
THE PATH TO BECOMING A REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST

JOAN S. FRANK, MS, RDN, FAND - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS

OVERVIEW

- Areas of Practice
- How to become an RDN
- Dietetic Internships
- Goals for the next 1-4 years

Careers4RDN.com

RDN / DN

Your career resource for all things nutrition & dietetics:

Dietetic Internships

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists

Degreed Nutritionists

WHAT IS AN RDN?

Registered dietitian nutritionists — RDNs — are the food and nutrition experts who can translate the science of nutrition into practical solutions for healthy living. RDNs use their nutrition expertise to help individuals make unique, positive lifestyle changes. They work throughout the community in hospitals, schools, public health clinics, nursing homes, fitness centers, food management, food industry, universities, research and private practice. RDNs are advocates for advancing the nutritional status of Americans and people around the world.



RD vs. “Nutritionist”



WHERE CAN A CAREER IN DIETETICS TAKE YOU?

- Clinical Nutrition*
- Community Nutrition
- Public Health
- Food Service Management
- Nutrition Management
- Research
- Business & Industry
- Teaching
- Private Practice/Consulting
- Media
- Publishing

*RD only – Medical Nutr. Therapy



JOB OUTLOOK

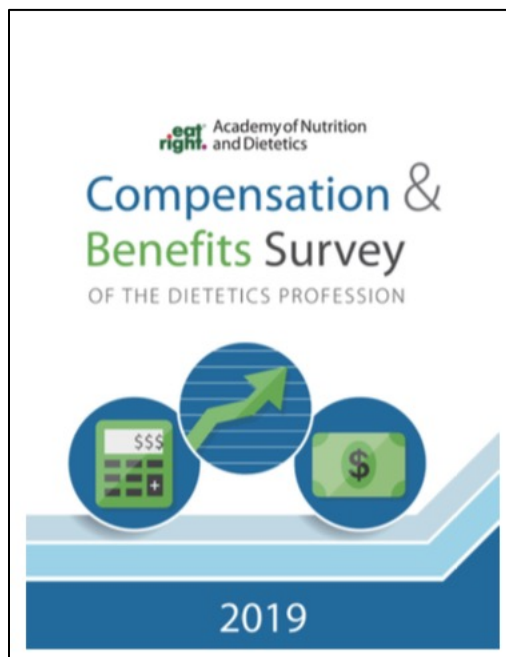


Exhibit 2.11 Highest Incidence Positions – RDNs

Clinical Dietitian	19%
Clinical Dietitian, Specialist - Diabetes	3%
Clinical Dietitian, Specialist - Renal	7%
Pediatric/Neonatal Dietitian	3%
Nutrition Support Dietitian	3%
Outpatient Dietitian, General	4%
Outpatient Dietitian, Specialist - Diabetes	3%
Outpatient Dietitian, Specialist - Renal	3%
Clinical Dietitian, Long Term Care	6%
WIC Nutritionist	4%
Public Health Nutritionist	3%
Director of Food and Nutrition Services	3%
Private Practice Dietitian - Patient/Client Nutrition Care	3%

weighted base: 7,082 practicing RDNs
See Exhibit 7.23 for supporting data

2021 BEST JOBS



Dietitian and Nutritionist

🏆 #78 in 100 Best Jobs

Dietitians and nutritionists help clients with almost every aspect of their diet, assisting with food choice, meal plans, lifestyle and nutritional goals. [READ MORE »](#)

PROJECTED
JOBS

5,900

MEDIAN
SALARY

\$61,270

Rankings

Dietitians and Nutritionists rank #24 in [Best Health Care Jobs](#). Jobs are ranked according to their ability to offer an elusive mix of factors. [Read more about how we rank the best jobs.](#)

🏆 #24 in Best Health Care Jobs

🏆 #78 in 100 Best Jobs

SCORECARD 6.2

Salary 6.2

Job Market 8

Future Growth 8

Stress 6

Work Life Balance 8

[HOW WE RANK JOBS »](#)

Top 10 Jobs for People Who Want to Save the World



03 Dietitian



Cecilie_Arcurs / Getty Images

Nutritionists and dietitians advise clients on healthy eating with a variety of goals, from supporting medical treatment to weight loss to managing illnesses like diabetes. Dietitians typically have a bachelor's degree, and their pay may rise with specific skill sets, such as assisting clients undergoing treatment for specific medical issues.

Careers in Dietetics

Becoming a Registered Dietitian or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

Educational and professional requirements

Registered Dietitians (RDs) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) are food and nutrition experts who have met the following criteria and earned the RD or RDN credential:

Effective January 1, 2024 - a **minimum of a master's degree** is required to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)

- **Completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree** at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college or foreign equivalent, and coursework through an Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) or Coordinated Program in Dietetics (CP)
- **Complete 1200 hours of supervised practice through an ACEND accredited Dietetic Internship**, Coordinated Program in Dietetics or an Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) offered through an ACEND accredited program
- **Passed a national examination** administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR). For more information regarding the examination, refer to CDR's website at www.cdrnet.org. In order to maintain the credential, an RD or RDN must complete continuing professional educational requirements.



CURRENTLY: 2 PATHWAYS

Becoming a RDN

Pathway 1

Undergraduate DPD Program

AND

Accredited Dietetic Internship

OR

Pathway 2

Coordinated Undergraduate or Graduate Program in Dietetics (CPD)

Registered Dietitian Exam

Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)



OPTIONS & YEAR OF GRADUATION – CLINICAL NUTRITION

2022

RD, MS (then RD), or MS/RD

2023+


MS (then RD) or MS/RD

OPTIONS & YEAR OF GRADUATION – NUTRITION SCIENCE, ETC.



2022

CP or FG MS/RD



2023+

CP or FG MS/RD

ACADEMY OF NUTRITION & DIETETICS' ACCREDITED PROGRAMS DIRECTORY

- <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/accredited-programs-directory>
- Dietetic internships
- Coordinated Graduate Programs (CP)
- Future Graduate Programs (FG)

RESOURCES / WEBSITES

- Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics' *Accredited Programs Directory*
 - <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/accredited-programs-directory>
- UC Davis Department of Nutrition - Dietetic Internship Application Materials:
 - <https://nutrition.ucdavis.edu/academics/dpd/diet-intern-app-mats>
 - Applicant Guide to Supervised Practice
- Careers4RDN:
 - <http://Careers4RDN.com>

DIETETIC INTERNSHIPS



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM OPTIONS

- Full-time vs. Part-time
- Degree or Non-degree
 - M.S., M.A., MPH, MBA
- Distance Internships
- Duration – 8 to 24 months
- Concentration or focus – MNT, Community, Management, etc.
- This is post-bacc training; most charge a fee/tuition

WHAT DOES A DIETETIC INTERNSHIP LOOK LIKE?

UCDMC = 52 WEEKS

- 12 weeks Clinical Nutrition Core
- 4 weeks Critical Care Nutrition
- 4 weeks Pediatrics
- 11 weeks Ambulatory Nutrition
- 3 weeks Community Nutrition
- 6 Weeks Management
- 2 weeks Elective Experience
- 2 Weeks Staff relief
- 200 hours Didactics
- 1 week Vacation



UCDAVIS
HEALTH

Dietetic Internship

GOALS FOR NEXT 1-4 YEARS:

- Work hard academically
- Obtain volunteer/internship/work experience
- Join SNA!
- Evaluate your goals
 - What experiences do you want from your DI?
 - What type of job do you want?
 - Do you want a graduate degree?
- Research internships
- Take the GRE (if needed – Jr/Sr Summer)
- Work on resume
- Assemble professional portfolio
- Attend Office Hours!



Increasing Your Chances of being Accepted into a Dietetic Internship

Here are some tips to increase your chances to be accepted into an American Dietetic Association Dietetic Internship (DI) Program. There are 244 DI programs in the US and its' territories. Only 50% of applicants are matched with a DI. These tips don't guarantee a DI match, but they do increase the possibility of a match.

- ☞ Get involved in your school's nutrition/dietetic club
- ☞ Be active with other academic or social clubs that interest you. Not everything has to be directly related to dietetics. You can learn many applicable skills from experiences outside the field
- ☞ Volunteer in a clinical nutrition setting
 - A large portion of the DI is spent in clinical rotations, so it's important that you are exposed to this setting beforehand
- ☞ Volunteer or work in other nutrition settings, such as government, non-profits, research, etc.
- ☞ Work hard to receive high academic marks to keep your GPA competitive

☞ At least once per semester, meet with your Dietetic Academic Advisor to go over your Academic Plan



Boost Your Chances for a DI

- Be ACTIVE in your school's community and the larger community. Volunteer or work as much as you can (and still have a life) in the nutrition field.
- Work or volunteer experience outside of the nutrition field can still be beneficial to your application. The goal is to make those experiences apply to the nutrition field.



Super Boost Your Chances for a DI

- Keep track of all work and volunteer hours completed, as well as contacts for those activities.
- Having records on hand when completing the DI Application ensures that every hour that you spent learning will be included on the application.
- Official documentation isn't necessary, but accuracy of hours completed is crucial.
- For one-time events that will not be included on your DI application, still record the hours. This might remind you of an experience that you could include in your personal statement as an anecdote.

Quick Tips to Pick the Best DI for YOU

- ★ If you aren't limited by location, look at all the DIs across the US (California DIs are very competitive!)
- ★ Begin your DI search the summer before you apply
- ★ Narrow your DI choices to no more than 15 before the school year begins and about 8 before Thanksgiving. The February deadline will be there before you know it!
- ★ E-mail questions to the DI director only after *thoroughly* reading their website. Also, have someone proof-read the e-mails to make sure that all your communication with the director is professional
- ★ Visit the DI, if possible

QUESTIONS?

Joan Frank, MS, RDN, FAND
Assistant Director – Didactic Program in Dietetics
jsfrank@ucdavis.edu

