

# **Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) Policy**

## **Virginia Tech Internship Program in Nutrition and Dietetics**

### **Mission**

The mission of the Virginia Tech Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) in Nutrition and Dietetics is to prepare confident, competent entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists who can balance evidence-based practice with client-centered care.

### **Program Goals**

1. Prepare graduates for effective professional practice.
2. Position graduates to function successfully in their preferred area of practice within a rapidly changing profession.
3. Prepare graduates to be leaders within the dietetics/nutrition profession.

### **Program Overview**

The ISPP follows the curriculum of Virginia Tech's Internship Program in Nutrition and Dietetics in the Department of Human Nutrition Foods, Nutrition, and Exercise (HNFE). ISPP interns follow the Virginia Tech Internship Program in Nutrition and Dietetics Policy and procedures with exceptions identified in this document. Interns completing the ISPP will achieve the competencies identified in the Accreditation Standards for Internship Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics (2017) established by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Upon successful completion of the program, interns will be eligible to complete the registration examination for dietitians offered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration.

Interns complete 1200 or more hours of Supervised Practice in Clinical, Community, and Management of Food and Nutrition Services as required by ACEND. The program emphasis of Leadership and Professional Development is interspersed throughout. Interns also complete a 10-day elective rotation of their choice. ISPP interns are allowed a total of 2 years to complete the program. Interns are expected to participate in classes and supervised practice in one of the two program regions (Northern Virginia or Blacksburg). Whereas interns in the traditional VT program complete full-time work weeks (4 days on-site and one day in class sessions), flexibility is permitted to accommodate the ISPP intern's schedule, if needed. In general, part-time scheduling may be arranged as long as:

- Intern, Internship Director, site contact, and faculty advisor (for those who have not completed PhD) are agreeable to the proposed schedule of completion; schedule should be documented in the *ISPP Timeline Agreement* (see appendix A).
- Site availability exists
- Intern dedicates at least 2 days/week to community or management rotation or 3 days/week to clinical rotation
- Intern is completing or has completed accompanying class meetings within past 6 months

### **Eligibility Requirements**

1. PhD from HNFE or plan to complete within a year – fulfills one of the following options:
  - a. Option 1: Documented earned PhD from HNFE.
  - b. Option 2: PhD student in HNFE within one year of expected degree completion. Preliminary exam/research proposal completed or schedule to occur prior to start of internship.\*
2. Completed all Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) coursework earning a DPD grade point average of at least 3.0/4.0 and obtained Verification Statement or Intent to Complete from an accredited DPD Program indicating that all DPD requirements will have been met before the start of the program.
3. Fulfilled the Recency of Education policy requirements.
4. Obtained paid or unpaid work experience in a food and/or nutrition practice setting (a minimum of 500 hours is expected).

\*\*If PhD has not been awarded, written documentation from graduate faculty advisor is required supporting the application and confirming that the preliminary exam and research proposal are completed or scheduled to occur prior to the start of the program. Documented completion of the PhD must be provided within 1 year of beginning the program. ISPP interns must fulfill all HNFE graduate program requirements while enrolled in the PhD program.

## **Application Process**

Interns may begin the program in January or August. Applications for January should be submitted between October 15 and November 15 of the prior year and applications for August should be submitted between April 15 and May 15 of the current year. While not required, applicants are encouraged to communicate their interest with the Internship Director as soon as interest in the program is determined. Establishing a meeting with the director will allow the applicant to discuss potential scheduling options for completing the program.

ISPP Start Date	Submit Application
August 1	April 15 – May 15
January 1	October 15 – November 15

Virginia Tech's ISPP does not take part in the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS) or computerized match process. To apply, the following items should be submitted to the ISPP Director via email. Items 1-4 are to be submitted as one document in pdf form. Reference letters (item 5) should be emailed directly to the ISPP Director by the individual writing the reference prior to the application due date. The ISPP Program application fee of \$50 can be paid at the link provided to applicants.

1. Letter of application (1,000 words or less) addressing:
  - a) Reason for pursuing RDN credential
  - b) Experiences that have helped prepare you for your career as a registered dietitian nutrition
  - c) Short- and long-term goals
  - d) Strengths and weaknesses
  - e) Other information you would like the selection committee to know
2. Transcript(s) - unofficial transcript(s) displaying DPD and PhD coursework if PhD has not been completed, OR official final transcript(s) displaying DPD coursework and PhD if PhD is completed
3. DPD Verification Statement or Intent to Complete
4. Resume or Curriculum Vitae which includes specific activities completed as well as total hours dedicated to each work or volunteer experience
5. Letters from three professional references addressing application of knowledge, oral and written communication skills, and interpersonal skills (adaptability, initiative, responsibility and organizational skills). Submit one academic reference, one work supervisor, and the third of applicant's choice. If the PhD is incomplete, one letter must be from the graduate faculty advisor is required and must confirm that the preliminary exam and research proposal are completed or scheduled to occur prior to the start of the program.

## **Intern Selection Process**

Virginia Tech is approved by ACEND to enroll two ISPP interns. The ISPP selection committee will consist of the ISPP Director, the Northern Virginia Site Director, the Graduate Program Director (or other graduate program faculty member in cases where a conflict of interest exists), and one current Internship Program preceptor who has served on the intern selection committee within the past 3 years. Criteria considered for selection include academic performance, experience, references, and fit with program design. Applicants will be notified of the selection decision within 4 weeks of application deadline.

## **ISPP Timeline Agreement**

Upon accepting a position in the program, the ISPP intern will schedule a meeting with the ISPP Director, NOVA Site Director (if applicable), and his/her Graduate Faculty Advisor (if applicable) to complete the *ISPP Timeline Agreement* (Appendix A). The purpose of this meeting and agreement is to communicate and clarify the timeline for PhD completion, rotation timing and requirements, and overall program expectations. It is at this time that any individualized needs and programming should be discussed. If, at any time during the program, significant alterations in the *ISPP Timeline Agreement* are required, the ISPP Director should be contacted immediately (i.e.: within 1 week of known alteration). For those ISPP interns who are completing their PhD concurrently with the beginning of the start of the PhD, it is the responsibility of the intern to secure documentation from the graduate faculty advisor that the PhD has been completed within one year of beginning the ISPP. In cases where the PhD is not completed with a year, the ISPP may be discontinued until the PhD is earned.

### **Cost**

The ISPP Program Fee is \$10,000. Other expenses and total cost of attendance can be found in the Virginia Tech ISPP Procedures Handbook. Interns who have not yet completed their PhD are responsible for associated tuition and fees (<http://www.bursar.vt.edu/tuition/>). Fulfilling responsibilities of an assistantship while completing a PhD and beginning the ISPP would be extremely difficult. It could work in the case of an intern who is, for example, beginning the ISPP by just attending classes one day/week. If an intern and faculty member wish to consider this, it should be discussed at the ISPP Timeline Agreement meeting.

### **Intern Status within the University and Resources Provided by Program**

The ISPP is a non-credit program. Once ISPP interns are no longer enrolled VT students for the purpose of completing the PhD, they will not be eligible for resources that are supported by student activity fees. The ISPP interns will be given a unique classification in the university system that allows access to the library and course management system.


### **Tracking Supervised Practice Hours**

ISPP interns are responsible for documenting supervised practice hours worked and classes attended on the overview schedule provided. Preceptors will sign the document at the end of each month confirming supervised practice hours and the director will confirm attendance at classes on the program checklist.


### **Issuance of Verification Statement**

A verification statement will be issued when the all internship requirements and the PhD is complete.

**APPROVED:** (This policy will be reviewed as needed; minimum review every three years.)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, VT Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway

7/14/17  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head, HNFE

7/14/17  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Reviewed and approved by the Dietetics Committee on: May 29, 2017

Reviewed and approved by the HNFE Faculty: June 15, 2017

Next Review scheduled: June 15, 2020

## **APPENDIX A: ISPP Timeline Agreement**

### **Instructions:**

After acceptance, the ISPP Interns and Internship Director will schedule a preliminary meeting to create a proposed plan for completion of all supervised practice hours and class attendance. Any credit issued for previous competencies gained will be considered at that time. A calendar will then be created and imbedded in the space below demonstrating a proposed timeline. The Faculty Advisor, the Internship Director and the Intern will meet, if needed, to discuss the proposed plan. Upon approval by each, this document will be signed with a copy provided to each signer. The schedule is subject to change based on availability of practice sites and will be communicated to each signer.

***Calendar imbedded here***

### **Signatures**

Intern	ISPP Director	NOVA Site Director (if completing any portion in Northern Virginia)	Faculty Advisor