



# **University of Prince Edward Island Integrated Dietetic Internship**

## **Applicant Handbook**

(Updated Spring 2019)

## Introduction

This handbook is designed to provide helpful information and answer questions you may have as you consider applying to the University of Prince Edward Island Integrated Dietetic Internship Program.

As a potential applicant it is important to be knowledgeable about the dietetic profession and the UPEI internship program. The more information you have the better prepared you will be for the selection process. To become better informed about the dietetic profession and a career as a dietician visit the [Dietitians of Canada website](#) and review the material posted under the section titled “Become a Dietitian”. As well, interviewing practicing dietitians can provide wonderful insight about a career in this profession.

If you are planning to apply to the UPEI integrated internship program it is very important to familiarize yourself with the program. Begin by going to the [Foods and Nutrition website](#) and review material posted there about the UPEI internship program. It is also beneficial to talk with students who are presently in the program to gain a better understanding of program expectations and the roles and responsibilities of interns. Potential applicants are also encouraged to arrange a meeting with the Internship Professional Practice Coordinator at which time specific questions can be addressed. Finally, all potential applicants are encourage to attend the information session held each fall where the information on the program as well as, the application and selection processes is presented. Watch for notices posted in the department and communicated through your UPEI email account.

## Dietetic Internship: An Overview

### *What exactly is a dietetic internship? What will I be doing?*

A dietetic internship provides the practical experience necessary for you to qualify to practice as a registered dietitian. Basically, an internship provides students with the opportunity to apply the theory they have learned throughout the four years of the academic program in various practical settings. In the early stages of the internship program students spend time in practice areas which allow them to become familiar with food service operations and the role of the dietitian. As they progress through the program students spend more time with practising dietitians learning the skills and gaining knowledge associated with this profession. During each level the student is assigned increasing levels of responsibility under the supervision of a dietitian. By the end of the program students must complete supervised staff experience where they perform all the duties of the dietitian demonstrating that they have achieved entry level competence.

### *Why choose the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program*

The UPEI integrated dietetic internship program is an innovative and progressive program. This program offers students the opportunity to complete a science degree in Foods and Nutrition and the competences/performance indicators established by the *Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice* for entry level dietetic practice in just four and one half years. This dietetic education program is an accredited program recognized by the Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP) and prepares students for eligibility to register to practice with a provincial dietetics regulatory body.

Graduates of this program are prepared to meet the challenges of an exciting and ever changing dietetic work environment. The program fosters self-direction and lifelong learning, qualities which are essential to remain competent in dietetic practice. The blend of traditional and non-traditional experiences allow students to explore the diversity which exists in dietetic practice and help them to recognize the potential to apply these skills in a variety of settings. The following section will provide an overview of the program including objectives, academic planning and program structure.

### **UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program Objectives:**

The UPEI integrated dietetic internship program is designed to enhance the learning experience of participating student interns through the *integration* of theory and practice in nutrition and dietetics. The program includes two levels of experiential learning. It is based on the integrated (Stage) program at McGill University, where each level of the program is coordinated with the undergraduate Foods and Nutrition, Bachelor of Science degree.

### **Program Objectives:**

- a) To enhance teaching and the learning experience of participating student interns through the *integration* of theory and practice in nutrition and dietetics.
- b) To provide dietetic interns with opportunities to develop the skills needed to achieve the competence of an entry level dietitian, as outlined in the “Integrated Competencies for Dietetic education and Practice”.

### **Academic Planning:**

Students must be enrolled in the “[Dietetics Stream](#)” of the [Foods and Nutrition](#) program to be eligible to apply to the integrated dietetic internship program. In addition to the courses required for the Foods and Nutrition major, students interested in applying for dietetic internship must take:

- Foods and Nutrition 3210 (Foodservice Systems Management);
- Foods and Nutrition 3830 (Professional Practice in Dietetics);
- Foods and Nutrition 3710 (Lifespan Nutrition);
- Foods and Nutrition 4220 (Quantity Food Production);
- Foods and Nutrition 4310 (Evidence-Based Practice in the Health Sciences), and
- Foods and Nutrition 4610 (Clinical Nutrition II).

*A Sample dietetics stream course schedule for the integrated program can be found in Appendix 1.*

### **Internship Requirement:**

Internship combines practical training and knowledge acquisition. Students spend forty hours a week

at the placement site acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to become an entry level dietitian. Due to the nature of the work there will be times when students are expected to work on location during week-ends and evenings. It is expected that projects and assignments will be completed outside of the regular work hours.

The internship component of the program is outlined in learning guides containing the broad competency areas, performance indicators, sample learning activities and possible placements (*training locations*) options. Using this information, the intern can develop and/or demonstrate the competencies required for entry level practice.

### **Program Structure:**

The program includes two levels of non-classroom learning experiences, which are coordinated with the undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree (Dietetics Stream). Level I is nine weeks in length and completed following the third year of the academic program. This level includes a professional practice class week followed by two, four week placements. One placement is in food service management and the second one is in nutrition care. The professional practice course provides the intern with an orientation to the internship program and experiential learning. Time is committed to learning about internship program requirements and organizational policies and procedures, planning learning experiences, portfolio development, and principles of professional practice.

Level II is twenty seven to thirty weeks in length and is completed following the fourth year of the degree program. Placements are as follows; a six to eight week management placement, a ten week public and population health placement and a ten to fifteen week nutrition care placement. The total length of the internship program can range from 36 to 40 weeks, depending on student learning needs and experiences desired. Students will complete their undergraduate and professional education in 4.5 years.

### **Placements:**

The dietetic intern completes training in three broad areas of dietetics practice; nutrition care, management, and population/public health. Below is a list of typical placement locations where students might possibly complete some of their training.

- a) **Food Service:** Hospital and nursing home dietary departments, school and university campuses, penitentiaries, and industry.
- b) **Nutrition Care:** Acute care hospitals, long term care facilities, mental health hospitals, diabetes education centres, health networks, eating disorder clinics, and cancer clinics.
- c) **Pop/Public Health:** Prenatal nutrition program, family resource centres, health centres, school nutrition programs, public health programs, grocery stores, pharmacies, youth programs, and sport centres.
- d) **Research:** The research competencies are met by completing the Evidence Based Practice Course.

### **Admission Requirements:**

Due to the limited availability of internship spots a selection process is utilized to determine which students will be awarded a position in the program

**Ten internship seats are available annually.** Students enrolled in the dietetic stream of the foods and nutrition program and are in their third year of study at UPEI may apply to the internship program. As spots in the program are limited *not all* students who meet the admission requirements are awarded a spot in the program.

a.) Academic- Applicants must be Bachelor of Science students enrolled in their third year of study in the Foods & Nutrition Program at UPEI.

i) Minimum required courses: Applicants must have completed the minimum required courses (FN 1110, FN 2110, FN 2120, FN 2610, FN 3210, FN 3310, FN 3510, FN 3830, Bio 1220, Bio 1310, Chem 1110 and 1120, Chem 2430).

ii) Achieved an overall Cumulative GPA of 3.0 (74-76%) and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 in nutrition courses with no nutrition mark below a GPA of 2.7.

b) Qualifying membership with Dietitians of Canada- Students must be members in Dietitians of Canada.

### **Selection Process:**

a.) ***Initial screening is conducted*** to determine if packages are complete and admission requirements are met. Only complete packages and those that meet the admission requirements will move on to the next stage of the selection process.

#### ***i) Academic Assessment***

- 1) Required courses completed
- 2) Met minimum cumulative GPA 3.0 requirement
- 3) GPA for each nutrition course is 2.7 or above

#### ***ii) Application Package Requirements:***

- ✓ UPEI Applicant form
- ✓ Letter of intent: 1-1.5 pages
- ✓ Resume: 1-2 pages
- ✓ References: 2
- ✓ Academic course assessment
- ✓ Transcripts
- ✓ Immunization record
- ✓ Dietitians of Canada Membership

***Application packages which are incomplete or students who do not meet requirements will be screened out.***

b.) ***Interview selection-*** The Program Director and Professional Practice Coordinator review and rank the applications which have made it through the initial screen. The top fourteen applicants who meet the criteria will be granted an interview.

The applications will be ranked based on the quality of the applicant's work and volunteer experience as well as, professional commitment. This determination will be made based on the contents of the letter of intent, resume, and references.

i) Each application will be assigned one of the three following ratings for experience:

- a) *Minimal experience*
- b) *Average level of experience*
- c) *Extensive experience for a student*

ii) Faculty and external references will be reviewed and given one of the following ratings:

- a) *Highly rated by all references*
- b) *Good ratings from all references*
- c) *Generally good references but some concerns identified*
- d) *Several references identify concerns*
- e) *Significant concerns expressed which do not make this individual a good candidate.*

***The top fourteen ranked packages will be granted an interview.***

c.) ***Final selection for ten internship spots:*** The selection committee will review the application packages and conduct interviews. The committee is comprised of the Program Director or a faculty member, a dietitian who has acted as a preceptor, and an individual with human resource development experience.

### **Final Selection Scoring System of interviewed applicants (75 points)**

#### **Letter of Intent (5 points)**

The purpose of the letter of intent is to highlight or explain further your experiences and essentially discuss why you would be a good fit for this program. It is important to explain why you are interested in dietetics and why you have chosen this field of study. There is no right or wrong way to prepare your letter of intent. Make sure it is professional in appearance with all words spelt correctly and proper grammar used throughout. The letter should be no longer than 1.5 pages in length. Make sure you sign your letter. A sample letter of intent can be found in Appendix II.

### **Resume (3 points)**

The resume should be no more than two pages in length. Resumes can follow various formats, such as reverse chronological and skills/functional. Consider choosing a format that enables you to highlight your strengths and what you bring to the program.

### **Work and Volunteer Experience (7 points)**

Relevant work and volunteer experience are important considerations in the selection process. It is beneficial for students applying to the internship program to have quality experiences which may range from working in the food industry to volunteering with a breakfast program. It is beneficial if students can gain some experience, either paid or unpaid, in a health related field.

### **Interview: (50 points)**

#### **What are the interviews like?**

The interview panel consists of three individuals, the Director of the internship program or a faculty member, a practising dietitian, and an individual from Human Resource Development. Each interview lasts approximately thirty minutes.

#### **How to prepare for the interview:**

Be prepared to articulate how and why you became interested in the dietetic profession. As well, you should be able to discuss what it is about this particular program that is of interest to you. The selection committee wants to make sure that you are familiar with the program, have sound reasons for choosing to apply, and you are the right “fit”.

Think about the types of questions which are generally asked in interviews (informational/behavioural). Then consider questions which may be specific to an interview for a dietetic internship. A list of sample questions is included at the end of the handbook in Appendix III. It is always a good idea to do a mock interview. This helps you identify distracting habits and increases your comfort level with answering questions.

### **Critical Thinking Test (10 points)**

Students selected for an interview will be required to complete a critical thinking test which will be graded. The test will be administered in a classroom setting one week prior to the interviews.

### **Conditions of Acceptance**

**Students who are offered a spot in the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship program must agree to the following terms:**

**a) Transportation-** Students accepted into the program must have access to personal transportation and be willing to complete placements throughout PEI as placements sites are located occur from Souris to Alberton.

**b.) Travel-** Students must be willing to travel to pre-determined organizations in other provinces to complete some of their training. All cost associated with out of province placements are the responsibility of the student.

**c) Immunizations and Criminal Record Check-** Candidates accepted into the Integrated Dietetic Internship Program must show evidence of having immunizations up to date. As well, students must have a criminal record and vulnerable sector check completed. Documentation must be submitted prior to the start date.

## **Internship Fees and Associated Costs**

*Please note that most provincial student loans programs do not cover the dietetic internship program. The provinces of Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland do not provided financial assistance for students in dietetic internship programs. In previous years students who are residents of PEI have been successful in qualifying for a student loan for the internship component of their education.*

### **Fees and Associated Costs**

- Internship tuition fee for each program level. This fee is determined annually and is set by the Board of Governors.
- Level II Student fees for the fall term.
- Dietitians of Canada online courses:
  - Critical Care Nutritional
  - Public and Population
  - Health Needs Assessment
  - Dysphagia Assessment and Management
  - Counselling for Behaviour Change
- Transportation and accommodation costs
- Immunizations and criminal record check
- Clothing- uniform, lab coat, professional clothing
- Registration with provincial colleges and boards, NB PEI
- Incidentals- Dietitians of Canada membership, conference and workshop fees, course materials and name tags



### **Important Dates for 2019/2020**

Mid-Sept	Internship information session
Mid-Oct	Application packages ready for pickup in the Department office.
03 Jan	Completed applications submitted to Department office by 4:00 p.m.
06-20 Jan	Selection committee to review applications (tentative)
Week of Jan 22	Interviews (tentative)
05 Feb	Selection committee reports to Advisory committee
12 Feb	Students notified of results
April 30	Professional Practice Placement (tentative)

**APPENDIX I**  
**Dietetic Stream Course Sequence**

**First Year**

Nutrition Concepts	One of UPEI 1010, 1020 or 1030
Foods and Nutrition 1110 Introductory Foods	Math 1110 Finite Mathematics OR Math 1120 Calculus for the Managerial, Social and Life Sciences
Biology 1220 Human Physiology	Two 3 semester hours Social Science
Biology 1310 Introduction to Cell and Molecular Biology	One free elective
Chemistry 1110 General Chemistry I	Chemistry 1120 General Chemistry II

**Second Year**

Foods and Nutrition 2110 Introductory Nutrition I	Chemistry 2430 Organic Chemistry for the Life Sciences
Foods and Nutrition 2120 Introductory Nutrition II	Statistics 1210 (formerly STAT 2210) Introductory Statistics
Foods and Nutrition 2230 Determinants of Dietary Behaviour	Business 1710 Organizational Behaviour
Foods and Nutrition 2610 Communications	Two free electives
Biology 2060 Microbial Diversity	

**Third Year**

Foods and Nutrition 3020 Advanced Foods	Foods and Nutrition 3520 Clinical Nutrition I
Foods and Nutrition 3210 Foodservice Systems Management	Foods and Nutrition 3110 Lifespan Nutrition
Foods and Nutrition 3310 Introduction to Research Methods	Foods and Nutrition 3820 Program Planning & Evaluation
Foods and Nutrition 3310 Introduction to Research Methods	Foods and Nutrition 3830 Professional Practice in Dietetics
Foods and Nutrition 3510 Nutritional Assessment	Chemistry 3530 Biochemistry
	One free elective

**Fourth Year**

Foods and Nutrition 4120 Human Metabolism	Two Foods and Nutrition electives at the 3000 or 4000 level
Foods and Nutrition 4220 Quantity Food Production	Three free electives
Foods and Nutrition 4310 Evidence-Based Practice in the Health Sciences	
Foods and Nutrition 4340 Community Nutrition	
Foods and Nutrition 4610 Clinical Nutrition II	

## **Appendix II**

### **Sample Letter of intent**

January 25, 2013

Dear Intern selection committee,

I am very interested in completing my dietetic internship at\_\_\_\_\_. I am a third -year Foods and Nutrition student. After researching the UPEI dietetic internship program, I believe the program fits my personal interest and I possess the characteristic making me a very good candidate. I am self-directed and function well in a team environment, handling a diverse range of challenges. Therefore the following aspects of the UPEI program particularly interest me;

- The focus on practical application learning
- The strong independent component
- The diversity of work and people

My studies at UPEI have enabled me to develop many strengths and skills. Academically, I have aimed for excellence in all my courses, which include courses in nutrition as well as, food service. This required the development of self-discipline, strong work ethic, and good study habits. I have also had to learn time management since I combined significant work experience with the academic load.

Since 2011, I have worked with the YMCA-YWCA, as an administrative and fitness staff member. I have learned to instruct group fitness classes, and adapt fitness programs to suit the needs of many individuals. This work has allowed me to improve my self-confidence, leadership skills, and ability to motivate others. It has also taught me how to communicate effectively with large groups, as well as with individuals.

Last summer, I worked with a community health team, including a dietitian, at a Community Health Centre. During this time I applied nutrition knowledge and program planning skills, in order to establish a program of nutrition education for people learning English as a second language. This program taught me a lot about communicating with an ethnically diverse group. I also worked with parents and children in order to develop a toddler-feeding workshop. In this position I worked with minimal supervision, and I was able to learn how to independently plan, and deliver nutrition programs.

Throughout university, I have also developed skills by participating in a range of volunteer activities:

- I designed and conducted several Nutrition Health and Wellness workshops at the YMCA-YWCA, which helped me be a more effective public speaker. I also created handouts and displays, which facilitated development of my written communication skills and creativity.
- I have been a mealtime supervisor with a long term care facility. This enabled me to develop my listening skills, and to learn how to deal with food-related problems in the senior population.
- Most recently, I have become involved with the Feeling Better Program, which is a home exercise program for the frail elderly. I am learning a lot about this group, helping them realize the benefits of keeping active and healthy.

I have attempted to achieve personal balance through extracurricular activities. As a member of the Applied Human Sciences Student Association, I have been involved in team building and leadership activities such as, social events and career nights. I am dedicated to personal fitness and enjoy a regular exercise program.

In summary, I am self-motivated, and hard working with a well-rounded skill set appropriate for this internship. I am committed to the profession and to health on a personal level. I am keen to continue my professional development and make a contribution to the success of the program. I appreciate you taking the time to review my application package and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

## **Appendix III: Sample Interview Questions**

### General Questions

1. Why do you want to become a dietitian?
2. Why did you apply to this program? Why is it of particular interest to you?
3. What qualities do you bring that would make you a good intern?

### Professionalism

1. How would you define professionalism?
2. What would you do if the dietitian you were working with started talking/gossiping about other dietitians?
3. Describe a time when you received feedback you didn't agree with. What did you do and why?
4. Describe a work-related situation where you were faced with problems or stresses that tested your coping skills. What did you do?

### Dietetic Knowledge Based Questions

1. A parent approaches you, asking for advice on the use of naturopathic supplements. What would you say?
2. How would you assess patient satisfaction with food services?

### Interpersonal Relationship/Team Work

1. Describe a time you had to work on a team with someone who didn't pull their weight. How did you deal with this? What might you have done differently?
2. Tell us about a time you worked effectively in a group. What role did you take on?

### Organization/Time Management

1. What strategies do you use when you have a lot of competing responsibilities?
2. Give an example of a time when you used your problem-solving skills?
3. Explain a situation where you had to be self-directed, flexible, and/or responsible.
4. Give me an example of an important goal which you had set and describe how you achieved it.

### Self-Directed

1. Give me an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
2. Often when working as part of a team there are different roles to take on, such as team lead. What role do you tend to take on and why?

### Conclusion

Do you have any questions for the committee? Or is there anything further you would like to add?

## **Additional Tips**

\* Practice potential interview questions\*. There is nothing like being in an interview and not knowing how to answer a question. Set up mock interviews at Career Services, or with friends or family.

\* Know your resume well. \* Before the interview, reflect on each job/volunteer experience listed so you'll be able to draw on these experiences to answer question.

\* Have some questions ready\*. At the end of the interview you may be asked if you have any questions. This is a great chance to impress the committee by demonstrating that you have given this some thought.