

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 interns for effective professional practice.
2. Position interns to function successfully in a rapidly changing professional dietetics/nutrition environment.
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, and Exercise (HNFE). ISPP interns follow the Virginia Tech Internship Program in Nutrition and Dietetics Policies and Procedures with exceptions identified in this document. Interns completing the ISPP will achieve the competencies identified in the current Accreditation Standards for Internship Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics 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.

Competency must be established in all areas of practice (MNT/clinical dietetics, community nutrition, and management of food and nutrition services). Demonstration of competency will require completion of at least 50% of the supervised practice hours designated as worksite hours in the internship program curriculum. The actual number of hours required will depend on each ISPP intern's professional background and pace of skill development. In addition to the worksite supervised practice hours, assignments and class activities are required unless the ISPP intern can demonstrate competency from previous experience.

Within one month of acceptance to the program, the intern and the director will review the program competency checklist to determine if any competencies have been met through previous professional experience. The intern will provide any requested documentation. The director will determine if there will be a reduction in supervised practice hours and/or assignments required during the internship based on credit awarded for previous experiences. Interns are not expected to complete an 8-day elective.

ISPP interns are allowed a total of two 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:

- o Intern, internship director, site contact, and HNFE faculty advisor (for those who have not completed PhD) approve the proposed schedule of completion; schedule is documented in the *ISPP Timeline Agreement* (see appendix B).
- o Site availability exists
- o Intern concurrently attends class sessions corresponding to the respective supervised practice component or has attended the class meetings within the previous six months.

Eligibility Requirements

1. PhD from HNFE (or plan to complete). Fulfills one of the following options:
 - a. Documented earned PhD from HNFE or
 - b. PhD student in HNFE within one year of expected degree completion. Qualifying exam and preliminary exam successfully completed prior to the start of the internship.*
2. Completed required coursework. Options include:

- a. Verification Statement or Intent to Complete form from an accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) indicating that all DPD requirements will have been met before the start of the ISPP. Cumulative GPA of 3.0/4.0 in all DPD coursework or
- b. Documentation of Completed Coursework form (see Appendix A)
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. Completion of the PhD must occur within one year of beginning the internship 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 September 15 and October 15 of the prior year and applications for August should be submitted between March 15 and April 15 of the current year. Applications received after the due date may be considered if an open position exists, however the program start date may be modified according to available practice settings. While not required, applicants are encouraged to communicate their interest with the 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
Late August	March 15 – April 15
Early January	September 15 - October 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 internship program 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 program director by the individual writing the reference according to the application due date. The application fee of \$50 can be paid at the link provided to applicants on the program website.

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 nutritionist
 - 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 from any ACEND accredited program or Documentation of Completed Coursework form (Appendix A).
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 two professional references addressing application of knowledge, oral and written communication skills, and interpersonal skills (adaptability, initiative, responsibility and organizational skills). Submit one academic reference and one from a work supervisor. If the PhD is incomplete, one letter must be from the graduate faculty advisor 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 program director, the Northern Virginia site director, the graduate program director (or other graduate program faculty member), and one current internship program preceptor who has served on the intern selection committee or has

precepted an ISPP intern 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 four weeks of application deadline.

ISPP Timeline Agreement

Upon accepting a position in the program, the ISPP intern will schedule a meeting with the program director, Northern Virginia Site Director (if applicable), and their graduate faculty advisor (if applicable) to complete the *ISPP Timeline Agreement* (Appendix B). 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. Any individualized needs impacting the scheduling will be discussed at this time. If, at any time during the program, significant alterations in the *ISPP Timeline Agreement* are required, the intern should contact the program director immediately (i.e. within one week of known alteration).

A Verification Statement will be issued after the ISPP intern has completed the required competencies/hours and has provided a final transcript documenting the PhD completion.

Cost

The ISPP Program Fee is \$10,000. A deposit of \$1000 is due upon acceptance to the program. Half of the remaining fee (\$4,500) is due before supervised practice rotations begin. The remaining \$4,500 is due when half of the required supervised practice hours/competencies are achieved according to the ISPP Timeline Agreement. Other expenses and total cost of participation can be found in the Virginia Tech Internship in Nutrition and Dietetics Policies and Procedures. Interns who have not yet completed their PhD are responsible for associated tuition and fees. Fulfilling responsibilities of an assistantship while completing a PhD and beginning the ISPP would be extremely difficult. 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 all internship requirements and the PhD are complete.

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APPENDIX A: Documentation of Completed Coursework

Instructions: Required HNFE courses are listed in column A. An unofficial transcript and a syllabus documenting equivalent course content must be provided for review and listed in column C. Prerequisites may be required for courses on this list.

Medical nutrition therapy coursework must have been completed within 5 years of program start date. All other courses must be completed within 10 years of program start date. There is no required recency of education for prerequisites.

A. Required Coursework or Content	B. Course, School, and Term completed <i>Applicant enters</i>	C. Documentation (syllabus and unofficial transcript) <i>Applicant attaches</i>	D. Director Approval <i>As part of application review</i>
Nutrition Across the Lifespan (HNFE 2014 or equivalent content with 3 credits or more)			
Food Science Lab course (HNFE 3024 Science of Food Preparation Lab or equivalent content of 2 credits or more)			
Management of Food and Nutrition Services (HNFE 3114 Foodservice and Meal Management or equivalent content -3 credits or more)			
Nutrient Metabolism (HNFE 4025 Metabolic Nutrition and HNFE 4026 Metabolic Nutrition - 6 credits or more)			
Medical Nutrition Therapy (HNFE 4125/5125 Medical Nutrition Therapy I and HNFE 4126/5126 Medical Nutrition Therapy II (6 credits or more within 5 years))			
Community Nutrition (HNFE 4624 Community Nutrition -3 credits or more)			
Health Counseling, Nutrition Counseling, or nutrition education course (HNFE 3224, HNFE 4644, HNFE 4645) – 3 credits			

APPENDIX B: ISPP Timeline Agreement

Instructions:

After acceptance, the ISPP Intern 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	Internship Director	NOVA Site Director (if completing any portion in Northern Virginia)	Faculty Advisor