

Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Graduate Student Handbook

2025-2026

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# Introduction

# Purpose and Audience

This handbook outlines the requirements for students in the professional Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program at The Ohio State University. It is a companion volume to the [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)  and the [University’s Code of Student Conduct](http://studentconduct.osu.edu/). It provides additional expectations established specifically for students in the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program. It is intended for Ohio State University graduate students admitted to the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program. This handbook is revised annually, and the most recent edition replaces all previous editions. The Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program reserves the right to implement revised or newly created policies at any time it is determined necessary.

# Guiding Principles

## Mission

The mission of The Ohio State University Master of Dietetics and Nutrition program is a professional degree whose purpose is to produce graduates to become Registered Dietitian Nutritionists who practice high-quality entry-level practice and obtain advancement to positions of leadership and influence. Graduates will be prepared to think critically, engage in ethical decision-making, provide leadership for nutritional care, practice and manage in a variety of environments, function as active multidisciplinary team members, and continue professional development throughout life.

## Vision

The Master in Dietetics and Nutrition (MDN) is an educational program within a land-grant university offering a liberal education in the field of dietetics supported by diverse faculty and practitioners. Together we are committed to providing a broad-based education steeped in the science, arts and humanities; furnishing collaborative and interdisciplinary experiences in a variety of practice settings; and embracing new technology and standards in modeling professional practice.

The Ohio State University will provide a unified dietetics program between Medical Dietetics and Human Nutrition, eliminating internal competition for resources and confusion regarding duplicative dietetics education programs on the Ohio State campus.

## Goals

Outcomes data for all objectives is available upon request.

**Program Goal 1. The program will prepare graduates to be competent entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN).**

Objective 1. At least 80% of graduates will evaluate the program with a score of "very good" to "excellent" as having a structure that adequately prepared them academically and professionally for leadership positions.

Objective 2. At least 80% of students complete program requirements within three years (150% of planned program length).

Objective 3. Employers of graduates will indicate a rating of "competent" for entry level practice for at least 90% of the graduates.

Objective 4. At least 90% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.

Objective 5. The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.

**Program Goal 2. The program will prepare graduates to demonstrate a commitment to the dietetics profession.**

Objective 1. Of graduates who seek employment, at least 70% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.

Objective 2. At least 70% of graduates report involvement in a professional organization.

# The Dietetics Profession

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) are food and nutrition experts. Their field combines the study of food, nutrition, and health in relation to proper diet and food choices. RDNs assess nutritional status and provide medical nutrition therapy to treat diseases or help individuals reach optimal fitness and health. They offer nutrition education for groups and provide nutrition counseling for people of all ages. RDNs may manage food services in health care settings, schools, or congregate feeding sites. They may provide direct patient care in hospitals, long term care, or community settings. RDNs may also work with athletes, fitness clubs, employee wellness programs or home health agencies. Some dietitians work in commercial settings such as food outlets or grocery store chains; others are employed in industry. Opportunities for employment are varied. Many graduates integrate their dietetics training with careers in medicine, nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy, occupational therapy, business, or other professions.

# Educational Program Overview

The Medical Dietetics Division of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (HRS) initiated a Coordinated Undergraduate Program in September of 1961, with financial assistance from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. This program was the first of its kind offering professional didactic education in conjunction with clinical experiences in dietetics.

Human Nutrition, housed in Human Sciences, has conducted an internship program since 1989 and the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) has roots that are about 100 years old. The Medical Dietetics and Human Nutrition programs bring a strong history of dietetics education. This Future Graduate program leads to the degree of Master of Dietetics and Nutrition (MDN) and eligibility to sit for the national registration examination offered by the Commission for Dietetic Registration (CDR). The Ohio State University’s program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).

## Length and Structure

The MDN program is designed for students who have completed a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution as well as the pre-requisites to pursue a career as an RDN or students who have completed an ACEND-accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD).

Students with a verification statement from an accredited DPD degree may enter the MDN Program with the prerequisites considered met. Students will complete five semesters of coursework as well as the Supervised Experiential Learning rotations and the requirements for the graduate degree to ultimately earn a Master of Dietetics and Nutrition degree.

Students who have received a verification statement from the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) at The Ohio State University are eligible for accelerated pathways in which they can achieve all program requirements in four semesters (referred to as the 4+1.5). Further, there is a pathway for students enrolled in the OSU DPD program to concurrently complete the DPD and initiate the MDN program through a combined bachelors/masters (3+2) model. See [Prior Learning](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/graduate-programs/master-of-dietetics-and-nutrition/curriculum) for more information about the 4+1.5 pathway. For more information about the accelerated pathways from OSU DPD to MDN, visit the [Dietetics](https://ehe.osu.edu/undergraduate/dietetics) website.

## Program Admission

Admission to the MDN Program is separate from admission to the university, and the admission process is selective and competitive. A complete application includes the [Dietetic Inclusive Centralized Application Service](https://dicas.cas.myliaison.com/applicant-ux/#/login) (DICAS) application as well as an OSU Graduate and Professional Admissions application no later than the posted deadlines via the online application processes at the DICAS and the [Graduate and Professional Admissions](https://gpadmissions.osu.edu/programs/programs.aspx) website.

Eligibility for admission is dependent on the completion of specified pre-requisite courses. Each spring, potential candidates are invited for a holistic interview, and successful students are admitted to the MDN Program. There are a limited number of students admitted to each class, and this is dependent on accreditation guidelines. Details about program admissions including pre-requisites, process, timeline and transfer applicants can be found on the [MDN Admissions](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/graduate-programs/master-of-dietetics-and-nutrition/admissions) website.

The program follows the rules and guidelines established by The Ohio State University. Consideration and acceptance of the students is by a selected admissions committee that is in compliance with the university, state and federal regulations and laws. The application of each student will be viewed and considered individually, in compliance with the university’s nondiscrimination policy (1.10) that says Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its education program or activity.

The Ohio State University follows the policy of not engaging in discrimination or harassment against any person regardless of sexual orientation, race, origin, religion, sex, unfavorable discharge from the military, or status as disabled veteran of the Vietnam period and fulfill with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, and regulation.

It is the policy of The Ohio State University to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974 as well as the Family and Educational Rights. To maintain the student protection of privacy information and the access to files, consent by the student is required before releasing any information from the student’s record. Students may have access to their own student file upon request to the program co-directors.

## Advising & Scheduling

[HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)

Advisors are assigned to students during initial University Orientation, upon transferring into HRS from another unit at the university, or upon transfer admission from another university. Please see the [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks) for additional information regarding Academic Support Services.

Professional phase students are advised by a faculty member from Medical Dietetics or Human Nutrition with additional consulting from the HRS Student Services office on an “as needed” basis. Faculty advisors are assigned upon professional program admission.

Advisors provide guidance to students in planning their program of study; however, students are ultimately responsible for planning and completing all required coursework and Supervised Experiential Learning outlined in this handbook. Students should make an appointment to meet with their advisor at least once each term. Prior to registration for each term, students are expected to prepare or update a proposed plan of study as well as a proposed schedule that they review and refine with their advisor.

Advising includes much more than course scheduling and students are encouraged to develop strong mentoring relationships with their advisor. Students in the MDN program are advised by one of the co-directors of the MDN Program.

## Accreditation Status

The MDN program at The Ohio State University is currently granted Accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).

Email: ACEND@eatright.org

Phone: 800/877-1600, ext. 5400

Mail: 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995

Website: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend>

##

## Graduation Requirements

[HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)

For students to earn the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition, they must:

* complete all University degree requirements per the [School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks).
* complete all Master of Dietetics and Nutrition courses and credit hour requirements with a 3.0 or better (see: Policy 3 Academic Standards: GPA Requirements of this handbook).
* maintain a minimum cumulative point-hour ratio (GPA) of 3.0 for all graduate coursework completed at Ohio State.
* meet all Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Accreditation Council for Education of Nutrition and Dietetics competencies as documented by completion of the competency portfolio at the end of Supervised Experiential Learning rotations and academic courses.
* complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of Supervised Experiential Learning
* be enrolled in the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program at the time of graduation.

## Verification Statement Procedures

Each student who has successfully completed all requirements for graduation will receive an electronic copy of the verification statement. The MDN Program Director will then complete all required processes according to the Registration Eligibility Processing System Guide to submit each student’s eligibility forms to the Commission on Dietetics Registration (CDR). One copy of the verification statement and the CDR forms will be kept on file in the student’s permanent record for any future need.

## RDN Exam Eligibility

Verification statements are required by CDR for eligibility to take the RDN exam. Following the successful completion of the program, graduates are eligible to sit for the National Examination for registered dietitians administered by CDR. Passing the national exam allows these entry-level practitioners to use the RDN credential and transition into their professional careers. Passage of the RDN exam is often a requirement for gaining licensure (e.g., LD) to practice, when applicable. A listing of state licensure requirements is available on the [CDR](https://www.cdrnet.org/LicensureMap) website. State licensure requirements vary by state.

Refer to the [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks) for procedures regarding degree audits, credit evaluations and the applications to graduate.

# Curriculum

Entry into the professional program is selective and competitive. Students may use approved transfer credit for pre-professional coursework, but transfer credit may not be used for required professional courses, except under petition and review by the Co-Directors and/or admissions committee.

The professional program is comprehensive and includes both didactic (classroom) and Supervised Experiential Learning components. These two components are not independent; they are integrally linked and collectively support our mission to develop highly competent dietetics professionals. The classroom education component focuses on the theory and knowledge behind the practice of dietetics. The Supervised Experiential Learning component focuses on the real-world application of this knowledge. Students should place equal priority on success in both portions of the curriculum. To this end, students should understand that their Supervised Experiential Learning experiences are part of their educational curriculum and students should never think of themselves as working or covering an assigned position. Clinical instructors will supervise and mentor their experience within a particular professional setting or settings. This experience will frequently involve some student autonomy in activity and collaboration in decision- making between the student and clinical instructor; students are never the primary person responsible for patient care and decision making.

The curriculum includes professional courses based on core competencies, which include nutrition, food science, medical nutrition therapy, foodservice systems management, nutrition education and counseling, research methods, applied nutrition, and professional seminars. Required support courses include biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, microbiology, and principles of food management.

The graduate capstone\* is an optional, independent project that allows a student to demonstrate the ability to synthesize and apply the knowledge acquired during the program. For Ohio State, it encompasses several components and spans two semesters. It is the clinical application version of a thesis or dissertation (but is not a thesis or dissertation). Capstone projects help sharpen analytic skills for patient/client management and/or community or foodservice problems, developing interventions, evaluating outcomes, and/or integrating prevention and wellness strategies. The capstone is completed in the final two semesters prior to graduation.

\*If a student does not choose the Capstone option, the student is required to take an extra elective. \*

The program expects that all students who choose the capstone option complete and submit a written document as a capstone project and complete an oral presentation to meet the requirements to successfully complete the MDN 7990 Capstone course. The format of the final capstone document can be a written case study, literature review, or a manuscript for publication and is presented orally as a defense of the capstone project.

A faculty mentor will guide students through the self-directed capstone project. Faculty advisors can be any faculty from HRS and Human Sciences. Advisors can include tenure and clinical track faculty and clinical instructors.

Professional courses are carefully planned to meet knowledge requirements outlined by the ACEND Accreditation Standards for Dietitian Education Programs. The list of competencies will be housed centrally to identify which competencies are met by that individual course. Courses are mapped to provide the learning opportunities for each of the individual Performance Indicators defined by the Future Education Model; therefore, attendance and participation in courses and Supervised Experiential Learning are essential to document learning requirements in the program. Thus, students enrolled in the program will adhere to the University calendar for session and for breaks and the policy for excused absences. Students must schedule personal travel based on the university calendar.

## Distance Instruction

Distance instruction can be used for in-person, hybrid, and distance learning designated courses. Most courses in the MDN program are in-person courses. During synchronous distance learning, students will be asked to turn on their cameras to verify the identity of the student.

# Technology Requirements

**All MDN students are required to have their own personal laptop.** **First year MDN students must obtain their laptop prior to orientation.** In addition, students will need internet access from off campus. Minimum Wi-Fi speed and other information can be found on OSU’s [Office of Technology and Digital Innovation](https://it.osu.edu/help/it-students/get-tech-ready) site.The OSU Wexner Medical Center uses a standard platform of Windows and Windows-compatible software and hardware. Many programs and shared files are also compatible with Mac systems though support for these is limited. Students can contact the [Office of Curriculum and Scholarship](https://medicine.osu.edu/faculty/office-of-curriculum-and-scholarship) for more information at 614-685-1920.

All materials will be provided via Carmen, and all assignments will be completed via Canvas file upload. All necessary materials will be provided in the content section of Carmen. An [online tutorial](https://teaching.resources.osu.edu/toolsets/carmencanvas/guides/getting-started-carmen-students) is available. Notices about this course will be sent to your name.#@buckeyemail.osu.edu account. All students must have an active OSU email account and remain electronically connected to OSU. Emails may be forwarded to an external email address. Please check your [notification preferences](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/How-do-I-manage-my-Canvas-notification-settings/ta-p/615326) (go.osu.edu/canvas-notifications) to be sure you receive these messages. Please contact the Help Desk for more information.

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available [online](https://it.osu.edu/help), and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

Self-Service and Chat support: [go.osu.edu/IT](https://go.osu.edu/IT) • Phone: 614-688-HELP (4357) Email: ServiceDesk@osu.edu • TDD: 614-688-8743

**Microsoft 365**

This program requires students to author documents using Microsoft 365. Students can login to Microsoft 365 via [microsoft365.osu.edu](https://microsoft365.osu.edu/). Check the university’s IT Service Desk knowledge base article KB04728, [FAQ on Office 365 for Students](https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04728), for information on hardware requirements.

# Clinical Education

**All students must complete a minimum of 1,000 hours of Supervised Experiential Learning**, including acute care, medical nutrition therapy counseling, food systems management, community nutrition, and a culminating experience. The clinical Supervised Experiential Learning is a critical EDUCATIONAL requirement. It is neither a “work” requirement nor a volunteer activity. Clinical Supervised Experiential Learning is where students learn to apply and refine the knowledge and skills they learn in their coursework. More importantly, clinical Supervised Experiential Learning is where students integrate all phases of dietetics knowledge, skills, and values to become competent practitioners. It is where students make the transition to clinical practice, develop a practice style, and ultimately embrace the culture of the profession. Undervaluing clinical Supervised Experiential Learning leads to incompetent and unreliable clinical practice and is antithetical to the mission and legacy of this program.

To this end, **clinical Supervised Experiential Learning and associated assignments take precedence over all employment, residential life, social activities, club activities, Greek life, vacation, and any other obligations.** Students are not permitted to miss scheduled clinical Supervised Experiential Learning hours for participation in any of these activities. Instead, these activities should be scheduled around students’ clinical Supervised Experiential Learning obligations, just as they will when students become practicing professionals. The program adheres to the university’s academic calendar and requires full-time participation whenever school is in session.

As student’s progress through their clinical Supervised Experiential Learning, they will be challenged to: (1) increase their discipline specific knowledge; (2) integrate their classroom knowledge into the clinical setting; (3) become increasingly more proficient with clinical skills; (4) develop and implement evidence-based practice; (5) accept increasing levels of responsibility; and (6) conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism.

# Professional Phase

Professional phase students engage in assigned clinical Supervised Experiential Learning concurrently with their classroom coursework. There is no provision for combining portions of the Supervised Experiential Learning nor shortening the duration. All Supervised Experiential Learning is graded as an academic course, and these evaluations are a critical component of the grade for Supervised Experiential Learning. These courses are culminating experiences where students demonstrate the professional and clinical competence necessary to progress through the MDN Program.

## Supervised Experiential Learning

**Placements**

All clinical Supervised Experiential Learning is conducted at sites affiliated with the MDN Program and with clinical preceptors who have completed specific training prior to student placement. All Supervised Experiential Learning placements are arranged by the MDN Program’s Clinical Coordinators who communicate early and regularly with these preceptors when arranging specific student placements. This process is extensive and complex and attempts to place each student in a situation where they can best develop as a professional. While the Clinical Coordinators may elect to take a student’s preferences under advisement, placement is not made based on these preferences. Once placements have been finalized, the MDN Program reserves the right to not reassign students nor permit swapping of placements.

Students who withdraw from a placement or are removed for competence or professionalism deficiencies will not be reassigned to other placements during the current schedule. Their Supervised Experiential Learning course grade will reflect any missed time from Supervised Experiential Learning. Students who are failing a Supervised Experiential Learning course are prohibited from withdrawing from the course to avoid receiving a failing grade in the course.

## Expectations

* Students must document their completion of competencies on [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/) prior to the completion of each rotation.
* Students should participate in decision-making roles about the care of patients to the extent possible given the patient care situation and the student’s level of knowledge, skill, and ability. As the student’s role increases, preceptors will use professional judgment as to when it is appropriate to apply supervised autonomy to challenge increasing levels of skill and confidence in clinical practice.
* Students are expected to conduct evidence-based searches for articles that correlate with nutritional care assessed during clinical experiences. Students are expected to be prepared to support their clinical decisions with relevant and related current evidence.
* Students with a conflict or concern related to their Supervised Experiential Learning should follow this reporting chain: Student; Clinical Coordinator and Preceptor; Preceptor Supervisor; Program Director; Division Director.

## Enrollment Policies

Students receive academic credit for their Supervised Experiential Learning through courses numbered MDN 6X89. Students must be enrolled in a Supervised Experiential Learning course to engage in Supervised Experiential Learning activities and to have their clinical activities covered by the MDN Program’s liability insurance. HRS has adopted an approximately 4:1 weekly contact hour to semester credit hour policy for full semester clinical Supervised Experiential Learning by graduate students (e.g. Supervised Experiential Learning where 32 hours per week is anticipated=6 graduate credits), partial semester Supervised Experiential Learning is prorated. Students’ actual contact hours will vary.

Student contact hours are self-reported in [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/) using the timesheet form which is submitted to preceptors for approval or disapproval. Only hours approved by preceptors count towards total SEL time.

The MDN Program has specific policies governing minimum and maximum contact hours and actively tracks these logs for compliance. Hours should be logged weekly. Failure to log hours in a timely fashion will affect the student’s grade in their Supervised Experiential Learning course.

## Replacement of Employees

Supervised practice is for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace facility employees, except as planned to demonstrate competence/planned learning experiences.

Dietetic Supervised Experiential Learning experiences will adhere to competence attainment as described in the curriculum and work assignments for the purpose of education, mastery of techniques and reinforcing knowledge. Students should not accept wages or salary in exchange for work performed unless allowed in the affiliation agreement.

## Inclement Weather

During inclement weather, students should contact their preceptors to determine if the site is open or closed and to communicate about Supervised Experiential Learning attendance. Students are expected to attend their clinical Supervised Experiential Learning unless one or more of the following has occurred:

* The Ohio State University has cancelled classes at the Columbus Campus due to the weather. The university’s operational status is posted at the University’s [Department of Public Safety](https://dps.osu.edu/campus-status) website.
* The Supervised Experiential Learning site has closed or cancelled activities.
* The student feels their safety is at risk if they were to attempt to travel to the Supervised Experiential Learning site (e.g. severe cold for students walking, dangerous road conditions for students driving).

## Supervision

All clinical Supervised Experiential Learning is overseen by qualified preceptors, most of whom are state licensed Registered Dietitian Nutritionists; however, individuals serving as preceptors are not required to hold RDN credentials, provided they possess appropriate expertise relevant to their assigned role. For example, in specifically planned and limited experiences, students may be supervised by a licensed physician, other licensed and/or credentialed healthcare provider, or qualified professional appropriate to the setting.

Students and preceptors should never misunderstand the term supervision to mean that students cannot be autonomous or have decision-making roles in patient care. Supervision requires that the preceptor be present and provide positive reinforcement and constructive feedback with the goal of developing the student along the continuum towards an autonomous RDN. Student autonomy is a critical part of developing competence and is emphatically encouraged by the MDN Program. Autonomy involves self-directed collection and interpretation of information and use of such information to formulate and implement a plan of action. The plan of action should be vetted through the preceptor prior to implementation to ensure its appropriateness and patient safety, but the student should be the one to develop and implement it whenever possible and to the greatest degree possible. Students who are not pushed to become autonomous do not become competent to practice independently upon graduation.

## Expectations During Supervised Experiential Learning

Each Supervised Experiential Learning course (MDN 6X89) includes specific requirements detailed in the course syllabus, which is accessible via Canvas. Students should familiarize themselves with these requirements prior to starting the Supervised Experiential Learning placement. Course requirements include but are not limited to daily journals, class meetings and assignments. Competencies must be documented in [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/) for each rotation by the end of each Supervised Experiential Learning course. Failure to do so will result in an unsatisfactory course grade for that rotation.

## Assessment of Student Learning

The MDN program is a competency-based education (CBE) program, and thus, the assessment of student learning uses competency-based assessment. Students must also maintain a 3.0 GPA in the program to meet OSU Graduate School requirements. Thus, student learning is assessed using a combination of these assessment methods. MDN faculty instructors assign grades and evaluate competence for a variety of assignments and activities within each course. The program also uses a “competency day” to evaluate student progression at the end of their first year. MDN preceptors evaluate competencies in Supervised Experiential Learning.

## Evaluations Through Coursework

Progress towards competencies and Supervised Experiential Learning hours are evaluated, and adjustments are made as appropriate. At the end of each semester, co-directors review transcripts to confirm compliance with the graduate school minimum GPA of 3.0. Students who fall below the minimum requirement will receive a warning letter from the OSU Graduate School and be placed in remediation. The student must reach the 3.0 threshold by the following semester to remain in the program. In addition, some courses have additional, minimum requirements. Students must score at or above the criteria established by the instructor for all critical assignments.

Students must demonstrate competence during competency day, which is a day devoted to faculty assessment of student competence on numerous clinically related competencies. Students who are not achieving these benchmarks will participate in remediation in the summer semester. Students in remediation cannot start clinical rotations without a signature from the faculty member(s) providing the remediation. Delays in the start of clinical rotations may increase time to graduation. This may result in additional costs for the student.

Students who do not meet the minimum requirements of coursework, must complete remediation to address gaps to be able to progress in the program.

* First time: Required meeting with the instructor to determine necessary pathway to improving outcomes.
* Second time: Determine additional activities needed to improve outcomes, such as attending instructor office hours weekly, formulating a study group with MDN student mentors, etc.
* Third time: Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)/further remediation will be implemented.

## Evaluations Through Competency Day

Students will participate in two competency days, which will take place in January of the second semester in the program and in May (third semester prior to the beginning of SEL activities). Students must demonstrate competence during competency day, which is a day devoted to faculty assessment of student competence on numerous clinically related competencies.

Competency Day in January is an experiential learning day as the student works toward gaining confidence, competence and knowledge. This is a non-graded activity, which will allow the student to provide self-assessment and to receive feedback from faculty

Competency Day in May is a graded activity. Students not achieving the specified benchmarks will receive a Performance Improvement Plan-Level 1 Academic Alert and will participate in remediation in the summer semester. Students in remediation cannot start clinical rotations without a signature from the faculty member(s) providing the remediation.

## Evaluations Through Supervised Experiential Learning

At the completion of every rotation, the student submits their self-evaluation (rating) of each competency to their preceptor using the secure online software package, [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/). Students use a standard rubric provided by the program. The preceptor either agrees or disagrees with the student’s self-evaluation. If the preceptor disagrees with a student’s rating, MDN program faculty are notified through an automated system and will follow-up on the unmet rating. MDN faculty initiate contact with the student and preceptor as needed and students may need to resubmit their competency evaluation depending on the required reasoning given for an unmet rating. The preceptor and student meet to review the evaluation(s). Program faculty may attend this evaluation session. Edits may be made at this time. These competency ratings are used to track progress towards competencies. Mid-rotation evaluations between preceptor and student are encouraged but not mandatory. Informal, regular feedback between preceptor and student is expected.

The program curriculum includes alternate practice experiences (case studies, simulation, role play). The Supervised Experiential Learning hours for each experience are determined by the program. Program faculty share the expected learning necessary to meet competence for each assignment.

Students complete a weekly log that consists of subjective and objective reflections of their Supervised Experiential Learning experiences. They may also catalogue the competencies experienced during the week and how they meet the competencies.

Students are additionally required to complete the evaluation of the preceptor and facility for each rotation during their Supervised Experiential Learning. Students also complete an Exit Survey evaluation at the time of graduation.

## Documentation Tracking

### Compliance and Supervised Experiential Learning Hours

Students utilize [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/) to log clinical Supervised Experiential Learning hours and to complete required Supervised Experiential Learning evaluations. Prior to starting Supervised Experiential Learning, students are issued an [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/) account and login information. A variety of items necessary for Supervised Experiential Learning eligibility are tracked through this account and instructions for uploading these items is provided to students at their program orientation and is also available on the home screen of [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/).

The MDN program uses [MyBuckMD](https://shs.osu.edu/my-buckmd1) to collect documents and show health compliance with required documentation (e.g., onboarding materials, vaccinations, etc.).

# Retention and Good Standing

Students shall be considered to be in “good standing” within the professional phase of the MDN Program when they are compliant with the academic, safety and capability, and professionalism requirements and are not currently on warning or probation nor have been dismissed from the MDN Program or University.

# University Level Sanctions

The University has established university-wide student conduct guidelines in their [Code of Student Conduct](http://studentconduct.osu.edu/). The university also has established a system of academic performance sanctions that include warning, probation, and dismissal as described in in the Student Conduct Process section of the [Code of Student Conduct](https://studentconduct.osu.edu/for-students/understanding-the-student-conduct-process).

# School/Program Sanctions

The MDN Program has established a reputation for producing professional, highly trained practitioners. Student behaviors are expected to reflect these ideals in the classroom and in Supervised Experiential Learning rotations. Behaviors that do not meet these expectations will be addressed according to established policies and procedures [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)**.** In addition to the university sanctions, HRS has also established academic and professionalism policies and sanctions for students in the School specifically outlined in the [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks) (Policies 1,2,5,6,10,11,12). Students face sanctions for violations of academic policies, professionalism polices, or a combination of both.

# Professional Sanctions

HRS policies establish that any student whose professional behavior, conduct, competence, or interpersonal skills are judged unsatisfactory may be placed on professional warning, probation or recommended for professional disenrollment (dismissal from the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program). [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)(Policies 1,6,10,11,12).

# Appeals

Students may appeal specific grades, academic or professional sanctions through processes described in the [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks) (Policy 20) and the university’s [Code of Student Conduct](http://studentconduct.osu.edu/).

# Complaints and Grievances

The program encourages the resolution of grievances from students and preceptors through informal means and discussions in keeping with the collegial atmosphere of a university. The program and department are also committed to a formal procedure for consideration of grievances that are not resolved through informal processes. Students and preceptors are encouraged to work with their co-directors and preceptor/preceptor supervisors to resolve academic issues and complaints. If the complaint is not addressed to the satisfaction of the student or preceptor, the student or preceptor should go to the HRS Graduate Studies chair. If the issue is not resolved, the student or preceptor should go to the HRS Director who will make a final ruling. Students or preceptors should submit written complaints to ACEND related to program noncompliance with ACEND accreditation standards only after all other options with the program director and institution have been exhausted.

The program director must keep a chronological record of the intern or preceptor complaints related to the ACEND accreditation standards, including the resolution of complaints for a period of 10 years. The program director must allow inspection of complaint records during on-site evaluation visits by ACEND.

# Remediation and Retention

Students are regularly informed regarding their progress in didactic coursework and Supervised Experiential Learning. The program co-directors review the progress of all students. If a student fails to meet the criteria for satisfactory performance, the student may be placed in remediation at the discretion of the program co-directors. In addition, if the conduct of the student is not consistent with the academic standards of OSU or the technical standards of the program, the student may be placed in remediation at the discretion of the co-directors.

## Remediation and Performance Improvement Plans

Every effort is made to help support the students and provide the needed resources for their success while at OSU. For example, program faculty communicate and coordinate with preceptors and other personnel to address personal issues that could negatively impact a student’s success. If the student does not meet the competencies and objectives of the Supervised Experiential Learning experience and/or they are not following the technical or academic standards, the student will be assigned to continue with additional experiences, until the desired level of expertise is accomplished.

Supervised Experiential Learning experience and/or they are not following the technical or academic standards, the student will be assigned to continue with additional experiences, until the desired level of expertise is accomplished. Should this occur, the co-directors in consultation with the preceptors of the facility will provide in writing specific steps and actions that are to be required of the student in a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Often resources are shared with students, such as [Student Learning Disability Services](https://slds.osu.edu/) and the [Dennis Learning Center](https://dennislearningcenter.osu.edu/time-management-get-started/) that provides resources common to success, such as time management. The student will be given the opportunity to address their behaviors and competence. Repeating portions of rotations may delay completion of the program. This may result in additional costs for the student. Remediation that relates to progress towards competencies often requires additional time on learning assignments or tutorials with assistance from the program faculty.

The MDN process for remediation is coordinated in alignment with the HRS Academic Review process and is outlined below.

**Academic Alert - Level 1 Performance Improvement Plan**

* + **Purpose**: Identify performance deficits and align them with curriculum/accreditation standards.
		1. **Examples**: professionalism; technical standards; attendance; etc.
	+ **Requirements**: Specify required outcomes and deadlines for improvement.
	+ **Consequences**: Failure to meet outcomes may lead to continuation or escalation to Level II.
	+ **Documentation**: Signed by student and program representatives; kept for two semesters post-separation.
	+ **Status**: Does not affect Good Standing status

**Formal Review - Level II Performance Improvement Plan – Disciplinary Review**

* + **Purpose**: Issued if Level I outcomes are not met or progress is insufficient.
	+ **Requirements**: Similar to Level I, with specified outcomes and deadlines.
	+ **Consequences**: Failure to meet outcomes may lead to continuation, probation, or recommendation for disenrollment.
	+ **Documentation**: Signed by student, program representatives, and director of academic affairs; kept for two semesters post-separation.
	+ **Status**: May result in probation if guidelines are not met.

**FORMAL REVIEW: LEVEL III**

* + **Purpose:** Failure to meet Level II conditions and expectations.
	+ **Process**: Review by Student Academic Success Committee, including evidence and student statements.
	+ **Notification**: Student receives notice of meeting details and allegations.
	+ **Rights**: Student can attend hearing, present evidence, and have supporters (not legal representatives) present.
	+ **Outcome**: Recommendations sent to Director for Academic Affairs and communicated to student.

**LEVEL IV: FINAL DECISION MAKING**

* + **Authority**: Final decisions on disenrollment or reinstatement made by Director of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.
	+ **Immediate Action**: Director may suspend or disenroll students for significantly harmful behavior without other review levels.
	+ **Appeals**: Students can appeal decisions at any level.

## Probation and Dismissal

A student may be placed on probation when there is evidence that they have difficulty in complying with the Performance Improvement Plan as defined in the Remediation section. Probation will be issued in writing by the program co-directors and include the reason for the probation and required behavior, performance requirements and time frames for re-evaluation. During this time, it may be necessary to change the preceptor or the rotation schedule, which may result in delayed completion of the program. There may be additional costs for the student. The student must meet the terms outlined in the probation letter or face possible dismissal from the program. Students will be limited to two Performance Improvement Plans during the program, regardless of content or focus, to demonstrate successful progress in the program. The program co-director(s) will notify the student of dismissal from the program in writing. The dismissal shall be stayed pending the expiration of the student’s right to appeal the dismissal as set forth in the Grievance Procedure.

## Leave of Absence

Students may request a leave of absence from the program co-directors. If a leave of absence is indicated for injury or illness, the student must submit a written request along with documentation indicating the severity or extent of the injury/illness, including any required work limitations. The written request should indicate the date when the student will meet with the program director to discuss re-entry. In the case of a medical leave of absence, the student will be required to submit a physician’s release before returning to the program. Once a leave of absence is established, specific arrangements will be made on an individual basis in coordination with the program co-director(s). The student’s accomplishments to date will be evaluated, and a written plan for completion will be determined. The written plan for completion will include, but is not limited to:

1. The number of program hours completed.
2. Specific rotations, assignments, projects, and competencies successfully completed and preceptor evaluation of the student’s work and capabilities.
3. Number of required hours remaining to meet the standards set by the program and ACEND.
4. Specific rotations, assignments, projects, and competencies required to be successfully completed by the student.
5. The plan will also take into consideration the availability of preceptors to work with the student, as well as the reasonable expectation that the student will successfully complete the program.
6. The opportunity to complete remaining Supervised Experiential Learning experiences will depend on availability of affiliated sites and supervision.

If the student who has requested a leave of absence from the program does not re-enter the program, tuition and fees already paid will not be refunded. The student does not qualify for benefits related to the federal Family Medical Leave Act.

# Professional Requirements

The public rightly expects that those in the medical professions will adhere to a set of values that reflect their commitment to excellence, responsibility, respect for all, integrity, prudence, trustworthiness, and evidence-based practice. The expectations are in addition to the expectations of clinical knowledge and competence. HRS and the MDN Program consider any student enrolled in the school to always be an active member of their profession. Professional behavior is expected not just in the classroom but in Supervised Experiential Learning, community outreach and other environments where students are involved. Commitment to integrity in espousing the values of the profession means that members of the profession (including students) behave in ways that will reflect positively on the profession even when they are not in class, on the grounds of the university, in Supervised Experiential Learning settings or at professional conferences. Furthermore, students will practice within the scope of the profession as outlined in Ohio statutory law, based on the existing evidence, without imposing personal beliefs and biases on the individual.

**Students who behave in a manner counter to the ethics and values of the profession, regardless of the setting in which these behaviors occur, may be subject to adverse academic and/or professional sanctions from the MDN Program and/or HRS, up to and including program disenrollment.**

## Appearance

An important part of professionalism is maintaining a professional appearance. Clinical Supervised Experiential Learning requires specific professional attire, hygiene, and grooming practices. Students must maintain a neat and professional appearance that enables them to always perform their duties efficiently and safely during clinical Supervised Experiential Learning. A student’s attire or appearance should not distract or make others feel uncomfortable, especially in a Supervised Experiential Learning setting. Students should clarify expectations with their preceptor prior to beginning each clinical Supervised Experiential Learning. Unless otherwise directed, students are expected to adhere to the OSU Health System Dress Code. Students who do not comply with appearance guidelines may be sent home from the Supervised Experiential Learning site for the day and placed on professional warning. An ongoing pattern of inappropriate dress will lead to professional sanctions up to and including probation or disenrollment.

## Hygiene

Proper hygiene is critical for controlling disease transmission and helping create a professional appearance. Students are expected to maintain impeccable personal daily hygiene.

* Daily hygiene includes clean skin, hair, and teeth; regular use of deodorant/antiperspirants; and regular dental hygiene.
* Makeup and cologne/perfume should be minimal and not distracting. Some patients are sensitive to cosmetics or perfume/cologne, and these items may be prohibited in some settings.
* Students are expected to engage in frequent hand washing or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers prior to beginning Supervised Experiential Learning between patients and before leaving the Supervised Experiential Learning facility daily.

## Grooming

Good grooming is essential to enable health care providers to perform their professional duties as well as to create a professional appearance.

* Long fingernails can injure patients, are incompatible with many clinical skills and food service safety and are therefore prohibited. Nails should be no more than ¼ inch long. Artificial fingernails or items affixed to fingernails have been shown to be an infection hazard and are prohibited in patient care and foodservice activities.
* Hair should be pulled back or otherwise kept out of the face so that it does not interfere with vision, communication, or the performance of clinical skills. Facial hair must be kept neat and well-trimmed. In food service areas, hair coverings must be worn.
* Jewelry should be minimal, professionally tasteful, and not interfere with performance of work. In food service, guidelines must be adhered to.
	+ Jewelry that cannot be easily decontaminated should not be worn.
	+ Visible piercings are limited to the ears with only two earrings permitted in each ear.
	+ Exceptions for religious or medical alert jewelry will be considered.
* If tattoos present a conflict, students should cover them or work with their instructors and preceptors to determine a solution.

## Dress Code/Uniforms

Students should clarify the dress code for their specific Supervised Experiential Learning setting with their preceptor on or before the first day of the Supervised Experiential Learning.

## General Requirements

* Students must wear an MDN lab coat in acute care rotations. Lab coats must be washed and ironed regularly.
* In all other rotations, business casual clothing is required.
* Closed toe shoes are required in food service rotations.
* Clothing should be clean, wrinkle-free and in good repair.
* Clothing should not interfere with mobility or clinical duties and should fit well, not be overly tight, or revealing. Clothing must remain concealed while performing normal tasks such as reaching or crouching activities.
* Sleeveless tops, tank tops, bare midriffs, and spaghetti straps cannot be worn during Supervised Experiential Learning.
* Appropriate undergarments should always be worn.
* Low-rise waistlines are prohibited.
* Skirts and shorts should not be shorter than where the fingertips touch the legs when the arms are extended down at the sides or, alternately, should have a 6-inch inseam or greater.
* Jeans or denim pants / skirts, regardless of color are prohibited unless it is agreeable to the preceptor (e.g., working special events).
* Shoes and socks / hosiery must be always worn, and footwear must be clean and in good repair.
* Unless otherwise instructed, OSU Medical Center Identification badges are to be worn above the waist with the name and photo visible during patient care.
* The MDN Program reserves the right to make accommodations or revisions to these requirements as necessary.

# Technical Standards

[HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)

The Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program is rigorous and intense and places specific technical standard requirements and demands on the students enrolled in the program. Technical standards are nonacademic criteria for admission and continued program participation. Standards are anchored to the curriculum and accreditation standards, supported in policy and practice, and utilize objective performance criteria that are reliably applied to all program applicants or participants. Standards are defined as essential functions a student must demonstrate to fulfill program requirements and should be connected to professional licensure requirements. These standards may be achieved with reasonable and appropriate accommodation for otherwise qualified individuals. The MDN Program partners with the university’s Office of Disability Services to explore and implement accommodations where appropriate. If a student’s physical, emotional, or mental capability changes while in the program, an amended Technical Standards Certification must be submitted. It is possible that a loss of capability may render a student unable to continue in the MDN Program.

Upon acceptance into the program, students will be asked to acknowledge their ability to meet the standards with or without accommodation. The following technical standards, in conjunction with the academic standards, are requirements for admission, retention and program completion. The term “student” refers to students who have been accepted to the program as well as current students who are in the process of completing Supervised Experiential Learning and program requirements.

These requirements may be achieved with or without reasonable accommodation. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services for appropriate accommodations through [Student Life Disability Services](https://slds.osu.edu/) or at phone 614-293-3307 early in the application process to begin a confidential conversation about what accommodations they may need to meet these standards. HRS provides counselors for mental health services, and the university has a robust [Counseling and Consultation Services](https://ccs.osu.edu/) for mental health support.

The MDN program prepares candidates to practice dietetics and nutrition with organizations and businesses. Graduates require knowledge and skills to function in diverse practice settings. An essential requirement for completing the program is the ability to function within a clinical learning environment and to interact with a variety of interprofessional teams and patients.

**Students admitted to the program must be able to perform the following:**

## Communication

Students must have the ability to use multiple communication techniques (oral, written, nonverbal) to enable communication with clients, patients, instructors, preceptors, and the health care team. Students must be able to communicate with preceptors, patients/clients, and other members of the health care team effectively and professionally and precepting sites. Students must be able to report to members of the team, express accurate information to patients/clients, and teach, explain, direct, and counsel people. The student must be capable of responsive, empathetic listening to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences. In patient care settings, the student must be able to process and communicate information on the patient's status with accuracy in a timely manner to physicians, colleagues, and other members of the health care team.

## Psychomotor

Students must have sufficient motor capacities and motilities to be able to do the following: generate, calculate, record, evaluate and transit information; prepare assignments; deliver public presentations to large and small audiences; collect specimens and perform basic tests and physical assessments on individuals, e.g., finger sticks for blood glucose testing, using glucometers, assessing skinfold thickness, taking blood pressure and placing feeding tubes; work in institutional and food demonstration kitchens to prepare foods and direct employees involved in food services; and conduct patient visits individually and with health care team members to provide nutrition care. Candidates must be able to travel to Supervised Experiential Learning experiences. See Transportation Requirements.

## Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities

Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate, and be able to apply information. Creative problem solving and clinical reasoning requires all these intellectual abilities. It is also necessary to apply critical thinking skills using evidence- based tools as part of the learning process in the classroom, Supervised Experiential Learning setting and any other professional activity.

## Observe

Students must be able to accurately observe lectures, demonstrations, research, and practice situations. These observations may be in person, recorded, or by virtual means. Observation is necessary to perform competent health assessments and interventions. Students must also be able to observe, learn from, and analyze health record content, including discernment and use of clinical data displayed within the health record. Students must possess functional use of the senses that permit such observations as listed here.

## Professional and Social Attributes

Students must exercise good judgment and promptly complete all responsibilities required of the program. They must develop mature, sensitive, and effective professional relationships with others. Candidates must be able to evaluate their own performance critically, accept constructive criticism, and look for ways to improve. Self-reflection is an important skill to possess and develop to learn and improve. In addition, students must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities. Concern for others, interpersonal competence and motivation are requisites for the program.

## Ethical Standards

Students must demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors and must perform in an ethical manner in dealing with others. Personal integrity and the ability to adhere to standards that reflect the values and functions of the dietetic profession are always required during the MDN program. Students are required to abide by the professional code of ethics for dietetics and student honor codes as set by the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics](https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/code-of-ethics/what-is-the-code-of-ethics).

## Communication Expectations

Communication should be timely, within 2 business days for standard topics, and within 24 hours for topics of high importance, whenever possible.

### Verbal & Non-Verbal

Students should work diligently to use professional language and vocabulary in their dietetics-related communications and be aware of how their body language impacts their communications.

* Word choices should be appropriate to the audience and setting (e.g. jargon to professionals, lay language to patients).
* Vulgar and inappropriate language has no place in professional communications.
* Body language should be professional, respectful, attentive, and appropriate to the situation at hand.

### Written

For paper communications with students during the academic year, the MDN Program uses the current local address as listed in official student records. Students should ensure that their desired addresses are correct and up to date. When students sign records or other documentation, they should use a designation that identifies them as a MDN student so that no one will misunderstand them to be a licensed and credentialed person (e.g., “MDN Intern”).

### Email

Email is a primary means of communication between the MDN Program and its students. All students are issued a secure Ohio State University email account upon enrollment. The MDN Program operates under the reasonable assumption that email communications originating from a student's registered account are authentic and sent by the account holder. Messages received from this account are not presumed to be forged or part of a phishing attempt. Therefore, this account is the ONLY email address that the MDN program will use for communications with students.

* Students should check their email in this account daily (even during breaks).
* Failure to regularly check your email or to maintain your inbox is never an acceptable excuse for missing official communications.
* Students are expected to use appropriate professional etiquette in all email communications.
* Communications of a professional nature:
	+ Include a salutation / greeting at the top that is professionally appropriate. Do not use the first name of faculty or preceptors unless they have asked you to call them by their first name.
	+ Avoid slang, poor grammar, or the use of text messaging jargon (e.g. “y r u txting me?”)
	+ Include a signature that identifies the sender as an Ohio State University Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Student and includes a return email address.

Brutus Buckeye

Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Student

brutus.1@buckeyemail.osu.edu

* Students who send professionally related emails from non-OSU accounts should make professional choices regarding their username / email address.
	+ Inappropriate choices can cast the student in a less than professional light (e.g. 2hot4u@email.com).
	+ Students should not use inappropriate email addresses to send email communications in which they identify themselves as an Ohio State MDN student.

The MDN Program will not provide students with academic information to accounts other than the student’s official OSU account.

### Telephone

**Students should:**

* Ensure that the MDN Program records contain their local /cellular phone number for urgent communications.
* Add the phone numbers of the MDN Program Co- Director(s), placement coordinators, their capstone advisor and their preceptor(s) / Supervised Experiential Learning facilities into their cell phone’s contacts list.
* Do not call or text faculty or preceptors for non-professional reasons or, barring emergencies, at times outside of normal working hours.
* Ensure that incoming voicemail greetings are appropriately professional. Inappropriate voicemail greetings that are encountered by preceptors, potential employers, etc. are a poor reflection on the student and on the MDN Program.
* Students should answer the telephone at a Supervised Experiential Learning site as follows, “[Name of Site], this is [Name of Student], how may I help you?”

### Electronic Devices

[HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)

The use of cell phones, tablets, laptops, or other electronic devices is prohibited during class or Supervised Experiential Learning, unless they are being used specifically for class or Supervised Experiential Learning related purposes.

* Students who need to have a phone on for emergency purposes should discuss the issue with the instructor or preceptor prior to the beginning of the day’s class or Supervised Experiential Learning.
* Taking photos or making video or audio recordings of the School of Health and Rehabilitation property, clinical Supervised Experiential Learning sites, and patients is **strictly** prohibited without the written consent of the institution and all parties involved.
* No student shall post photos or information about Supervised Experiential Learning on social media platforms or other public forums.
* Electronic transmission of data related to patient specific identifiers is a violation of HIPAA and is subject to disciplinary action, which may include academic sanctions and legal accountability.

# Ethical Standards and Laws

Students must demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors and must perform in an ethical manner in dealing with others. Personal integrity is required as well as adherence to standards that reflect the values and functions of the profession of dietetics. Students are required to abide by the professional code of ethics for dietetics.

### Ethical Codes

* Students will adhere to the HRS Student Code of Ethics found in the [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks).
* Students will adhere to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) [Code of Ethics](https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/code-of-ethics/what-is-the-code-of-ethics) and [Scope of Dietetics Practice Framework](https://www.eatrightpro.org/practice/quality-management/scope-of-practice). The AND Ethics Committee is responsible for reviewing, promoting, and enforcing the code. The Committee also educates members, credentialed practitioners, students, and the public about the ethical principles contained in the Code. Support of the Code of Ethics by members and credentialed practitioners is vital to guiding the profession’s actions and to strengthening its credibility.

Students must adhere to federal, state, and local laws regarding licensure and scope of practice. This includes but is not limited to confidentiality laws, drug laws, medical device laws, non-discrimination laws, billing and insurance laws, and human research protection laws. Students should never provide private “after hours” or “off the books” care that circumvents the healthcare plan that is in place for our patients. Doing so is both unethical and illegal. If a patient contacts a student outside of normal care environments to request nutritional care, the student should advise the patient to contact their healthcare provider or to seek care in an appropriate facility. Students must also notify their preceptor of the request at the first available opportunity.

Students will self-report any arrests, criminal charges, or criminal convictions to the MDN Program within 24 hours.

### Honor Codes

Students will adhere to the University’s [Code of Student Conduct](http://studentconduct.osu.edu/) as well as the HRS Professional Honor Code, Academic Honor Code, and the MDN Program professionalism requirements outlined below.

# Professional and Social Attributes

Students must exercise good judgment and promptly complete all responsibilities required of the program. They must develop mature, sensitive, and effective professional relationships with others. Candidates must be able to evaluate one’s own performance critically, accept constructive criticism and look for ways to improve. Self-reflection is an important skill to possess and develop to learn and improve. In addition, students must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility and function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities. Concern for others, interpersonal competence and motivation are requisites for the program.

# Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students are expected to adhere to academic integrity standards established by the [Committee on Academic Misconduct](https://oaa.osu.edu/resources/policies-and-procedures/committee-academic-misconduct). The program is designed to train students in clinical decision-making to demonstrate competence for entry-level practice. AI has the potential to augment student learning as an additional resource. The use of AI to replace the students’ efforts, including AI products for submission as one’s own work, violates academic integrity and will be subject to the University’s COAM process. The exception is if the assignment explicitly states that the use of AI is necessary to complete the assignment.

# Attendance

Consistent, punctual attendance in all MDN classes, supervised experiential learning (SEL) rotations, clinical education activities, and mandatory scheduled events are essential to meet the competencies required to function as an entry-level practitioner. Missing class sessions or SEL rotations compromises the ability to meet program competencies and may negatively affect academic performance, engagement, and professional development.

Attendance Requirements
• Attendance is required for all scheduled classes, laboratories, SEL rotations, and special events unless illness or another serious reason makes attendance inadvisable or impossible.
• Students may not miss class for SEL activities, nor miss one class to fulfill activities for another class.
• Attendance via Zoom does not meet the in-person attendance requirement unless specifically approved by the instructor.
• Students are expected to arrive on time, remain for the full session, be alert, prepared, and actively participate in all learning activities.
• **Students are responsible for all missed material and assignments.**
• Outside employment and student organization obligations are not acceptable excuses for tardiness or absenteeism.

Special Circumstances
• Religious accommodations will be made in accordance with university policy; students must submit requests in writing within 14 days of the first day of class and/ or SEL.
• Prolonged illness and SLDS accommodations will be handled individually according to university policy.
• Student vacations and personal activities should be scheduled during official university breaks (e.g., spring break, early August, mid-December to early January).
• Requests for SEL time off for extenuating, unavoidable personal events (e.g., being in a wedding) must be submitted to the MDN clinical coordinator **before** rotation schedules are posted; once posted, approval is required from both the coordinator and preceptor.
• If more than two SEL days are missed, make-up hours or equivalent assignments will be required.

Notification Procedures
• **If illness, an emergency, or another approved reason prevents attendance, students must notify the course instructor (for classes) or clinical site preceptor *and* the MDN clinical coordinator (for SEL) before the start time whenever possible.**• Notification after an absence must occur within 24 hours.
• In SEL rotations, students must notify both the preceptor and MDN faculty member immediately if they expect to be late or absent.
• Any tardiness or absence must be accompanied by an appropriate explanation; requesting time off does not guarantee approval.

Once the preceptor and clinical coordinator are notified, complete the request for absence in [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/) as instructed by the Clinical Coordinator. This will serve as the formal documentation of absence. Attendance expectations and the university calendar remain the standard for program participation.

Consequences for Attendance Violations
If an attendance concern arises, the process will follow the steps below. The instructor or clinical coordinator will meet with the student to discuss the situation addressing concerns of professional behavior. The goal is to provide early support and ensure success moving forward.

* **First occurrence (Class or SEL):** The instructor, clinical coordinator, or remediation liaison will meet with the student. This will be considered an initial conversation and verbal warning, documented and noted in the student’s file for reference.
* **Second occurrence (Class or SEL):** If the concern continues, the instructor, clinical coordinator, or remediation liaison will meet with the student again. At this stage, a written warning of the discussion and next steps will be documented and kept in the student’s file.
* **Further occurrences:** The student will meet with a co-director of the MDN program and the remediation coordinator to develop a structured support plan. The student will be placed on a Level 1 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) to help guide improvement and ensure success.

## Attendance at Conferences

MDN students must be in good standing to request approval for conference attendance. The conference should be relevant to the student’s area of research or professional development. Priority will be given to students presenting papers, posters, or participating in panels at the conference. If a class(es) will be missed, the student must communicate with the instructor(s) for each course to determine if the absence is possible prior to making arrangements, ensuring the student understands the consequences of missing class (e.g., points deducted), and the process for making up the class content.  Students may only apply for one conference a semester.

To apply for approval, students must submit a time off request through [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/) at least 30 days prior to the event. The request must include:

* A brief description of the conference and its relevance to the student’s work
* A description of the missed classes and process for the student to make up the required content. The make-up work must be established with the instructor in advance of the application.
* Proof of acceptance to present (if applicable)

If the student applies for and receives funding for the conference, the student will provide appropriate documentation on all expenses per the department providing the funding. The department providing the travel funding will provide specific instructions on applying for travel funds and all information needed for processing.

* Within 30 days of attending the conference, students must submit a brief report detailing their experience, how it contributed to their academic development, and any notable outcomes (e.g., new contacts or insights gained). This report will be submitted to Kathy Garrison

If a specific professor requests the student to share the conference experience in class, the student will be expected to make this presentation.

## Personal Responsibility and Accountability

Personal responsibility and accountability are cornerstones of professionalism. No professional ever earns the respect or trust of patients or colleagues without first demonstrating the high degree of personal responsibility and self-sacrifice that are defining features of a profession that puts the well-being of others as its highest priority.

* Students are always personally responsible for their behavior and in all settings. They shall not make excuses nor blame others for their own shortcomings.
* Students shall hold themselves and each other accountable for their behavior and shall never enable or turn a blind eye allowing another student to violate the MDN Program’s professionalism standards. They are encouraged to disclose any violations of which they are aware of to the MDN Program. The MDN Program will make every attempt to keep such disclosure anonymous.
* Students shall assume personal responsibility for their own academic and clinical success and shall actively pursue excellence in all phases of their program.
* Students shall assume responsibility for the quality of care provided to their patients and shall never be party to the delivery of care that does not meet accepted standards.
* Students shall assume responsibility for the quality and condition of their working environment by being meticulous about the upkeep and cleanliness of facilities and equipment.
* Students shall accept responsibility for maintaining the legacy of excellence of this Program. They shall continue to actively further that legacy through hard work and commitment to excellence rather than assuming that they will be excellent simply because others who preceded them worked hard and became excellent.

## Sound Judgment

As healthcare providers, students’ ability to make sound judgments while under pressure is vital to their success and to their professional competence. Words and deeds at any time and in any setting that cause the soundness of that judgment to be questioned weaken students’ credibility and therefore their competence. Students shall recognize that their judgment in their personal life and during times outside of class or Supervised Experiential Learning impacts their fitness for the MDN Program and for Supervised Experiential Learning placements. Students who demonstrate questionable judgment should not expect to receive favorable recommendations from their faculty or preceptors nor should they expect the MDN Program or its members to put their personal reputation in jeopardy by creating extra opportunities for them above the minimal program requirements. Such opportunities are earned and are not automatic.

# Communicable Diseases

## Guidelines for Students Who Become Ill

[HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks) **(Appendix D)**

Students who are ill could place their colleagues and patients at risk and should not attend class or clinical Supervised Experiential Learning until cleared to do so by a physician. Students who have a fever or contract a serious or communicable disease during the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program must immediately seek appropriate medical care and may not return to classes or clinical Supervised Experiential Learning until at least 24 hours after the fever has broken and they have been cleared to return by a physician or based on specific public health guidance.

Students are responsible for notifying the Clinical Coordinator, their instructors, and preceptors of illnesses. Medical care is available to students through the Wilce Student Health Center on campus or through a provider of the student’s choice.

## Positive Status for HIV, HBV, and/or HCV

Students who are positive for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and/or who have chronic Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and/or Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) are required to have regular follow-up with their health care provider.

Students may have limitations placed on the clinical Supervised Experiential Learning sites to which they may rotate depending on the decision of the receiving health system. Students will be expected to pay detailed attention to universal precautions. In the case of Hepatitis, students will also be counseled about the risk of exposure to hepatotoxic materials. Students will also be counseled on the potential implications of their status for career selection.

Clinical environment participation of students chronically infected with HBV, HCV and/or HIV will be determined in accordance with [SHEA guidelines](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/650298?seq=1). In accordance with these guidelines, students are required to obtain viral burden titers every 6 months. HBV, HCV and/or HIV status communication is required for students rotating at outside institutions. It is the student’s responsibility to inform attending medical staff at each hospital or institution about their positive status.

## Caring for Patients with Infectious Diseases

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis B (HBV) are serious health problems in the United States. There has also been an increase in the number of patients with tuberculosis infections. Professional students may not refuse to assist in patient care simply because a patient has HIV, HBV, or another infectious condition.

## Blood Borne Pathogen Exposure

Blood borne pathogen exposure is specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious material. Students exposed to a blood borne pathogen during the educational activities or assigned clinical Supervised Experiential Learning should immediately perform appropriate wound care including washing / flushing the area thoroughly, follow the post-exposure plan for the facility, and notify the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program of the incident.

After immediate wound care and washing with a disinfectant, the student should at least perform the following:

* Seek immediate medical care at the OSU Wilce Student Health Center or a nearby Emergency Department.
* Document the route and circumstances of the exposure.
* Document the source (person) of the potentially infectious material (if known)
* Notify the source’s physician to request that the source submit to blood tests for infection. OSU Student Health can assist with this process.
* Make an appointment to be seen at the Preventative Medicine clinic at the OSU Wilce Student Health Center (call 614-292-4321 for appointments).
* Notify the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program Director.
* Students and/or their health insurance provider are responsible for costs associated with any treatment provided to them. The Associate Dean for Student Life in 155 Meiling Hall may help with any “uncovered” expenses that result after insurance payment. Students are encouraged to meet with Associate Dean and bring remaining bills.

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# Liability Insurance

Professional phase students have liability protection through a blanket liability insurance policy provided by the College of Medicine at no direct cost to the student. This policy provides coverage to students, instructors and preceptors during coursework and assigned clinical Supervised Experiential Learning. This policy only covers classroom and Supervised Experiential Learning activities that are assigned by the MDN Program. This policy also provides for medical and personal injury coverage if a student is injured during a clinical Supervised Experiential Learning experience.

# Transportation Requirements

Candidates must be able to travel to Supervised Experiential Learning experiences. Reliable transportation is mandatory for this program. Central Ohio does not have a robust mass transportation system by which a student can reach local sites nor is it reasonable to be able to bike to the sites. Many of our Supervised Experiential Learning sites are 30-75 minutes or more from campus by car, therefore students need to be prepared to drive (car in good, working order) or pay for transportation (taxi, Uber, Lyft). There is no excuse to **not** have reliable transportation for distance sites that may last for several weeks. There is no reimbursement for travel expenses such as gas, hotel, etc. Students must have dependable transportation to fulfill Supervised Experiential Learning obligations. Inability to secure reliable transportation may prevent completion of required SEL hours and could jeopardize progression toward graduation from the MDN Program.

## Liability for Safety in Travel

Students are solely responsible for their personal safety and liability during travel to and from assigned Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) sites, field trips, and any travel to and from The Ohio State University for SEL activities. In the event of a vehicle-related incident during Supervised Experiential Learning, the student should prioritize their personal safety above all else. As soon as reasonably possible following the incident, the student must notify both the site supervisor and either the MDN Program Director or the clinical supervisor. Students are expected to proactively arrange reliable transportation to meet all program obligations, including travel to Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) sites. This includes preparing contingency plans in case of unexpected disruptions, such as vehicle breakdowns or inclement weather, to ensure consistent attendance and participation.

# Background Checks and Drug Testing

Students will be working in facilities (i.e. hospitals, schools) that require criminal background checks and/or drug screens before attendance is permitted. The program will honor the policies of the site if they reject an intern whose criminal background check raises concerns.

Once admitted to the program, the student will be asked to obtain a criminal background check and FBI check (if residence is outside Ohio). Results are shared with the program. Partner agencies frequently ask the director to confirm the student has had a background check and there are no concerns. Students will disclose their date of birth and possibly their social security number to assist facilities with their own background checks. All students are required to disclose criminal convictions that occur within three business days of the conviction.

# Training and Certification

## CPR

CPR certification must always be valid while students are engaged in clinical Supervised Experiential Learning. A lapse in certification results in immediate removal from clinical Supervised Experiential Learning which will undoubtedly affect the grade in the accompanying Supervised Experiential Learning course. Documentation (scan or photo of both sides of the card) of current CPR certification must be uploaded to [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/). There are a variety of CPR courses available; however, the **American Heart Association (AHA) is the preferred provider** due to its recognized leadership in resuscitation science. If you are not currently CPR certified, we will provide the opportunity for this training during Year 1 at a minimal cost.

## Infection Control Training

Annual Infection Control training (i.e. Bloodborne Pathogen training) is required for all students. Professional phase students complete training provided through the OSU Wexner Medical Center online training system through [BuckeyeLearn](https://u.osu.edu/buckeyelearn/). Instructions for completing this training are posted on Canvas. Instructions for completing this training are posted in [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/). Students must upload documentation of their annual training into their profile in [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/).

## HIPPA Privacy Standard

[HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks)(Policy 13)

Upon admission to the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program and prior to beginning clinical Supervised Experiential Learning, students are required to complete training in the HIPAA privacy standard. This training is provided through the OSU Wexner Medical Center online training system through Buckeye Learn. Instructions for completing this training are posted in [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/). Students must upload documentation of their training into their profile in [Exxat](https://login.exxat.com/).

# Prior Learning

The program allows undergraduates from the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) at The Ohio State University to earn prior learning for several courses (MDN 6000, MDN 6100, MDN 6400) for a total of 9 credits in the 4+1.5 pathway (4 semester MDN program). These students take these courses along with MDN students during their undergraduate program. Students get credit for these courses, but they do not count towards the minimum credit hours required by the graduate school to complete the program. No other prior learning is available.

# Professional Activities and Organizations

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## University Committee Memberships

Students are encouraged to participate in the Program, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Student Council, and any other university-related organizations.

## Student Dietetic Association (SDA)

All students admitted to the Program are eligible to become members in this association. The purpose of this organization is to promote the dietetic profession through meetings, programs and activities related to dietetics and nutrition. It also serves as an ombudsman for the needs of the group and stimulates fellowship and professional growth.

Election of officers is held in the Spring Semester of each academic year. Meetings are held at least twice per semester and include opportunities for professional education, community service and social activities.

## Affiliate Membership-Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Students are required to apply for student membership in the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](https://www.eatrightpro.org/). This entitles students to a subscription to the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, access to the “members only” section of the AND website, and discounts on AND publications and products.

Many of the resources provided by the Academy are actively used during the curriculum for learning activities and professional assets.

## Affiliate Membership – Columbus Dietetic Association

Students are encouraged to apply for student membership in the [Columbus Dietetic Association](https://www.eatrightohio.org/aws/OAND/pt/sp/home_page). Meetings are held monthly, and topic areas vary. Attending meetings provides students with good networking experience and increases educational opportunities.

## Graduate Society of Nutritional Sciences

[GSNS](https://osun.osu.edu/current-students/graduate-society-nutritional-sciences) is a student-led group at The Ohio State University promoting professionalism, research, and community among nutrition graduate students. This group hosts research forums, supports teaching associates, and raises health awareness through campus events.

# Financial Information

## Interference in Outside Employment

The professional phase of the MDN Program requires students to complete clinical Supervised Experiential Learning that can occur at any time of day and frequently changes times with little pre-notice. Because of the dynamic nature of the Supervised Experiential Learning schedule, it will likely interfere with the student’s ability to hold outside employment. Students need to make appropriate financial plans prior to enrolling in the professional phase of the MDN Program. The Ohio State Student [Financial Aid](https://www.sfa.osu.edu/) office is available to all MDN students. The [graduate school](https://gradsch.osu.edu/) offers additional financial resources and support.

While students are not strictly prohibited from holding outside employment, such employment SHALL NOT interfere with the student’s ability to complete their clinical Supervised Experiential Learning. When faced with a choice between a job and assigned clinical Supervised Experiential Learning, Supervised Experiential Learning must be the priority. Missing scheduled clinical Supervised Experiential Learning will result in deductions on student’s clinical evaluations which will affect the grade in the Supervised Experiential Learning course.

## Program Costs

The MDN Program maintains a [list of program costs](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/graduate-programs/master-of-dietetics-and-nutrition/costs-and-scholarships) on its website. This list is updated annually. Access to a car is required during Supervised Experiential Learning as driving to sites is required. The cost of gas and automobile upkeep, driver’s license, automobile insurance (varies), and housing and utilities (varies) should be considered as a program cost as well.

Students are required to carry personal health insurance throughout the internship. Students are eligible for the student health insurance or may waive the fee and enroll in health insurance through another provider. Additional fees such as vaccinations and immunizations may apply but flu vaccine, COVID vaccine, and PPD test are often covered by insurance. In addition to the University tuition and fees the following items are required but are not limited to:

**REQUIRED EXPENSES**

| **Item** | **Estimated Cost\*** |
| --- | --- |
| Student membership to Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics | $58 |
| Student member of Columbus Dietetic Association (recommended) | $10 |
| Lab Coat | $30 |
| MDN Polo Shirt  | $30 |
| CPR Training | $30 |
| Health insurance | varies |
| Personal laptop or desktop computer | Varies, up to $1000 |
| Immunization and Vaccinations | Varies (usually covered by OSU Student Health insurance) |
| Housing/ living accommodations | Varies |
| Transportation (including fuel & car insurance) | Varies |
| Parking fees & meals at rotation sites | Varies |
| Clinical equipment not provided by academic program | Varies |

\*Subject to change. Please view the [HRS Student Handbook](https://hrs.osu.edu/academics/academic-resources/student-handbooks) for additional information.

# Compliance with Policies and Requirements

By signing below, I indicate that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by all the policies and requirements of the Ohio State University Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program outlined in this student handbook and the Handbook for the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences. My questions about these policies and requirements have been answered and I understand that the Division Director, Program Director and/or Clinical Coordinator can answer additional questions should they arise. This agreement is in effect for the entire academic year and must be renewed annually.

I am specifically aware of the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program’s requirements for graduation, retention, and good standing.

I am specifically aware of the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program’s Safety & Capability requirements including but not limited to:

* Background checks and 24-hour self-disclosure if arrested or charged with a crime.
* Substance abuse and drug testing including “for cause” testing.
* Technical standards (including changes in status) and immunization compliance.
* Communicable diseases and blood borne pathogen exposure.

I am specifically aware of the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program’s policies about Supervised Experiential Learning commitments including but not limited to:

* Academic and non-academic schedule conflicts, punctuality and absenteeism, and outside employment
* Placements and loss of placement
* Hour requirements, limits, and logging
* Supervision during clinical care and prohibition of unsupervised practice

I am specifically aware of the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program’s Professionalism requirements including but not limited to:

* Ethics and Laws
* Honor Codes
* Competence
* Appearance
* Responsibility, Accountability and Judgment in class, during Supervised Experiential Learning, and in my personal life
* Communications and Confidentiality
* Use of electronic devices and social networking
* Relationships and Professional Boundaries

I understand that violation of the Master of Dietetics and Nutrition Program policies or requirements carries consequences such as suspension from or loss of Supervised Experiential Learning placements as well as academic and professionalism sanctions up to and including probation and program disenrollment.

| **Signature** | **Date** |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |