

**USC** Leonard Davis  
School of Gerontology

## **Coordinated Program in Nutrition & Dietetics Student Handbook**



**Full-Time On-Campus,  
Full-Time and Part-Time Distance**

**Master of Science in Nutrition,  
Healthspan and Longevity**

Welcome to the University of Southern California (USC), Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, Master of Science (MS) Coordinated Program (CP) in Nutrition, Healthspan and Longevity (NHL).

This handbook is designed to help students understand the application process, program requirements and academic curriculum. The handbook also includes USC policies and procedures (P&P) to which enrolled students are required to follow while enrolled in the program. The handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to be used as a supplement to the [University of Southern California's Student Handbook](#). Please consult the [University Catalog](#) for information on tuition, fees, housing, application requirements, and relevant information concerning admission.

Additional information about the MS NHL is detailed on our [Webpage](#). USC P&P apply to students enrolled in all tracks of the MS program. This handbook outlines accepted policy, based on the program's compliance to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).

This handbook is one of many tools you will have to guide you through your enrollment into the academic program. It is important that you read and become knowledgeable about the information presented. If you have further questions about the CP at USC you can contact the Program Director, listed below. If you have questions about becoming a dietitian or ACEND Accreditation, you can visit the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics \(AND\)](#) and/or the [ACEND Program Webpage](#).

Faculty and staff at USC, and within the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, are here to support and guide you as you pursue a career in nutrition and dietetics.

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## Introduction

The MS NHL, a CP in Nutrition and Dietetics, at the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, USC, provides an academic curriculum that meets standards established by AND and ACEND. The CP accepts 20-24 graduate students each year including students attending the program full-time on campus, full-time through distance education and a third group completing the program part-time over a 3-year period, through distance education. The Program includes didactic courses and SP scheduled concurrently. Successful completion of 44 units is required for graduation (28 units of didactic course work, 10 units of SP and 6 units of research). In addition to required didactic coursework, the program provides students with 1,000 hours of SP experience needed to meet competencies established by ACEND. The program's concentration area is NHL, preparing graduates for entry-level dietetics. In selecting applicants for admission, the School of Gerontology considers both academic potential (as reflected in undergraduate study) and professional potential (as reflected in experience, references, and career goals) along with in-person or Zoom interviews.

Completion of the 1,000 didactic and SP hours and the award of a Master of Science degree provides students with eligibility to write the national registration examination of the Commission of Dietetics Registration (CDR), that grants the use of the nationally recognized credential, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).<sup>1</sup> The CP office is located at the Leonard Davis School in room 231D of the Andrus Gerontology Center, 3715 McClintock Ave. on the USC University Park Campus. The CP Director is Dr. Cary Kreutzer, EdD, MPH, RDN, FAND and Internship Coordinators are Jeannie Wakamatsu, MPH, RDN and Rebecca Oh, MPH, RDN, CNSC.

Effective January 1, 2024, the CDR will require a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become an RDN. To be approved for registration examination eligibility with only a bachelor's degree, an individual must meet all eligibility requirements and be submitted into CDR's Registration Eligibility Processing System (REPS) before midnight Central Time, December 31, 2023. For more information about this requirement visit [CDR's website](#). In addition, CDR requires that individuals complete coursework and SP in program(s) accredited by ACEND. Graduates who successfully complete the ACEND-accredited MS NHL CP at USC are eligible to take the CDR credentialing exam to become an RDN.

Students are overseen by preceptors at SP sites. A preceptor is an RDN or related professional (as defined in this Student Handbook) that supervises and mentors students in their work setting and complete student evaluations, measuring student competency.

## Accreditation Status

On August 13, 2018, the program received full accreditation from ACEND through 2026. ACEND has established Standards of Education which accredited program must meet and includes knowledge, skill, and competency requirements.

ACEND will review complaints that relate to a program's compliance with the accreditation/approval standards. ACEND is interested in the sustained quality and continued improvement of dietetics education program but does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admission, appointment, promotion or dismissal of faculty, staff, or students.

A copy of the accreditation standards, and ACEND's P&P for submission of complaints, and a complaint investigation form, may be obtained on the [ACEND Webpage](#). If access to the Webpage is not possible, the requestor can contact ACEND by mail at 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995 or by calling 1-800-877-1600, ext. 5500. Written complaints can be mailed to the ACEND Chair at the above address.

### Admission Requirements

The school requests information from applicants in addition to that supplied on the USC Application for Graduate Admission. Supplemental information includes a resume, statement of interest, two letters of reference (one academic, one work experience), proof of completion of prerequisites (assessed by review of transcripts, all courses completed within past 10 years, with the exception of math, psychology/sociology and speech/communications) and completion of the pre-requisite table posted on the Webpage), DPD verification statement for those completing a DPD program<sup>1</sup>; and, documentation of 40 hours of experience shadowing an RDN [written summary under 1,000 words and original letter or signature from RDN(s) confirming experience].

Upon submission of the application to the USC Graduate School, an email is sent to the applicant's references, requesting that the individual upload the letter of recommendation through a USC secure Webpage. Alternatively, the individual may send the letters of recommendation directly to Cary Kreutzer, EdD, MPH, RDN, FAND, CP Director, through US Mail with an original signature. Applicants selected for interviews will be required to participate in a 30-minute interview (in-person or via Zoom) with members of the Program Advisory Board, Program Director, Internship Coordinators, and Preceptors. Students seeking admission to the CP are expected to have completed a bachelor's degree and program prerequisites with an overall and major GPA of at least 3.0 from accredited colleges/universities prior to the first day of the program. Completion of the GRE is not required unless overall GPA (undergraduate degree) is below 3.0. Required prerequisites are summarized on page 11.

To expose applicants to the various roles of RDNs in practice, applicants will be required as a pre-requisite to complete at least 40 hours of paid or volunteer work experience with one or more RDNs. A written summary describing the various roles of dietitian and the applicant's experience with one or more RDNs must be submitted with the application.

The [USC Graduate Admission Application](#) is available online.

### Steps to Apply to the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology MS NHL CP

1. Visit the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology Graduate Degrees Webpage and review information about the program, including a previously recorded Webinar.
2. Make initial contact with the USC Leonard Davis School Student Services, register to attend Virtual Open House or on-campus Open House, held in the Fall of each year.
3. Review the Student Handbook and submit an application (link posted on the School of Gerontology Webpage). This registration will give you access to the application and program application requirements. All application documents will be uploaded into the USC graduate school application Webpage.
4. Complete pre-requisite requirements before applying to the program with final pre-requisites completed no later than the first day of Fall semester. Acceptance into the program will be conditional upon completion of all prerequisite courses with a grade of C or higher. Students will be required to complete all courses in the master's degree. **No credit is accepted for prior graduate courses taken at other colleges or universities.**

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<sup>1</sup> Students submitting proof of DPD Program completion (within 10 years from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Fall semester) will automatically meet required prerequisites for program admission; completion of the prerequisite grid is required.

5. Speak with Academic Advisors Sara Robinson ([sararobi@usc.edu](mailto:sararobi@usc.edu)) and Steven Stumph ([stumph@usc.edu](mailto:stumph@usc.edu)) or the Program Director as needed to review academic preparation and assess pre-requisite completion.
6. Review electronic degree application requirements and assemble required documents.
7. Submit the complete application, and request for financial aid and scholarships on or before January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
8. All applications will be reviewed by members of the Program Faculty, Staff, Preceptors and Graduates with qualified applicants selected for interviews.
9. Applicants selected for an interview will be contacted by March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and interviews scheduled (on-campus or via Zoom).
10. Program acceptance announced between March 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.
11. Complete required vaccinations, background checks and other program requirements prior to program SP experience (January 2<sup>nd</sup> of first enrolled academic year).
12. Transition into SP in the CP is contingent upon successful completion of Fall courses with a GPA of 3.0 or above in each course, proof of required vaccinations, a Certified Background Check and SP agency-required testing.

### **Applying for Financial Aid and Scholarships**

The USC Financial Aid Office provides information as well as staff support to assist student seeking financial aid. Students are encouraged to apply for financial aid once application for admission has been submitted. Graduate students must meet the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline and all eligibility requirements to be considered for financial aid. Applications received after this date are considered for Federal Direct Stafford and Federal Direct Graduate PLUS loans only. Sixty-three percent of graduate and professional school students at USC receive some form of financial aid. This section of the website contains key information to help clarify and explain the [financial aid application process](#) for new and continuing graduate and professional students.

The Supplemental Application for the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology Graduate Admission Application is available in the online application. Additional information such as the program description and the [prerequisite template](#) may be downloaded from the webpage. The merit-based scholarship application may also be found in the online application. USC Office of the Provost provides information about non-university external funding sources and fellowship program, additional information can be accessed on our [Awards and Fellowships Database](#).

### **Program Description**

The mission of the MS NHL, within the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, is to produce entry-level RDNs capable of providing excellent service to a variety of constituencies with an emphasis upon nutrition, healthspan, and longevity.

### CP Goals and Outcome Measures

The USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology CP has strong relationships with community health professionals and programs serving individuals across the lifespan and acknowledges that RDNs will be playing an increasing role in the health care arena. Thus, the goals focus on assuring that the program produces competent, well trained professionals, who are attuned to the research evidence that has the potential to impact the delivery of nutrition services, appreciates the impact research evidence has on health issues in society, and recognizes the need for evidence-based practice in the profession. The goals of this CP are tightly woven with expectations of its students to become actively engaged in healthspan and longevity research throughout both SP and graduate studies.

**Goal #1:** To prepare graduates to be competent, entry-level RDNs.

#### Objectives for Goal #1:

- 80% of graduates will complete the CP within 150% of the allotted timeframe (three years for full-time students and four and half years for part-time students).
- 80% of graduates will pass the CDR credentialing exam for dietitians within one year following first attempt.
- 80% of graduates will take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitians within one year of program graduation.
- 75% of graduates who respond to an alumni survey will report they were employed in a dietetics-related position within 12 months following program completion.
- 80% of employed graduates will rate themselves at least satisfied with the education and SP they received from the USC MS NHL Program on a survey sent one year after graduation.
- 80% of employers will rate graduates with “Above-Satisfactory” competency level when delivering food and/or nutrition services.

**Goal #2:** To prepare graduates who demonstrate lifelong learning, a commitment to the profession and use of research evidence to inform food and nutrition services for individuals across the lifespan.

#### Objectives for Goal #2:

- 60% of graduates on an alumni survey will rate their use of research evidence in providing nutrition services across the lifespan as “Frequent Use.”
- 70% of employers responding to a survey of program graduates, will rate graduates “Above-Satisfactory” in their use of research evidence to inform their food and nutrition services for individuals across the lifespan.
- 40% of graduates on an alumni survey will indicate they are preceptors, committed to giving back to the profession.
- 50% of graduates on an alumni survey will indicate they have maintained their RDN credential 5-year post-graduation, demonstrating lifelong learning.

*Note: Annual program outcome data is available upon request.*

### **ACEND Core Knowledge and Competencies for the CP**

Throughout the CP students will engage in learning experiences that satisfy the standards to acquire the core knowledge and competencies established by ACEND. A graduate of the CP will possess:

#### **Domain 1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice: Integration of scientific information and translation of research into practice.**

KRDN 1.1. Demonstrate how to locate, interpret, evaluate and use professional literature to make ethical, evidence-based practice decisions.

KRDN 1.2. Select and use appropriate current information technologies to locate and apply evidence-based guidelines and protocols.

KRDN 1.3. Apply critical thinking skills.

CRDN 1.1. Select indicators of program quality and/or customer service and measure achievement of objectives.

CRDN 1.2. Evaluate research and apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature in nutrition and dietetics practice.

CRDN 1.3. Justify programs, products, services and care using appropriate evidence or data.

CRDN 1.4. Conduct projects using appropriate research or quality improvement methods, ethical procedures and data analysis utilizing current and/or new technologies.

CRDN 1.5. Incorporate critical-thinking skills in overall practice.

#### **Domain 2. Professional Practice Expectations: Beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the nutrition and dietetics practitioner level of practice.**

KRDN 2.1. Demonstrate effective and professional oral and written communication and documentation.

KRDN 2.2. Describe the governance of nutrition and dietetics practice, such as the Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics.

KRDN 2.3. Assess the impact of a public policy position on the nutrition and dietetics profession.

KRDN 2.4. Discuss the impact of health care policy and different health care delivery systems on food and nutrition services.

KRDN 2.5. Identify and describe the work of interprofessional teams and the roles of others with whom the registered dietitian nutritionist collaborates.

KRDN 2.6. Demonstrate cultural humility, awareness of personal biases and an understanding of cultural differences as they contribute to diversity, equity and inclusion.

KRDN 2.7. Describe contributing factors to health inequity in nutrition and dietetics including structural bias, social inequities, health disparities and discrimination.

KRDN 2.8. Participate in a nutrition and dietetics professional organization and explain the significant role of the organization.

KRDN 2.9. Defend a position on issues impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession.

CRDN 2.1. Practice in compliance with current federal regulations and state statutes and rules, as applicable, and in accordance with accreditation standards and the Scope of Practice for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Standards of Practice, Standards of Professional Performance, and Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics.

CRDN 2.2. Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications.

CRDN 2.3. Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in group settings.

CRDN 2.4. Function as a member of interprofessional teams.

CRDN 2.5. Work collaboratively with NDTRs and/or support personnel in other disciplines.



- CRDN 2.6. Refer clients and patients to other professionals and services when needs are beyond individual scope of practice.
- CRDN 2.7. Apply change management strategies to achieve desired outcomes.
- CRDN 2.8. Demonstrate negotiation skills.
- CRDN 2.9. Actively contribute to nutrition and dietetics professional and community organizations.
- CRDN 2.10. Demonstrate professional attributes in all areas of practice.
- CRDN 2.11. Show cultural humility in interactions with colleagues, staff, clients, patients and the public.
- CRDN 2.12. Implement culturally sensitive strategies to address cultural biases and differences.
- CRDN 2.13. Advocate for local, state or national legislative and regulatory issues or policies impacting the nutrition and dietetics profession.

**Domain 3. Clinical and Client Services: Development and delivery of information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations.**

- KRDN 3.1. Use the Nutrition Care Process and clinical workflow elements to assess nutritional parameters, diagnose nutrition related problems, determine appropriate nutrition interventions, and develop plans to monitor the effectiveness of these interventions.
- KRDN 3.2. Develop an educational session or program/educational strategy for a target population.
- KRDN 3.3. Demonstrate counseling and education methods to facilitate behavior change and enhance wellness for diverse individuals and groups.
- KRDN 3.4. Practice routine health screening assessments, including measuring blood pressure and conducting waived point-of-care laboratory testing (such as blood glucose or cholesterol).
- KRDN 3.5. Describe concepts of nutritional genomics and how they relate to medical nutrition therapy, health and disease.
- KRDN 3.6. Develop nutritionally sound meals, menus and meal plans that promote health and disease management and meet client's/patient's needs.

- CRDN 3.1. Perform Medical Nutrition Therapy by utilizing the Nutrition Care Process including use of standardized nutrition terminology as a part of the clinical workflow elements for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of settings.
- CRDN 3.2. Conduct nutrition focused physical exams.
- CRDN 3.3. Perform routine health screening assessments including measuring blood pressure, conducting waived point-of-care laboratory testing (such as blood glucose or cholesterol), recommending and/or initiating nutrition-related pharmacotherapy plans (such as modifications to bowel regimens, carbohydrate to insulin ratio, B<sub>12</sub> or iron supplementation).
- CRDN 3.4. Provide instruction to clients/patients for self-monitoring blood glucose considering diabetes medication and medical nutrition therapy plan.
- CRDN 3.5. Explain the steps involved and observe the placement of nasogastric or nasoenteric feeding tubes; if available, assist in the process of placing nasogastric or nasoenteric feeding tubes.
- CRDN 3.6. Conduct a swallow screen and refer to the appropriate health care professional for full swallow evaluation when needed.
- CRDN 3.7. Demonstrate effective communication and documentation skills for clinical and client services in a variety of formats and settings, which include telehealth and other information technologies and digital media.
- CRDN 3.8. Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience.
- CRDN 3.9. Develop nutrition education materials that are culturally and age appropriate and designed for the literacy level of the audience.
- CRDN 3.10. Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change.

CRDN 3.11. Develop and deliver products, programs or services that promote consumer health, wellness and lifestyle management.

CRDN 3.12. Deliver respectful, science-based answers to client/patient questions concerning emerging trends.

CRDN 3.13. Coordinate procurement, production, distribution and service of goods and services, demonstrating and promoting responsible use of resources.

CRDN 3.14. Develop and evaluate recipes, formulas and menus for acceptability and affordability that accommodate the cultural diversity and health needs of various populations, groups and individuals.

**Domain 4. Practice Management and Use of Resources: Strategic application of principles of management and systems in the provision of services to individuals and organizations.**

KRDN 4.1. Apply management theories to the development of programs or services.

KRDN 4.2. Evaluate a budget/financial management plan and interpret financial data.

KRDN 4.3. Demonstrate an understanding of the regulation system related to billing and coding, what services are reimbursable by third party payers and how reimbursement may be obtained.

KRDN 4.4. Apply the principles of human resource management to different situations.

KRDN 4.5. Apply safety and sanitation principles related to food, personnel and consumers.

KRDN 4.6. Explain the processes involved in delivering quality food and nutrition services.

KRDN 4.7. Evaluate data to be used in decision-making for continuous quality improvement.

CRDN 4.1. Participate in management functions of human resources (such as training and scheduling).

CRDN 4.2. Perform management functions related to safety, security and sanitation that affect employees, clients, patients, facilities and food.

CRDN 4.3. Conduct clinical and client service quality management activities (such as quality improvement or quality assurance projects).

CRDN 4.4. Apply current information technologies to develop, manage and disseminate nutrition information and data.

CRDN 4.5. Analyze quality, financial and productivity data for use in planning.

CRDN 4.6. Propose and use procedures as appropriate to the practice setting to promote sustainability, reduce waste and protect the environment.

CRDN 4.7. Conduct feasibility studies for products, programs or services with consideration of costs and benefits.

CRDN 4.8. Develop a plan to provide or develop a product, program or service that includes a budget, staffing needs, equipment and supplies.

CRDN 4.9. Engage in the process for coding and billing for nutrition and dietetics services to obtain reimbursement from public or private payers, fee-for-service and value-based payment systems.

CRDN 4.10. Analyze risk in nutrition and dietetics practice (such as risks to achieving set goals and objectives, risk management plan, or risk due to clinical liability or foodborne illness).

**Domain 5. Leadership and Career Management: Skills, strengths, knowledge and experience relevant to leadership potential and professional growth for the nutrition and dietetics practitioner.**

KRDN 5.1 Perform self-assessment that includes awareness in terms of learning and leadership styles and cultural orientation and develop goals for self-improvement.

KRDN 5.2 Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals.

KRDN 5.3 Practice how to self-advocate for opportunities in a variety of settings (such as asking for support, presenting an elevator pitch).

KRDN 5.4 Practice resolving differences or dealing with conflict.

KRDN 5.5 Promote team involvement and recognize the skills of each member.

KRDN 5.6 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance and expectations of a professional in mentoring and precepting others.

CRDN 5.1. Perform self-assessment that includes awareness in terms of learning and leadership styles and cultural orientation and develop goals for self-improvement.

CRDN 5.2. Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals.

CRDN 5.3. Prepare a plan for professional development according to Commission on Dietetic Registration guidelines.

CRDN 5.4. Advocate for opportunities in professional settings (such as asking for additional responsibility, practicing negotiating a salary or wage or asking for a promotion).

CRDN 5.5. Demonstrate the ability to resolve conflict.

CRDN 5.6. Promote team involvement and recognize the skills of each member.

CRDN 5.7. Mentor others.

CRDN 5.8. Identify and articulate the value of precepting.

### **Program Concentration Area – Nutrition, Healthspan & Longevity (NHL) Competencies**

NHL 6.1. Translate research evidence on biology of aging and mechanisms for the extension of health and treatment of disease.

NHL 6.2. Incorporate knowledge of nutrient gene interactions, molecular and biochemical parameters and medication use, into the nutrition care plan (MNT) for individuals with complex medical conditions.

Abbreviations: KRDN=Core Knowledge; CRDN=Practice Competencies; NHL= Program Concentration Area Nutrition, Healthspan & Longevity
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## ACADEMIC PROGRAM PREREQUISITES AND REQUIRED COURSES

<u>Prerequisite - Required Undergraduate Science Courses</u>	<u># of Semester Units</u>	<u>USC-Equivalent</u>
1. General Chemistry with lab	4 units	CHEM 105aL
2. Organic Chemistry with lab*	4 units	CHEM 322aL
3. Biochemistry with lab*	4 units	BISC 330L
4. Cellular Biology with Lab	4 units	BISC 101Lgx, 120L, 220Lg
5. Physiology with lab*	4 units	BISC104Lgx, 307L; GERO 310
6. Microbiology with lab*	4 units	BISC 300L

**\*Not all colleges/universities offer separate lab along with lecture, unit requirement must be met**

### Prerequisite - Required Undergraduate non-Science Courses

1. General Psychology or Sociology	3 units	PSYC 100, SOCI 200
2. Algebra, pre-Calculus, Calculus or Statistics	3 units	Math 108, 125, 208
3. Speech/Communication	3 units	COMM 204

### Prerequisite - Required Undergrad Nutrition-Related Courses

1. Basic Human Nutrition	2 units	GERO 411; HP 230; HBIO 302L
2. Introductory Food Science/Experimental Foods	3 units	BISC 115Lxg (Spring)

**NOTE: All prerequisites must be completed within 10 years of program application, with the exception that mathematics, speech/communication and psychology/sociology are not time restricted.**

### **MS Degree Required Courses**

1) Nutrition, Genes, Longevity and Disease	4 units	GERO 498
2) Fundamentals of Clinical Nutr. Screening & Assessment	4 units	GERO 511
3) Communicating Nutrition & Health	2 units	GERO 512
4) Fundamentals of Nutrition (Macronutrients)	2 units	GERO 513
5) Food Production & Foodservice Management w/Lab	4 units	GERO 515L
6) Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) w/Lab	4 units	GERO 517L
7) Current Topics in Clinical Nutr., Healthspan, Longevity	4 units	GERO 518
8) Micronutrients, Health and Longevity	4 units	GERO 560
9) Directed Research	2 units	GERO 590
10) Field Practicum – Supervised Practice in Dietetics	10 units	GERO 591
11) Research Methods	4 units	GERO 593

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**Total: 44 units**

Courses are completed as written in the 2-year and 3-year course schedules (next pages). Each student will register for GERO 591- SP beginning the second semester given the first semester GPA, for each course completed is  $\geq 3.0$ . Student must take SP, 2 or 4 units (GERO 591) each semester for a total of 10 units (1,000 hours). Courses will be taught on an annual basis and build on the semester prior, therefore courses are not interchangeable.

**PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE (2-Year Full-Time Program of Study)  
On-Campus and Distance Students**

**Units                      Fall Year 1**

4	GERO - 511 – Fundamentals of Clinical Nutrition Screening and Assessment
2	GERO - 512 – Communicating Nutrition and Health
2	GERO - 513 – Fundamentals of Nutrition: Macronutrients
4	GERO - 515L – Food Production & Food Services Management with Lab

**Total Units: 12**

**Units                      Spring Year 1**

4	GERO - 517L – Advanced Therapeutic Nutrition with Lab
4	GERO - 560 – Micronutrients, Health and Longevity
2	GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice - Professionalization Seminar; Community Nutrition; Nutrition Education
4	GERO - 593 – Research Methods

**Total Units: 14**

**Units                      Summer Year 1**

4	GERO - 498 – Nutrition, Genes, Longevity and Diseases
2	GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice - Retail Foodservice Management

**Total Units: 6**

**Units                      Fall Year 2**

4	GERO - 518 – Current Topics in Clinical Nutrition, Healthspan and Longevity
2	GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice –In-Patient Foodservice; Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) I; Outpatient MNT

**Total Units: 6**

**Units                      Spring Year 2**

2	GERO - 590 – Directed Research – Portfolio
4	GERO - 591 – (400 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice – MNTII; Clinical Concentration

**Total Units: 6**

**Degree Total Units: 44 Units**

**PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE (3-Year Part-Time Program of Study)**  
**Distance Students Only**

<b>Units</b>	<b>Fall Year 1</b>
2	GERO - 513 – Fundamentals of Nutrition: Macronutrients
4	GERO - 515L – Food Production & Food Services Management with Lab
	<b>Total Units: 6</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>Spring Year 1</b>
4	GERO - 560 – Micronutrients, Health and Longevity
4	GERO - 593 – Research Methods
	<b>Total Units: 8</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>Summer Year 1 or Year 2</b>
4	GERO - 498 – Nutrition, Genes, Longevity and Diseases
	<b>Total Units: 4</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>Fall Year 2</b>
4	GERO - 511 – Fundamentals of Clinical Nutrition Screening and Assessment
2	GERO - 512 – Communicating Nutrition and Health
	<b>Total Units: 6</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>Spring Year 2</b>
4	GERO - 517L – Advanced Therapeutic Nutrition with Lab
2	GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
	<b>Total Units: 6</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>Summer Year 2</b>
2	GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
	<b>Total Units: 2</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>Fall Year 3</b>
4	GERO - 518 – Current Topics in Clinical Nutrition: Healthspan and Longevity
2	GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
	<b>Total Units: 6</b>
<b>Units</b>	<b>Spring Year 3</b>
2	GERO - 590 – Directed Research
4	GERO - 591 – (400 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
	<b>Total Units: 6</b>

**Degree Total Units: 44 Units**

**Estimated Program Expenses \***

<b>Item</b>	<b>Estimated Cost to Complete the Program</b>	<b>Cost Detail</b>
Graduate Application fee & Tuition	\$ 90 Application \$ 2,035 per unit \$ 89,540 (44 units)	Cost for on-campus and distance students is the same, USC does not have separate fees for in-state vs. out-of-state <a href="#">tuition</a>
Housing, on-campus, meal plan & parking	\$10,410-\$12,380 for 2 semesters	<a href="#">Housing Fees</a>
GERO 498 study abroad expenses in Genoa, Italy (optional)	\$1,700-\$2,500	Roundtrip flight to Genoa, room and board, and travel within Italy. Approximately \$1,000-\$1,500 for the flight and \$700-\$1,000 for room and board.
Physical exam and vaccinations; flu shot	\$0-\$100	Required for SP; cost varies by health insurance plan
CPR/AED Adult and Child First Aid	\$25-\$50	Cost is subject to provider fees charged; Not required by all SP sites
Fingerprinting (LiveScan)	\$0-\$60	May be required for some students based on SP location and policies
Background Check	\$42	Cost is subject to fees of the provider, may be required for some students based on location
Drug Testing	\$50-\$80	May be required for some students based on SP location and policies
Transportation & Parking	\$500	Will vary by SP location; students must provide their own transportation; public transportation is available
Textbooks, Reference Manuals, EHR Go	\$2,000	Some books can be rented or purchased used; this cost is based on new books purchased. EHR Go may be required for virtual MNT internship.
Computer internet connection	\$600	Students will be given access to USC computer resources on-campus but will need internet access to connect off-campus
Professional Liability Insurance	\$22/year, for 2 years	Required. The company recommended is Proliability powered by Mercer.
Student Memberships: AND, Dietary Practice Group (DPG), Member Interest Group (MIG)	AND \$58/year Practice and interest groups vary from \$15-40 each	Students must become a student member of AND; recommend local dietetic association affiliates and/or DPG, MIG
National/State/Local Nutrition Conferences or Meetings	\$100-\$700	Flights, hotel accommodations, transportation, parking and/or registration fees associated with conferences, meetings, Policy Day, capstone project presentations.
Review course for Dietetic Registration Examination	\$100-\$400	Students are encouraged (NOT required) to purchase online access or attend a study review course for the registration exam upon program completion
Application for RD exam	\$200	Following completion of the CP and receipt of verification statement

Closed Toe, Non-Slip Shoes, required	\$50-100	Each student will be required to have closed toe, non-slip shoes and recommended to have flame resistant pants for food service. A Clinical lab coat will be provided by program.
Flame resistant pants, recommended	\$50	
Capstone presentation	\$0-\$500	Flights and hotel accommodations associated with poster session at conferences for capstone project presentation, as needed.

\* Students will need to estimate the cost of personal health/medical insurance in addition to the estimated program expenses

### Students Technology Requirements

Students enrolling in the CP should be familiar with PC or Mac technology, sending and receiving email, navigating the Internet and engaging in online learning. Students will also need to be familiar with Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Zoom. Internet access for all students is required. All students will have access to Zoom or Mediasite recorded class lectures through Blackboard. Distance students will need to video and/or audio record class presentation/assignments and submit into Blackboard. Students will be trained on using EXXAT, an education management platform for SP rotations. Adobe Connect may also be used to deliver class in the event of a university closure for class sessions.

### Secure Login, Passcodes and Verification of Identity

To verify student identity on exams completed off-campus, exams will be delivered through the USC academic course system Blackboard, a password-protected portal. Blackboard also employs Turn-It-In for papers submitted through blackboard to assess for plagiarism. Student presentations will be delivered via video to assure identity (distance students). All students will be required to use EXXAT for storage and retrieval of documents required for SP. Prior to the start of SP rotation, preceptors will receive a link to the student profile via EXXAT. The student profile will include a photo ID to verify the identity of the student, resume, student bio, immunization records and additional documents requested by SP site. Documents maintained or required to be uploaded in EXXAT include: SP hours of verification, assignments and evaluations. Only the Program Director, Internship Coordinators, and the individual student have access to their EXXAT files.

### Program Policy and Procedures

The following section provides a summary of the USC and CP P&P that guide the academic integrity of the Program. Students, faculty, staff, and SP preceptors will receive training on accessing and interpreting the P&P.

#### 1. Scheduling, Time Commitments, and Academic Calendar

The CP follows the [University Academic Calendar](#), as described in the University Handbook. Students will follow the USC academic calendar for scheduling and time away. Students approved by the Program Director to enroll in GERO 591 will be notified of rotation sites, schedule dates, and location prior to the beginning of the semester. Required hospital or facility orientation is scheduled by the preceptor with the student. Students are instructed to contact their preceptor prior to start of the semester to determine when orientation is scheduled and when and where to meet the preceptor on the first day of the rotation.

Because the program is considered a time of intensive, hands-on experiences, it is important that students focus on the SP experience and accompanying didactic courses. The practicum experiences may entail up to 40 hours per week in facilities. Students are encouraged **not to work** in an outside paying job during the academic program. If an outside job must be maintained, hours for the job must be scheduled so that the hours DO NOT conflict with the SP schedule established by the Internship



Coordinators and/or preceptor. Since practicum experiences may also entail some weekend or evening activities, student should work closely with their SP facility preceptor regarding scheduling issues. **In addition to SP hours, students should allocate approximately 10 hours/week to complete reports and projects outside of the SP day.**

*Students are not allowed to replace employees as part of SP. However, students are required to complete staff relief during the rotation. If a student believes their educational time is being utilized to fill in for staff vacancies, they should contact the Internship Coordinators who will discuss the issue with the site preceptor.*

## 2. Vacation, Holiday, and Absence Policies

Holidays and vacation breaks are published in the [USC Academic Calendar](#).

Due to limited availability and time frames for internship experience, students may be asked to intern during USC holidays. Schedules will be presented to students in advance to allow adequate time for coordination or other options.

Course instructors may announce class cancellations or changes in the semester schedule. Students are responsible for checking with individual course instructors regarding absence policies for didactic courses.

Students and preceptors should work together to ascertain the best schedule for the facility and operation. For example, a student may work a weekend in a SP facility and be given time off during the week. Or a student in a school foodservice setting may rearrange the time they take their spring break to coincide with the school district's spring break rather than the University's spring break.

University policy grants students excused absences from class/SP for observance of religious holy days. Faculty and staff are asked to be responsive to requests when students contact them IN ADVANCE to request such an excused absence. Students must contact faculty, internship coordinators, and/or preceptors at least one month in advance to request an excused absence for religious holy days. For more information, visit the [Office of Religious and Spiritual Life](#) website.

Excessive absences, whether for illness, family emergency, or other reasons, must be discussed with the CP Director, Internship Coordinator, and/or faculty or preceptors involved with the student during that semester. All parties involved will work together to determine if, when, and how time missed may be made up. A total of 1,000 hours will need to be completed for a student to be considered for completion of the required SP hours.

The student is responsible for notifying their instructors and facility personnel as early as possible if absence from classes or facilities is anticipated. Provision must be made, to the satisfaction of the faculty and/or SP staff, for coverage of coursework or duties during the student's absence. Students who are "at risk" academically will need to discuss with their instructor if absence from classes or facilities is in their best interest.

Failure to notify CP staff and/or the preceptor of any absence, regardless of the reason, may result in but is not limited to failing a rotation/course or dismissal from the program. Student must contact the University Office of Academic Records and Registrar if they need to take an academic leave of absence.

### 3. Loan Deferments and Student Loans

You may be eligible to defer payments on previous student loans while enrolled in graduate school. Several financing options exist to help you pay your USC expenses. We encourage you to take advantage of the financial resources USC has to offer. Financial aid counselors are available by phone, email, or in person. For more information, please visit the [Financial Aid Website](#).

### 4. Attendance at Professional Meetings

All students are encouraged to attend professional meetings such as the AND Food and Nutrition Conference and Exhibition (FNCE), their State and/or local Dietetic Association affiliate meetings and training events or other professional organization seminars. Limited funding may be available to support students' attendance at these conferences through the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology when presentations or posters are delivered. The University Graduate School Office may also have financial support for students giving a presentation at a professional meeting/conference.

### 5. Student Records

The USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, MS NHL will abide by USC P&P for student record access under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)). The CP Program Director is responsible for assuring that the USC Student Records P&P are followed (see [SCampus](#)). The Program Director will work with the School and the University Administration to assure that the P&P are implemented consistently across the school of Gerontology. The Program Director will inform faculty and preceptors of the P&P and will assume leadership for student requests to see their records. Faculty and preceptors are to refer students requesting access to records to the Program Director. The student must schedule a meeting with the Program Director, requesting in writing access to their program file. The Program Director maintains a file on each student which includes a student's application to the program, recommendation forms (right to review waiver), required entrance documents, summary comments on student performance, etc. The Internship Coordinator will maintain documentation of all student records pertaining to SP including completed assignments, preceptor evaluation forms, hours of verification, etc.

### 6. Student Counseling and Resources Provided by the University

Assuring that students are able to successfully complete the CP is the responsibility of all faculty, staff and preceptors that engage with the student. The Program Director is responsible for oversight, assuring that systems and resources are in place to a) identify (early-on) students failing to meet program benchmarks for grades and SP evaluation scores; b) support students' progress through the development of remediation plans; c) monitor students' progress on remediation plans; and d) counsel students regarding career paths more appropriate to their ability when it becomes evident that they have little chance of success in the CP.

The USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology provides Student Academic Support to students enrolled in the program. In addition, the University provides multiple resources and supports for students that can be accessed through the [SCampus Student Handbook](#). The [USC Student Affairs](#) provide student support and advocacy to assist students and families in resolving complex issues which can adversely affect student's academic success.

### 7. Medical Insurance Entrance Requirements for USC Graduate School and SP Courses

Students participating in the CP must show evidence of medical insurance coverage, either through USC Student Health Insurance (Aetna) or an individual/family medical insurance plan. This is separate from the mandatory student health fee for on-campus students, which allows access to the [USC Student Health Center](#). Distance students can request a waiver for the student health fee.

Proof of medical insurance coverage must be uploaded in EXXAT prior to assignment in any SP facility. This is critical because students are not employees of these operations and thus are not covered by Workers' Compensation.

#### 8. Injury or illness while in a facility for SP

Most facility-developed affiliation agreements state that emergency care will be provided to a student that is injured or has a health emergency while at the facility. The cost of these services is borne by the student. **USC and the CP do not provide Workman's Compensation at SP sites.**

#### 9. Professional and General Liability Insurance

It is a requirement that students purchase professional (student) liability insurance to protect them from malpractice lawsuits. Proof of student liability insurance coverage must be uploaded in EXXAT prior to starting the SP Rotations. The company recommended by AND offering discounts to members and providing professional liability insurance for students and practicing credentialed RDNs is Proliability. The program will provide information to students. Once the CP student graduates, this policy will no longer be considered student professional insurance coverage and regular professional liability insurance should be purchased.

#### 10. Additional Entrance Requirements for SP

Proof of current immunizations and/or titers is required. Students must upload a PDF file of the record in EXXAT (images are not accepted). Most hospitals require the following:

- Varicella vaccination or titer test (within 1 year)
- Seasonal influenza vaccine
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) or titer test (within 1 year)
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap, with a booster every 10 years)
- Hepatitis B vaccinations or titer test (within 1 year)
- COVID-19 vaccination and/or boosters OR an approved exemption waiver. **Note:** students who are granted a COVID-19 vaccination exemption through USC may face difficulty with clinical placements and/or have additional requirements such as regular testing and increased Personal Protective Equipment.
- Negative TB Test (skin or blood, within one year). **Note:** Many people born outside of the United States have been given a vaccine called BCG. Vaccination with BCG may cause a false positive reaction to a TB skin test. Therefore, the TB blood tests (IGRAs) or a Chest X-Ray may be required.

SP sites vary in their requirements. The Internship Coordinators will provide each CP student with specific requirements for the site to which they are assigned. Failure to comply with immunization requirements may result in students being prohibited from interning at sites.

#### 11. Criminal Background Checks

Background checks are required by many SP sites. If required, students must initiate this criminal background check through a third-party vendor, CastleBranch. It takes 24 to 96 hours for the background check to be completed. The report will be sent to the Internship Coordinators and the student. The Internship Coordinators will review and relay the results to the facility. The Internship Coordinators will provide each student with instructions for the background check.

#### 12. Drug and Alcohol Testing

Some SP sites require students to have drug and/or alcohol testing prior to entrance to the facility.

Some sites will perform this testing onsite. However, some facilities require testing prior to the first day of the SP rotation. The USC Health Center performs drug and alcohol testing for students. Students will need to sign a waiver allowing the results of the test to be released to the Internship Coordinators, who will send the results to the SP site. The student will incur all costs of drug and alcohol testing if not covered by the SP site. Failure to meet standards set forth by the facility may result in denial of placement at the facility.

### 13. SP Site-Specific Requirements

Each SP site has specific onboarding requirements. The Internship Coordinators will provide each CP student with a list of requirements and due dates for the site where they are assigned. The Internship Coordinators will need all documents from students approximately 30 days prior to the first day of the SP rotation.

The Internship Coordinators will send copies of all documentation to the SP sites before the first day of the rotation. All SP sites are notified that information provided to them regarding the student is HIPAA protected.

### 14. Liability for Safety in Travel

Students must assume responsibility for transportation to and from any off-campus activities such as SP assignments, field trips and travel to professional meetings. During the year, students may be assigned to off-campus facilities away from the Los Angeles area. It is highly suggested that students have reliable transportation of their own as many locations do not have public transportation available. Students who must rely on public transportation to reach SP sites must notify the Internship Coordinators at the time of program acceptance. However, proximity of sites and accessibility to public transportation to SP facilities **cannot** be guaranteed.

### 15. Grievances

Students have access to the USC CP P&P to be used when a student grievance arises. Students receive a copy of this Policy and are asked to sign and acknowledge receipt in EXXAT. Students will be informed of the procedure for filing a grievance upon entering the program. Steps to be taken by student, faculty, staff and preceptors will follow three established policies and procedure resources for point of contact, 1) USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, 2) USC, and 3) ACEND. In addition, the CP seeks to preserve the working relationship with the preceptor, their staff and the practicum site recognizing that each practicum site must enforce their own P&P.

Every attempt will be made by the Program Director and the Internship Coordinators to work with the preceptors, student and faculty to resolve the concerns that might prevent the student from completing a successful SP or didactic course. All student concerns are handled in a non-retaliatory and confidential manner among preceptor, internship coordinators, faculty, student and/or program director. The USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology Senior Associate Dean is consulted as needed by the program director. Students may also discuss their concerns with the Senior Associate Dean without fear of retaliation. For more information regarding filing a complaint and appeals at USC visit the [Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX](#) or the [Office of Academic Records and Registrar \(FERPA\)](#). The program director is required by ACEND to maintain a file of student concerns, responses, documentation of meetings and student/program agreements reached indefinitely. This file will be available to ACEND Review Team at Accreditation Reviews.

#### 16. Opportunity and Procedure to File Complaints with ACEND

ACEND will review complaints that relate to a program's compliance with the accreditation and approval standards. ACEND is interested sustained quality and continuous improvement of dietetics education programs, however, ACEND does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admission, appointment, promotion or dismissal of faculty, staff or students.

A copy of the accreditation standards and/or ACEND's policy and procedure for submission of complaints may be obtained from [ACEND's Webpage](#) or by contacting the Education and Accreditation staff at AND, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995 or by calling 1-800-877-1600, ext. 5500. Written complaints should be mailed to the ACEND Chair at the above address.

#### 17. Assessment of Student Learning and Performance Reports

Regular evaluation of student performance in didactic courses and SP component is an important part of the CP experience. Each student meets on a regular basis with their faculty or preceptor to identify strengths and areas for improvement in didactic, on-the-job knowledge and behavior.

At least once each year, all students will be asked to complete a selection of questions that mirror the CDR registration examination and cover content delivered the previous year. The purpose of this exam process is to a) check for understanding and assess student's progress in meeting established ACEND competencies and b) prepare students for taking the registration examination. Exam results, along with SP evaluation and didactic course grades will be used as a comprehensive evaluation of student progress.

Formal evaluations are completed at midterm and at the end of the semester. SP (GERO 591) is graded credit or no-credit by the faculty assigned to teach the course based upon preceptor evaluations, assignment scores, and project scores.

The philosophy of the program is that students must demonstrate competence in both knowledge and performance. However, if improvement is not shown and the student continues to demonstrate a lack of ability or commitment, the student will be removed from the program and encouraged to seek other career options or an alternative degree program in the Leonard Davis School.

#### 18. Graduation Requirements

CP students must complete all coursework required for the MS degree with an overall GPA of 3.0 or greater, completion of a capstone project (peer-reviewed publication, poster at professional conference or presentation), and 1,000 hours of SP with above satisfactory (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) ratings and passing scores on all assignments and projects. It is the student's responsibility to track GERO 591 units they are registered for and to schedule a Capstone Presentation with Faculty and Staff. [Past Capstone Projects](#) can be reviewed on our website.

CP students are expected to complete the SP experience within two years. The CP follows guidelines established by USC for the maximum number of years a student will be allowed to complete the master's degree.

*The time limit for completing the master's degree is five years. An academic unit may grant an extension of up to one year at a time for a maximum of two years. In extenuating circumstance, extensions beyond seven years (master's students may be granted. Extensions beyond seven years (master's students) require approval from the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology and the Graduate School. When requesting an extension beyond the allotted time, the students will need to demonstrate how their earlier coursework is current.*

### 19. Verification Statement Procedures

Upon completion of the master's degree with conferral of a diploma, the Program Director issues to the CP students 5 original copies of their Verification Statement indicating successful completion of the required 1,000-hour experience and degree completion. The Program Director will submit the verification statement to CDR. CDR will notify the candidate of their eligibility to take the exam. The process can take up to 3 weeks post-graduation. The original signed and dated verification statement remains on file in the program office at USC indefinitely.

### 20. International Students

The [Office of International Services \(OIS\)](#) provides advising services and support for international students and scholars at USC. Through an array of programs and initiatives for USC's international community, OIS aims to help international students and scholars to achieve their academic, personal, and professional goals, and to make the most of the USC experience. International Students must complete the CP on the USC Campus and are not eligible to enroll in the distance education program.

### 21. USC Accessibility Services and Programs

The [Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) is the unit at USC responsible for ensuring equal access for students needing accommodations in compliance with state and federal law. OSAS serves undergraduate, graduate and professional students; on-campus and on-line students; and students in all credit-granting courses and programs of study. OSAS is committed to supporting students with accessibility needs in all aspects of the program including External Work Placements (EWPs). An EWP is a required academic internship. For students approved for, and wishing to utilize, EWP Accommodations you will need to generate Accommodation Letters for your EWP, following the same process as class-related Accommodation Letters.

**Important Note:** OSAS communicates that all students must meet the technical standards and essential requirements of the department and of the external work placement with or without reasonable accommodation. Accommodations should not alter the fundamental academic or professional standards of the course or program. **A request for accommodations does not guarantee approval. It does guarantee a full review of the request and the student's file, and an interactive process to reach decisions about accommodations.**

### 22. Program Retention, Remediation and Dismissal Procedures

CP didactic professors and SP preceptors will review student progress at a minimum of twice per semester. CP professors and preceptors will meet with the Program Director and/or Internship Coordinators and CP student if they are not performing up to standards as indicated by the performance report. Students who fail to make satisfactory progress will be informed by the Program Director and/or Internship Coordinators and placed on probation or given a written warning. The CP instructor, CP student, faculty and/or preceptor will determine goals, objectives and a timeline to meet performance standards. If the student does not improve within the given timeline, the CP student may be dismissed from the program.

A graduate student, whether on probation or not, will be subject to disqualification if the student affairs committee of the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology at any time determines deficiency in academic achievement. Obtaining a 3.0 GPA overall in the MS NHL program is a prerequisite to graduate from USC. Students must complete the first semester of full-time study with a grade of 3.0 or greater in every course completed in order to begin SP in the second semester of the program. Students who earn a GPA below 3.0 in a first semester course will be re-evaluated for continuation in the program and/or will be required to repeat the course when next offered. Student

performance and professional behavior is a critical component in determination of letter grades for courses.

In addition, if a student does not successfully pass a SP rotation, the preceptor, CP Director, and Internship Coordinators will determine whether the student must complete a portion of the rotation or repeat the entire rotation. This may require the student to receive an incomplete in GERO 591 units and may extend the date of graduation and add additional costs.

If the student successfully completes the repeated rotation, the CP Director and Internship Coordinators will re-evaluate the student on the competencies that were identified for improvement. If the student does not successfully pass the repeated rotation or successfully complete the remediation plan after one semester, the Program Director will counsel the student and explore with the student other graduate degree and/or career options the student might consider. All documentation of student meetings and corrective actions will be signed by all parties involved with a copy given to the student and the original maintained in the student file.

### 23. Student Withdrawal from the CP and the University

Information regarding withdrawal from the University is found in the [USC Catalogue](#). Students have three options to cancel or drop all enrolled classes: complete a Request for Change of Program application in person at the Registration Building, 601 Exposition; send a letter requesting to withdraw from all classes to the Registration Department, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0912; or send a fax to the Registration Department, (213) 821-3724, requesting to withdraw from all classes. All withdrawals must be requested, received and processed by the end of the third week of class. Students should consult the [Registration Calendar](#) or the deadline to drop/withdraw classes. In order to be considered for re-application in the future the student must submit a written letter to the CP Director stating the reason for withdrawal. This document will be placed in the students file for future reference and ACEND accreditation reviewers.

### **SP Rotations (GERO 591)**

Students will complete nine SP rotations to fulfill the 1,000-hour requirement. Students must complete and receive approval of all SP rotation reports, hours, and obtain a passing grade on the final evaluation form by their SP rotation preceptor. If all reports and documents are not in place and approved by the Internship Coordinators and/or the preceptor by the last day of the semester (prior to final exams), placement for the next SP rotation will be delayed. If a student does not receive passing scores in the SP rotation, and is required to repeat all or partial rotation, the student may not receive academic units for course completion and additional units will have to be taken.

### **SP Documentation**

The student will upload all assignments in EXXAT for review. The SP reports must be submitted for review on a regular basis as activities take place. It is not acceptable to hold reports and submit them in bulk. Modifications made to assignments must be requested by the student in advance and approved by the Internship Coordinators prior to implementation.

Rotation Schedule Form: Students need to complete the Rotation Schedule Form or provide email verification of the schedule from their preceptor. Completed schedules or email confirmation will be uploaded in EXXAT for the Internship Coordinators to review and approve.

Rotation Hours Verification: Students must enter SP hours in EXXAT weekly. Preceptors must approve the hours submitted by students in EXXAT at least monthly. Hours accrued through simulations, case

studies, role playing, or learning modules will be approved by the CP Director or the Internship Coordinators. All rotation hours will be entered in EXXAT by the student for review by the preceptor and/or the Internship Coordinators.

Evaluations: Preceptors are asked to complete a midpoint evaluation and are required to complete a final evaluation form. Preceptors will address strengths and areas of improvement with the student. The evaluation forms will be sent to the preceptors via EXXAT and completed evaluation forms will be reviewed by the Internship Coordinators. **Note**: Preceptors do not have sign-in privileges to EXXAT.

### **Securing SP Rotations (GERO 591)**

All students in both the full-time and part-time distance tracks must secure facilities and preceptors for 8 of the 9 SP rotations on their own. For any on-campus students who would like to secure their own sites, the following instructions will apply. A fully executed affiliation agreement between USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology and the facility must be in place prior to beginning SP hours.

1. Full-time distance students must secure preceptors for the first THREE (3) SP rotations (retail food service, community and nutrition education) prior to the start of the first semester. Part-time distance students must secure preceptors for ONE (1) of the first SP rotations (retail food service) prior to the start of the first semester.
2. In general, internship hours cannot be paid, but students may receive a stipend (i.e., fellowships). You may be able to complete SP hours at your current employment site, as long as the hours can be separated between your work hours and your internship hours.
3. Students will need to take information about the program to potential sites. Students may not be able to locate all the preceptors required within their community and travel may be required. Some organizations may be able to provide SP experience for more than one rotation. Students may have different preceptors within the same organization.
4. The program will require several additional documents from the preceptors to assure their credentialing. The CP requires a copy of the preceptor's CDR Card (if an RDN) and/or a copy of their CV/resume, including areas of practice and certifications.
5. The AND has assembled a nationwide list of [potential preceptors](#) on their website. Students can also use Google to search for local hospitals, community nutrition programs, schools, colleges and universities. All students accepted into the CP will be required to join AND as a student member and their state dietetic association. Attendance and involvement in national, state and local dietetic associations is also a potential source of contact for RDNs.
6. Once students are ready to meet with their prospective agencies, students can share their EXXAT profile with potential preceptors. Students should be prepared to take documents to share along with an outline of what to cover during the meeting. Students should dress professionally and take along their portfolio as well as their resume. Students are encouraged to send a follow-up thank you note or email to the individual following any meeting.
7. If the potential preceptor wishes to speak with the Internship Coordinators or the CP Director, student can share the contact information for Jeannie Wakamatsu, Rebecca Oh, and/or Dr. Kreutzer (pg. 2).
8. SP rotations are listed and described on page 25.



## **Preceptor Requirements by Rotation (as defined in the SP Rotation Workbooks)**

### **Community**

Credentialed or licensed health care providers who are also credentialed as nutrition educators and meet state and federal regulations for the area(s) in which they are responsible such as RDNs, nurses, social workers, non-profit program directors, community leaders, or teachers.

### **Nutrition Education**

Professionals experienced in teaching nutrition education and mentoring educators such as a RDNs as well as other specialists, such as, a nurse, first aid instructor, teachers, or coach. Examples of preceptors are: child and adolescent educator at a community center, an experienced teacher, or a lactation consultant.

### **Retail Foodservice and Inpatient Foodservice**

Someone experienced in planning and overseeing retail/institutional foodservice such as the foodservice director, manager, or supervisor and might be a certified chef or other production managers.

### **MNT I, MNT II, Outpatient and Specialty Concentration**

RDNs who are credentialed or licensed to meet state and federal regulations for the area in which they are responsible must serve as preceptors for these rotations.

### **Facility Option List**

<b>SP Rotations</b>	<b>Facility Options</b>
Community/Nutrition Education	Women, Infant, Children (WIC), Head Start, Non-Profit Organizations, Department of Health, Meals on Wheels, Cooperative Extension, Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), Community Centers, YMCA, YWCA, Food Banks
Retail Food Service	School Districts, Hospitals, Hotels, Large Retail or Institutional Cafeterias, Food Service Companies, University Dining, Long Term Care Facilities, Resorts, Amusement Parks
Outpatient	Student Health Centers, Outpatient Medical Clinics, Private Practice
Inpatient Foods and Clinical Rotations	Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Long-Term Care

### **Policies & Procedures for Maintaining Affiliation Agreements**

The affiliation agreements are reviewed by the Internship Coordinators and if approved, are sent to USC's Legal Counsel and signed by the USC Vice Provost and the Senior Associate Dean of the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology.

The site may have its own agreement, which will need to be reviewed and approved by USC's Legal Counsel. Not all affiliation agreements may be successfully negotiated. If USC is unable to establish an agreement, then the student (distance track only) will need to find an alternate site. Affiliation agreements will be reviewed annually for renewal or for extensions based on expiration date in the original agreement. The Internship Coordinators will consult USC Legal Counsel when negotiating these contracts. All affiliation agreements are maintained by the Internship Coordinators as electronic files.

Students are not allowed to negotiate or sign contracts for proposed SP sites. Students can provide the site with information about the program along with the affiliation agreement template and then ask the agency or the preceptor to contact the Internship Coordinators directly.

### **Description of Each SP and Required Hours**

#### **1. Professionalization Seminar (40-80 hours)**

Through the Professionalization Seminar, which consists of a series of sessions, activities, and communication exchanges, the Internship Coordinators walk the students throughout their entire SP so that students develop and bring professional attitude, behavior, ethics, and values into their roles as professional RDNs.

The Professionalization Seminar topics include orientation to SP, professional conduct, tutoring, and mentoring support. Actual activities and assignments include medical terminology training, participating in public policy activities for legislative and regulatory initiatives, conflict resolution case studies, applying nutrition services within a culturally diverse population, developing a draft CDR portfolio, registration exam preparation, resume development, and selecting prospective employment opportunities. Additionally, students communicate with the Internship Coordinators monthly, receiving individualized support throughout their SP experience. The Internship Coordinators will develop other projects, activities and assessments, such as: learning portfolios, journal clubs, research projects, homework assignments, readings, quizzes, pre-tests, and post-tests.

#### **2. Retail/Institutional Foodservice, Production and Management (128 hours)**

The Retail/Institutional Foodservice, Production and Management Rotation focuses on all aspects of marketing, procurement, storage, preparation, delivery, service and management of retail/institutional operations. Students practice the care and operation of equipment, sanitation audits, HACCP Guidelines, menu planning, customer service and management activities. The activities in this rotation include practical hands-on practice as well as operations management to prepare for entry-level management responsibilities.

#### **3. Inpatient Foodservice, Production and Management Rotation (128 hours)**

The Inpatient Foodservice, Production and Management Rotation focuses on all aspects of producing and delivering nutrition, within an inpatient setting, to patients who have medical needs related to their diets including menu modifications, meal orders, tray preparation and delivery, meal promotion, food production and patient satisfaction. While the activities in this rotation may seem similar to the Retail/Institutional Foodservice, Production and Management Rotation, it focuses exclusively on providing nutritional needs for patients, and not on serving the general public in a retail setting.

#### **4. Community Nutrition Rotation (112 hours)**

Students practice providing community-based nutrition services including community nutrition assessment, counseling, education, wellness promotion and project-related time management. Students also develop skills in evaluating and applying government program guidelines and policies.

#### **5. Nutrition Education Rotation (40 hours)**

During this rotation, students promote good health and wellness to school age children, adolescents, college students, adults and/or the elderly through nutrition education. Students learn

how to create a series of lessons while learning how to interact and appropriately educate a culturally diverse population. These lessons are to be taught to groups or classes.

#### **6. Outpatient MNT Rotation (96 hours)**

Outpatient MNT builds on the skills developed in the MNT I Rotation. In this rotation, students practice the Nutrition Care Process with patients who are being seen in an outpatient setting. These patients have disease states or conditions impacted by diet. Students also prepare and present case study reports to become skillful in investigating and discussing these disease states and conditions in professional settings.

#### **7. Inpatient MNT I Rotation (160 hours)**

Inpatient MNT I is the first rotation where students practice the Nutrition Care Process (NCP) for MNT in an inpatient setting. Students practice the Nutrition Care Process with populations that have general disease states or conditions impacted by diet, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and gastrointestinal disorders. Students also prepare and present case study reports to become skillful in investigating and discussing these disease states and conditions in professional settings.

#### **8. Inpatient MNT II Rotation (200 hours)**

Inpatient MNT II is the second rotation where students practice the Nutrition Care Process (NCP) for MNT in an inpatient setting. Students practice NCP with populations with complex disease states or conditions that require significant nutrition intervention such as renal disease, multisystem organ failure, hepatic disease, and nutrition support. Students also prepare and present case study reports to become skillful in investigating and discussing these disease states and conditions in professional settings.

#### **9. Specialty Concentration Rotation (96 hours)**

The Specialty Concentration provides opportunity for students to gain further experience and depth in a nutrition area of personal interest. The available options may vary annually depending on the availability of sites. The primary learning objective is for students to demonstrate an understanding and to work independently in the area of nutrition that they are most interested in practicing post-graduation. Before beginning the rotation, students will select their area of concentration with the advice and consent of the program director and internship coordinators:

- Private Practice
- Corporate Wellness
- Integrative and Functional Medicine
- Transplant
- Sports Nutrition
- Food Service Management
- Public Health Nutrition
- Gastrointestinal Disorders
- Renal
- Disordered Eating
- Developmental disabilities
- Research
- Weight Management
- Bariatric Surgery
- Geriatrics
- Others as defined by internship coordinators

### **Dietetics as Your Chosen Career**

As a recipient of this handbook, you have chosen the field of dietetics to be your career choice. What does this choice mean for you once your studies are over? The following section of this handbook is designed to answer some of the questions that new graduates from a CP often have such as: What is a dietitian? What employment opportunities are available for RDN's? Why should I become an RDN? What are the steps involved in becoming an RDN?

RDNs are food and nutrition experts who have met the following criteria to earn the RDN Credential:

- Completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree at a US regionally accredited university or college and course work approved by ACEND.
  - \* Note: effective January 1, 2024, a minimum of a master's degree is required to be eligible to take the credentialing exam.
- Completed an ACEND-accredited SP program at a healthcare facility, community agency, and/or a foodservice corporation, or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies.
- Passed a national examination administered by CDR.
- Once registered, RDNs must complete continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration.

Some RDNs hold additional certifications in specialized areas of nutrition practice, such as pediatric, renal, geriatric, nutrition support, and diabetes education. These certifications are awarded through CDR, the credentialing agency for AND. Other medical and nutrition organizations may provide certification and are recognized within the profession, but are not required (e.g., ASPEN). In addition to RDN credentialing, many states have regulatory laws including [mandatory licensure](#) for dietitians and nutrition practitioners. Frequently these state requirements are met through the same education and training required to become an RDN. In California, additional State-level Licensure is not required.

The certification as a RDN signifies to other health professionals and consumers that the individuals providing nutritional care meet the standards of the CDR.

For more information regarding the career path to [become a RDN](#), please visit the AND website.

### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RDNs**

RDNs work in a wide variety of employment settings, including health care, business and industry, public health, education, research, and private practice. Examples of employment opportunities include: clinical dietitian as part of a hospital or other health care team, Food Service Systems Manager, Sports Nutrition or Wellness Program Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Consumer Affair Spokesperson, Community or Public Health Nutritionist, Nutrition Research Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Program Development and many more!

#### **Reasons for Becoming an RDN:**

Being a RDN is a competitive advantage in securing an employment position. Many work environments, particularly those in medical and health care settings, require that a nutrition professional be credentialed as an RDN.