

Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program

POLICY MANUAL

Last Reviewed/Updated: July 2026



Western Zone



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

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1.0 PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP

ACADIA DIETETIC PRACTICUM PROGRAM

Number: 1.10

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Acadia University, School of Nutrition and Dietetics, in partnership with the Western Zone, Nova Scotia Health shall provide an accredited Dietetic Practicum (DP) Program. The Practicum Program exists as a joint partnership between Acadia University and three areas of the Western Zone, Nova Scotia Health – South Shore, Southwest Nova, and Annapolis Valley. The DP program shall meet accreditation requirements of the Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP), including the achievement of the Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice (ICDEP), while adhering to the policies of Acadia University and the policies of Nova Scotia Health. Practicum program offered may be Integrated and/or Graduate placements.

Purpose and Objectives: The purpose of the Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program is to provide accredited practical training opportunities for Acadia University's School of Nutrition and Dietetics graduates (Dietetics Option). Our objectives are to ensure training environments that supports 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.

Resources / Related Documents

- Academic Calendar, Acadia University
- Partnership Agreements, Western Zone, Nova Scotia Health

GRADUATE PRACTICUM

Number: 1.11

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

The Dietetic Practicum will include a Graduate Dietetic Practicum option (GDP). Practicum placements will be in two levels, NUTR 4033 and NUTR 4043 – complete in 48 weeks of consecutive placements after graduation. Normally, these begin in the last week of August in the same year of and after graduation.

Graduate Practicum Students will complete their practicum in one of the partnership facility areas or, as opportunities arise, in other zones.

Procedures:

- The number of Dietetic Practicum placements (including Graduate and Integrated) is determined by the Partnership Committee during the dietetic practicum selection process each year.
- The placements will be coordinated by Acadia for Level 1/4033
- The placements will be coordinated by Nova Scotia Health for Level 2/4043

The number of weeks in placements will be distributed per table 1.11. This is a generalized guideline which can be altered to meet individual students' learning needs. The order of placements may vary and may be adapted to the planning needs of Nova Scotia Health.

Table 1.11: Overview of Placement Schedule

Placement/Rotation	Number of weeks
Level One (4033)	16 Total
Nutrition Care (Clinical): Long-Term Care	4 weeks
Population Health (Community)	8 weeks
Research Project	4 weeks*
Level Two (4043)	32 weeks
Nutrition Care (Clinical): Acute and Ambulatory Medical Nutrition Therapy (including consolidation of learning)	18-20 weeks
Management/Food Provision Dietetic Experience (including consolidation of learning)	12 -14 weeks

*Four weeks will be dedicated to research in Level 1/4033. In addition, students may also be working on phases of the research during other rotations as deemed appropriate for their specific type of research. See detailed Research Guidelines.

Resources / Related Documents:

- Academic Calendar, Acadia University
- Research Guidelines

INTEGRATED PRACTICUM

Number: 1.12

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

The Dietetic Practicum will include an Integrated Dietetic Practicum (IDP). Practicum placements will be in two levels, NUTR 4033 and NUTR 4043: Level one after completion of third year courses (NUTR 3013, 3023, 3513, 3553), generally in the spring and summer between third and fourth year, and Level two after completion of the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition (Dietetics Option).

Integrated Practicum Students will complete their practicum in one of the partnership facility areas or, as opportunities arise, in other zones.

The procedures and placement schedule is laid out in 1.11.

PARTNERSHIP WITH NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH

Number: 1.2

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

The Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program shall operate as a partnership between Acadia University School of Nutrition and Dietetics and Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone. All components of the Dietetic Practicum Program shall be the shared responsibility of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Partners representing Nutrition and Food Services in the three areas within NSH Western Zone (Annapolis Valley, South Shore and South West)

Purpose:

To support the integrity and quality of the practicum program through the incorporation of both educational and practical experience in the development, operation and evaluation of the program.

To continuously evaluate and improve the quality of the learning experience of the dietetic practicum students.

To ensure high quality practical learning environments (placements) for the dietetic practicum students.

Procedures:

NSH -Western Zone is actively involved in the Acadia University Dietetic Practicum Program through the following mechanisms:

- Partnership Committee

- Selection Committee
- *Ad-hoc* Operational Committees

Resources / Related Documents:

- Partnership Agreement with Nova Scotia Health Western Zone

PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE – TOR

Number: 1.3

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Purpose:

The Terms of Reference (TOR) are to govern and direct the overall operation of the Dietetic Practicum (DP) program.

- ❖ To provide visionary direction to the program
- ❖ To approve policies related to DI as developed by operational or other committees
- ❖ To maintain a strong commitment and relationship between Acadia University and Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone through liaisons and dissemination of information.

Composition:

Representation from the three areas of Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone and representation from Acadia University's School of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Committee members will include:

- ❖ Dietetic Practicum Director or designate, School of Nutrition & Dietetics
- ❖ Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead, School of Nutrition & Dietetics
- ❖ Director of Nutrition and Food Services or designate, Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone
- ❖ Annapolis Valley Manager, Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone
- ❖ South Shore Manager, Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone
- ❖ South West Manager, Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone

The Dietetic Practicum Director shall act as chair, and the Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead shall act as recording secretary.

Period of Appointment:

All listed committee members shall be standing members of the Partnership Committee.

Accountable to:

Provost and Vice President, Academic, Acadia University

Meetings:

Meetings shall be held at least three times per year, approximately September (placement preparations), January (selection preparations) and May (broader policy and program quality assurance). A quorum for the meeting is defined as 50% plus one of the committee memberships.

Communication:

Notice of the meeting, with agenda, shall be pre-circulated at least two weeks prior to the next meeting. Unique circumstances may necessitate meetings on occasion with less than two weeks notice, though this shall not be the norm.

Minutes of meetings shall be maintained and pre-circulated as soon as possible following the meeting by the secretary of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics, or recorder, at a minimum of at least one month prior to the next meeting.

Committee members are responsible to communicate with decision makers in their respective area of practice or their geographical area.

Subcommittees or Ad Hoc Committees:

Subcommittees or ad hoc committees shall be:

- ❖ Formed as the need arises, with a clear purpose identified
- ❖ Contain members from the committee as well as outside resources as the mandate requires
- ❖ Responsible to the Partnership Committee.

Decision Making:

Decisions shall be made by consensus although the chair or any committee member may call for a vote on any issue if consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable time frame.

The committee shall annually review the DP Program and the effectiveness of the committee through the feedback from students, practicing dietitians and additional preceptors or employers.

Review of Terms of Reference:

The Terms of Reference for the Partnership Committee will be reviewed annually in September.

2.0 PLACEMENT COORDINATION

PRECEPTORS

Number: 2.10

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Definition:

Preceptors are registered dietitians who support dietetic practicum students by sharing knowledge, skills, and professional experience, and by fostering inclusive, respectful, and supportive learning environments throughout the practicum program¹.

Policy:

Preceptors are required to be registered dietitians who are employed by Nova Scotia Health – Western Zone or by an affiliated organization. Preceptors who assume responsibility for evaluating practicum students, signing evaluation documentation, and supporting the achievement of ICDEP competencies must hold current licensure with a Canadian dietetic regulatory body.

Acadia University commits to supporting preceptors in their educational role through a variety of learning and development opportunities that recognize diverse experiences, learning styles, and professional contexts. Communication with preceptors will be conducted using multiple, accessible formats and methods, with consideration for individual preferences, capacity, and practice settings, to promote clear, respectful, and inclusive engagement.

Purpose:

To ensure preceptors are supported with the expertise, resources, and ongoing supports necessary to create high-quality, inclusive, and effective learning environments for dietetic practicum students.

Procedures:

- Nova Scotia Health-Western Zone will provide adequate resources for preceptors to fulfill their role with dietetic practicum students.
- The role of preceptors is outlined to each preceptor and to the dietetic practicum students. (See 3.22 Preceptor Expectations)
- Acadia University provides continuing education for preceptors through workshops, virtual meetings, and other means, as opportunities arise.
- Preceptors have access to all relevant practicum program information, documents and resources.
- Preceptors may request access to Acadia University Library online holdings.
- Communication with preceptors and appropriate manager is established through email, video call, telephone or face-to-face meetings with the Practicum Director and/or Dietetic Practicum Education and Research Lead.

Resources / Related Documents:

¹Accreditation Manual for Dietetic Internship Practicum, 2004, Dietitians of Canada.

AFFILIATION AGREEMENTS

Number: 2.20

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2023

Policy:

Legal affiliation agreements are required for all student placements except for those within Nova Scotia Health placement facilities and those consisting of short-term observational experiences.

Student placements cannot begin until these agreements are signed by Acadia University and the placement organization. The partnership agreement with NSH – Western Zone provides legal agreement for all partnership NSH facilities/programs.

Signed affiliation agreements shall remain in place for each placement unless revoked.

Purpose:

To ensure that there is a legally binding agreement between the Acadia University and placement sites.

Procedures:

Action	When	Who
Identify a non-Partnership placement.	At the time of scheduling student	NSH Practicum Facilitator
Check if agreement currently exists	When notified of placement	Practicum Director
Send form to be completed to site.	At least 1 month prior to placement; or as soon as notified	Practicum Director
Obtain and file signed forms	Prior to placement	Practicum Director

Resources / Related Documents:

- Affiliation agreement form or acceptable alternate

RETENTION OF RECORDS

Number: 2.30

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Records of the dietetic practicum of each student will be maintained by the School of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Records for dietetic practicum students who have successfully completed the program shall be maintained for seven years following completion.*

Records for dietetic practicum students who do not successfully complete the program (either due to termination or withdrawal) shall be kept for seven years.*

Procedures:

- Individual Dietetic Practicum files include, but is are not limited to:
 - Performance evaluations for each placement/preceptor
 - Performance action plans
 - Practical Training Competency Attestation Logbook
 - Dietetic practicum application package
 - Other records may include:
 - Disciplinary letter(s)
 - Withdrawal or termination letter(s)
 - Appeal records

Action	When	Who
Review file to ensure all documents are completed.	Within one month of completing practicum	DP Director
Store files in a secure location in department	Annually	Administrative Assistant
Destroyed files following the retention period		Administrative Assistant

Resources / Related Documents:

- Acadia University Policies

COMMUNICATION – TIMELINESS

Number: 2.40

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

*The Practicum Director and the Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead will acknowledge and respond to non-urgent emails from students, preceptors and managers within **24–48 business hours**. In some cases, a complete response may require additional time depending on the nature or complexity of the inquiry. When this occurs, an initial response will be provided to confirm receipt of the message and, where appropriate, to outline next steps or an anticipated timeline for follow-up.*

Urgent inquiries will be addressed as promptly as possible. Emails or messages requiring immediate attention should be clearly identified as urgent to support timely recognition and response. In urgent situations, individuals are encouraged to use any available and appropriate communication method to connect with the Practicum Director and/or the Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead.

Purpose:

- To support timely, transparent, and accessible communication for all students and preceptors who contact Acadia.
- To ensure that student and preceptor communications are acknowledged, respected, and responded to by the Practicum Director and the Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead in a manner that promotes fairness, clarity, and mutual accountability.

Procedures:

Practicum Students, Preceptors, Managers

- Clearly identify urgent emails or messages to support appropriate prioritization and timely response.
- If response timelines are not being met and communication concerns persist, individuals may contact the Director of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics to support resolution.

Practicum Director and Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead

- Review and prioritize urgent communications and respond as promptly as possible.
- Respond to non-urgent inquiries within 24–48 business hours.
- When a complete response cannot be provided within this timeframe, acknowledge receipt of the communication and, where possible, share an anticipated timeline for follow-up.

References:

While not specifically addressed in this policy, a reasonable response time by students and preceptors to any messages received from the Practicum Director and Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead would be helpful to ensure ongoing positive communication. Any emails flagged as urgent by the Practicum Director and Dietetic Practicum Education & Research Lead should be responded prioritized and responded to accordingly.

3.0 ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Number: 3.10

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Dietetic Practicum Students are expected to:

- (1) *adhere to the personnel and professional practice policies for the Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program; and in place at placement sites including Nova Scotia Health and affiliated practicum sites. Clarification and additional information will be provided during site orientation. In the case of discrepancies, site-specific policies over-ride the general guidelines provided below.*
- (2) *adhere to the personnel and professional practice standards for registered dietitians in Nova Scotia, including the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dietetics (NSRD) [Standards of Practice \(2020\)](#) and the NSCDN [Code of Ethics for Professional Dietitians \(2020\)](#).*

Clarification and additional information will be provided during site orientation. In the case of discrepancies, students must confirm with the preceptor and Practicum Coordinator which specific policy over-rides the general guidelines provided below.

General Guidelines: (listed alphabetically)

Accommodation – Dietetic Practicum Students are responsible for securing their own accommodations for all placements.

Attendance - Regular and punctual attendance is a professional obligation. In the event of illness or other unexpected absence, dietetic practicum students must follow site

absence reporting procedures and report the absence to the Acadia Practicum Coordinator. Typically, this involves reporting the absence immediately to the current preceptor and the Acadia Practicum Coordinator. The Dietetic Practicum Students will make arrangements with the preceptor to address missed learning opportunities and/or outstanding assignments. If more than a one-day absence is required, the preceptor(s), Acadia Practicum Coordinator and the area Manager of Nutrition and Food Services, Nova Scotia Health will determine the need for and plan for any required replacement of lost time (e.g., placement extension, adjustment of future placements).

Refer to Policy 3.13 - Attendance for further detail.

Code of Ethics – Dietetic Practicum Students are to review and comply with codes of ethics (institutional and dietetic profession-specific) in effect at placement sites.

Refer to the NSRD Code of Ethics for the Professional Dietitians.

Confidentiality and Consent for Care – Dietetic Practicum Students are to review and comply with all policies in place at Nova Scotia Health and affiliate sites; and all applicable provincial and federal legislation. Refer to the NSRD *Jurisprudence Handbook*. General guidelines are available.

Dress Code – Dietetic Practicum Students are expected to follow the dress code of Nova Scotia Health, the NFS Personal and Hand Hygiene SOP, and affiliate sites. For safety reasons, footwear worn in patient care and food services areas must be fully enclosed. Food service areas typically have additional attire requirements, including hair covering, no nail polish, no artificial nails, or lashes, and possibly lab coats.

Hours of Work – per the requirements of the practicum site and affiliate sites (typically full-time hours, Monday to Friday). Shift times may vary with the area of placement (early, late, twelve hour or weekend shifts may be required at times). Reasonable hours longer than regular workday may be required to complete learning experience in some

placements. Dietetic Practicum Students are frequently required to complete assignments and projects after work hours.

Identification Tags – Acadia University name tags be worn at all times at the placement site. Photo identification tags are also provided by Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and must be worn at all times when working in NSH placement sites.

Immunization records and health screening – All Practicum Students are required to obtain documentation to demonstrate that all immunizations and health screenings required by NSH are current and submit it using the *NSH Health Student and Learner Placement Service Immunization & Infectious Diseases Screening Form*. Any delay in immunization and health screening will delay the start of your practicum and cause scheduling interruptions.

Meals - Dietetic Practicum Students receive a 30-minute lunch break each day. Break schedules may vary; any specific timing requirements must be discussed with your preceptor.

Parking – Practicum sites may have paid parking. NSH placement facilities have free parking. Any parking expense incurred by Dietetic Practicum Student during the program becomes the responsibility of the practicum student.

Perfumes / Fragrances – In keeping with no/reduced scent policies, Dietetic Practicum Students are to avoid wearing perfumes or other fragranced products.

Professional Behaviour – Dietetic Practicum Students are expected to be polite, respectful, punctual, and reliable. The following behaviours must be avoided at practicum placement sites: eating or drinking in presence of patients or clients, gum chewing. Recreational use of devices during work hours is to be avoided. Some sites may approve cell phone use in select circumstances. *Refer to Policy 3.11 and NSH policies.*

Respiratory Protection – Respiratory mask fit testing is not provided by Acadia due to low requirements for respiratory protection in dietetic practice. Onsite respiratory mask fit testing may be required by specific site placements.

Requests for Leave – Requests for Leave must be sent via email to the preceptor, area manager and Practicum Coordinator. Requests should only be made when absolutely necessary (e.g., medical specialist appointment, compassionate leave, personal illness) and justified appropriately. Every effort should be made to schedule personal appointments outside of work hours.

Statutory Holidays – one day off will be given for each holiday (statutory and holiday as designated by placement facility). An alternate date will be given if the holiday falls on a scheduled day off.

Transportation – Dietetic Practicum Students are responsible for their own transportation. Because practicum students may be required to work at multiple sites and because practicum students may not be transported in employee vehicles unless it is a facility rented vehicle, access to timely, reliable transportation is required.

Resources / Related Documents:

- Dietetic Practicum Policy 3.11 Professional Behaviour
- Dietetic Practicum Policy 3.13 Attendance
- NSH Health Student and Learner Placement Service Immunization & Infectious Diseases Screening Form
- Code of Ethics for Professional Dietitians (NSCDN, 2020)
- Standards of Practice (NSCDN, 2020)

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Number: 3.11

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Professional behaviour shall be expected of dietetic practicum students at all times both in professional practice placement and Acadia University campus settings.

Professional behaviour shall be assessed in the School of Nutrition and Dietetics (i.e., attending university to complete courses, teaching assistant duties) and professional practice and practicum courses).

Purpose:

Dietetics is a regulated health profession. As such, students are required to demonstrate the Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice necessary for eligibility for registration with a provincial dietetic regulatory body. These competencies reflect a shared responsibility to uphold professional standards, ethical practice, and social responsibility.

Dietetic practicum students are expected to conduct themselves in ways that contribute to a collaborative, inclusive, and respectful learning and practice environment—one that is free from discrimination, harassment, and harm. Students are expected to interact with all individuals with dignity and respect, while recognizing and valuing diverse identities, lived experiences, and perspectives. In addition to academic and professional requirements, practicum students must comply with the conduct policies, codes of ethics, and organizational standards of Nova Scotia Health and all affiliated placement and professional practice sites.

Examples of conduct that does not align with professional, ethical, or equity-informed practice include, but are not limited to:

- Actions or behaviors that threaten, harass, discriminate against, or cause harm to others (including students, faculty, preceptors, staff, patients/clients, or volunteers);
- Breaches of confidentiality or misuse of sensitive or personal information;
- Communication that is disrespectful, dismissive, or derogatory, whether verbal, written, or digital;
- Participation in illegal or unsafe activities.
- Participating in illegal activities.

Procedures:

Action	When	Who
Identify and assist student to address inappropriate behavior.	As situation arises	Preceptor; Practicum Director
Refer serious recurring problems to Practicum Director and area Manager, Nutrition and Food Services, NSH	As situation arises	Preceptor
Communicate and collaborate with Acadia Practicum Director	Within one week	Manager, Nutrition and Food Services for placement area
Meet with Practicum Student to determine appropriate course of action	Within one week of notification	Practicum Director; Manager, Nutrition and Food Services for placement area
Monitor, evaluate, reassess for feedback	Within one month	Practicum Director; Manager, Nutrition and Food Services for placement area
Communicate and document to Practicum Director and Practicum Student	Monthly as needed	District Practicum Facilitator

Resources / Related Documents:

- UBC policy No: 1.15

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Number: 3.12

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Dietetic Practicum Students shall adhere to all professional standards established by the NSRD, including but not limited to the NSRD Code of Ethics for Professional Dietitians, and the NSRD Standards of Practice.

Purpose:

To reinforce the importance of Dietetic Practicum Student complying with professional standards, and provincial and federal legislation.

Procedures:

- Dietetic Practicum Students must review and be familiar with [publications from the Nova Scotia Regulator of Dietetics found here](#).
- Dietetic Practicum Students are provided with electronic access to the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics and other related material. Access to electronic copies of these documents is through an Acadia OneDrive shared folder.
- A discussion of the professional standards is part of the orientation to the practicum program. This typically involves an education session from a representative of the NSRD.
- Adherence, understanding and competence related to Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics is a component of each practicum placement evaluation.

Resources / Related Documents:

- See the NSRD website for a current list of policies, position statements, and publications.

ATTENDANCE

Number: 3.13

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: April 2023

Policy:

Students shall maintain regular and punctual attendance in all practicum placements. If unable to attend practicum for short term or long-term periods, students must follow standard procedures for reporting absences.

Purpose:

Regular attendance is a professional obligation and a requirement to meet learning objectives.

Procedures:

Action	When	Who
If unable to report to the placement, contact preceptor and Practicum Coordinator.	As soon as possible	Practicum Student
Maintain attendance record in OneDrive shared folder	During practicum	Preceptor
Discuss any concerns re: recurring or long-term absences	As necessary	Practicum Coordinator



- If more than a one-day absence is required, and/or absences are frequent and recurring, the preceptor(s), Acadia Practicum Coordinator and the area Manager of Nutrition and Food Services, Nova Scotia Health will determine the need for and plan for any required replacement of lost time (e.g., placement extension, adjustment of future placements).
- Medical documentation may be requested.
- There is no scheduled vacation period during practicum placements. The Practicum Coordinator and NSH Practicum Facilitator will discuss any request for time off by the student during practicum placement on a case-by-case basis. The criteria for decisions will include the effect of time off on the achievement of competencies and preceptor availability.

ROLES & EXPECTATIONS ON SITE

Number: 3.20

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

The Dietetic Practicum Program will establish, support, and maintain clear, respectful, and accessible communication processes between practicum students and preceptors.

Purpose:

Clear and transparent communication about roles, responsibilities, and expectations supports the development of positive, collaborative, and inclusive relationships throughout the practicum placement.

Mutual understanding of the expectations of both dietetic practicum students and preceptors at the outset of the learning experience is essential to fostering a respectful, effective, and supportive learning environment.

Procedures:

At the start of the practicum rotation, the practicum student and preceptor will meet to discuss expectations, including communication procedures.

PRECEPTOR EXPECTATIONS

Number: 3.21

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Preceptor Expectations

Hours of Work:

It is expected that the preceptor will be available on a regular basis to provide support and advice to the dietetic practicum student. It is expected that the majority of the time the student will work an 8-hour day with at least a 30-minute lunch break. The specific work hours will be determined based on the expectations of the workplace of each rotation. Flexible work hour options can be discussed to accommodate overtime hours and individual needs. Any changes from regular work hours requested by the dietetic intern need to be made in consultation with and agreed upon by the preceptor and/or the district internship facilitator. Evening and weekend work may be required and hours beyond the regular work day will be necessary to complete learning in certain rotations. Preceptors are to monitor the workload of interns and ensure that the expectations placed on them are effectively communicated and reasonable.

Communication:

The preceptor and student will exchange contact information at the beginning of each placement. In the event that more than one preceptor will be working with the student during a placement, one preceptor will be designated to be the main contact to avoid confusion.

The student and the preceptor will meet at least weekly to keep the lines of communication open. Additional meetings may be scheduled as determined by the dietetic practicum student and the preceptor.

Assignments:

Should the preceptor have pre-readings and pre-assignments prepared to give to the dietetic practicum student, they should strive to provide them two weeks before the start of their placement. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the preceptor in advance of the start of each placement to obtain any pre-readings or pre-assignments.

Expectations for assignments will be discussed with the student at the beginning of each rotation. Sufficient notice will be given to students regarding due dates for assignments. Ideally, due dates should be set within the first two weeks of the placement. Dietetic practicum students are to be informed that assignments are a regular part of each placement and must be completed on time; failure to do so will impact rotation evaluations.

Resources:

The preceptors will ensure that the dietetic practicum student has access to relevant practice resources such as a workspace (which may be shared, or rotate), and the tools required for what students are being asked to do.

Scheduling of Rotations:

The dietetic practicum student's schedule will be developed to ensure required competencies are obtained. The schedule will be planned based on the availability of preceptors and the opportunities for relevant learning opportunities while addressing the best interest of the student.

Evaluation:

At the beginning of each rotation, the dietetic practicum student and the preceptor will meet to discuss the learning opportunities that will be available. The practicum student will work with the preceptor to schedule a time half-way through the rotation to complete the Mid-Point Evaluation and a time at the end of the placement for the "Final Placement Evaluation". Students must update their attestation logbook on a weekly basis; share the

logbook five (5) working days prior to evaluation meetings; and actively engage in the practicum learning process. Preceptor's can use student feedback shared during the student evaluation process to self-reflect on areas of strengths and areas to improve upon with respect to the preceptor role.

Dietetic practicum students also complete components of evaluation of the practicum program and their learning experiences. This information will be used to shape the learning environment and opportunities for future dietetic practicum students. Preceptors will work with Acadia University to access anonymous feedback shared by practicum students so preceptors are informed of areas to build on and to improve.

PRACTICUM STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Number: 3.22

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: Under review

Institutional Policies:

Abide by the Code of Conduct and Dress Code policies in place in the facilities, or that applies to the employees of your current workplace/affiliation location if applicable. Be familiar with and abide by the Policy Manual that guides the Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program.

Hours of Work:

It is expected that the majority of the time the dietetic practicum student will work an 8-hour day. The specific work hours will be determined based on the expectations of the workplace of each rotation. Evening and weekend work may be required and hours beyond the regular workday will often be necessary to complete learning in placements. Flexible work hour options can be discussed with the receptor. Practicum students are expected to have access to transportation to ensure that they are able to be at the work locations at the scheduled time.

If the dietetic practicum student is unable to be at work due to illness, they are expected to notify the preceptor as soon as possible, ideally no later than an hour before the workday begins and must ensure the message is received. The dietetic practicum student is also responsible to notify the Dietetic Practicum Director, e.g., copied on an email message to the preceptor a Teams message.

Communication:

The dietetic practicum student will provide contact information to their preceptor at the beginning of each placement, including phone number and personal email. The dietetic practicum student and the preceptor will keep communication clear and regular, including weekly meetings. Additional meetings may be scheduled as determined by the dietetic practicum student and the preceptor.

Scheduling of Rotations:

The dietetic practicum student's schedule will be developed to ensure required competencies are obtained. The schedule will be based on the availability of preceptors and to provide relevant learning opportunities and will be planned in the best interest of the practicum student. Should a practicum student want to seek placements in areas of practice not available in the placement area, this request needs to be brought forward to the Dietetic Practicum Director Acadia to ensure the requisite scheduling and facility agreements are in place. Depending on what area of practice this placement is in, these rotations might necessitate the addition of time to the practicum program. With the exception of some community placements, all placements are completed with NSH-Western Zone and Western Zone Long Term Care facilities. Requests for placements outside existing placements are challenging to organize, and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Assignments:

Assignments are a regular part of each placement and must be completed on time and to the identified standard. Failure to do so will impact placement evaluations, and the successful completion of the program. It is the responsibility of the dietetic practicum student to contact the preceptor a minimum of two weeks prior to the start of each rotation to obtain any pre-readings or assignments requirements; and to set assignment due dates with the preceptor(s) at the beginning of the placement.

Evaluation:

At the beginning of each rotation, the dietetic practicum student and the preceptor will meet to discuss the learning opportunities that will be available. The practicum student will work with the preceptor to schedule a time halfway through the rotation to complete the Mid-Point Evaluation and a time at the end of the placement for the “Final Placement Evaluation”. Students must update their attestation logbook on a weekly basis; share the logbook five (5) working days prior to evaluation meetings; and actively engage in the practicum learning process.

Practicum students are also expected complete an “exit” evaluation at the end of practicum program. This information will be used to shape the learning environment and opportunities for future practicum students.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Number: 3.30

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Each Dietetic Practicum Student is expected to demonstrate initiative and be responsible for their learning experiences. The student should continuously strive to improve their performance based on feedback received informally throughout their placements, formally through mid-point and end-of-placement evaluations, and meetings with the Practicum Coordinator.

During the Practicum Program orientation, the Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice (ICDEP), evaluation forms and attestation logbook are explained. The Acadia University Practicum Program evaluation forms are based on the ICDEP (Version 3.0) and a collaboration with dietetic practicum leaders in Atlantic Canada.

Evaluations are completed for each rotation:

- Management/Food Provision*
- Nutrition Care/Clinical*
- Population and Public Health/Community*
- Long-Term Care*
- Research Project and Seminar*

Professionalism and Ethics", "Communication and Collaboration" and some aspects of "Management and Leadership" competencies are integrated into each of the evaluations specified above.

Purpose:

Performance evaluations are used to:

1. Clarify performance standards and expectations.
2. Assist the student in identifying strengths and areas of performance requiring growth.
3. Facilitate individualized program planning with the practicum student, which will assist in optimizing strengths and developing areas requiring growth/improvement.
4. Track student progress toward achieving the ICDEP and entry-level proficiency.

Procedures:

Detailed instructions are found in the Practicum Manual. In each rotation the practicum student and the preceptor(s), or supervising preceptor, evaluate the practicum student's achievement of the performance indicators and practice competencies, and the practicum student's own specific objectives for the rotation. By the end of the practicum program, it is expected that the student will be consistently competent in six competency areas (i.e., nutrition care, food provision, management and leadership, population and health promotion, professional practice and ethic, and communication & collaboration).

Evaluations are conducted within each rotation between the student and the preceptor(s).

Evaluation includes, but is not limited to, a verbal evaluation by the preceptor(s) with the student throughout the rotation as agreed upon by the student and preceptor, either daily or weekly; and a formal mid-point and end-of-placement evaluation meeting.

The process for completing the mid-point and final evaluation involves (a) the dietetic practicum student reflecting on their experience, referring to their attestation logbook and completing a self-evaluation, (b) the dietetic practicum student and the preceptor then complete the evaluation form together at the mid-point and end of the placement. The student has the opportunity to identify highlights of the placement, major learning challenges, areas of strength, and/or areas for growth. Preceptors are encouraged to define the performance categories as clearly as possible for themselves and to discuss them with the dietetic practicum student during the evaluation process. All final placement

evaluation forms are reviewed by the Practicum Coordinator prior to the next placement to ensure progression of skill development. In the event of unacceptable performance (refer to Non-Competent Behaviours) in any given placement, a Performance Action Plan is developed by the Practicum Student in conjunction with preceptor(s) and the Practicum Coordinator to ensure progression of skill and competency development.

If progress is not evident at any time during the program, the Practicum Director meets with the student to discuss their progress and the student's learning objectives, to create a plan to support development of knowledge and skills. It is the student's responsibility to communicate these objectives to the preceptor(s) of the next placement to ensure awareness of the student's objectives for improvement. Inadequate performance and/or insufficient contribution to the research project could also lead to an altered education plan. A decision is made to:

a) allow the student to progress to the next placement with specific conditions for meeting the performance objectives, or b) extend the length of the placement by up to two weeks to ensure progression of skill subsets as above. The number of weeks will be determined by the preceptor(s), Practicum Director and Director, Nutrition and Food Services, NSH - Western Zone,

OR

c) implement procedures for remediation if the student is unable to meet performance objectives with the above extensions, or d) if remediation is unsuccessful, implement procedures for termination

Performance Standards:

Ratings are determined by the student's progress at the end of the placement and on the skills that they have developed throughout the placement. Guidance will be required at the beginning of the practicum, and at the beginning of each new placement. However,

with each placement the student should gain knowledge, skills and judgement that can be applied in a variety of practice areas. The goal by the end of the practicum is that the student is able to practice safely, competently, and within acceptable time frames for the entry-level dietitian, which is to be demonstrated during the supervised professional practice component of their program.

Performance Rating Categories:

Exposure/Discussion (E)	Describes experiences at the exposure level only. Practicum students may have observed activities but not performed them independently. Activities are rule-driven, and practicum students at this stage may require significant supervision or prompting, may make numerous mistakes or omissions and may require extended periods of time to complete tasks.
Supervised (S)	Describes experiences at the “hands-on” level but with direct supervision. Activities are primarily directed by the preceptor and the Practicum student may have difficulty identifying relevant data. Practicum students rely upon rules and procedures and require significant direction when rules do not apply. The Practicum Student may still make numerous mistakes and require extended periods of time to complete tasks.
Minimal Supervision (M)	Describes experiences at the “hands-on” level requiring only minimal supervision. Practicum students may identify most relevant details, but may still lack speed and flexibility and seek direction when/if original plans fail. Although mistakes are minimal, practicum students may still require assistance prioritizing to complete tasks.
Independent (I)	Describes experiences at the “hands-on” level to generally recognized standards of the profession. Although speed may still be somewhat slower, the Practicum student presents no threat to the public, and is able to prioritize activities to achieve goals and established outcomes within a reasonable timeframe, with minimal

	errors or omissions and with little or no prompting required from the preceptor.
N/A	Not observed or not applicable to this placement.

Non-Competent Behaviours:

The following describe behaviours considered non-competent.

- Making errors without recognizing them or learning from them.
- Not applying past experience.
- Avoiding/not making decisions.
- Not being able to work collaboratively.
- Not asking for help when needed.
- Demonstrating inappropriate communication skills
- Practicing unethically.
- Not being receptive to advice/constructive criticism.
- Lacking knowledge/skills and not pursuing further learning.

Lacking the ability to recognize self-limitations/knowledge deficits.

4.0 DISRUPTIONS TO PLACEMENTS

PLACEMENT FACILITY DISRUPTION

Number: 4.10

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Dietetic Practicum placements are for the purpose of student learning and professional development. If there are disruptions to placement site operations such that learning activities cannot continue (e.g., strike or job action by employees at the placement facility, communicable disease outbreak, natural disaster), it may be necessary to alter or suspend practicum placements until the disruption is over.

Purpose:

In the event of circumstances beyond the control of the Acadia University Dietetic Practicum Program such as a strike, communicable disease outbreak, community disaster, fire or other situations in which the continued provisions of the program would substantially interfere with the provision of care to patients, clients, and/or operations and the Dietetic Practicum Program's mandate of learning and supervision of its students, the Acadia's Dietetic Practicum Program reserves the right to suspend placements until such time as the program determines that the resumption of practical experience is appropriate for its students. The program end date will be extended to accommodate such an event.

Procedures:

1. In the event of circumstance beyond the control of the Acadia Dietetic Practicum Program, the Dietetic Practicum Director will notify students as soon as possible. Wherever possible, the notification will include the following information:

- The nature of the disruption to the service/placement
The expected duration of the disruption
 - A description of alternatives to service/placement, if available
 - A contact number for more information
 - If possible, non-patient care activities will continue.
2. Once resumption of practical experience is appropriate the Practicum Director will work with the student(s), preceptors and others to adjust learning activities and placement locations as needed. The length of the practicum program will be extended to accommodate the time missed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Number: 4.20

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: April 2023

Policy:

A Leave of Absence from the Dietetic Practicum Program may be granted to a practicum student if circumstances prevent them from completing the requirements within the required time.

Acceptable circumstances may include personal, academic or financial situations. Each request shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A Leave of Absence shall not exceed one (1) year.

Purpose:

To ensure there is a process for dealing fairly with situations that prevent practicum students from completing their practicum.

Procedures:

Action	When	Who
Submit request, in writing, to Practicum Director, stating reason and length of time for leave.	As soon as possible	Practicum Student
Consult to discuss request	Within two weeks	Practicum Director; Manager, Nutrition and Food Services for placement area and/or Director, Nutrition and Food Services, NSH Western Zone
Respond, in writing, to student.	Within one month	Practicum Director

- If request is denied, reasons for the denial will be stated in letter.
- If request is approved, the Practicum Director reserves the right to determine an agreeable time for the students return based on program resources and available learning placements.

TERMINATION

Number: 4.30

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

Dietetic Practicum Students may be terminated from the Dietetic Practicum Program due to personal reasons (self-termination); academic termination; or performance termination.

Purpose:

To ensure there is a process in place for students who fail to successfully complete the Dietetic Practicum Program.

Procedures:

Self-termination

- A student may withdraw permanently from the Dietetic Practicum Program for any reason. The decision to withdraw will be indicated in writing to the Dietetic Practicum Director and the Director of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics. The Dietetic Practicum Director will conduct an exit interview with the student, if appropriate, to obtain feedback from the student on the program.
- Once a student withdraws, they are not eligible for readmission to this program.
- In accordance with the Retention of Records Policy, the evaluation records of any student who withdraws from the program will be kept in a secure place for seven (7) years.

Academic Termination

- Once admitted to the Dietetic Practicum Program, students must meet two academic standards:
 - the academic requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Nutrition (Dietetics option) to graduate from Acadia University, as outlined in the University Calendar.
 - maintain a 2.67 GPA and achieve a minimum grade of C- in any remaining core courses. Failure to do so may lead to a review of acceptance to the practicum, and integrated students may be asked to leave the program.
- Failure to meet the requirements will result in academic termination from the Dietetic Practicum Program. The Director of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics has the final decision in terminating a student from the program.
- The Dietetic Practicum Director will advise the student of the academic termination in writing. A copy will be kept in the student's file in a secure/confidential place.
- The evaluation records of any student who is terminated from the program for academic reasons will be kept in a secure place for seven (7) years.

Performance Termination (Failure to meet the standards of the Dietetic Practicum Program)

- To graduate from the Dietetic Practicum Program, students must meet the standards of the program by meeting all competencies. Failure to do so may result in termination from the program.
- Upon identification of any significant standards issue that has the potential to lead to termination from the Dietetic Practicum Program, the dietetic practicum student will be verbally informed of identified problem areas in their performance and documentation will be recorded and placed in the student's file. A strategy to address the identified issue(s) will be developed by decision of the Director of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Dietetic Practicum Director, one or more of the preceptors, and the student.



- If the strategy does not result in the student achieving the program standard within the defined time period (normally two additional weeks), a decision to terminate the student from the program will be made by the Director of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics. A letter of termination informing the student of the decision will be written by the Dietetic Practicum Director and sent to the student via registered mail.
- The evaluation records of any student who is terminated for failure to achieve program standards will be kept in a secure place for seven (7) years.

APPEALS

Number: 4.40

Approved by: DP Partnership Committee

Last Reviewed/Updated: June 2026

Policy:

The dietetic practicum student shall have the right to appeal any evaluation or decision that results in the extension of their program or the request for withdrawal from the program.

Purpose:

To rule on the fairness of the decision made by the Dietetic Practicum Director (the individual with the final decision-making responsibility for extension or termination) and to determine whether:

- The extension of the practicum program is justified; or
- The request for withdrawal of the practicum student from the program is warranted.

Procedures:

- Within one week of receiving a personally delivered extension or termination notice from the dietetic practicum program, the dietetic practicum student may submit an appeal hearing request in writing to the Dietetic Practicum Director for presentation to an Appeal Committee.
- In the written request, the dietetic practicum student must clearly set forth the reason(s) for which the extension or termination decision is appealed.
- Upon receipt of the appeal-hearing request, the Dietetic Practicum Director must activate an appeal committee.

- The appeal hearing shall take place within 14 working days of the appeal request. The Dietetic Practicum Director will notify the dietetic practicum student and the appeal committee members of the date, time and place of the appeal meeting.

Composition of the Appeal Committee

The Appeal Committee will include:

- Chair, Dean of Science, University representative from outside the School of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Faculty representative, School of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Dietitians (2) from two Western Zone placement areas (not from the area where the student has been placed) and a member of the Partnership Committee
- Dietitian from Western Zone who graduated from practicum within five to ten years.

Appeal Meeting Procedures:

- A secretary will be appointed.
- The dietetic practicum student and the Dietetic Practicum Director may each choose a representative to assist in their presentations.
- The dietetic practicum student may obtain copies of pertinent written evaluations upon request.
- All documents must be presented to the Appeal Committee at the time of the appeal meeting. The Appeal Committee reserves the right to retain these documents until it has reached a decision.
- The duration of the appeal hearing will be at the discretion of the chair.
- The Appeal Committee will hear presentations from
 - The student and/or representative
 - The Dietetic Practicum Director/The Director of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics and/or representative
- The remaining time will be for questions and deliberations.



- Other individuals may be called for questioning before the Appeal Committee if it is deemed necessary for a fair hearing of the appeal.
- The decision of the Appeal Committee will be on the basis of simple majority. The Committee will deliver a decision in writing to the Dietetic Practicum Director/Director of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics and the dietetic practicum student within two working days of the hearing.
- Copies of all correspondence related to the appeal will be kept in the dietetic practicum student's permanent record.
- The decision of the Appeal Committee will be final.