



USC Leonard Davis
School of Gerontology

COORDINATED PROGRAM IN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS STUDENT HANDBOOK



**Full-time On Campus,
Full-Time and Part-Time Distance
Master of Science in
Nutrition, Healthspan, and Longevity**

USC Leonard Davis
School of Gerontology

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, 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 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).¹ 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 Laura Kauffman, MS, RD, CNSC.

As of January 1, 2024, the CDR now requires a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become an RDN. 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. Student graduation and RDN exam pass rates are available on request.

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

ACCREDITATION AND STEM 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. On March 30, 2023, USC MS NHL received STEM designed degree approval for graduates of the program.

ACEND will review complaints that relate to a program's compliance with the accreditation and 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 or a DPD verification statement, and completion of the prerequisite table posted on the Webpage.

To expose applicants to the various roles of RDNs in practice, applicants will also be required as a pre-requisite to complete at least 40 hours of paid or volunteer work experience shadowing one or more RDNs. A written summary under 1,000 words describing the various roles of dietitian and the applicant's experience with one or more RDNs must be submitted with the application along with an original letter or signature from the RDN(s) confirming the 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 via Zoom with members of the Program Advisory Board, including the Program Director, Internship Coordinators, Faculty 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 12.

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

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

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 for the MSNHL program, electronic degree application requirements and assemble required documents.
4. Applicants must complete all prerequisite requirements prior to applying to the program. Any remaining prerequisites must be completed no later than the first day of the Fall semester. Admission to the program is conditional upon successful completion of all prerequisite courses with a grade of C or higher. **No credit is accepted for prior graduate courses taken at other colleges or universities.**
5. Speak with Admission Counselor Jazmin Dizon (jazmindi@usc.edu) or the Program Director as needed to review academic preparation and assess pre-requisite completion.
6. Applicants to the CP must complete **two separate applications**:
 - a. The **USC Graduate Application** (application fee: \$90)
 - i. Submit via: <https://gradadm.usc.edu/>
 - b. The **DICAS Application**, using the centralized internship application system
 - i. Submit via: <https://dicas.cas.myliaison.com/applicant-ux/#/login>
 - ii. DICAS fees: \$50 for the first program designation and \$25 for each additional designation
 - iii. For more information, visit the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) website.

Both the USC Graduate Application **and** the DICAS Application must be **completed and submitted by January 15th** to be considered for admission.

- 7. Submit a request for financial aid and scholarships on or before January 15th 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 in early February.
- 10. Program acceptance will be announced by March 1st.
- 11. Applicants must notify the school of their decision by March 15th.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The USC Financial Aid Office provides information as well as staff support to assist students seeking financial aid. Students are encouraged to apply for financial aid once the application for admission has been submitted. Graduate students must meet the May 15th deadline and all eligibility requirements to be considered for financial aid. Applications received after this date are considered for [Federal Direct](#) 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](#).

Federal financial aid adjustments can be made on a case-by-case basis when a student has academic expenses beyond the standard costs as calculated by USC. A budget appeal may be requested to cover the costs of study abroad Maymester course. Students must submit a letter on USC letterhead, signed by the School of Gerontology, to the financial aid office. Students can contact Sara Robinson at sararobi@usc.edu for the necessary documentation of expected expenses to support the appeal request. For more information, go to the following webpage: <https://financialaid.usc.edu/graduates/continuing/special-circumstances.html>

*Additional requested expenses must be incurred while completing a degree program and related to the required courses. Therefore, requests for RD exam study materials or exam fees will not be approved.

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:

- At least 80% of full-time students complete program requirements within 3 years (150% of planned program length).
- At least 80% of part-time students complete program requirements within four and a half years (150% of planned program length).
- The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%.
- At least 80% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.
- Of graduates who seek employment, at least 75% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.
- At least 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:

- At least 60% of graduates will rate their use of research evidence in providing nutrition services across the lifespan as "Frequent Use" in an alumni survey.
- At least 40% of graduates will indicate they are preceptors in an alumni survey.

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, B₁₂ 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.

Abbreviations:

KRDN = Core Knowledge

CRDN = Practice Competencies

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**

<u>Prerequisite - Required Undergraduate non-Science Courses</u>		
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
<u>Prerequisite - Required Undergrad Nutrition-Related Courses</u>		
1. Basic Human Nutrition	2 units	GERO 411; HP 230; HBIO 302L
2. Introductory Food Science/Experimental Foods	3 units	BISC 115Lgx (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
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
Total: 44 units		

Courses are completed as written in the 2-year and 3-year course schedules. Each student will register for GERO 591 - SP beginning the second semester given the first semester GPA for each course completed is ≥ 3.0 . Students must take SP, 2 or 4 units (GERO 591) each semester for a total of 10 units (1,000 hours).

²Substitute courses may be offered.

**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**

Units Fall Year 1

- 2 GERO - 513 – Fundamentals of Nutrition: Macronutrients
- 4 GERO - 515L – Food Production & Food Services Management with Lab
- Total Units: 6**

Units Spring Year 1

- 4 GERO - 560 – Micronutrients, Health and Longevity
- 4 GERO - 593 – Research Methods
- Total Units: 8**

Units Summer Year 1 or Year 2

- 4 GERO - 498 – Nutrition, Genes, Longevity and Diseases
- Total Units: 4**

Units Fall Year 2

- 4 GERO - 511 – Fundamentals of Clinical Nutrition Screening and Assessment
- 2 GERO - 512 – Communicating Nutrition and Health
- Total Units: 6**

Units Spring Year 2

- 4 GERO - 517L – Advanced Therapeutic Nutrition with Lab
- 2 GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
- Total Units: 6**

Units Summer Year 2

- 2 GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
- Total Units: 2**

Units Fall Year 3

- 4 GERO - 518 – Current Topics in Clinical Nutrition: Healthspan and Longevity
- 2 GERO - 591 – (200 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
- Total Units: 6**

Units Spring Year 3

- 2 GERO - 590 – Directed Research
- 4 GERO - 591 – (400 hours) Field Practicum - Supervised Practice
- Total Units: 6**

Degree Total Units: 44 Units

ESTIMATED PROGRAM EXPENSES *

Item	Estimated Cost to Complete the Program	Cost Detail
Graduate Application fee & Tuition	\$ 90 Application \$ 2,244 per unit \$ 92,004*-98,736 (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 tuition . *Units 15 to 18 are typically covered by flat-rate tuition, provided your combined spring and Maymester enrollment does not exceed 18 units. This allows you to save 3 units of Maymester tuition.
Housing, on-campus w/ partial meal plan & optional parking	\$10,832-\$15,492 for 2 semesters	Housing Fees
GERO 498 study abroad expenses in Genoa, Italy (optional)	\$1,900-\$3,000	Roundtrip flight to Genoa, room and board, and travel within Italy. Approximately \$1,200-\$2,000 for the flight and \$700-\$1,000 for room and board.
Physical exam and vaccinations; flu shot	\$0-\$20	Required for SP; cost varies by health insurance plan; no charge under student health insurance
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-\$50	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	\$0-\$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 \$44 total	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 \$10-25 each	Students are strongly encouraged to 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 Flame resistant pants, recommended	\$30-\$50 \$40-\$50	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.
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

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students 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 Brightspace. Distance students will need to video and/or audio record class presentations/assignments and submit into Brightspace. Students will be trained in 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 Brightspace, a password-protected portal. Brightspace also employs Turn-It-In for papers submitted through Brightspace to assess plagiarism. Student presentations will be delivered live or recorded via video to ensure identity (distance students). All students will be required to use EXXAT for storage and retrieval of documents. Before 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. Hospital or facility orientation is scheduled by the preceptor with the student. Students are instructed to contact their preceptor prior to the 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 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, students should work closely with their preceptor regarding scheduling issues. **In addition, 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 ([Fact Sheet #71 Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#)).

2. **GERO 591 Registration Policy**

All students enrolled in the CP must be officially registered for **GERO 591: Field Practicum** each semester in which they are completing supervised practice hours. This course supports documentation of competencies and hours required for ACEND accreditation.

Students are responsible for monitoring USC's **Add/Drop deadlines** posted by the Registrar's Office each term. Students **must be enrolled by the published USC registration deadline** for each semester. Students who are not registered by the deadline will be **prohibited from beginning or continuing** their internship placement for that term. Missed hours due to failure to register may delay graduation.

For more information, visit the [Office of Academic Records and Registrar](#) website.

3. 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 the USC holidays. Schedules will be presented to students in advance to allow for adequate coordination.

Course instructors may announce class cancellations or changes to 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 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 three months in advance to request an excuse 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 Coordinators, 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. Students must contact the University Office of Academic Records and Registrar if they need to take an academic leave of absence.

4. 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](#).

5. 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.

Outside of SP rotation, any presentation at any type of event (whether in person or virtually) or materials developed must be reviewed by MS NHL administration. Students represent the university as well as the MS NHL program and information disseminated must be evidence-based. If a student is requested to give a presentation or develop materials as an individual and will not be identifying oneself as a USC student, MS NHL review is not required.

6. 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 the [USC Student Records P&P](#) is followed. The Program Director will work with the School and the University Administration to ensure 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 from 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 Coordinators will maintain documentation of all student records pertaining to SP including completed assignments, preceptor evaluation forms, hours of verification, etc.

7. Student Counseling and Resources Provided by the University

Assuring that students can 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 support for students that can be accessed through the [University of Southern California's 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.

8. 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 and must be kept up to date. This is critical because students are not employees of these operations and thus are not covered by Workers' Compensation.

9. 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 Workers' Compensation at SP sites.**

10. 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. These policies last 1 year and must be updated before the Spring of the students' second year. 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.

11. 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:** Not all clinical sites accept exemption waivers. 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, TB blood tests (IGRAs) or 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.

12. 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 complete. 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.

13. 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 on site. 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.

14. 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 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.

USC works with a variety of sites, some of which have religious affiliations. These sites may have additional rules regarding attire or other physical attributes, such as the presence of tattoos. These rules are outside of the university's control and must be followed.

15. Professionalism during Supervised Practice Rotations

Students are expected to dress in professional attire and in accordance with the requirements of their SP site. Generally, attire is business casual. Lab coats or scrubs can be used if allowed in the clinical facility. The following attire is not allowed: jeans, revealing clothing, form-fitting leggings/yoga pants, shorts, short skirts, sheer fabric, bare midriffs, athletic wear, and flip flops. In food service establishments, shoes must be closed toed and closed heels. Hair must be pulled back in a restraint and covered with hairnet or other hair covering while in production or service areas. Facial hair must be covered while working in food production or service areas. Fingernails must be kept short and clean, and no artificial nails are permitted. If fingernail polish is worn, then food service gloves will be required. Preceptors have the right to determine if the attire worn is consistent with the organization's dress code.

Students **may not** engage in personal relationships with preceptors or anyone serving in the client/patient role for the duration of the SP rotation. This includes, but is not limited to, patients, students, student athletes, professional athletes, and other dietitians or management at the SP site. Maintaining professional boundaries is essential to uphold ethical standards and protect the integrity of the learning environment.

16. Liability for Safety in Travel

Students are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from all off-campus activities, including supervised practice (SP) rotations, field trips, and professional meetings. Throughout the program, students may be assigned to facilities outside the Los Angeles area.

It is strongly recommended that students have access to reliable personal transportation, as many rotation sites are not accessible via public transit. Students who anticipate relying on public transportation must notify the Internship Coordinators upon acceptance into the program. However, proximity of sites to students' homes and accessibility to public transportation to SP facilities **cannot** be guaranteed.

In some cases, students may be required to use their personal vehicles during supervised practice. Students are fully responsible for maintaining valid automobile insurance. The university assumes no liability for damage, loss, or injury incurred by the student or any third party while commuting or traveling as part of the program.

17. 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 students, 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 up-to-date 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 the ACEND Review Team at Accreditation Reviews.

18. Conflict Resolution During Supervised Practice

Situations may arise during SP rotations where conflict resolution is required. The following procedures should be followed:

1. If possible, communicate your concerns to your preceptor in a respectful manner.
2. If your concerns are not addressed, contact the Program Manager, Jeannie Wakamatsu, and Program Administrator, Laura Kauffman.
3. The following information will be requested:
 - a. Detailed description of incident(s) including dates, times, and witnesses if possible.
 - b. Names of other individuals involved.
 - c. Actions that have been taken since the incident(s).
4. Site preceptor(s) may be contacted to obtain the same information.
5. A decision will be made with the preceptor and/or student as to the next steps.

In the event of a conflict, students should always maintain professionalism. It is important to understand that the work setting combines numerous personalities and communication styles, and a difference of opinions may arise. USC MS NHL staff will acquire the necessary information from both sides to assist in making the best decision.

Should the situation arise where it is decided that the student will not continue with the rotation, the following will be done:

1. Request for preceptor to approve the students' hours at the site that have been completed.
2. Complete an evaluation regarding the students' progress.
3. Should additional hours be required, or if competencies were not met, internship coordinators will look for a new site placement. It should be noted that placements will be dependent on availability and may delay the student's graduation date.

19. 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 in 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.

20. 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 complete an exam consisting of questions that reflect the format and content of the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) exam, covering material delivered during the previous academic year.

The purpose of this exam is to:

- a) Assess student understanding and progress toward meeting established ACEND competencies
- b) Prepare students for the RDN registration examination

Results from the exam, along with supervised practice evaluations and didactic course grades, will be used as part of a comprehensive assessment of student progress in the program.

Formal evaluations are completed at the end of the semester. GERO 591 are classes graded credit or no-credit based upon in-class participation, assignments, preceptor evaluations, and SP 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.

21. 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. [Past Capstone Projects](#) can be reviewed on our website.

Full-time CP students are expected to complete the 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 at USC is five years. An academic unit may grant an extension of up to one year at a time for a maximum of two years. Under extenuating circumstances, master's students may be granted extensions beyond seven years. This will, however, 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.

22. Verification Statement Procedures

Upon completion of the master's degree with the conferral of a diploma, the Program Director issues the CP students with a Verification Statement indicating successful completion of the required 1,000-hour experience and degree completion. Students must submit to the Program Director their final official transcript. Once all student transcripts have been received, the Program Director will submit the verification statements and transcripts 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.

23. International Student

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.

24. 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 accommodation 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. Accommodation should not alter the fundamental academic or professional standards of the course or program. **A request for accommodation 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 accommodation.**

25. Equal Opportunity and Title IX

For up-to-date policies regarding Title IX, refer to the [Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#). For more information, please see the [University of Southern California's Student Handbook](#) and visit the EEO-TIX website.

26. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

All students are required to complete training on the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) as a condition of participation in the program. Students are obligated to comply with all applicable federal and state laws, as well as the policies and procedures established by the university and any affiliated supervised practice facilities, to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and security of individuals' Protected Health Information (PHI).

In the event that a student or program administrator identifies a potential HIPAA violation, a formal report detailing the incident shall be documented, and appropriate investigative and corrective actions may be initiated per institutional policy and applicable law.

Students who have questions or require clarification regarding HIPAA compliance obligations shall promptly consult with the Program Director and/or Internship Coordinators.

27. 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 Internship Coordinators, 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. To begin SP in the second semester of the program, students must complete the first semester of full-time study with a grade of **3.0 or B- or greater in every course** completed. 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.

28. 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](#) for the deadline to drop/withdraw classes. To be considered for re-application, the student must submit a written letter to the CP Director stating the reason for withdrawal. This document will be placed in the student file for future reference and ACEND accreditation reviewers.

Students may only receive a refund of tuition and fees if courses are dropped before the refund deadline. It is a student's responsibility to officially withdraw from any class that the student is not attending. Informing the academic department or the course instructor does

not constitute withdrawal from the course. All withdrawals must be processed by Web Registration or through the Registrar One Stop Center. Tuition refund insurance is available that provides full coverage for tuition and mandatory fees (excluding health insurance) if students suffer a serious illness or accident that makes it necessary for them to leave the university before the semester is completed. For more information, please go to the [USC Tuition and Fees](#) webpage.

SP ROTATIONS (GERO 591)

Students will complete nine 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 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.

Evaluations: Preceptors may 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 may have sign-in privileges to EXXAT.

SECURING SP ROTATIONS

All distance students in both the full-time and part-time tracks must secure facilities and preceptors for 8 of the 9 SP rotations on their own. SP rotations are listed and described on page 31. 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.

SP Preceptor Requirements for Distance Students

1. Full-time distance students must secure preceptors for the first TWO (2) SP rotations (retail food service or community and nutrition education) prior to the start of the first semester.
2. 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.

Locating Preceptors

1. Students are responsible for contacting and securing qualified preceptors in advance. Students will need to take information about the program to potential sites.
2. Students may need to travel outside their immediate community to fulfill rotation requirements, as not all areas will offer access to all types of sites.
3. Some organizations may provide SP experience for more than one rotation, and students may work with different preceptors within the same facility.

Stipends and Employment Considerations

1. In general, internship hours cannot be paid, but students may receive a stipend (i.e., fellowships).
2. Students may be able to complete SP hours at their current employment site, as long as internship hours are clearly separated from paid hours and approved by the program.

Credentialing Documentation

1. To ensure appropriate supervision and credentialing, the program requires a current CV/resume for all preceptors, including credentials, areas of practice and certifications.

Resources for Finding Preceptors

1. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) has assembled a nationwide list of [potential preceptors](#) on their website. All students accepted into the CP will be strongly encouraged to join AND and their state dietetic association as a student member.
2. Students can also use online searches (e.g., Google) to search for local hospitals, community nutrition programs, schools, colleges, and universities.
3. Attendance and involvement in national, state and local dietetic associations is also a potential source of contact for RDNs.

Preparing for Preceptor Meetings

1. When preparing to meet with potential preceptors:
 - a. Share your EXXAT profile with the prospective site.
 - b. Bring printed materials about the program, including:

- i. Overview of rotation expectations
 - ii. Outline of the role of the preceptor
 - iii. Your resume
- c. Dress professionally and be prepared to clearly explain your goals and internship structure.
- d. Always follow up with a thank-you email or note after the meeting.
- 2. If the potential preceptor wishes to speak with the Internship Coordinators or the CP Director, students can share the contact information for Jeannie Wakamatsu, Laura Kauffman, and/or Dr. Kreutzer (pg. 2).

SELECTION CRITERIA AND EVALUATION PROCESS OF SUPERVISED PRACTICE SITES

Selection Criteria: All supervised practice sites must:

- 1. Offer experiences aligned with ACEND-required competencies.
- 2. Serve a relevant patient/client population.
- 3. Provide qualified preceptors noted under Preceptor Requirements by Rotation section)
- 4. Ensure access to necessary resources (ex: EHR, learning materials, workspace)
- 5. Meet legal and institutional requirements (ex: HIPAA, signed active affiliation agreement)

Evaluation Process:

- 1. Students complete site evaluation forms, which are reviewed by Internship Coordinators.
- 2. Preceptors complete mid-point and/or final rotation evaluations, which are reviewed by Internship Coordinators and compared to ACEND required competencies.
- 3. Exit interviews are conducted as needed to obtain additional information about sites and student experiences.
- 4. Sites are reviewed annually by Internship Coordinators to determine continued relationship.

PRECEPTOR REQUIREMENTS BY ROTATION

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. May include RDNs, nurses, social workers, non-profit program directors, community leaders, or teachers.

Nutrition Education

Professionals experienced in teaching nutrition education and mentoring educators. May include RDNs as well as other specialists such as nurses, first aid instructors, teachers, public health educators or coaches. Examples of preceptors: a 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, supervisor, or other production manager. Preceptor might be a certified chef or certified dietary manager (CDM).

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

SP Rotations	Facility Options
Community/Nutrition Education	Women, Infants, and 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.

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 extensions based on the original agreement's expiration date. 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 (minimum 60 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.

2. Retail/Institutional Foodservice, Production and Management (120 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.

3. Inpatient Foodservice, Production and Management Rotation (120 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)

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)

Specialty Concentration provides the 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.

- 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
- Pediatrics
- 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 master's degree at a US regionally accredited university or college and course work approved by ACEND.
- 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 an RDN](#), please visit the AND website. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics is available [here](#).

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 an 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.