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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS DEGREE PROGRAM
PROGRAM HANDBOOK
2021-2022
UPDATED OCTOBER 2021

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Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics Program (MSND)

Program Overview

The **HNFE POLICY HANDBOOK** for the **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUTRITION AND DIETETICS PROGRAM** provides you with a description of the department, faculty, degree requirements, policies and procedures, expectations for the graduate program, and information specific to this program.

This handbook is to be used in conjunction with information provided by the [Virginia Tech Graduate School](#) and [Graduate Catalog](#). It is the responsibility of each student enrolled in the program to read, understand, and follow the policies and procedures in this handbook, as well as those issued by the HNFE Department and Graduate School at Virginia Tech. Questions regarding this document or anything on the Graduate School website should be addressed to the M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics Program Director or the HNFE Graduate Program Director.

Students should also frequently reference the **M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics Canvas Site**, in particular, the [Resources](#) and [Forms](#) folder. The online version of this handbook is located on the program Canvas site and is the most current version.

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Accreditation Status

The M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics program at Virginia Tech is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND→) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics as a Future Education Model Graduate Program (FG) through June 30, 2023.

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)
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Phone: (800)-877-1600 ext 5400
Email: acend@eatright.org
Website: www.eatright.org/ACEND

Mission, Goals, and Objectives

HNFE Mission: To discover, translate, and disseminate health-related advances in the nutrition, food, and exercise sciences.

M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics Program Mission: To prepare graduate-trained registered dietitian nutritionists who can advance professional practice through food and nutrition to accelerate improvements in health and well-being among diverse populations.

M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics Program Goals:

Goal #1: To prepare HNFE graduate-trained RDNs to be effective practitioners in a variety of positions in the field.

Objectives:

- At least 80 percent of Track 1 program graduates complete program/degree requirements within two years and six weeks (150 percent of the program length).
- At least 80 percent of Track 1 program graduates complete program/degree requirements within three years (150 percent of the program length).
- 95 percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.
- 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 percent.
- Of graduates who seek employment, 85 percent are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.
- 90 percent of graduates will report they were adequately prepared to be an effective RDN practitioner in their first post-graduate professional position.
- 90 percent of employers will report that the graduate(s) they hired was adequately prepared overall to be an effective RDN practitioner.
- 75 percent of employers will indicate that the HNFE graduate-trained RDN(s) they hired was very well or well prepared, compared to other entry level RDNs, to be an effective RDN practitioner.

Goal #2: To prepare HNFE graduate-trained RDNs to perform successfully in emerging focus areas that align with the Academy's standards of practice.

Objectives:

- 75 percent of graduates will report that they were prepared in emerging scope of practice areas related to counseling for behavior change.
- 90 percent of graduates will report that they had adequate opportunities in the program to use emerging skills in dietetics practice.
- 75 percent of employers will report that the graduate(s) they hired was prepared in emerging professional skills for the area of counseling for behavior change.
- 75 percent of employers will indicate that the graduate(s) they hired was prepared to advance the practice of dietetics.

Admissions Process and Policies

Admission requirements and procedures follow guidelines established by the Virginia Tech Graduate School. Consideration of applicants is by the M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics program selection committee and will be in compliance with these and other University, state, and federal regulations. The application of each student will be considered individually. Admission to the Virginia Tech MSND program is based on academic preparation, nutrition-related experience, leadership potential, and ability. Only those students likely to succeed in the condensed, accelerated program are admitted. The M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics program has two different tracks that prospective students can apply:

- **Track 1:** Designed for any individual with a Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited university prior to the start of the program with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Track 1 students may or may not have a degree and verification statement from an ACEND-accredited undergraduate didactic program in dietetics (DPD). Students coming from non-DPD undergraduate programs must fulfill specific program prerequisite coursework as listed on the program website. The track 1 curriculum is designed to be 17-months in length. Qualified track 1 applicants may be offered spots into the 22-month plan of study according to the track 2 pathway if open spots are not filled by qualified track 2 students.
- **Track 2:** Designed for undergraduate students in the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise who are pursuing a DPD verification statement in the Dietetics concentration and have a minimum of 3.4 GPA. Students in track 2 apply for the program in the spring of their junior year, and fulfill 12-credits of graduate level coursework in their senior year while finishing their undergraduate degree. This track is designed to be 22 months in length from the start of the student's senior year.

Full information regarding the admissions process and respective requirements is available on the program website: <https://www.hnfe.vt.edu/graduate/MSnutrition/application.html>

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, or veteran status; or otherwise discriminate against employees or applicants who inquire about, discuss, or disclose their compensation or the compensation of other employees, or applicants; or any other basis protected by law.

Pre-Entrance Requirements

After acceptance and prior to beginning the program, students are required to submit evidence of the following:

- Official final transcript(s) demonstrating successful completion of B.S. degree and all prerequisite coursework (Track 1 only);
- Official final transcript demonstrating completion of Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) coursework after B.S. in HNFE graduation (Track 2 only)
- Verification statement (for Track 1 students completing an ACEND-accredited DPD program only)
- Valid and current ServSafe Manager Certification
- Proof of active membership in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Proof of active health insurance policy

- Criminal background check and nine panel drug screen results successfully meeting program requirements (see Drug Screen and Background Check)
- Negative QuantiFERON Gold Tuberculosis (TB) Test (or 2-step skin TB test) – completed within 3 months of the first supervised practice rotation, typically first semester fall for Track 1 students and first semester spring for Track 2 students.
- The following immunizations must be up to date:
 - a. Measles, Mumps, Rubella
 - b. Polio IPV or OPV
 - c. Tetanus-Diphtheria
 - d. Hepatitis B
 - e. Meningococcal vaccine
 - f. Varicella vaccine
- Starting Fall 2021, COVID-19 vaccination is required for all students at Virginia Tech, however students may submit a request for either a religious or medical exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine. Students who have not received the COVID-19 vaccination may be subject to self-quarantine and testing prior to starting supervised experiential learning (SEL) rotations depending on site-specific policies.
- Yearly flu vaccination may be required depending on specific site placement for SEL rotations.

Students are responsible for fees associated with fulfilling pre-entrance requirements.

Graduation Requirements

In order to earn a Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics diploma, the student must a) complete all courses with a grade of “B-” or higher and b) receive a passing grade for all Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) rotations (HNFE 5754: Internship in HNFE). Students must also maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for all courses on their graduate plan of study and demonstrate all ACEND summative competency evaluations at the “competent” level or higher. Successful completion the Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics degree coursework and demonstration of all ACEND competencies results in the conferral of a Master’s degree and issuance of an ACEND verification statement resulting in eligibility to take the Registration Examination for Dietitians through the Commission on Dietetics Registration (CDR).

The M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics program consists of the following Virginia Tech courses:

- HNFE 5125G Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy I (3 credits)
- HNFE 5126G Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy II (3 credits)
- HNFE 5154 Research Methods in Nutrition and Physical Activity (3 credits)
- HNFE 5314 Business of Dietetics and Healthcare (3 credits)
- EDCO 5214 Theories of Counseling and Consultation (3 credits)
- HNFE 5344 Nutrition Counseling for Behavior Change (3 credits)
- HNFE 5354 Food for Optimal Health (3 credits)
- HNFE 5324 Public Health Nutrition Policies and Programs (3 credits)
- HNFE 5334 Clinical Nutrition Care Applications (2 credits)
- HNFE 5304 Principles of Dietetics and Nutrition Practice (2 credits)
- HNFE 5394 Professional Practice in Nutrition and Dietetics (1 credit)
- Choice elective (3 credits)
- HNFE 5754 Internship in Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise:
 - Clinical (10 credits)

- Community Nutrition (5 credits)
- Foodservice Management (3 credits)
- Dietetics and Professional Management (2 credits)

Total credits: 51

Students will work with the Assistant Director to establish their official plan of study to be submitted to the Virginia Tech Graduate School. Track 1 students will establish their plan of study in their first year fall semester, and track 2 students will establish their plan of study in their first year spring semester. All plan of study deviations from the above, with the exception of the choice elective, are subject to final approval by the Program Director. Track 1 students are allowed up to two years and six weeks to complete the program and Track 2 students are allowed up to 3 years.

Assessment of Prior Learning and Course Substitutions

All graduate-level courses must be taken at Virginia Tech. Students that have taken Medical Nutrition Therapy at the undergraduate level at Virginia Tech (HNFE 4025, HNFE 4026) and are wanting to receive credit for the 5000-level course (HNFE 5125G, HNFE 5126G) within the program must have the instructor submit a plan to achieve necessary competencies not covered in the undergraduate level course. These students will be required to enroll in a 1-credit independent study per semester (2 credits total) to meet graduate-level competencies not met through the undergraduate course. Students receiving credit for prior coursework will be required to take additional credits of graduate coursework to fulfill the 4 remaining credits to reach the required 51 credits to graduate and will work with the Assistant Director to determine specific changes to their plan of study. Any other changes to the program plan of study are subject to final approval from the Program Director.

The program does not offer credit for prior work experience to be applied towards supervised experiential learning rotations/hours.

Curriculum

All students must complete 51 credits of graduate level courses and supervised experiential learning (SEL) in order to fulfill program requirements for the degree. Students enrolled in track 1 and 2 will each follow the same curriculum, however the order of the coursework and SEL experiences are different. Students will be enrolled in 19 credits of SEL (HNFE 5754: Internship in HNFE) with each credit hour being the equivalent of approximately 50 hours of supervised practice. **Successful completion of the program is dependent upon students demonstrating all ACEND-outlined competencies at the “competent” level or higher.** Some students may require additional time than what is estimated for each track to successfully demonstrate these competencies within the coursework and SEL experiences. Students are responsible for extra tuition required to extend the program beyond the allocated timeline in order to demonstrate competency.

Track 1 Curriculum

Estimated completion time: 17 months

First Year: Fall

HNFE 5125G – Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy I (3)

HNFE 5154 – Research Methods in Nutrition and Physical Activity (3)

EDCO 5214 – Theories of Counseling and Consultation (3)

HNFE 5304 – Principles of Dietetics and Nutrition Practice (2)

Elective course (3)*

Total: 14 credits

First Year: Spring

HNFE 5126G – Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy II (3)

HNFE 5324 – Public Health Nutrition Policies and Programs (3)

HNFE 5344 – Nutrition Counseling for Behavior Change (3)

HNFE 5314 – Business of Dietetics and Healthcare (3)

HNFE 5754 – Dietetics and Professional Management SEL (2)

Total: 14 credits

First Year: Summer

HNFE 5354 – Food for Optimal Health (3)

HNFE 5754 – Community Nutrition SEL (4)

HNFE 5754 – Foodservice Management SEL (3)

Total: 10 credits

Second Year: Fall

HNFE 5394 – Professional Practice in Nutrition and Dietetics (1)

HNFE 5334 – Clinical Nutrition Care Applications (2)

HNFE 5754 – Clinical Nutrition SEL (10)

Total: 13 credits

Total program: 51 credits

HNFE 5754 = Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) Rotations

1 credit equates to ~50 hours supervised experiential learning

**Track 1 students entering the program in Fall 2021 who have not taken statistics at the undergraduate level will need to take STAT 5615 – Statistics in Research as their elective to meet program requirements.*

Track 2 Curriculum (Accelerated BS-MS Program)

Estimated completion time: 22 months

First Year: Fall*

HNFE 5125G – Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy I (3)

EDCO 5214 – Theories of Counseling and Consultation (3)

Total: 6 credits

First Year: Spring*

HNFE 5126G – Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy II (3)

HNFE 5324 – Public Health Nutrition Policies and Programs (3)

Total: 6 credits

*Courses from first year fall and first year spring are in addition to any undergraduate courses needed to finish DPD program. HNFE 5125G and HNFE 5126G are dual counted towards both BS and MS degrees.

After first year spring, students are expected to graduate from the undergraduate didactic program in dietetics (HNFE degree: Dietetics) to officially become graduate students.

First Year: Summer

HNFE 5354 – Food for Optimal Health (3)

HNFE 5344 – Nutrition Counseling for Behavior Change (3)

HNFE 5314 - Business of Dietetics and Healthcare (3)

HNFE 5754 – Dietetics and Professional Management SEL (2)

Total: 11 credits

Second Year: Fall

HNFE 5304 – Principles of Dietetics and Nutrition Practice (2)

HNFE 5154 – Research Methods in Nutrition and Physical Activity (3)

HNFE 5754 – Community Nutrition SEL (4)

HNFE 5754 – Foodservice Management SEL (3)

Elective (3)

Total: 15 credits

Second Year: Spring

HNFE 5394 – Professional Practice in Nutrition and Dietetics (1)

HNFE 5334 – Clinical Nutrition Care Applications (2)

HNFE 5754 – Clinical Nutrition SEL (10)

Total: 13 credits

Total program: 51 credits

HNFE 5754 = Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) Rotations

1 credit hour equates to 50 supervised practice hours

Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) Sites

Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech serve as the primary providers of SEL practice sites. Specific SEL sites and rotations are subject to vary each year depending on preceptor and site availability. The Assistant Director and SEL Coordinator from Carilion Clinic will assume responsibility for assigning students to sites and preceptors based on availability, student professional development goals, and other logistical considerations. **While the program will make every effort to assign sites based on professional development goals and interests, scheduling preferences for any given site cannot be guaranteed.**

Students may be expected to drive up to 100 minutes to a given SEL site and no more than 100 miles. All SEL sites must have an active affiliation agreement on file before the start of a given rotation, and affiliation agreements will be updated on an annual basis, as needed. The SEL Coordinator will be in charge of managing all SEL sites within the Carilion Clinic system, while the Assistant Director will be in charge of managing all SEL sites associated with Virginia Tech and outside of the Carilion Clinic system. SEL sites will be evaluated on a yearly basis for their adequacy and appropriateness for meeting student learning needs based on the quality of experience provided, and preceptor and student feedback.

Examples of sites where students may be placed include the following:

- Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital
- Carilion Community Hospital
- Carilion Cancer Center
- Carilion Rehabilitation Center
- Carilion Franklin Memorial Hospital
- Carilion Giles Community Hospital
- Carilion New River Valley Medical Center
- Carilion St. Albans Behavioral Health
- Carilion Diabetes Center – Roanoke
- Carilion Diabetes Center – NRV
- Food Service Partners
- Virginia Tech Carilion Research Center
- Carilion Institute for Orthopedics and Neurosciences
- Virginia Tech Athletics
- Virginia Tech Dining Services
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Virginia Cooperative Extension Family Nutrition Program

Tuition, Fees, and Other Program Expenses

Students will be enrolled full-time for each semester of the program and follow standard tuition rates as outlined by the University Bursar's Office. For the most up to date information on tuition, fees, and other program expenses, it is best to refer to the program website:

<https://www.hnfe.vt.edu/graduate/MSnutrition/costs.html>. A full-breakdown of tuition and fees by semester is available at <https://www.bursar.vt.edu/>

Financial Aid: This program qualifies for federal financial aid. Students are also encouraged to pursue private loans as deemed appropriate and/or scholarships through the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, state and local dietetic associations, or other organizations. More information is available at <https://finaid.vt.edu/graduate-students.html>.

Withdrawal and Refund of Tuition: Program tuition and fee information are located on the [program website](#). If a student needs to withdraw from classes or the program for any reason, standard University procedures will apply for the refund of tuition and fees. Students should refer to the [Bursar's Office](#) webpage for more specific information regarding the refund of tuition and fees.

Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics Program (MSND)

Policies and Procedures

Drug Screen and Background Check

Students are expected to pass a criminal background check and a nine-panel drug screen in order to be admitted to the program. Students who cannot pass these screens will be immediately terminated from the program without refund of fees. The student is responsible for covering all fees associated with the background check and drug testing which is completed through [PreCheck](#).

Insurance Requirements

Health Insurance Requirements, Injury or Illness While Working at SEL Sites: Students are required to provide proof of active health insurance coverage for the duration of the program. If a student requires emergency medical attention while at a SEL setting or other program sponsored event, treatment will be provided the same as for the facility's personnel at the student's expense, based on the student's Insurance plan. Students are responsible for treatment of personal illness. Students are not entitled to worker's compensation.

Professional Liability Coverage: Virginia Tech covers professional liability insurance for professional responsibilities completed by the student as required by the MSND Program. Virginia Tech does not provide liability coverage for any professional work completed outside of that which is required by the program.

Transportation: The student is responsible for transportation to all classes and SEL sites and any liability incurred. In cases where transportation is provided by University-funded vehicles, including University-sponsored mass transportation, the University maintains liability for travel.

Ethical Conduct and Professionalism

Students must abide by Virginia Tech's [Honor Code](#): No plagiarism, stealing, lying, cheating, or illegal activities will be tolerated and are grounds for immediate termination of the student. Students must also comply with the [Code of Ethics](#) and Standards of The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in all aspects of the program. Students are expected to treat preceptors, instructors, professional staff, fellow classmates, etc. with respect and courtesy. Disrespectful behavior is grounds for discipline and/or termination from the program. More information regarding expectations for ethical conduct and professionalism is outlined in the Discipline/Termination Policy and Expectations for Graduate Students form provided during orientation.

Confidentiality

Students are required to comply with Virginia Tech and the policies of all affiliation sites to protect the confidentiality of information in the records of patients and/or employees. Students must also understand and comply with federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations that are enforced at each SEL site. These regulations stipulate site policies regarding use of patient/resident personal information. It is the student's responsibility to know and follow the confidentiality policies of each rotation site.

Use of Electronic Devices

Students should refer to individual graduate course syllabi for instruction on proper use of electronic devices during class. Students are required to adhere to the following policy regarding the use of electronic devices during SEL rotations:

- Telephones at SEL sites are to be used for business purposes only. No personal calls are allowed without permission, and students must follow the institution's policy regarding long-distance calls.
- Computers at SEL sites are for business-use only.
- Cell phones and personal tablets/computers should be turned off at SEL sites and during associated classes. Use of electronics should be confined to break time or personal time unless related to the completion of professional assignments or note-taking.
- Checking email, social media, texting, etc. should be confined to breaks or personal time.
- Use of cell phones and/or electronic devices for personal use during class or onsite SEL activities is considered unprofessional and subject to discipline.

Social Media Engagement

Social media can serve as a useful communication tool and students are encouraged to engage in *professional use* of social media throughout the program. Students should exercise professional judgement regarding the proper use of social media platforms. Virginia Tech's official social media sites are as follows:

Virginia Tech Social Media	HNFE Social Media	MSND Social Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Website: www.vt.edu▪ Twitter: @Virginia_Tech▪ Instagram: Virginia.Tech▪ Facebook▪ LinkedIn▪ Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Website: www.hnfe.vt.edu▪ Twitter: @VTHNFE▪ Facebook▪ LinkedIn▪ Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Website: https://www.hnfe.vt.edu/graduate/MSnutrition.html▪ Twitter: @VT_MSND▪ Instagram: @VT_MSND▪ Facebook

More information regarding the appropriate use of social media will be outlined during the program orientation and the Principles of Nutrition and Dietetics course. Virginia Tech has guidelines relating to the use of social media available [here](#). The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has published a paper for dietetics practitioners on best practices for using social media available [here](#).

Appropriate Attire

Students are expected to exercise personal judgement when it comes to selection of their dress or attire on class days and for specific occasions within the program. It should be noted that common classroom attire does not meet business casual attire standards that will be expected for SEL rotations. During SEL rotations and program-sponsored events, students should adhere to guidelines for **business casual attire**, which is the most commonly accepted office dress code appropriate for most business functions, meetings, conferences, and other professional events, unless instructed otherwise by the assigned practice site. The emphasis is still on business, not casual, and should be a more relaxed version of the business professional including:

- Ties, blazers, jackets, and cardigans may be worn. Sweaters, blouses, button down shirts, and polos are also appropriate.

- Dark colored, khaki or other dress pants, skirts, and dresses may be worn; skirts and dresses should be of professional length. Jeans are not typically acceptable for business casual.
- Heels, flats, booties/boots, and loafers are appropriate. Most SEL practice sites requires that shoes be close-toed and slip-resistant.

Additional notes:

- Students will be required to obtain and wear a white lab coat for the clinical SEL.
- Some sites may require hair coverage in the form of a hair net and/or beard cover.

Students are required to adhere to professional dress requirements when at their SEL sites and/or when with their preceptor(s). Students are expected to discuss specific professional dress and attire expectations with their preceptors prior to arrival as expectations may vary based on the location and setting. Students can refer to Virginia Tech's Career Planning Guide (available at [Career Services](#)) for more information on appropriate dress for specific situations.

Role of Student in SEL Settings/Student Compensation

When placed in SEL settings, students support the work completed by, but are not intended to replace, paid employees. Some compensation from facilities may occur in various forms such as complimentary meals or parking. In rare cases, facilities may offer financial compensation for work done outside of the MSND program. Any form of compensation may vary annually and is never guaranteed. As such, it is not tracked by the Program Director and is not considered in site placement decisions.

Outside Employment

The MSND program requires full attention and energies to be successful in the learning experience and in completing timely assignments. Success requires that the student assign the program top priority. Completion of written assignments and capstone assignments requires significant time commitment beyond supervised practice hours. Part-time employment of any type is strongly discouraged, particularly during SEL rotations. Outside employment of any type needs to be reported to the Program Director using the form provided: <https://forms.gle/y8oZzA2RRa8rpC587>. Outside work or related training is not considered to be an excused absence for MSND sponsored events, rotations, or course requirements.

Competency Based Education and Student Performance Monitoring and Evaluation of Progress

The Future Education Model is grounded in **competency-based education (CBE)**. **Competencies are defined as** the described knowledge, skill, and judgment needed to perform professionally-related functions. CBE is the system where core competency level must be achieved and demonstrated by students before they move on; progress toward reaching the required competencies is monitored within the framework. Thus, in CBE emphasis is on demonstration of required competencies rather than on completion of a certain number of hours and/or checking off a list of activities. Unlike traditional education models where achieving competence is often determined by completing a rotation with a set number of hours, in CBE the amount of time spent in a rotation is secondary to achieving competence in a given area of practice. The student completes the rotation when he, she or they demonstrate the ability to meet all the defined competencies for that rotation; hours required to demonstrate competency are expected to vary.

Progress towards performance goals will be reviewed at regular intervals throughout each SEL rotation to ensure that the student has completed all required learning activities and has demonstrated assigned competencies at the “competent” level or higher. All activities must be completed, and all ACEND competencies must be demonstrated to the expectations set forth by the rotation and the program before a passing grade for the SEL rotation will be issued; otherwise an “incomplete” grade will be issued. Progression to the next SEL rotation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis if all activities have not been completed and/or if all ACEND competencies within the current rotation have not been successfully demonstrated at the “competent” level or higher. Degrees and verification statements will not be awarded with an “incomplete” grade on their transcripts. The aforementioned documentation will be retained in the student’s permanent electronic file.

SEL Outcomes Tracking and Documentation

- Students must demonstrate all ACEND competencies outlined throughout courses and SEL rotations at the “competent” level or higher.
- Competency in SEL rotations will be demonstrated through the completion of rotation-specific assignments (formative and summative in nature) and formative and summative performance evaluations. Students are expected to complete all activities associated with each SEL rotation and upload required supporting documents to Canvas.
- Students are expected to complete the number of hours assigned to each SEL rotation (50 hours per 1 credit enrolled) plus or minus 10%. This represents the minimum number of hours assigned to each respective rotation in order to demonstrate minimum competency for entry-level practice. Each student will be assigned an Excel spreadsheet (“SEL Timesheet”) at the beginning of their first supervised practice rotation for tracking SEL activities and hours. Students are responsible for using the SEL timesheet to log activities and hours throughout all SEL rotations and are expected to update on a weekly basis. Instructors will be responsible for estimating hours of alternative supervised experiential learning that are integrated into graduate courses and reporting them to the Assistant Director.
- Summative preceptor evaluation forms will be utilized to evaluate student competency level for specific ACEND competencies assigned to each SEL rotation. Each SEL instructor and/or preceptor facilitating those rotations will document and provide completed versions of these evaluations at the specific deadlines indicated within each SEL rotation to both the student, who is responsible for signing the evaluation and uploading it to Canvas. Paper copies of summative evaluation forms should be given to the Assistant Director for proper scanning.
- The assigned instructor for a given SEL rotation will regularly review students’ SEL timesheet, summative performance evaluations, and other planned activities to ensure competencies are being met at the “competent” level or higher as expected in each SEL rotation before a “passing” grade is given.
- A student who does not demonstrate the appropriate competency level for a specific activity or performance evaluation is required to communicate with the preceptor or instructor within 5 days of the evaluation to establish a plan for working toward achieving minimal competency. If competency is not achieved within the recommended timeframe, an “incomplete” grade will be assigned for the rotation or course to allow for additional time for the student to demonstrate competency. In the situation where all activities have not been completed and/or all ACEND competencies within the current rotation have not been successfully demonstrated at the “competent” level, progression to the next SEL rotation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Students may have to spend additional time in the current rotation before moving on to the next

SEL. Degrees will not be awarded to students with an “incomplete” grade on any required courses or SEL rotations.

- The Program Director and Assistant Director will serve as a resource to instructors, preceptors, and students related to the challenges in effectively meeting specific competencies outlined for a learning activity or SEL rotation. Meetings and conferences between the student, the Program Director and/or Assistant Director and/or the SEL Coordinator related to progress and completion will occur regularly and as needed to promote student success. All meetings and conferences between the student and the Program Director, Assistant Director and/or SEL Coordinator related to progress within SEL rotations will be documented. Included in these documents will be a summary of any problems and action taken on behalf of the student or SEL site.
- A final review of completed SEL evaluation forms is conducted by the Program Director and/or Assistant Director at the end of the program before a degree is conferred and an ACEND verification statement is issued. These documents will be retained in the student’s permanent electronic file.

As described above, students are expected to demonstrate competency at the “competent” level or higher for ALL specified ACEND competencies for each course and SEL rotation in order to successfully complete the program. Competencies are based on interactive learning experiences designed to train students to perform a wide range of activities practiced by entry-level dietitians. The desired level of competency of “competent” is considered a 4 or higher on a 9-point scale or 80 percent out of 100, depending on the method of evaluation for a given project or assignment.

MSND Competency Ratings:

7-9 – Advanced Competent: Has demonstrated above required competency level in an exemplary manner. Demonstrates skills, knowledge, and critical thinking at a level above entry-level practice.

4-6 – Competent: Has demonstrated competency throughout all aspects of skill or concept. Has completed all requirements satisfactorily. Skills, knowledge, and critical thinking are still developing but appropriate for what is expected for entry-level practice.

2-3 – Needs Improvement: More experience/learning is needed to demonstrate competency and critical thinking. Has mastered some aspects of competencies or skills but more improvement and/or development are needed to attain the level of what is expected for entry-level practice.

1 – Unsatisfactory: Demonstrates minimal skills and has limited knowledge and/or critical thinking ability. More learning experiences are needed to facilitate further improvement and growth.

N/A – Not Applicable: Not experienced in this rotation or course or not directly observed at the time of evaluation.

Evaluation of Student Progress

Evaluation of student performance in courses and SEL rotations occurs in various ways including formative and summative evaluations, feedback from the Program Director, Assistant Director, SEL Coordinator and preceptors/instructors, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation. These evaluations serve to monitor progress in demonstrating academic and professional competencies according to the CBE model as outlined by the ACEND Future Education Model for Graduate Programs. Evaluations provide a mechanism for the early detection of any academic difficulty or deficits in skills, professional/ethical behavior, and academic integrity. *The established system described below is subject to change to best meet the needs of the students and is designed to facilitate ongoing feedback to support student progress and successful performance.*

The SEL Coordinator will be in charge of managing all SEL rotations and assignments within the Carilion Clinic system, while the Assistant Director will be in charge of managing all SEL rotations and assignments affiliated with Virginia Tech or outside the Carilion Clinic system. The assigned instructor for a given SEL rotation evaluates SEL assignments that are NOT completed directly for the SEL facility (e.g., reflections, time logs, book review, final written reports). Major projects and assignments will be assessed on a 9-point scale to demonstrate achievement of specifically outlined ACEND competencies. Smaller, formative activities may be assessed on a “complete” or “competent” versus “incomplete” or “Incompetent” basis, with assignments marked as “incompetent” requiring revision until competency is demonstrated. Any summative assignment or assessment below “competent” will require modifications to bring it to the competent level.

Students will complete **self-evaluations** according to reflective practice principles on a regular basis throughout the program. Opportunities include the self-evaluation of nutrition counseling and interviewing skills, self-evaluation of clinical skills, reflections on leadership strengths and management skills, and the assessment of informatics skills, cultural competency, and other professional competencies and related skills.

Peer evaluation may be requested for some assignments. Peer evaluations are encouraged to facilitate student development of skills related to effective feedback, communication, and mentorship.

Preceptors and instructors will evaluate students according to two types of **performance evaluations**:

1. **Summative Evaluations:** The purpose of summative evaluations is to evaluate a student at a particular point in time in order to confirm if the student has met the required ACEND competencies outlined in the curriculum. A formal, summative evaluation will be provided during the final week of each SEL rotation and potentially more frequently during the clinical rotation. Summative evaluations are kept in the student’s permanent electronic file. The following are examples of evaluations used to provide summative feedback on specific skills and competencies:
 - a. *Summative Performance Evaluations* – to be completed at the end of each SEL rotation by the instructor and/or preceptor. A minimum of one summative performance evaluation will be completed for each of the following SEL rotations:
 - i. Dietetics and Professional Management
 - ii. Community Nutrition
 - iii. Foodservice Management
 - iv. Clinical Nutrition
 - b. *Group Teaching Evaluation Tool* – goal is to be completed by a preceptor approximately 2-3 times during the program based on availability of group teaching opportunities.
 - c. Additional summative evaluations will be implemented at the discretion of the Program Director or Assistant Director to ensure demonstration of all ACEND-outlined competencies. Examples include the following:
 - i. Capstone Project Rubric for the Dietetics and Professional Management SEL
 - ii. Program Plan Summative Rubric for the Community SEL
 - iii. Theme Meal or Major Project Report Rubric for the Foodservice Management SEL
 - iv. Clinical Oral/Written Case Study Rubric for Clinical SEL

2. **Formative Evaluations:** Formative evaluations are meant to monitor and provide feedback on a student's progress in meeting the competencies outlined in the curriculum and is often coupled with the opportunity for additional mentorship to promote continual improvement. Throughout SEL activities and coursework, the preceptor or instructor provides the student with informal daily feedback regarding his/her performance and progress toward demonstrating competency in specific skills (e.g., interviewing, counseling, communication and professional skills, ethical behavior, etc.). Formative evaluations may be completed in written form or conducted orally in the form of meetings between the student and preceptor or student and instructor.

The following process will facilitate documentation of the student's performance in SEL rotations:

Evaluations will be facilitated via rubrics tied to ACEND competencies as outlined on the syllabus for each SEL rotation. At the beginning of each SEL rotation, preceptors will be provided with evaluation forms required during the SEL rotation. A few days before the performance evaluation is due, the student will ask the preceptor to identify a time for an evaluation conference. At the end of each evaluation period, the student signs and submits the completed evaluation form to the assigned SEL instructor. Summative evaluation forms need to be scanned for submission on Canvas, with original paper form provided to the instructor to be filed within the student's permanent record.

The preceptor is responsible for assigning summative performance evaluation scores. Average performance level for the first half of a SEL rotation is expected to be ≥ 2.0 ("Needs Improvement") in order to be considered acceptable and to progress forward. **Students are expected to demonstrate ALL ACEND competencies at the "competent" level or higher (≥ 4.0) in order to successfully complete a given SEL rotation.** Students achieving competencies at the "competent" level or higher at a faster rate may be provided with opportunities to participate in activities that would build on the entry-level RDN competencies allowing for the demonstration of additional, advanced level competencies.

Student Retention/Remediation

Students are required to act in a professional manner, to follow all policies described in this document, and to meet expected performance standards as indicated on the student performance monitoring and evaluation of progress section. Students who do not perform in this manner or do not demonstrate competency by the end of a SEL rotation will be counseled by the Program Director or Assistant Director to identify remedial instruction and an action plan for improvement. Possible remediation efforts related to performance may include making modifications to an existing assignment, extending or adjusting a SEL rotation, identifying tutorial resources, or completing additional assignments to support student success.

The formative evaluations employed throughout the program (described above) provide regular feedback on student progress in the development of knowledge and skills. In the incidence that a student receives a "non-competent" performance evaluation or assignment grade within a graduate course, the instructor providing immediate oversight will be responsible for providing appropriate feedback and remediation to promote student success moving forward. If a student receives "non-competent" performance evaluation or assignment grade during an SEL rotation, the preceptor providing immediate oversight will first determine a plan for improvement to demonstrate competency at the "competent" level or higher. The plan for improvement will be discussed with the student within 5 business days, be documented in writing on the performance evaluation, and be reported to the Program Director or Assistant Director. The Program Director, Assistant Director, and student will review

progress on the remediation plan after an agreed upon date appropriate for the scope of the plan and/or rotations.

If a student repetitively fails to meet performance standards despite remediation efforts, the Program Director and Assistant Director may deny the student permission to continue in the degree program and recommend dismissal by the Graduate School. The Graduate School will evaluate the recommendation for dismissal. Virginia Tech has resources available at the Virginia Tech Career and Professional Development Center to assist students who may benefit from counseling on other career paths that are more appropriate to their interests and abilities. These resources include [academic](#) and [non-academic](#) job/career searches, as well as [one-on-one career advising](#). Written documentation of all conferences and disciplinary actions will be provided to the student and maintained in the student's permanent file.

Discipline/Termination

Behavioral misconduct is taken seriously and will lead to disciplinary action. Behavioral misconduct includes poor attitude; inappropriate interaction with faculty, preceptors, and other facility employees or patients; failure to adhere to facility policies; plagiarism or lack of academic integrity; alcohol and drug misuse; unsatisfactory attendance; or any other behavioral misconduct or unethical behavior. A conference will be scheduled with the Program Director and the outcomes of the meeting documented. Documentation will include a summary of the situation and resolution or plan for resolution. Inappropriate behavior or failure to follow directions presented by a preceptor/SEL facility will result in a formal written warning. A second offense will result in written notification of probationary status. A third offense will result in dismissal from the program with no refund of tuition or fees. Any major infraction or misconduct may result in immediate probationary status or dismissal from the program without refund of tuition and fees.

Disciplinary action is required if the students exhibits unprofessional behavior. Unacceptable professional behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Excessive missed days and/or tardiness
- Excessive use of cell phones for personal reasons
- Inappropriate dress
- Cultural insensitivity
- Harassing, threatening, intimidating or assaulting (physically or verbally) staff, peers, others
- Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior towards preceptors, instructors, professional staff, employees, or peers
- Breaching confidentiality of patients, staff, or peers

Additionally, students will be held responsible for breaches in student conduct which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Abusive, disorderly or disruptive conduct
- Use of illegal drugs
- Misuse and abuse of alcohol
- Actions leading to the conviction of criminal offenses
- Forgery, fraud or theft
- Violence, including gender-based violence
- Possession of a weapon

Breaches of student conduct will be dealt with in accordance of the policies outlined in the *Virginia Tech Hokie Handbook* provided by Student Affairs.

Copies of written disciplinary letters and individualized improvement plans will be kept in the student's permanent electronic record. To comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (as amended), Virginia Tech will not release educational records or personally identifiable information contained therein, other than directory information, without students' written consent. Student Conduct case records are private and will not be released without a student's written consent or by order of a court of law.

Vacations, Holidays, and Leaves of Absence During SEL Rotations

Each student may take a maximum of one sick/personal day during the Dietetics and Professional Management, Community and Foodservice Management SEL rotations, and a maximum of two sick/personal days during the Clinical SEL rotation, which should be communicated in advance, when possible. Students missing classes and SEL days due to sickness or reasons of a personal nature are still expected to complete all required learning activities to demonstrate competence. Insufficient demonstration of competency or completion of the required SEL activities will require coordination between the SEL Coordinator, instructor, preceptor and the student to make up required activities. SEL class days that are missed due to unexpected emergencies must be replaced at the student's initiative with an equivalent educational experience within four weeks of the scheduled class. If the scheduled class is less than four weeks before the SEL rotation end date, then the content must be replaced before the assigned SEL rotation ends. Content included in classes that are cancelled by the Program Director or Assistant Director will be rescheduled.

Leave from SEL rotations related to COVID-19:

During SEL rotations, students will be expected to adhere to the specific program policies outlined in the **COVID-19 Monitoring Policy & Assumption of Risk for Supervised Experiential Learning** document maintained separate from this handbook. Students who are unable to attend onsite SEL activities due to the need to isolate, self-quarantine, or due to COVID-19 related illness are expected to communicate with their preceptor and instructor to identify remote work opportunities or alternative supervised practice activities to stay on track for successful completion of each rotation.

Students are expected to attend all SEL class days in person, unless an alternative modality is indicated by the instructor. Students should refer to the syllabus for each of the other graduate level courses for specific policies in regard to missed class days.

Guidelines for use of personal days:

- Students will discuss a need for a personal day during SEL rotations with the assigned preceptor, SEL Coordinator and Assistant Director/Program Director (depending on site assigned) at least two weeks in advance. The student is responsible for documenting missed days onsite on the "SEL Timesheet."
- Students may not schedule a personal day during staff relief activities during the clinical SEL.
- Only in very limited circumstances will personal days be approved for absences occurring on SEL class days. Any SEL classes that are missed due to an approved personal day or an unexpected absence must be replaced **at the student's initiative** with an equivalent educational experience (as approved by the assigned SEL instructor within four weeks).

Guidelines for unexpected absences:

- Students will notify the preceptor, SEL Coordinator, and the assigned instructor for the rotation as soon as an emergency event arises that interferes with SEL rotations and/or SEL class days. The SEL Coordinator, preceptor, or instructor will determine the make-up schedule, if necessary, based on the individual situation.
- A personal day will be applied to any unexpected absence. If the student has already used allotted personal days when the absence occurs, then he/she will submit a written proposal to the SEL Coordinator or Director/Assistant Director, depending on the assigned practice site, within 5 working days with a plan to make up the SEL hours. The proposal will be approved at the discretion of the SEL Coordinator and/or Program Director/Assistant Director and the preceptor.

Guidelines for inclement weather:

- If inclement weather occurs on a day when students are scheduled to work at their SEL sites, students are expected to follow their individual site's inclement weather policies. It is the student's responsibility to become informed of each site's inclement weather policy at the beginning of each SEL rotation. Failure to show up onsite against facility policy for inclement weather will result in the application of a personal day.
- If inclement weather poses a travel risk on a scheduled SEL class day, the appropriate instructor will notify students by 7 a.m. The assigned instructor may assign independent study activities as needed.
- Students are generally not expected to make up lost SEL hours due to inclement weather if they are told not to report to work by their preceptor or SEL Coordinator and they are provided with work they can complete remotely. However, if missed time at SEL rotations interferes with the student's ability to demonstrate competency or if performance objectives are not met, additional hours will be planned. The make-up schedule will be reflected documented on the "SEL Timesheet."

Guidelines for SEL site holidays and Virginia Tech holidays:

- University and SEL site holidays may not coincide. Students are expected to work at a SEL site according to the facility holiday schedule. If the SEL site has a scheduled holiday and the student is unable to work, the students may be scheduled in an alternate setting or use the SEL site holiday to accomplish work on a project for the SEL site. If a student does not make arrangements to accomplish alternate work or does not communicate these arrangements with the SEL Coordinator in writing, then a personal day will be applied to the missed hours.

Grievances/Complaints

it is recommended that students and faculty/preceptors discuss any issues, concerns, or appeals as soon as they come up. Any disagreement regarding performance evaluations, assignment grades, site placements, or other grievances and complaints will be processed in the manner described below. Students should be assured that they can submit grievances without risk of retaliation.

1. Student or preceptor grievances related to SEL rotations at Virginia Tech or coursework should be submitted directly to the Program Director. Student or preceptor grievances related to SEL rotations at Carilion Clinic should first be submitted directly to the SEL Coordinator. Faculty should submit grievances directly to the Program Director.
2. The student or faculty/preceptor must state the problem in written form with the reason for the appeal and submit to the appropriate individual mentioned above. If the grievance is related to a performance evaluation or assignment grade, the request for appeal must be submitted within

- 5 business days of the event. The designated individual will discuss the problem with the student and/or the faculty/preceptor and document a written response within 5 business days.
3. If the student and/or faculty/preceptor perceives that the problem is not adequately resolved, the issue is referred to the next level along with the previous documentation, progressing until the grievance is resolved. The levels are as follows: Director of MSND Program, Director of HNFE Graduate Programs, Department Head of HNFE, and Dean of the Graduate School (if necessary). Students and/or faculty/preceptors can contact and work with the Graduate School Ombudsperson at any step of this process.
 4. Students, faculty, or preceptors can submit complaints regarding unresolved issues or program non-compliance to the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) after the options described above are exhausted:

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606
Phone: (800)-877-1600 ext 5400
Email: acend@eatright.org
Website: www.eatright.org/ACEND

Any grievances from preceptors or other representatives or employees of the SEL sites will be processed according to the terms stated in the affiliation agreement between Virginia Tech and the site, when applicable. All records of grievance or appeals are maintained in the program files for a period of seven years.

Verification of Student Identity in Online Settings

The MSND Program is primarily administered through in-person coursework and supervised practice, however some elements of online education may be integrated within the program. In cases of online instruction or testing, student identity is verified through the university Learning Management System, Canvas, which is used to administer all online exams and quizzes. Faculty are encouraged to utilize lockdown browser during exams and quizzes, preventing students from opening additional windows or taking screenshots. Respondus Monitor may also be used in conjunction with lockdown browser to further verify identity and monitor student testing behavior via webcam recording. Minimum computer system requirements from the Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise dictates the inclusion of a built in or external web camera. In graduate professional courses for the program, students are expected to have their camera on to build relationships with peers and instructors and to verify identity.

Protection of Privacy Information/Student Access to Files

Students' permanent electronic records are kept by the Program Director in a secure location. Active files are in the possession of the Program Director, Assistant Director, and an appointed administrative assistant during the active portions of the program, prior to graduation, and readily accessible to students. Student requests to review permanent files, excluding documents for which access has been waived, will be granted immediately.

Access to Student Support Services

Graduate Honor Code

The [Graduate Honor System](#) establishes a standard of academic integrity. The code demands a firm adherence to a set of values and is founded on the concept of honesty with respect to the intellectual efforts of oneself and others. Compliance with the Graduate Honor Code requires that all graduate students exercise honest and ethical behavior in all their academic and professional pursuits here at Virginia Tech, whether these undertakings pertain to study, course work, research, extension, or teaching.

<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations/graduate-honor-system.html>

University Counseling Center

The staff of the [Cook Counseling Center](#) sees students with issues that include depression, anxiety, stress management, family problems, relationship concerns, sexual concerns, career or major uncertainty, difficulties with studying and learning, and substance/drug abuse. Support groups are offered for ACOA's, sexual assault and incest survivors, LGBTQ students, and a variety of other factors. Students may be seen individually or in a group depending on the nature of their problems. Counselors at the center are licensed psychologists and professional counselors.

<http://www.ucc.vt.edu/>

Student Health Services

Care provided by the [University Student Health Service](#) (SHS) is comparable to that provided by a general family physician and is available to all full-time Virginia Tech students. The staff consists of well-qualified physicians, physician's assistants, and nurse practitioners. In addition, the staff includes registered nurses, registered pharmacists, radiological and medical technologists, and other support personnel.

- Full-service pharmacy: Students can utilize the pharmacy in the McComas Health and Fitness Center.
- Women's Clinic: Tests, birth control, and sexually transmitted disease screening is available at the Schiffert Health Center: <http://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/>.

The University offers optional subsidized health insurance to interested students. Spouse/partner and family plans are also available. For more information regarding insurance student, visit:

https://www.healthcenter.vt.edu/insurance_billing/insurance_questions.html

The Writing Center at Virginia Tech

[The Writing Center](#) provides free writing tutorial and consultation services for students, faculty, and staff. The Writing Center instructors can assist with general writing needs on most types of documents. Assistance is available on a one-time, occasional, or regular basis.

<https://lib.vt.edu/spaces/writing-center>

The Career and Professional Development Center at Virginia Tech

The Virginia Tech Graduate School offers regular [professional development](#) opportunities. [Career and Professional Development](#) (CPD) for VT students also provides assistance through all stages of career exploration and preparation. CPD partners with the Graduate School to offer weekly walk-in career advising sessions in the GLC, and a series of workshops and seminars to help students hone skills for the jobs they want.

<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/student-life/professional-development.html>

<https://career.vt.edu/>

Virginia Tech Police Department

The [Virginia Tech Police](http://www.police.vt.edu/) Department's mission is to strive to enhance the safety and quality of life for students, faculty, staff, and visitors through effective law enforcement and proactive crime prevention in partnership with the University community. They operate 24 hours a day and provide full services to the University community in the following areas: patrol, crime prevention, investigation, and traffic enforcement. Officers also answer calls for assistance involving such problems as keys locked in vehicles, disabled vehicles, and requests for information. Students may also request a vehicle escort if they feel uncomfortable walking to their car after dark.

<http://www.police.vt.edu/>

Statistical and Graphic Services

[Statistical consulting](https://www.stat.vt.edu/stat-lab.html) is available through the Statistics Department to graduate students at an hourly charge. The [STAT Lab](https://www.stat.vt.edu/stat-lab.html) provides sessions, workshops, tutorials and individualized support for data visualization, design, and communicating information graphically.

<https://www.stat.vt.edu/stat-lab.html>

Amendments to the Program Handbook

The program handbook will be reviewed annually and throughout the academic year as needed. Updates to the handbook will be communicated to students in a timely manner and posted online. If a student has questions regarding the content of this handbook or would like to receive clarification on policies and procedures, inquiries should be directed to the Program Director or Assistant Director.

Program Handbook Updated: November 1, 2021