

Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program

DIETETIC PRACTICUM MANUAL

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026



Western Zone



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The purpose of this manual is to ensure that students and preceptors in our practicum program can access instructions for each step of the practicum program.

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ABOUT US

The Acadia University Dietetic Practicum Program has been conferred as an accredited professional education program by EQual.



Since 1999, the faculty of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics and the dietitians of the Western Zone of the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) have worked together to provide dietetic practicum students with many opportunities and learning experiences to meet the competencies required to complete the Program. Entry to the Practicum Program is based on strong academic achievement, participation in course work, active involvement in volunteer activities, favourable references, and a positive interview. Dietetic practicum students are placed within the Western Zone of the NSHA. The Program involves rotations including the core areas of Nutrition Care, Management (food services and administration), and Population and Public Health. Long Term Care placements are also part of the Program. A practice-based research project and completion of a research seminar are required components of the practicum.

There are two cohorts per year in our program. One cohort (integrated) completes 48 weeks in two levels. Level 1 (NUTR 4033) is 16 weeks, from May to August between third and fourth year; level 2 (NUTR 4043) is 32 weeks, completed between May and December after the fourth year of study. The second cohort (Graduate) completes 48 consecutive weeks that covers both levels and courses, beginning the last week of August following the fourth year of study.

INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS

The mission of SND is to support emerging leaders in food, nutrition and health by providing a robust, interdisciplinary curriculum and community-engaged learning that fosters professional skills and ethics necessary to contribute to local community vitality and global health.

The mission of Nova Scotia Health (NSH) is: Working together to achieve excellence in health, healing and learning. NSH provides health services to Nova Scotians and some specialized services to Maritimers and Atlantic Canadians. We operate hospitals, health centres and community-based programs across the province. Learn more about Nova Scotia Health here: <https://www.nshealth.ca/about-nova-scotia-health>.

PRACTICUM PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program is to provide accredited practical training opportunities for Acadia University Nutrition and Dietetic students.

Our objectives are to ensure training environments that support achievement of the Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice (ICDEP) required for success in passing the Canadian Dietetic Registration Exam (CDRE), and for entry-level practice as a registered dietitian.

GETTING STARTED

Students admitted into the program must complete the following steps prior to beginning the program.

REGISTERING FOR YOUR PRACTICUM COURSES

Nutr 4033 – Practicum Level 1

- The SND Administrative Assistant will contact the Registrar’s Office and let them know the start dates of the course. She will then register you in the course. Once you are registered, you can pay your fees – see below.

Nutr 4043 – Practicum Level 2

- The SND Administrative Assistant will contact the Registrar’s Office and let them know the start dates of the course. She will then register you in the course. Once you are registered, you can pay your fees – see below.
- After graduation with a BSN, you must apply for Honours Conversion to complete your practicum courses. Your graduation from the practicum program will be as an Honours Conversion student.
- Dependent upon when you complete your practicum, you can apply to graduate in either the fall or spring. If you graduate in the fall, you will receive your degree in the mail. If you graduate in the spring, you can receive your degree at the spring convocation ceremony.

Course Fees are published in the current Academic Calendar, posted by the University Registrar’s Office: <https://registrar.acadiau.ca/AcademicCalendars.html>

FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

Canada Student Loans

- Canadian Acadia Dietetic Practicum students are eligible to apply for a student loan in your home province. You apply as a full-time student.
- All students registered for these courses will be treated as full-time students during the practicum period.

Sobey's Fund

- Through generous funding from the Sobey's Foundation, we provide basic financial assistance for Acadia Dietetic Practicum students. Each student is allotted \$500.00 at the beginning of their practicum, and additional funds are allotted using equity as a decision-making framework as funds allow.

FORMS

There are several forms you will need throughout your practical training that maintain clear expectations and protect safety and quality. Please ensure that all forms are completed in a timely manner. These must be uploaded to your Practicum One Drive folder according to the schedule below. Placement cannot begin until all required forms are submitted. This is non-negotiable.

Forms are found on our [Dietetic Practicum website](#).

PRIOR TO START DATE

Form Name	Due date
Letter of Agreement with Preceptor	Upon beginning of the rotation
Student and Learner Placement Service Agreement: Confirmation of Pre-Placement Requirements	5 weeks prior to start
Pledge of Confidentiality	5 weeks prior to start
Consent Form for Use and Disclosure of Student Information	5 weeks prior to start
NS Health Student Parking Pass and ID form	5 weeks prior to start
NSH Health Student and Learner Placement Service Immunization & Infectious Diseases Screening Form	5 weeks prior to start

DURING PRACTICUM

Form Name	Due date
Competency Evaluation Forms	Mid- and end-point of each rotation
Performance Action Form	As needed

THE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA

As a Dietetic Practicum student, you are expected to abide by the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dietetics (NSRD). You are also expected to be familiar with several publications of NSRD. You must familiarize yourself with the following regulations prior to beginning your practicum.

- **NSRD**
 - <https://nsrd.ca/>
- **NSRD Code of Ethics**
 - <https://nsrd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/COE-NSCDN-Final.pdf>
- **NSRD Standards of Practice**
 - [https://nsrd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Standards of Practice Updated October 2023.pdf](https://nsrd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Standards_of_Practice_Updated_October_2023.pdf)
- **NSRD Documentation Guidelines**
 - <https://nsrd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/NSCDN-documentation-guidelines-Sept-2024.pdf>
- **NSRD Competencies for Dysphagia Assessment and Management in Dietetic Practice**
 - [https://nsrd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Dysphagia Competencies - updated.pdf](https://nsrd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Dysphagia_Competerencies_-_updated.pdf)
- **NSRD Candidate License**
 - <https://nsrd.ca/applicants/candidate-license/>

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING: STUDENTS

Practicum students are required to complete supplementary training prior to Practicum Prep Week. All courses will provide a proof of completion certificate that needs to be added to your OneDrive in the Course Completion Certificates folder.

Indigenous Learning Series

These learning modules are developed by the Politics department at Acadia and introduce foundational concepts relevant to the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and Nova Scotia, and our commitments to Truth and Reconciliation

- Link: <https://teaching.acadiu.ca/AcadialLUs.html>
- 2 modules
- No cost

Advanced Food Handlers

If you have not already completed this, you must complete this course offered through TrainCan.

- Link: will be provided by your Practicum Coordinator.
- Cost is approximately \$70.00, or more, depending on the format you choose.

Preceptor Education Program

The Preceptor Education Program is an online interprofessional program aimed at students and preceptors. It aims to support health professionals as preceptors and help prepare students for real life practice and address common issues that can arise in the student and preceptor relationship.

- Link: <https://www.preceptor.ca/>
- 8 interactive modules
- No cost

Dietitians of Canada Online Courses

You are required to complete several online courses prior to starting some rotations. Student members of Dietitians of Canada will receive a discount (<https://www.dietitians.ca/Join>). Certificate for each module completed needs to be added to your DC Online Courses folder.

- Prior to Population Health (Community):
 - Assessing Needs and Setting Priorities in Population and Public Health
- Prior to Nutrition Care (Clinical)
 - Professional Practice in Dysphagia Management
 - Swallow Screen and Assessment
 - Nutrition Care Process in Dysphagia
 - Critical Care Nutrition

SUGGESTED TRAINING: PRECEPTORS

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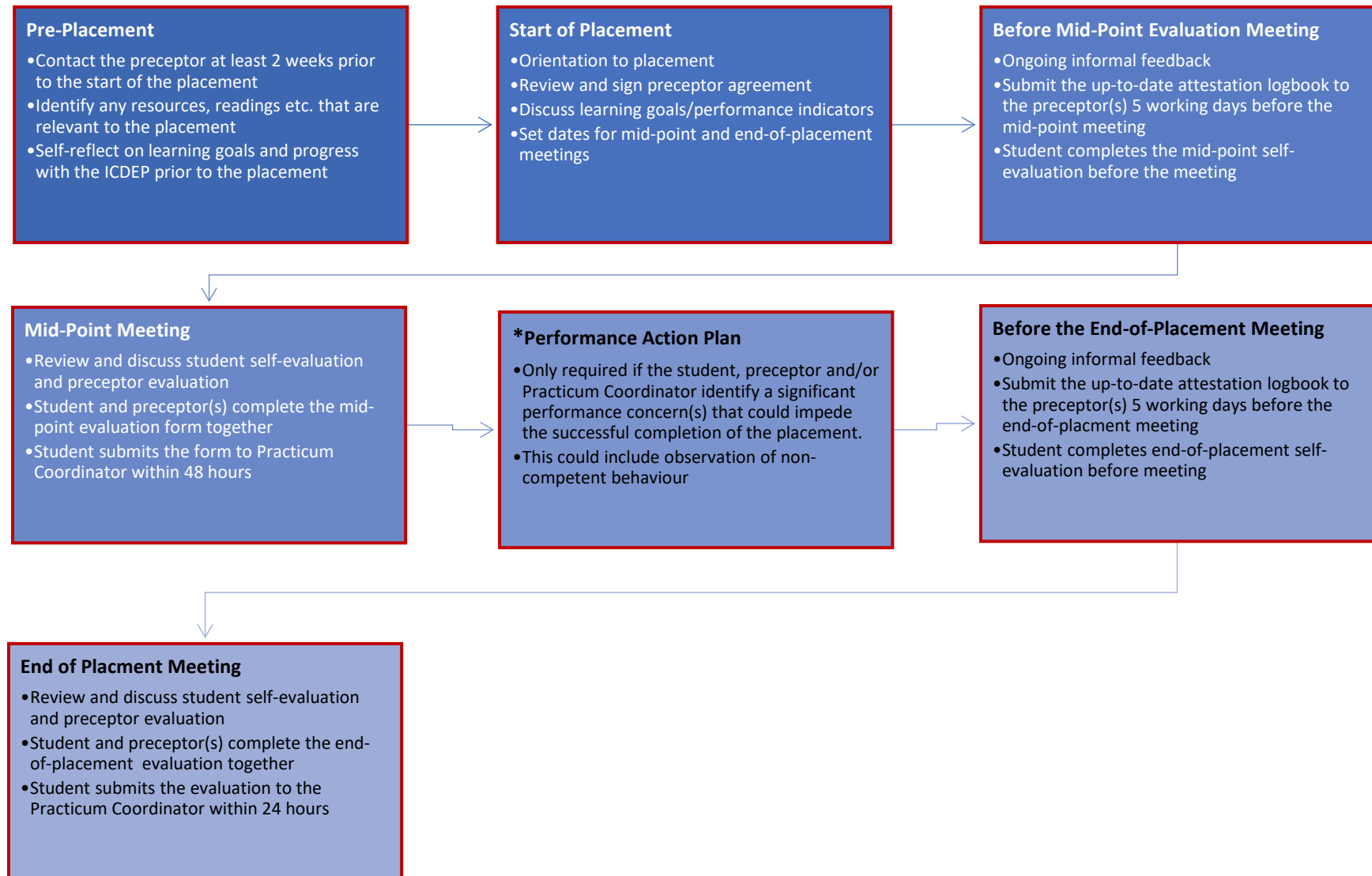
- Link: <https://www.preceptor.ca/>
- 8 interactive modules
- No cost

TRACKING COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the evaluation forms and processes for the Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program has involved the contributions of colleagues from several dietetic practicum programs in Canada. We would like to acknowledge the sharing of practicum resources from Brescia at Western University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Francis Xavier University, University of Prince Edward Island, The Eastern Health Dietetic Internship Program and The Moncton Dietetic Internship Program. We look forward to continuing collaboration and participation as the implementation of the Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice (Version 3.0) evolves.

EVALUATION PROCESS FLOWCHART



COMPETENCY ATTESTATION LOGBOOK INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of the attestation logbook is to facilitate reflective, self-led learning throughout your placement.

The link to the downloadable, fillable **Attestation Logbook** can be found on our [Dietetic Practicum website](#).

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. The student will maintain one attestation logbook for the entirety of their practicum, with each placement experience colour coded clearly. The student will identify evidence, in consultation with their preceptor(s) and the Practicum Supervisor (as needed), for all performance indicators that are relevant to each placement.
2. Daily, the student will document all activities, assignments, continuing education activities etc. they complete that provide evidence toward the successful completion of performance indicators during the placement.
3. The student will provide a copy of their up-to-date logbook, with their self-evaluation of competence, to the preceptor(s) five (5) working days before the mid-point and end-of-placement evaluation meetings.
4. The student will seek and incorporate feedback from the preceptor(s) about the evidence they have documented in the logbook on an ongoing basis.
5. Within 48 hours of the mid-point and end-of-placement evaluation meetings, after incorporating preceptor feedback, the student will upload a copy of their logbook.
6. Save each version of the logbook (mid-point and final) with a file name that clearly distinguishes which version is from mid-point and which version is the final attestation logbook for the placement.

PRECEPTOR INSTRUCTIONS

1. The preceptor(s) will encourage the student to update their logbook with evidence of their work toward entry-level proficiency for all performance indicators that are relevant to the placement.
2. The preceptor will provide ongoing feedback on learning activities/evidence that are relevant to placement setting and the student's learning needs.
3. The preceptor will review the logbook prior to the mid-point and final placement evaluation meetings and provide feedback on the logbook entries during the evaluation meetings.

COMPETENCY EVALUATION INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of the mid-point and end-of-placement evaluation is to evaluate the student against established competencies to ensure student is progressing and meeting what is considered entry level practice. Upon completion of the academic program and practicum program, practicum students are expected, as a minimum, to exhibit behavior consistent with the following **Statement of Entry-Level Proficiency**. The ICDEP defines **Entry-Level Proficiency** as:

Entry-level dietitians apply approaches consistent with standards and best practices in the profession. They recognize situations beyond their capacity and take appropriate steps to ensure such situations are addressed safely and ethically.

This formal evaluation process is not meant to replace regular and timely feedback conversations throughout the placement. Ensure that regular feedback opportunities are planned into the placement. The link to the downloadable, fillable **Competency Evaluation Form**. Forms are found on our [Dietetic Practicum website](#).

If there are performance concerns in the placement, from either the student or preceptor, contact the Practicum Coordinator, as soon as any issues arise that cannot be resolved through conversation, at any time in the placement.

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. The student schedules a mid-point and end-of-placement evaluation meeting with their preceptor(s) early in the placement.
2. The student completes “self-rating” using the evaluation form and “evidence” portion of the Attestation Logbook:
 - a. The student reflects on their performance. Completes “student rating” using performance rating standards. In the “evidence” column of logbook, the student documents specific examples of activities/experiences undertaken to support performance rating.
3. For the mid-point and end-of-placement evaluation meetings, the student emails a copy of the self-evaluation and the logbook to the preceptor(s) five (5) working days before the meeting.
4. During the meetings, the student and preceptor(s) discuss performance and progress toward achieving entry-level proficiency in all relevant competency areas.
5. If significant concerns about student performance are raised at the mid-point meeting, in consultation with your preceptor(s), identify learning goals for the remainder of the placement by completing a Performance Action Plan.
 - a. Within 48 hours of the evaluation meeting, submit your Performance Action Plan by email to the Acadia Practicum Coordinator and copy all preceptors who contributed to the evaluation on the email.
6. After each evaluation meeting, the student adds their comments to the final version of the mid-point and final evaluation form before submitting to the Acadia Practicum Supervisor.
7. Once complete, form should be signed by student and preceptor(s)
8. Submit the completed evaluation form after both the mid-point and end-of-placement evaluation meetings by email to the Acadia Practicum Coordinator. Copy all preceptors who contributed to the evaluation on the email.
9. The student keeps a copy of all forms for their files.
10. The student uploads a copy of all forms to their shared folder on OneDrive.

PRECEPTOR INSTRUCTIONS

1. At the mid-point and the end of the placement, the student and preceptor(s) meet to review and discuss the evaluation.
2. Preceptor completes the relevant sections of this form for both the mid-point and end-of-placement meetings by reviewing the evidence documented by the student in the logbook and their self-ratings.
3. When applicable, the preceptor can advise the student regarding alternative and/or additional evidence to support the evidence of competence. The preceptor completes the Mid-Point rating column or Final Rating column using the performance rating standards (i.e., Exposure/Discussion (E), Supervised (S), Minimal Supervision (M), Independent (I), Not applicable (N/A)). Preceptors may also document comments in the “Preceptor Comments” box.
4. The student and preceptor discuss the student’s self-assessment, and the preceptor(s) shares their input on the student’s achievement of the learning outcomes.
5. The preceptor makes any necessary edits to the evaluation form following the discussion with the student.
6. The preceptor ensures the student adds their comments to the evaluation form after both meetings.
7. Once complete, form should be signed by student and preceptor(s). The student will submit the form to the Acadia Practicum Supervisor.
8. Contact the Practicum Supervisor at any time during the placement if you have concerns about student performance.
9. If significant concerns about student performance are raised at the mid-point meeting, the student is required to complete a Performance Action Plan, in consultation with their preceptor(s). The preceptor will work with the student and Practicum Supervisor to help the student identify learning goals for the remainder of the placement.

PERFORMANCE ACTION PLAN

See also Policy Manual, policy 3.31 for more detail.

This form is used only if it is determined at the mid-point evaluation that a student is not on track to attain competencies, or if non-competent behaviour is identified during the placement.

If significant concerns about non-competent behaviour and/or the achievement of the performance indicators in the placement are identified during the mid-point evaluation by preceptor(s), the student will identify three SMART learning goals to help achieve the key learning outcomes for the placement, and continue progress toward entry-level proficiency. Identify and list the relevant performance indicators that are related to the learning goal. For each learning goal, identify:

- how learning goals will be achieved
- what supports are needed to achieve the learning goals within the remainder of the placement
- how both student and preceptor(s) will be able to evaluate success.