



# Didactic Program in Dietetics Student Handbook

(Fall 2020)

Revised August 2020

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

*2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)*

SHARPENING INTELLECT    DEEPENING CHRISTIAN FAITH    INSPIRING ACTION



# The Messiah University Didactic Program in Dietetics Student Handbook

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**Distribution:** This manual will be given to new Nutrition and Dietetics majors by their academic adviser. Students should sign the back page. The bottom should be placed in the student's advising file. Students should keep their copy in their advising folder.

# MESSIAH UNIVERSITY DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS

## MISSION, GOALS, AND OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

Mission: to prepare students for supervised practice leading to eligibility for the CDR credentialing exam to become a registered dietitian and for other careers related to food and nutrition. Graduates will serve and lead with excellence as they provide food and nutrition services grounded in current evidence and Biblical principles.

Goal 1: To prepare graduates to succeed in dietetic internships, graduate school or entry level jobs in nutrition and dietetics or related professional settings.

|   |
|---|
| 1.1 At least 80% of program students complete program/degree requirements within 3 years. (150% of program length)*   |
| 1.2 At least 60% of program graduates apply for admission to a supervised practice program within 12 months of graduation.  |
| 1.3. At least 80% of graduates who apply to ACEND-accredited dietetic internships within 12 months of graduation are accepted.  |
| 1.4. At least 50% of program graduates are admitted to a supervised practice program within 12 months of graduation.  |
| 1.5 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%. |
| 1.6 At least 80% of graduates are employed in a professional setting related to nutrition and dietetics or enrolled in a postgraduate education program one year after program completion.  |
| 1.7 The overall preparation of at least 80% of graduates is rated as good or excellent by supervised practice program directors.  |
| 1.8. The overall preparation of at least 80% of graduates is rated as good or excellent by work supervisors.  |

\*students progress into the last 2 years of the program after completing the prerequisite courses and meeting the GPA criteria.

Goal 2: To prepare graduates who demonstrate professional development, leadership, teamwork, and community service.

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| 2.1 At least 75% of the graduates who complete the Senior Exit Survey rate the achievement of this goal as "Good" or "Excellent."  |
| 2.2 At least 80% the graduates who complete the Alumni Survey rate the program's achievement of this goal as "Good" or "Excellent."  |
| 2.3 At least 75% of graduates who complete the Alumni Survey report some form of continuing professional development (internship, graduate school, other professional certification, professional meetings, etc.). |
| 2.4 At least 65% of graduates who complete the Alumni Survey report participation in   |

some form of community service.

2.5 At least 80% of the employers, graduate school advisers, or internship directors who return the Alumni Supervisor Survey rate the commitment of graduates to professional development and leadership as “Good” or “Excellent.”

2.6 At least 80% of the employers, graduate school advisers, or internship directors who return the Alumni Supervisor Survey rate commitment of graduates to teamwork and community service as “Good” or “Excellent”.

Outcome data for the program objectives is calculated each year based on the past three years and are available upon request

## THE NUTRITION AND DIETETICS MAJOR AND THE RDN AND NDTR CREDENTIALS

The Nutrition and Dietetics major opens the door to a variety of careers in food manufacturing, food service, community health, and medical nutrition. Many work environments, particularly those in the health care field, require that an individual be credentialed as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RD or RDN) to practice nutrition care. To earn the RD credential an individual must complete a three-step process:

1. Complete a minimum of a bachelor’s degree at a US regionally accredited university or university and course work approved by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. (Beginning in 2024 new RDs will be required to complete at least a master’s degree.)
2. Complete an ACEND-accredited dietetic internship, individualized supervised practice pathway (ISPP) or master’s degree. These programs are usually offered by health care facilities, community agencies, foodservice corporations, or educational institutions and are 9 - 24 months in length. (Note: some universities and universities offer a “Coordinated Program” which combines steps 1 and 2. Messiah does not offer this type of program.)
3. Pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR).



The Messiah University Didactic Program in Dietetics is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Drive, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, <http://www.eatright.org/ACEND>

The Messiah University Nutrition and Dietetics major curriculum is accredited by ACEND as a Didactic Program in Dietetics and enables students to complete the first step towards becoming a Registered Dietitian. Graduates of the Messiah University Nutrition and Dietetics program who wish to become Registered Dietitians apply to a ACEND-accredited supervised practice program (Step 2). After successful completion of a supervised practice program, they are eligible to take the national registration exam (Step 3). In addition, individuals who successfully complete the Messiah University Nutrition and Dietetics major are eligible to take the national nutrition and dietetics technician, registered (NDTR) exam.

Effective January 1, 2024, the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) will require a minimum of a master’s degree to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). In addition, CDR requires that individuals complete coursework and supervised practice in program(s) accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Graduates who successfully complete the ACEND accredited didactic program in dietetics at Messiah University are eligible to apply to an ACEND accredited supervised practice program. For more information about educational pathways to become an RDN please visit <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/students-and-advancing-education/information-for-students>

Graduates who do not begin ACEND approved supervised practice programs after graduation are employable as dietetic technicians in health care institutions and businesses, nutrition counselors in community nutrition programs, and food service managers in health care institutions, schools, and industry. Additionally, graduates may choose to continue their education by applying to graduate school in areas such as nutrition science, public health, nutrition education, or international nutrition.

For additional information on dietetics education contact ACEND at: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995, [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

## LOCATING UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

| Policy or procedure                  | Location  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Academic Calendar                    | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Academic Policies*                   | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Academic Integrity                   | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a>                                      |
| Access to personal files and privacy | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a>                                      |
| University Code of Conduct           | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a>                                      |

| Policy or procedure                 | Location  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Disciplinary/Termination procedures | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a>                                      |
| Graduation requirements             | <a href="#">University Catalog</a> for the year you entered Messiah   |
| Grading policies                    | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Grievance Procedures                | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a>                                      |
| University Honors Program           | <a href="#">University Catalog</a>                                    |
| Repeating coursework                | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Privacy of information              | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Sexual Harassment                   | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a>                                      |
| Student Support Services            |   |
| Health and Counseling Center        | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Disabilities Services               | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Financial Aid                       | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |
| Withdrawal and refunds              | <a href="#">Student Handbook</a> , <a href="#">University Catalog</a> |

### \*A REMINDER ABOUT REPEATING COURSEWORK

In accordance with university policy, courses repeated at other universities and universities do not impact a student's Messiah University GPA, though they may be used for the purposes of the Nutrition and Dietetics Progression Requirements and for Dietetic Internship applications. Messiah University policy is that students may repeat Messiah University courses for which a grade of less than a C- is earned in order to improve their Messiah GPA. Courses must be repeated at Messiah University. If a course is repeated, both grades will remain on the transcript, but only the later grade will count for calculating the cumulative GPA. Students wishing to repeat a Messiah University course for which a grade of C- or better was earned at Messiah University should complete an academic appeal. When repeating a course for which academic credit has already been received, remember that the repeated credits will not count again towards the total number of credits needed for graduation.

## DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS POLICIES

### ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING



Student learning will be assessed by exams and assignments during and at the end of each course. However, much of the content of the upper level courses depends on students' ability to retain and use information gained in prerequisite courses. At several points in the curriculum students will be provided with review activities to assess and reinforce retention of key information. Periodically, copies of student work will be saved (with the student's name removed) to enable the program to document assessment of student learning.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Messiah University Student Handbook states that punctual and regular attendance at classes is expected except when a student is prevented from doing so by illness, death in the family, or a similar emergency. The specific policy for class attendance and completion of assignments for courses in the Nutrition and Dietetics Major is as follows:

- Attendance at lectures and labs is the responsibility of the student. Students are expected to make every effort to attend class (weather and health permitting). When you miss a class, it will be up to you to make arrangements to get copies of notes, handouts, assignments, instructions or any other material covered on that day. Unannounced quizzes or other in-class activities for which points are given cannot be made up.
- If you know in advance that you are going to miss a class because of a personal commitment (such as a wedding) on a day when an exam is scheduled or an assignment is due, you must inform the instructor two weeks prior to your absence. Assignments are expected to be handed in in advance. Make-up exams will be considered by the instructor on an individual basis.
- If you must miss a lab because of illness\*, personal emergency or to participate in a scheduled athletic event, notify your instructor in advance if possible. Make up labs will be considered by the instructor on an individual basis. For excused absences, arrangements will be made either for a make-up lab or an outside assignment. Except in extraordinary circumstances, a maximum of two make-up labs will be allowed. If you miss more than two labs, no points will be given for make-up work but you will be responsible for the information.
- Students who are late to lab or leave lab early may miss significant experiences or place an unfair burden on lab partners. Instructors may deduct points from the lab reports of students who arrive late or leave early.
- Athletes who must miss classes for participation in events are required to furnish their instructor at the beginning of the semester with a copy of the schedule of games or meets and the name of their coach. The instructor will work with athletes individually to make up work missed.

\*It is up to you to decide when you are too ill to attend a class or lab. You are expected to use good judgment about this; we do not want you to be in class when it would be better for you

(and your classmates) if you stay in bed. On the other hand, it isn't honorable to state you were ill when you weren't really sick.

### ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Assignments are typically due at the start of class. Assignments turned in on the day they are due but after the time they are due will lose 5% of the grade. Assignments turned in after the date they are due will receive a penalty of 10% of the grade for each day late. If a student is unexpectedly absent from class, e-mailed assignments (when appropriate) will be accepted without penalty if they are sent before the start of class. In addition, assignments should be handed in in the format specified. Generally, multiple page assignments must be stapled together. Unstapled assignments (or those which are not handed in in the specified format) will receive a 5% penalty.

### CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Students are encouraged to discuss concerns about faculty or class procedures directly with the individual involved. However, we recognize that this is not always possible due to concerns about retaliation. If this is a concern, students are encouraged to bring their concerns to the chair of the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Science or to the Dean of the School of Science, Engineering, and Health. The Messiah University policy for grade appeals is found in the student handbook.

Students are encouraged to discuss concerns about the Didactic Program in Dietetics policies and procedures and/or ACEND accreditation standards with their academic adviser. If the concern is not addressed to the student's satisfaction, the student should submit a written explanation of the concern or complaint to the DPD Director. The student and DPD director will meet to discuss the matter, and the results of the meeting will be documented and copies provided to the student. If the concern cannot be resolved, the student and chair will meet with the Chair of the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Science (HNES). If the concern cannot be resolved at the department level the student and HNES chair will meet with the Dean of the School of Science, Engineering, and Health.

Students should submit unresolved complaints related to ACEND standards to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND, [acend@eatright.org](mailto:acend@eatright.org)) only after all program and institutional options have been exhausted.

### COURSE SCHEDULING PROCEDURE (FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS)

Many courses in the Nutrition and Dietetics major have required prerequisites. In addition, a number of the junior-senior level courses are offered every other year. Course prerequisites and scheduling (i.e. fall only, spring only, semester taught if every other year) are listed in the course catalog. In addition, course scheduling templates are available on the Nutrition and Dietetics web site. Careful attention to course planning is necessary to ensure that all required courses can be completed on time.

The class schedule for a given semester is generally provided to students a few weeks before class registration begins. Once the class schedule has been released, students should schedule an appointment with their academic adviser. Students should use the DegreeWorks software as well as the course scheduling templates and the class schedule to create a tentative class schedule and bring these materials to the advising appointment. Students who do not bring these materials to their advising appointments will be asked to reschedule. At the appointment course progress and the semester plan will be reviewed. Registration advising appointments are required in order to sign up for classes.

#### DISCIPLINARY/TERMINATION PROCEDURE

The university-wide procedures for various disciplinary and academic infractions will be observed by the Didactic Program in Dietetics. These procedures are described in the [Messiah University Student Handbook](#).

#### FOOD TASTING POLICY

To be effective, foods and nutrition professionals need to be involved in the taste testing of a wide variety of foods. Accordingly, individuals studying to be foods and nutrition professionals need to taste small amounts of many foods as they learn the knowledge and skills they will need to serve others. Students in Messiah University classes that are part of the Nutrition and Dietetics major or the Foods and Nutrition minor are encouraged to set aside their personal preferences and taste small amounts of foods to be evaluated for class assignments. Students with medical (for example lactose intolerance or food allergy) or religious (for example avoidance of meat on Friday) food restrictions or with strong personal food preferences (for example vegetarianism) should discuss their food restrictions with their instructor during the first week of the semester.

#### FOODS LAB USE POLICY

The Foods Laboratory located in Jordan 63 is an academic facility used primarily by the Didactic Program in Dietetics. The laboratory is equipped with kitchen appliances and tools that are used for food preparation and experimentation in Food Science and Nutrition (NUTR) courses. A primary concern is to maintain the security of the laboratory and to insure that the equipment is used appropriately and with care.

Any use of the Foods Laboratory, including the appliances and other equipment, for purposes other than NUTR courses must be approved by the Director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics.

During any use of the Foods Lab, a responsible person employed by Messiah University must be present. Following are situations when the use of the Foods Laboratory **may** be approved.

1. A single session(s) of a Messiah University course involving an educational food-related activity.
2. Non-credit foods classes for Messiah University students and/or staff.
3. School of Science, Engineering, and Health (SEH) social activities (such as the Christmas Happening).
4. Student Nutrition Awareness Coalition (SNAC) preparation of food items for fund-raisers or service projects.

Food Laboratory use for the following purposes will not be approved:

1. Food preparation by groups for purposes not listed above.
2. Social gatherings that do not involve an educational component (except those sponsored by SEH)
3. Preparation and storage of personal food (except with permission of a Nutrition and Dietetics faculty member).

## GPA REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRESSION IN THE DIDACTIC PROGRAM IN DIETETICS

This policy applies to students in the Nutrition and Dietetics major as well as to students in the Nutrition Science major and students in the non-degree verification program. It is in effect for all students matriculating in the Fall 2010 semester and thereafter. Students who are unable to meet the progression criteria for the nutrition and dietetics will be unable to complete the nutrition and dietetics major, though completing the food and nutrition minor will be a possibility for them.

In order to progress in the Messiah University Didactic Program in Dietetics (to take Medical Nutrition I, Nutrient Metabolism and Research Methods I, and Nutrition Education and Counseling) students need to have completed the following courses with no grades lower than a C- and with an average GPA of at least 2.500 in them. Ideally, these courses will be completed by the end of the third semester. Students who have transferred in more than one course from this list will need to have achieved an average GPA of at least 2.750 in them.

**Repeat Policy for the progression GPA:** One course from the list may be repeated one time. An attempt at a course will include all letter grades as well as W, WP, and WF. Courses may be repeated at Messiah University or at other institutions. Courses taken at other institutions may be used to raise the progression GPA and on dietetic internship applications but will not influence a student's Messiah University GPA. Students receive credit for a course one time, so credits for repeated courses will not count towards the total number of credits needed for graduation. When extenuating circumstances arise (i.e. significant illness or death in the family), students may appeal this policy by submitting a written letter explaining the rationale for the exception to the

DPD Director. If the appeal is denied, the department decision may be appealed to the Chair of the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Science and then the Dean of the School of Science, Engineering, and Health.

Courses which determine the GPA for progression:

**CHEM 105:** General Chemistry I (4 credits, includes a lab)

**CHEM 106:** General Chemistry II (4 credits, includes a lab)

**CHEM 204:** Organic Chemistry (4 credits, includes a lab – students who take CHEM 309 and 310: Organic Chemistry I and II instead of CHEM 204 will have both courses count.)

**BIOL 185:** Human Anatomy and Physiology I (4 credits, includes a lab; if a student takes BIOL 160, 161, and 385 instead of BIOL 185 and 186, BIOL 160 will be used instead of BIOL 185).

**NUTR 121:** Food and Food Science (3 credits, includes a lab)

**NUTR 222:** Nutrition Theory (3 credits)

Student grades will be reviewed at the completion of three of the courses on this list. Typically, this will happen after the first two semesters and include CHEM 105, CHEM 106, and NUTR 121. Students who have less than a 2.5 cumulative GPA after three classes (less than a 2.75 for students who transfer one of these classes in) will be considered to be on probation as far as progression in the major is concerned. Students on probation related to DPD progression should consider the possibility that their talents may not be the best fit for the nutrition and dietetics major and should discuss progression in the major as well as other career options with their academic advisor.

## GRADUATION AND DPD VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation requirements for each major are found in the university catalog. The catalog in effect the year a student begins taking classes at Messiah University determines the graduation requirements unless changes to the curriculum are approved by each current student whose curriculum is affected by the change.

In order to receive a verification statement students must complete a Messiah University major (as described in the university catalog) including each of the following:

- IDST 101: First Year Seminar ( First year University Writing course)
- COMM 104 or 106: Oral Communications (A public speaking course)
- APHS 170: Concepts of Conditioning
- BIOL 185 and 186: Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II (both lab courses) or BIOL 160, 161, and 385

- BIOL 382: Microbiology
- CHEM 105 and 106: General Chemistry I and II (both lab courses)
- CHEM 204: Introduction to Organic Chemistry (with lab) or CHEM 309 and CHEM 310 (Organic Chemistry I and II with labs)
- PSYC 101: Introduction to Psychology
- STAT 269: Introductory Statistics
- HRM 120: Principles of Management
- NUTR 121: Food and Food Science
- NUTR 222: Nutrition Theory
- NUTR 099: Opportunities in Nutrition and Dietetics
- NUTR 322: Nutrition through the Life Cycle
- NUTR 331: Advanced Food Science and Technology
- NUTR 341: Food Service
- NUTR 352: Community Nutrition
- NUTR 410: Nutrition Education and Counseling
- NUTR 411 and 412: Medical Nutrition Therapy I and II
- NUTR 425 and 426: Nutrient Metabolism and Research Methods I and II
- NUTR 493: Senior Seminar in Nutrition and Dietetics

Students in the Non-Degree Academic verification program, who already have earned university degrees, need to satisfy the GPA required for progression into the upper level DPD courses, and to complete the courses above, earning at least a C- in each. In addition, at least 18 credits must be completed at Messiah University. Students who earn less than a C- in a course may repeat the course once.

To receive a verification statement, all NUTR courses at the 300 level or above must be completed with 5 years of program completion.

## HONORS IN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

The purpose of the Honors program is to encourage scholarly initiative and in-depth investigation within a limited area of nutrition and dietetics. Honors work provides a student with opportunities to plan and carry out scientific research under the direction of a faculty member. Skills are developed in literature review, research methods, analysis of results, and written and oral presentation of a research project.

### Overview

- 1) Nutrition and Dietetics majors who have attained at least a 3.5 overall GPA and a 3.8 GPA in their major courses at the end of the fall semester of their junior year may take NUTR 491 (Independent Study) during the spring of their junior year. If a student has completed NUTR 425 (Nutrient Metabolism and Research Methods I), one credit of NUTR 491 is required, and if NUTR 425 has not been completed 2 credits of NUTR 491 are required. In these courses students will work individually with a faculty mentor to develop a research or service learning project at the graduate level. A completed project proposal will be due on the last day of classes of the spring term. The proposal must be approved by the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Science faculty for continuation in the nutrition and dietetics honors program.
- 2) Students whose proposals are approved may enroll in a total of 4 - 5 credits of and/or NUTR 497, 498 during their senior year. Students must take at least two credits each semester of their senior year. To earn honors in Nutrition and Dietetics the student's work in NUTR 497 and 498 must merit a grade of A.

### Practical Guidelines

1. If you are interested in earning nutrition and dietetics honors or completing the University Honors Program Senior Honors Project in Nutrition and Dietetics, your first step is to talk with your academic advisor to make sure that you meet the criteria described below.
2. Individual faculty members work with only one or two honors students in any given year.
3. You are expected to develop your own idea for a project that interests you; however, your honors advisor must support your idea.
4. Honors projects do not have to be tied directly to the research work or interests of your honors advisor. You may be able to work on a project with someone at Hershey Medical Center, Hershey Foods, etc., although you will still need an Honors advisor in the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Science.
5. Remember that honors work is a privilege and is not for everyone; expectations and standards are high so will need to be highly motivated and you should expect to work hard. Your Honors advisor works with you only as an advisor and will not be doing any of the work on your project for you.

## Requirements and Procedures

1. To qualify for Honors in Nutrition and Dietetics, the student must have completed five semesters in the major and must have at least a 3.5 overall GPA and a 3.8 GPA in major courses.
2. Application for the Department Honors Program is made during the Fall semester of the junior year with assistance from the student's academic advisor. The application should include a statement of the reason for doing honors work, the area of research that the student wishes to pursue, and the name of the faculty member who will be the honors advisor. A statement from the honors advisor that he or she supports the application and is willing to act as the student's advisor must accompany the application. The application is presented to the Department by the student's academic advisor for approval.
3. If accepted into the Department Honors Program, the student begins by taking NUTR 491: Independent Study during Spring semester of the junior year to develop an honors project proposal. A thesis proposal is an important outcome of this course. This proposal must be approved by department faculty for continuation in the department honors program.
4. At least five major honors credits are taken in the senior year, 2-3 credits in Fall semester and 2-3 credits in Spring semester. This is when the actual research project is done. Students must receive departmental approval after the fall semester to continue their work during the spring semester. Recommendations for grades in honors courses and requests for approval for the student to continue in the honors program are presented to the Department by the student's honors advisor.
5. Students are expected to spend three hours per credit per week, or a total of 40 hours per credit per semester, doing honors work. Procedures for keeping time logs, laboratory notebooks, etc. will be worked out with the Honors advisor.
6. University policy specifies that only the grades of A and B carry credit in honors courses. In the event the student receives less than an A, but at least a B in NUTR 497, the student may continue to do research (with their faculty mentor's support and department approval) by enrolling in NUTR 422 Senior Research.
7. After the research project is completed, the student is required to write a paper in the style and format established by the honors advisor. The student is also required to present a public seminar on the project. This will typically be done during the spring SEH research symposium.
8. If the student has earned a grade of A for all Honors work AND has maintained a GPA of 3.50 or above, he or she will receive Department Honors at graduation. In addition, Honors will be noted on the final transcript and the diploma.



## COMPLETING THE UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM SENIOR PROJECT REQUIREMENT THROUGH A DEPARTMENT PROJECT OR DEPARTMENT HONORS

Students in the University Honors Program who wish to complete their University Honors Program Senior Honors Project requirement through a department project have two options:

1. Complete a Senior Project in Nutrition and Dietetics. This requires 1 – 2 credits of NUTR 491: Independent Study in the spring of the junior year to develop a project proposal. If a student has completed NUTR 425, one credit of NUTR 491 is required; and if a student has not yet completed NUTR 425, two credits of NUTR 491 are required. Following department approval of the project the student completes 3-5 credits of NUTR 422 Senior Research in the senior year. Total of 4-6 credits.
2. Complete Department Honors: This requires that a student have at least a 3.5 overall and 3.8 major GPA after 5 semesters of study. Student pursuing this option take 1 – 2 credits of NUTR 491: Independent Study in the spring of the junior year. If a student has completed NUTR 425, one credit of NUTR 491 is required; and if a student has not yet completed NUTR 425, two credits of NUTR 491 are required. Following department approval of the project the student completes 5 - 6 credits of NUTR 497, 498 Major in the senior year. A total of 6 - 8 credits is required to complete department honors.

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

**General Guidelines:** These guidelines apply to all types of recommendations. Please follow these as well as the guidelines for specific types of recommendations found on the following pages.

1. **Ask first:** Ask each recommender if they would feel comfortable writing you a strong letter of recommendation. If recommendations may be provided either electronically or on paper, ask which type of form your recommender prefers. Please ask even if you are just including a person's name on a job application form. Messiah nutrition and dietetics faculty will not provide a recommendation unless you have notified them that you have used their name.
2. **Pay attention** to the type of recommenders the program requires (Some require recommendations from professors or supervisors in specific areas.)
3. **Allow your recommender adequate time.** Provide your recommenders with the necessary information a minimum of two - three weeks before you need the completed recommendation. Be aware that university faculty are generally not on contract during the summer break and plan accordingly.
4. **Organize** the information the recommender needs to write you a strong recommendation and provide it to the individual writing your recommendation: purpose of recommendation, specific

information requested, date needed, person to send the recommendation to, and any other important directions. Many recommendation forms ask about your organization ability. Treat the request as an opportunity to demonstrate how well organized you are.

## Recommendations for Dietetic Internships and Graduate Schools

Many schools and programs require completion of a specific recommendation form.

1. Please follow the general directions section above. Prepare **one** typed request in memo form that gives the names of the programs to which you are applying and specific instructions on how the recommendations are to be done for each program. Include your resume (and for Messiah University faculty your application essay) with your memo. The memo can be provided in paper or e-mail.

*Please note – The essay you submit with your internship memo does not need to be your final draft, but it should be an example of your best writing. Messiah faculty are happy to provide assistance with internship essays in December and January, but not February. If you want assistance with your essay from a Messiah faculty member, please schedule an appointment in the first half of January so that follow up meetings can occur later in the month if needed.*

If your plans change after you submit your memo, provide your recommender with a revised memo. If you submitted your initial memo, resume, etc. in an e-mail, attach your resume and all other supporting documents to the revised memo e-mail so your recommender does not have to go hunting through e-mails to find all of your information.

For spring applications, this should generally be done by the beginning of the January term. However, many programs are moving their deadlines earlier, so check each program you are interested in and be sure to give your recommenders adequate time. (Since some programs hold open houses in January, faculty can be somewhat flexible here, but due to the number of recommendations which need to be written it is unrealistic to expect a faculty member to complete a packet for you in a week or two.) The memo should include the following:

- Specify if the recommendation form or letter must be electronic or paper. For paper forms, indicate whether the original is required or if a photocopy is OK. Note: Even if a photocopy is used, your recommender should sign each form with an original signature using colored, not black, ink.
- Indicate if a separate letter is required in addition to a form.
- State whether the recommendation is to be completed on line, should be returned to you or mailed directly to the program. If it should be mailed directly to the program, be sure to include the mailing address, including the department or person to whom the recommendation should be addressed. If it is a paper form, indicate whether the recommendation should be in a sealed envelope with the writer's signature across the seal.

- Include the deadline when the recommendations should be completed.
2. If you e-mail your recommenders an electronic copy of the form you usually still need to type in your name (and any other information you need to provide such as the program you are applying to or your address).
- Many forms – including the Dietetic Internship Recommendation form – require that you sign a form indicating your preferences regarding confidentiality. Be sure that you take care of this before you provide forms to your recommenders. If you need to use a paper copy of the AND internship recommendation, give each recommender a copy of the confidentiality page with your name and graduation date typed in and the form signed in blue ink.
3. In many cases it will be helpful to meet with your recommender to discuss your interests, strengths, and weaknesses.

### Recommendations for Study Abroad, Cross Cultural Trips, and Scholarships

1. Please follow the general directions for requesting recommendations provided above. Prepare a typed request in memo form that details the following:
- The name and address of the agency/program/organization to which you are applying. If possible, also provide the name and credentials of the person the letter should be addressed to. (In general, a letter to a specific person will make a better impression than one addressed to “To whom it may concern”.)
  - If traveling, include a brief summary about why you are interested in travel to this particular location.
  - Include a copy of your resume which lists your current GPA. In many cases it will be helpful to meet with your letter writer to discuss your interests, strengths, and weaknesses.
  - Specific instructions on how the recommendations are to be done such as:
    - Indicate if a separate letter is required in addition to a form provided by the program.
    - State whether the recommendation should be in a sealed envelope with the writer’s signature across the seal.
    - State whether the recommendation should be returned to you or mailed directly to the program. If it should be mailed directly to the program, be sure to include the mailing address, including the department or person to whom the recommendation should be addressed.
    - Include the deadline when the recommendations should be returned to you or to the program.

2. If the program has a recommendation form, fill out the information you need to provide. If you need to sign the form do so in blue ink (not black). Many forms require that you sign a form indicating your preferences regarding confidentiality. Be sure that you take care of this before you give forms to your recommenders.

Some forms are available electronically or may be completed interactively on the web. If forms are involved, ask your recommender if they prefer to receive a paper copy of the form or if you should e-mail them an electronic copy. Do not send your recommender a web link and expect them to search for information.

If you e-mail your recommenders an electronic copy of the form you still need to type in your name (and any other information you need to provide such as the program you are applying to or your address).

3. If your letter writer is a faculty member at Messiah University, the faculty member will provide a university stationary envelope. If your letter writer is off campus you should provide him/her with both an envelope (with the address or institution name typed in) and the appropriate postage.

### Recommendations for Jobs

1. Please note the general directions for requesting recommendations provided above. Prepare a typed request in memo form that details the following for each letter:
  - The name and address of the employer. If possible, also provide the name and credentials of the person the letter should be addressed to. (In general, a letter to a specific person will make a better impression than one addressed to “To whom it may concern”.)
  - The job position and responsibilities
  - The due date for the letter.
2. If the employer has a recommendation form type the information you need to provide. If you need to sign the form do so in blue ink (not black).
3. Give your recommenders a copy of your resume. In many cases it will be helpful to meet with them to discuss your interests, strengths, and weaknesses.
4. If your letter writer is a faculty member at Messiah University, the faculty member will provide you with a university stationary envelope. If your letter writer is off campus you should provide him/her with both an envelope (with the address typed in) and the appropriate postage.

## OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES RELATED TO NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

Nutrition and dietetics majors participate in both required and volunteer off-campus activities related to nutrition and dietetics. The following guidelines clarify the roles of faculty and students in these valuable experiences.

### BACKGROUND CHECKS AND DRUG TESTING

Many health agencies require criminal background checks and or drug testing for students. If an agency requires a background check, the student will be responsible for making requests to the appropriate agencies or authorities, transmitting the results of the background check to the agency, and for any costs associated with these requests. Students are advised to plan ahead so that adequate time for the processing of these requests is provided for. Typical costs for background checks and drug testing are as follows:

| Item  | Typical Cost         |
|---|----------------------|
| FBI Criminal Background Check   | \$30                 |
| Pennsylvania State Police Background Check  | \$10                 |
| Child Abuse Clearance   | \$10                 |
| Physical Exam, including a recent PPD test for tuberculosis, flu vaccine, and drug screen | Varies, \$50 - \$150 |

### TRANSPORTATION

Occasionally students are required to travel to off campus locations for upper level course-related experiences. When this occurs, students are expected to provide their own transportation. When a student does not have their own transportation, faculty will facilitate car-pooling if possible or try to find a substitute experience on campus. Messiah University and the Department of Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Science are not responsible to provide transportation to off-campus activities and are not liable for any personal injury, accident, or financial loss suffered by the student while traveling. Students will not be reimbursed by the university or department for traveling expenses related to course or volunteer activities. Anticipated costs for required travel are approximately \$5 per year.

## LIABILITY AND HEALTH INSURANCE

The University maintains liability insurance for off campus activities required for Messiah University courses. Students need to provide their own health insurance and are responsible for any and all medical costs incurred as a result of off campus activities.

## DRESS

Standards for professional dress vary widely in nutrition and dietetics practice. In general, students should dress neatly and modestly, and should inquire about appropriate dress for the agency or institution they will be visiting.

## INJURY OR ILLNESS

If a student is injured or becomes ill during an off campus experience they should promptly notify their off-campus supervisor as well as their Messiah University faculty supervisor or academic adviser.

## EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE OF PRACTICA AND MESSIAH UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIPS

The purpose of a supervised practice experience such as a Messiah University Internship or Practica is to promote the development of the student. Students are not yet fully ready to assume the duties of a practicing professional and should not be used to replace employees. If a student is concerned that their internship activities are replacing an employee, the student should alert their academic advisor and the Messiah University Internship Center.

## STUDY ABROAD

We highly recommend gaining a more international perspective while you are a student at Messiah University. There are several ways to do this. Some students study abroad for a semester, and others take a January or May term cross cultural study course. Because upper level nutrition and dietetics courses are typically not offered in semester long study abroad programs, the January or May term opportunities are easier to for nutrition and dietetics majors to participate in. Most students who wish to spend a semester abroad need to do so in the spring of the sophomore year, so it is important to plan early. Students who wish to spend a semester abroad should discuss course scheduling options with their adviser during the fall of their freshman year.

## TRANSFERRING COURSES

Many courses taken at other regionally-accredited universities and universities will transfer to Messiah University. A list of pre-approved transfer courses can be found in the “Transfer Course Equivalencies Database” accessible through the Messiah University Web site. Transfer equivalencies for courses which are not listed on this web site are assigned on an individual basis through the Messiah University registrar’s office. Students should save their course syllabi to facilitate this process. Nutrition is a rapidly changing field; therefore, foods and nutrition courses taken more than 5 years prior to entering the Messiah University Nutrition and Dietetics Major generally will not transfer.

Students transferring from other institutions to Messiah University should plan to meet with the Chair of the Dept. of Nutrition and Dietetics after they are accepted to review how their prior coursework has transferred and to plan a class schedule.

Messiah University students who wish to take courses elsewhere should first check the transfer course equivalency database on the registrar’s web page to determine if the course is pre-approved. If the course is not there, obtain an off-campus study form from the registrar’s office and be sure that the course is approved before it is taken. For courses in the nutrition and dietetics major, complete the form, attach the course description (from the school web site) to it, and give it to your adviser. Remember that to obtain a degree from Messiah University, students must take their last 30 credits, and last 12 credits in the major, at Messiah University.

## ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING

The department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Science does not grant nutrition course credit for prior learning in work or volunteer experiences.

## VERIFICATION STATEMENTS/INTENT TO COMPLETE FORM

### VERIFICATION STATEMENT

The DPD Verification Statement you receive from Messiah University is your proof that you have completed the academic requirements for application to dietetic internships or taking the dietetic technician, registered exam. To be eligible for verification statement students must:

1. Complete the requirements for graduation from Messiah University with a Nutrition and Dietetics Major, another Messiah University major with the

additional courses needed for DPD verification, or the non-degree academic verification program

2. Complete at least 18 credits at Messiah University.
3. Complete all NUTR courses at the 300 and 400 level no more than 5 years prior to program completion.

The Messiah University DPD director will send 6 copies of the ACEND DPD verification statement form to each graduate within 6 weeks after completion of all course requirements is verified by the university registrar. At various times in preparing for professional membership or dietetic registration, you will be asked to supply one of these forms. Therefore, it is your responsibility to safeguard these forms until the time they are to be used in various application processes

### INTENT TO COMPLETE FORM

Students applying to dietetic internships before they have completed graduation or DPD requirements will be required to submit an "Intent to Complete" form as a part of their dietetic internship application. Students needing these forms should send an e-mail or written memo requesting this form to the DPD Director at the end of the fall semester for the spring match, and at the end of spring semester for the fall match. If a student is using the online Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS) to apply to supervised practice programs, the intent to complete form will be completed through this system.



## Verification of Receipt of the Nutrition and Dietetics Handbook

Students should complete this form. The bottom portion of the form should be returned to the student's academic advisor. Students should keep this handbook with their advising materials. A copy of the handbook is also available at the Nutrition and Dietetics web page.

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Academic Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the information below, detach, and give to your academic advisor.

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I have received the Messiah University Didactic Program in Dietetics Policy and Procedure Handbook.

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_