



UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program

Applicant Handbook

Introduction

This handbook is designed to provide helpful information and answer any questions you may have as you consider applying to the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program. The more information you have, the better prepared you will be for the application and selection process. To become better informed about the dietetic profession and a career as a dietitian, 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 into a career in this profession.

If you are planning to apply to the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program, it is very important to familiarize yourself with the program. Begin by going to the UPEI [Foods and Nutrition](#) website and reviewing the material posted under the dietetic option. 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 Professional Practice Coordinator, at which time specific questions can be addressed.

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. An internship provides students with the opportunity to apply the theory they have learned in their academic courses in various practical settings. Students spend time with practicing dietitians in such practice areas as Food Provision, Population Public Health and Clinical Nutrition, learning the skills and gaining knowledge associated with the dietetic profession. During a dietetic internship, the student is assigned increasing levels of responsibility under the supervision of a dietitian so that by the end of the internship program, students will be able to perform all the duties of a 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 4 ½ year program offers students the opportunity to complete a science degree in Foods and Nutrition and the Competencies/Performance Indicators established by the *Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP)* for entry-level dietetic practice. This dietetic education program is an accredited program recognized by PDEP and prepares students to write the Canadian Dietetic Registration Exam (CDRE) for eligibility to register to practice

dietetics in Canada. Graduates of this program are prepared to meet the challenges of an exciting and ever-changing dietetic work environment. This program fosters self-direction and lifelong learning, which are both essential to remain competent in dietetic practice. The blend of traditional and non-traditional experiences allows students to explore the diversity which exists within the dietetic profession and helps 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.

Program Objectives

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 PDEP “Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice” (visit www.pdep.ca for more information).

Academic Planning

Students must be enrolled in the “[Dietetics Stream](#)” of the Foods and Nutrition program to be eligible to apply to the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program.

In addition to the courses required for the Foods and Nutrition major, students interested in applying for the dietetic internship must take the following courses:

- Foods and Nutrition 3210 (Foodservice Systems Management);
- Foods and Nutrition 3830 (Professional Practice in Dietetics);
- 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 course schedule can be found in Appendix I.

Internship Requirements

Internship combines practical training and knowledge acquisition. Over the duration of the internship program, students spend 1250 hours at multiple placement sites, 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 be at their placement during

weekends and evenings. It is also expected that internship projects and assignments will be completed outside of regular internship 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 degree program. Level I (FN 3001- Integrated Diet Practice I) is nine weeks in length, at 37.5 hours/week and is 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 Provision, and the second placement is in Nutrition Care (Clinical). The Professional Practice Class Week, held in the spring prior to the Level I placements, provides interns 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, e-portfolio development, and principles of professional practice.

Level II (FN 4001 - Integrated Diet Practice II & FN 4002 - Integrated Diet Practice III) is twenty-six to thirty weeks in length at 37.5 hours/week and is completed following the fourth year of the degree program. Placements are as follows: six to eight weeks at a Food Provision placement, ten weeks at a Population and Public Health placement and ten to fourteen weeks at a Nutrition Care (Clinical) placement.

The total length of the internship program can range from 36 to 40 weeks, depending on student learning needs, experiences desired and placement availability.

Placements

Below is a list of typical placement locations where students might complete some of their training:

- a) **Food Provision:** Hospital and long-term care dietary departments, school and university campuses, provincial facilities, industry, etc.
- b) **Nutrition Care (Clinical):** Acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, mental health hospitals, diabetes education centres, health networks, home care, cancer clinics, etc.

- c) **Population and Public Health:** Prenatal/postnatal nutrition programs, school food programs, family resource centres, government, health research centres, public health programs, youth programs, etc.
- d) **Research:** The research competencies are met by completing the Evidence-Based Practice Course (FN 4310).

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 typically 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.

- ⦿ **Academic:** Applicants must be enrolled in their third year of study in the Foods and Nutrition program at UPEI
- ⦿ **Minimum required courses:** Applicants must have completed the minimum required courses as specified in the application package (see Course Requirement Record).
- ⦿ Applicants must have achieved an overall Cumulative GPA of 3.0 (74-76%) and maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (74-76%) in nutrition courses with no nutrition mark below a GPA of 2.7 (70-73%). GPA calculations include all required courses (FN 2110, FN 2120, FN 2230, FN 2610, FN 2810, FN 3210, FN 3310, FN 3510, FN 3830, BUS 1710, Bio 1220, Bio 1310, Chem 1110 and 1120, Chem 2430, Math 1110 or 1120, STAT 1210) and electives from most to least recent, for a total of 25 courses.

Selection Process

- I. **Initial screening** is conducted to determine if the applicants meet the academic requirements and if the application package is complete. Only completed packages and those that meet the admission requirements will move on to the next stage of the selection process.
 - o *Academic Assessment*
 - ✓ Required courses completed
 - ✓ Met the minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (74-76%)
 - ✓ Met the minimum GPA of 3.0 for all nutrition courses with no nutrition course less than 2.7 (70-73%)

- *Application Package Requirements*
 - ✓ UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Applicant Form
 - ✓ E-Portfolio (including Resume & Letter of Intent)
 - ✓ Two (2) References
 - *Applicants are required to submit two references using the Applicant Rating Form. Applicants are encouraged to use references who are previous supervisors or managers from paid and/or volunteer work experiences. References from individuals who have not supervised you, as well as family or friends, will not be accepted.*
 - ✓ Department Composite Reference
 - *All applicants need to contact the Professional Practice Coordinator to request a department composite reference on their behalf.*
 - ✓ Course Requirement Record
 - ✓ Dietitians of Canada Student Membership
 - ✓ Unofficial UPEI Transcript (*Official transcript is required if from a different university*)

II. Interview Selection. The Program Director and Professional Practice Coordinator review the applications which have made it through the initial screen. Applicants who pass the initial screen are ranked based on personal qualities, knowledge and skills, work and volunteer experiences as well as professional goals. This is determined based on the contents of the letter of intent, e-portfolio/resume and references. A maximum of fourteen interviews will be conducted annually.

III. Final Selection: The Selection Committee will review the application packages and conduct interviews using a 115-point scoring system. A copy of the *Applicant Selection Rating Form for Interviews* can be found in **Appendix II**.

Scoring System of Interviewed Applicants (115 points)

➤ E-portfolio (including Resume & Letter of Intent) (8 points)

Your e-portfolio should be consistent with the requirements of the FN 3830 Professional Practice in Dietetics course. This includes but is not limited to an up-to-date resume, professional goals including timelines, letter of intent, and an explanation of how you have already received masterly in one of the ICDEPs (version 3.0).

- **Letter of Intent:** Your letter of intent should include why you want to enter the internship program and indicate which personal qualities/knowledge and skills make you a suitable candidate for this program and for the dietetic

profession. The letter will be evaluated on content, clarity of goals, interest in the profession and program, potential contribution to the profession, communication skills, interpersonal skills and self-direction. The letter should be no longer than 1.5 pages in length.

If you were not enrolled in FN 3830 in the fall of 2021, please notify the Professional Practice Coordinator.

➤ **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 (100 points)**

The Selection Committee consists of three individuals: the Director of the Internship Program or a faculty member, a practicing dietitian who has acted as a preceptor and an individual with experience in human resource development. Together, the Selection Committee sets the interview questions for the year and conducts all the interviews. 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 the UPEI program that is of interest to you. The Selection Committee will want to see that you are familiar with the program and have sound reasons for choosing to apply. Think about the types of questions which are generally asked in interviews (informational/behavioural). 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.

Note: Every January, UPEI Career Services offers an interview preparation session for students applying to the internship program. Contact Career Services at (902) 620-5088 for more information.

Conditions of Acceptance

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

- ❑ **Transportation-** Students must have access to personal transportation and be willing to complete placements throughout PEI, as placement sites are located from Souris to Alberton.
- ❑ **Travel-** Students must be willing to travel to pre-determined organizations in other provinces to complete some of their training. All costs associated with out-of-province placements are the responsibility of the student.
- ❑ **Immunizations and Criminal Record Check-** Students must have all immunizations listed on the UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS form up to date, along with any additional immunizations required by relevant placement organizations. As well, students must have a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check completed. Documentation must be submitted **one month prior to the start date of FN-3001**.
- ⊙ Upon acceptance, interns are recommended to become student members of Dietitians of Canada.

Internship Fees and Associated Costs

Current Fees and Associated Costs: There is a course tuition for each practicum course of the internship and an internship fee for program level I & II. Fees are subject to change depending on year fee increases.

- **Level I FN 3001** (course tuition (\$682.80) + internship fee (\$2144) + applicable student fees) - **This course counts as a 4th-year elective.**
- **Level II FN 4001** (course tuition (\$682.80) + internship fee (\$2144)+ applicable student fees)
- **Level II FN 4002** (course tuition (\$682.80) + applicable student fees)
- Dietitians of Canada online courses:
 - *Counselling for Behavior Change* (\$26.25)
 - *Critical Care Nutrition* (\$42.00)
 - *Swallow Screens and Assessment* (\$26.25)
- Transportation and accommodation costs
- Clothing- uniform, lab coat, professional clothing
- Registration with provincial colleges and boards (if applicable)
- Dietitians of Canada Student Membership

- Incidentals (e.g. workshop fees, name tags, etc.)

Important Dates for 2023/2024

- **Wednesday, November 1, 2023**
 - **Application packages are available** via email. Email the Professional Practice Coordinator, Bethany Vessey, at bavessey@upei.ca to receive your package.
- **Friday, December 1, 2023**
 - **Confirm with the Professional Practice Coordinator via email your intent to apply to the dietetic internship program,** including your consent for a Faculty Composite Reference to be requested on your behalf.
- **Monday, January 12, 2024**
 - **Application packages are due.** Applications can be submitted via email to the Professional Practice Coordinator, Bethany Vessey, at bavessey@upei.ca.
 - **Two (2) References due.** Ensure your references have been either emailed to the Professional Practice Coordinator or sent via mail
- **Late January 2024**
 - Interviews
- **Early February 2024**
 - Applicants informed of results
- **April 29, 2024 (tentative):** Start date FN 3001 (Professional Practice Class Week)

Appendix I: Dietetic Stream Course Sequence

First Year

Foods and Nutrition 1010 – Concepts and Controversies in Nutrition
Biology 1220 – Human Physiology
Biology 1310 – Introduction to Cell and Molecular Biology
Chemistry 1110 – General Chemistry I
Chemistry 1120 – General Chemistry II
One of UPEI 1010, 1020 or 1030
Math 1110 – Finite Mathematics OR
Math 1120 Calculus for the Managerial, Social and Life Sciences
IKE 1040 – Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island
Two 3 semester hours Social Science

Second Year

Foods and Nutrition 2110 – Introductory Nutrition I
Foods and Nutrition 2120 – Introductory Nutrition II
Foods and Nutrition 2230 – Determinants of Dietary Behaviour
Foods and Nutrition 2610 – Communications
Foods and Nutrition 2810 – Introductory Foods
Foods and Nutrition 2820 – Food Systems: Food Production and Food Processing
Biology 2060 – Microbiology
Chemistry 2430 – Organic Chemistry for the Life Sciences
Statistics 1210 – Introductory Statistics
One free elective

Third Year

Foods and Nutrition 3020 – Advanced Foods
Foods and Nutrition 3210 – Foodservice Systems Management
Foods and Nutrition 3310 – Introduction to Research Methods
Foods and Nutrition 3510 – Nutritional Assessment
Foods and Nutrition 3520 – Clinical Nutrition I
Foods and Nutrition 3820 – Program Planning & Evaluation
Foods and Nutrition 3830 – Professional Practice in Dietetics
Business 1710 – Organizational Behaviour
Chemistry 3530 – Biochemistry
One free elective

Fourth Year

Foods and Nutrition 3710 – Lifespan Nutrition
Foods and Nutrition 4120 – Human Metabolism
Foods and Nutrition 4220 – Quantity Food Production
Foods and Nutrition 4310 – Evidence-Based Practice in the Health Sciences
Foods and Nutrition 4340 – Community Nutrition
Foods and Nutrition 4610 – Clinical Nutrition II
Four free electives (FN 3001 can count as a 4th year elective if accepted into internship program.)

Appendix II: Applicant Selection Rating Form for Interviews

Applicant Name: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Signature

Component	Rating
E-Portfolio (including Resume & Letter of Intent) <i>(rate on format only)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exceeds requirements 8• Meets requirements 6• Below requirements 0 _____/8
Experience: Work/Volunteer	_____/7
Interview	_____/100

Total _____/115

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 Selection Committee? Or is there anything further you would like to add?