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Welcome to the Dietetics Program at Bluffton University!

The Dietetics Program at Bluffton University is one of three concentrations in the Food and Nutrition Major, in the Nutrition and Dietetics Department. The other concentrations are Food in Business and Food and Nutrition – Wellness. The Nutrition and Dietetics Department is part of the Division of Natural and Applied Sciences. The Dietetics Program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Dietetics Education (ACEND), located at 120 South Riverside Drive, Suite 2000, Chicago, Illinois 60606. The official title/type of program, according to ACEND is the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). Bluffton's Dietetics program in one of 224 programs in the United States that are accredited by ACEND.

This handbook is designed to help all dietetics students learn and understand the Dietetics Program at Bluffton University, including guidelines, policies, and information required for you to complete your undergraduate degree. It is your responsibility to understand and fulfill the requirements and obligations of this handbook in order to be successful. Take the time to read it thoroughly and use it as a reference throughout your years of study and when there are any questions about the program.

The faculty and staff at Bluffton are committed to assisting you in your educational goals. If you have questions about the program or need additional information, contact Dr. Deborah Myers, RD, LD, Dietetics Program Director at Bluffton University.

Best wishes for a successful college career,

*Deb Myers*

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Program Information

Mission Statement (22.1a)

The mission of the Dietetics Program at Bluffton University is to prepare competent, entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists to serve the needs of the population in a variety of practice areas. The learning environment seeks to integrate the mission of Bluffton University, didactic program requirements, and experiential learning that allows for the application of theory to practice, to develop professional skills and knowledge.

The dietetics program is designed to meet the mission of the University and the department by providing our students with the academic preparedness for supervised practice, and in turn, to prepare entry-level dietitians. The curriculum is focused on the Core Knowledge for the Registered Dietitian, as defined by ACEND. The philosophy of the DPD program is to engage in continuous quality improvement of our program. Each aspect of the dietetics program at Bluffton University is frequently evaluated, especially knowledge standards, the curriculum, teaching methods, implementation of best practices, and the need for experiential learning that integrates dietetic theory with practice at the pre-professional level. The program integrates evidence-based practice into teaching and learning.

Goals and Objective of the DPD at Bluffton University (22.1a)

The program has three broad goals that reflect its mission and there are objectives tied to each goal.

**Program Goal 1: To prepare DPD graduates with the knowledge, skills, and professional attributes necessary to become competent entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists to meet the needs of the population.**

**Goal One Objectives:**

1. Over a five-year period, 80% of DPD graduates taking the registration examination for the first time will pass.

2. 90% of DPD students enrolled in the third year will complete the program within 150% of the time planned for program completion (150% = 6 years).

3. 80% of DPD graduates will receive satisfactory ratings of 3 or higher (on scale of 5) on their overall dietetics knowledge and skills, as reported by supervised practice program directors or employers completing a survey.
Program Goal 2: To prepare DPD graduates with educational experiences that allow for the application of theory to practice, thereby developing knowledge, skills, and behaviors to qualify for accredited supervised practice programs.

Goal Two Objectives:

1. 80% of DPD graduates will apply for supervised practice programs within one year of being eligible.

2. 70% of DPD graduates who apply for supervised practice programs will receive placement within one year of being eligible.

3. Of the DPD graduates completing an alumni survey, 80% will rate the DPD program at a satisfactory rating of 3 or higher (on scale of 5) in providing learning experiences that allowed for the application of theory to practice, thus, preparing them for supervised practice.

Program Goal 3: The Individualized Supervised Practice Program (ISPP) prepares competent entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists to meet the needs of the population.

Goal Three Objectives:

1. Over a 5-year period, 90% of ISPP graduates will complete supervised practice rotations in a maximum of 15 months (150% of planned completion).

2. Over a 5-year period, 80% of ISPP graduates will pass the registration exam the first time, and 100% of graduates will pass within one year of graduation.

3. Over a 5-year period, 80% of ISPP graduates will be employed in one of the following areas of dietetics practice: inpatient or outpatient clinical, food service or patient/client meal service administration, or community nutrition, within one year of graduation.

Information to Public (22.1b)

Program outcomes data are available upon request. Please send a written request to Deborah Myers, DPD Director, at myersd@bluffton.edu.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is dietetics?

Dietetics is a profession concerned with the science and practice of human nutritional care. It is an essential component of the health sciences and health care. Dietetics is concerned with the social, economic, cultural and psychological implications of food and eating and its effects on human health and well-being.

What is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist?

A Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) is a highly qualified professional, recognized as an expert on food and nutrition. Dietitians apply science and art of food, nutrition, and dietetics in the service of people – individuals, families, communities, whether healthy or sick, and all stages of the life cycle. Unlike faddists who promise miraculous weight loss or improved health, professionals trained in the science of nutrition can scientifically evaluate an individual’s diet.

What is the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics?

The professional society for dietitians is the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. It sets the educational standards for students preparing to become Registered Dietitian Nutritionists. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics maintains the integrity of the profession by requiring academic and performance competency of its members.

What is a Didactic Program in Dietetics?

The term “didactic” means teaching and instructing, particularly in formal coursework. The program at Bluffton University is a didactic program in dietetics or DPD. This is the primary pathway in which individuals become registered dietitian nutritionists. In the DPD the students complete all coursework before entering an accredited internship where the skills, abilities, and knowledge learned in applied in actual practice facilities. More simplified, the didactic portion is the coursework that students complete.

What is a Supervised Practice Program?

The supervised practice program, also known as a dietetic internship, is completed after graduation, usually in the following year, in which students work full time with credentialed preceptors to apply the skills and knowledge acquired in the undergraduate program to actual practice. The supervised practice program must be accredited by ACEND.
Is there a national examination that must be passed in order to practice dietetics?

Yes. The Registration Examination is the national examination that must be successfully completed in order to use the designated credentials of RD or RDN. Passing of this examination indicates the person has met dietetics educational and practice standards.

Are registered dietitians licensed?

In Ohio, all practicing RDNs must also be licensed by the Ohio Board of Dietetics. Laws and licenses or certifications vary from state to state, so be sure to find out the requirements of the state in which you intend to practice. A resource would be to locate the state Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, as each state has an affiliate.

Pathway to Becoming a Registered Dietitian (and Licensed Dietitian in Ohio)

Dietetics is a profession concerned with the science and practice of human nutritional care. A registered dietitian (RD) is an allied medical professional who puts into practice the science and art of food and nutrition in the service of people, individuals, families, and communities. In Ohio, a registered dietitian must also be a licensed dietitian (LD).

The RD credential is required for employment in the health care industry and preferred for many other careers in foods and nutrition. The credential is a requirement when nutrition assessment, nutrition diagnosing, and individualized nutrition counseling is the performed in the duties of employment.

The first step in becoming a registered and licensed dietitian is to complete a baccalaureate degree in an accredited dietetics program. The Bluffton University program is accredited by the Accreditation Council on Education of Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, 800-877-1600).

The second step is to complete an accredited dietetic internship. As a second-semester senior in the DPD, or after graduation and issuance of a Verification Statement, you are eligible to apply for an accredited supervised practice program (also known as a dietetic internship) or an Individualized Supervised Practice Program (ISPP), both of which are accredited. The accredited internship program does not need to be completed directly after graduation, but the majority of students plan for this. This accredited post-baccalaureate program, also known as a Supervised Practice Program (SPP) must be successfully completed before being eligible to sit for the national Registration Examination. Following completion of an accredited dietetic internship, which is typically 9-12 months, unless a masters degree is included which extends the program to about 24 months, the internship graduate is eligible to sit for the national registration examination.
Currently, not all students who apply for a supervised practice program obtain one due to the limited number of openings nationwide. The national average is that about 50% of students applying will receive one. The current average at Bluffton University is at 85%, of qualified students who apply.

The **third step** is to pass the national registration examination. Passing this exam allow the individual to use the credential of Registered Dietitian (RD).

The **fourth step** is to apply for dietetics licensure in Ohio, if the individual plans to practice in Ohio or has a permanent residence in Ohio. If the individual has completed an internship but has not yet passed the registration exam, they may apply for a “limited permit” from the Ohio Board of Dietetics, which allows them to accept employment and begin practice. The limited permit may be renewed up to one time (total time of one year). In the state of Ohio, passing of the RD exam is accepted as the requirement to be a licensed dietitian, provided that the minimum of continuing education requirements is completed (75 CEUs for each 5 year interval).

### Estimated Expenses (22.1d)

The estimated yearly cost of attendance at Bluffton University, including tuition, room and board, and technology fee is available at: [http://www.bluffton.edu/admission/financialaid/tuition/index.html](http://www.bluffton.edu/admission/financialaid/tuition/index.html)

The following are additional costs of students in the DPD:

- White lab coat: $40.00
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Membership (optional): $50.00

The following are additional costs incurred in the internship application process:

- D & D Digital Registration Fee: $50.00
- DICAS –Centralized Application portal for dietetic internships: $40.00 for the first program you apply to and $20.00 for each additional program that you apply.
- Supervised Practice Program Application Fees: Varies, but is typically around $50.00 per internship.
- GRE (Graduate Record Examination) exam: $185.00 for standard test administration.
Accreditation Status (22.1e)

The Didactic Program in Dietetics at Bluffton University is currently granted accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, Illinois, 60606-6995. Phone: 800-877-1600, Ext. 5400 or 312-899-0040. ACEND is an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education. The DPD at Bluffton University received initial approval in 1986 and accreditation in 2004. The program recently participated in a 10 year re-accreditation site visit in March, 2014. The final accreditation decision will not be known until January, 2015.

Admission Requirements (20.1b, 22.1f)

Incoming first year students are admitted by the Bluffton University admissions criteria, which is available at: [http://www.bluffton.edu/admission/apply/require.html](http://www.bluffton.edu/admission/apply/require.html). Transfer students must have a minimum GPA of 2.0 in previous coursework. Acceptance of transfer credits is determined by the Registrar and the Program Director. Further information can be obtained from: [http://www.bluffton.edu/admission/transfer/requirements.html](http://www.bluffton.edu/admission/transfer/requirements.html)

Dietetics Program Admission Criteria: Once a student meet Bluffton University admissions requirements, any student may declare a major in Food and Nutrition, Dietetics concentration. It is advised to declare the major as early as possible in order to be connected early with a Nutrition and Dietetics faculty person to be your academic advisor.

Academic Calendar (22.1g, 23.1b)

The DPD program follows the academic calendar of Bluffton University, including holidays and breaks. The academic calendar is located at: [http://www.bluffton.edu/catalog/intro/calendar/](http://www.bluffton.edu/catalog/intro/calendar/)

Program Length Completion Requirements (23.2 k)

DPD Policy on Maximum Time to Complete Program Requirements
Bluffton University dietetics students are advised that they must complete the program within 150% of the standard program length, which is four years (8 semesters). Therefore, students are expected to complete all program requirements by the end of the sixth year of beginning the program. Regular discussion with the academic advisor is highly advised.
DPD Curriculum Requirements

Required courses, organized into a 4 year plan, can be found at: http://www.bluffton.edu/registrar/4yearplan/food_plan2.pdf. The student’s actual four year plan may vary somewhat, based on course availability and other factors.

Dietetics Advising

Appropriate and accurate advising of students is a goal of all Bluffton faculty members. The professors in your department are designated as your academic advisors for your entire college years. At a minimum, students will meet one on one with their advisor once each semester to plan the next set of courses. The purpose of advising is also to discuss progress in your courses and overall program, assuring that requirements are being followed. Your advisors hope to get to know your interests, passions, and goals, so that we can advise you the best that we can.

Due to the competitive nature of post- baccalaureate supervised practice programs, it is imperative for the student to maintain good grades (> 3.0 GPA) and have work experiences that will help them to be strong candidates for supervised practice. This will also be discussed during advising appointments.

The faculty welcomes your questions and concerns at any time, not simply during advising, so please do not hesitate to ask.

Policy on Practicum Activities

The Bluffton University DPD faculty is able to provide learning opportunities that extend beyond the classroom. We are able to do this because of small class sizes, connections to the local community, and the positive reputation of our program. Required activities for classes are known as “practicums”, where the faculty member sets up and arranges for a student activity. Practicums are always a requirement of a particular course. For example, NTR 375 and 376, MNT 1 and 2, respectively, have weekly clinical labs at St. Rita’s Medical Center in Lima, Ohio. Attendance is required and the learning experiences are viewed as practicums.

Policy on Volunteer Activities

This refers to any learning or volunteer action that is not associated with any class, and are performed as an unpaid person. The goal of such activities is to perform a service, and at the same time, provide a learning experience for the participant. Involvement in the Bluffton University Nutrition Association (BUNA) and any of its activities is
considered in the category of “volunteer activities”. Students may be involved in other student organizations that have similar criteria and value.

Students are highly encouraged to be involved in volunteer activities.

Policy on Letters of Recommendation for Scholarships, Employment, Internship Applications, and Graduate School

Asking and obtaining a letter of recommendation for any of the above reasons is considered a privilege. It is expected that students adhere to the following:

1. The student is responsible for formally requesting a letter of recommendation from a faculty member that knows the student well enough to write a positive letter. (Be aware that faculty members may decline a request, especially if they are unfamiliar with the student’s work and therefore, cannot make a reliable recommendation.)
2. The student is responsible for informing the faculty member of all details, such as who the letter should be addressed to, the purpose of the letter, the deadline, and the exact address of the organization, school, or business. This should be done in writing.
3. Include a copy of your most current resume and any other details which could help the faculty member write the letter for the particular reason that is requested.
4. Internship application recommendation letters use the DICAS form and format. Follow all DICAS instructions for these.
5. A thank you note to the faculty member who writes a letter for you is appropriate and appreciated.
Policies and Procedures (Std 23)

Student Rights – FERPA
The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. Notice regarding FERPA rights is provided in the Bluffton University Catalog, Student Handbook and the fall and spring course schedules. This notice is also distributed annually to all students at the beginning of Fall Semester.
http://www.bluffton.edu/registrar/ferpa.html

University Academic Policies
Bluffton University policies and procedures concerning academics can be accessed in the Catalog, which can be accessed at:

http://www.bluffton.edu/catalog/academics/academic/index.html

Student Advising

Student responsibility
The responsibility for planning the academic program rests largely with the student. Information in the undergraduate academic life section of this catalog and other academic announcements must be reviewed carefully in order for the student to take the required courses at the right time. The counseling services of faculty advisors, department chairpersons, the registrar and the deans are available to assist students.

Academic advising
The academic advising program at Bluffton is based on the premise that significant learning and growth can occur within the context of a close relationship between students and advisors. At the beginning of the fall semester, first year students indicate whether they want as their advisor their Becoming a Scholar instructor or a member of the department in which they intend to major. Upon declaring their major, all students are assigned an advisor in their department. Transfer students who have decided on a major are assigned to an advisor in the appropriate department. The registrar advises transfer students who have not yet chosen a major. It is recommended that students declare a major by the second half of their sophomore year.

Student Support Services
A wide range of support services, both for academic and non-academic areas, are available at Bluffton University. The Student Handbook formally outlines the information, services, and procedures for students, and can be accessed at http://www.bluffton.edu/studentlife/handbook/index.html
Academic support, in particular, should be sought early and often. The professors in your courses and your academic advisor need to be the initial contact whenever a student is experiencing difficulties. Faculty members are your primary resources for understanding course content. Students are also encouraged to utilized the services of the Learning Resource Center, the Writing Center, tutors, and others resources in order to be successful.

Physical and mental health services are available to all enrolled students. Please consult the student handbook for more information on these and other non-academic programs available to Bluffton University students.

**Policy on Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions. Students are directly responsible for all required work in each course, including work missed because of absence. (Student handbook)

**Academic Dishonesty**

**Policy on Academic Grievances**

The Student Handbook formally outlines the Honor Policy, Academic Dishonesty Policy, and Academic Grievances and Complaints. These areas of concern for students, and can be accessed at [http://www.bluffton.edu/studentlife/handbook/index.html](http://www.bluffton.edu/studentlife/handbook/index.html).

**Policy on Complaints Concerning Dietetics (Std 23.2 f)**

Complaints concerning dietetic classes, the DPD program, or ACEND standards should be addressed with the following procedure.

“What if I have a complaint about a class or the program? Students are expected to display common courtesy and respect for the individuals you approach with a complaint. If you have a complaint about anything concerning a particular class, it is first appropriate to go directly to the professor of the class and discuss the matter in person. If this does not resolve the issue then the student may go to the DPD program director or faculty advisor. The student is also free to go directly to the professor’s division chair or the Vice President and Academic Dean. If the complaint is about the program itself, then contact the DPD director, or the Vice President and Academic Dean. If the aforementioned procedures do not result in some form of satisfaction, then the student may contact ACEND at 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL, 6060-6996, phone number 312-899-0040, extension 5400, or go the ACEND website directly, [http://www.eatright.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=7975](http://www.eatright.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=7975).”
Assessment of Prior Learning (Std 23.2 g)

Assessment of prior college coursework will be considered by the Registrar in collaboration with the Program Director.

Assessment of prior learning through experience, in order to obtain college credit, is not available at Bluffton University.

Policy of Verification Statement Issuance (Std 23.2 l)

A verification statement is a form supplied and completed by the Program Director, which states that the student has completed all DPD courses required by an ACEND-accredited dietetics education program. Only forms with original signatures of the Program Director are valid. The program Director will issue a Verification Statement to the DPD graduate only after confirmation of program requirements by the Program Director, and graduation requirements are confirmed by the Registrar of Bluffton University. (Students already possessing a bachelor’s degree will receive a Verification Statement only). A signed Verification Statement is required for the following:

- **To establish eligibility for a Dietetic Internship program**
  - The completion of ACEND Didactic Program requirements and at least a bachelor’s degree from a U.S. regionally accredited college/university or foreign equivalent are necessary for eligibility to enter an ACEND-accredited Dietetic Internship program. When the Director of a Didactic Program in Dietetics signs a verification statement, she/he also is verifying that the individual has completed at least a baccalaureate degree from a U.S. regionally accredited college/university or foreign equivalent.

- **To establish eligibility to write the registration examination for dietitians and dietetic technicians**
  - A verification statement is required by the Commission of Dietetic Registration upon completion of the Coordinated Program, Dietetic Internship and Dietetic Technician Program to indicate completion of academic or supervised practice requirements for eligibility to write the registration examination.
  - Not applicable if individual completed the name/address verification for Program Director to submit via CDR software.
  - To obtain limited work permits and licensure from state boards of dietetics.

- **To establish eligibility for AND membership**
  - A verification statement is required when applying for AND Active membership
  - Accessed from AND website. [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)