

Dietetics Internship: Certificate of Applied Practice in Dietetics (CAPD) Assessment Report Academic Year 2025

Executive Summary

The annual review of program occurred in January-December of 2025. The program continues to meet accreditation guidelines by providing education appropriate to all 36 standards established by the accrediting body for dietetics programs, ACEND. Standards can be accessed at: <http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=6442485341>

Mission Statement of USU Dietetics Internship:

The mission of the DI is to enhance the health of family, communities, and nations by advancing students who are prepared to advance the profession of dietetics through scientific understanding, compassionate clinical practice, and community engagement.

Learning Assessment Matrix and Course Map

Details on competency assessment can be accessed at: <https://usu.box.com/s/u82230lb3rkdixlh11duw04gi8vvl95b>

DI Program Highlights and Statistics:

- The CP program was officially changed to a Dietetics Internship Program. The core program remains the same with a few changes involving the application and eligibility process. Students who have previously completed a master's degree can now apply to CAPD program without having to complete a second master's degree.

- 100% of our students complete the program within 3 years
- >95% of students are in dietetics-related jobs or graduate school within 1 year of program graduation

RD Registration Exam Statistics (3-Year Average = 2022- 2024):

- Pass Rate for 2024 Examinees (First or Second Attempt) = 100%
- 3-Year Average Pass Rate on the RD Registration Exam (First Attempt) = 88%
- *2025 data is not available

Academic Year	# of students in the cohort	Goal #1: Graduate students who are exam-ready and able to enter the dietetics work force or advanced study		Goal #2: Produce professionals who are independent, capable, and prepared to function in entry-level dietetics practice.			
		90% of graduates will pass the Registration Examination for Dietitians within 1 year of their first attempt.	90% of graduates will complete program requirements in less than three years	70% of students will be employed in dietetics or a related field within 1 year of program completion	30% of graduates will be enrolled in graduate schools within 5 years of program completion	70% of students will be rated as 'above average' on employer surveys	80% of graduates will report being 'well prepared' for entry level employment on 1-year alumni surveys
2017	12	80%	100%	89%	40%*	80%	63%
2018	12	83%	100%	77%	36%*	N/A**	70%
2019	12	100%	100%	75%	N/A*	N/A**	50%
2020	12	100%	100%	89%	N/A*	N/A**	N/A*
2021	12	82%	100%	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**
2022	12	92%	100%	92%	N/A**	N/A**	N/A**
2023	9	72%	100%	92%	50%	N/A	N/A
2024	10	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	80%
2025	10	No Data*	100%	No Data*	100%	No Data*	No Data*

*Incomplete data. This cohort has not met the criteria for evaluation.

**Failed to collect adequate responses from surveys.

Program Changes Based on Assessment Data

The following issues have been identified that will influence the ongoing success of the program:

Issue #1: Challenges in Enrollment and Retention

As of 2024 all dietetics students must complete a master's degree and 1000 hours of internship hours. Unfortunately, the national wage for dietitians has not changed. Universities nationwide are seeing a drop in interest in dietetics programs. So far, Utah State University has not seen too much of an impact on the DPD level. The CAPD has seen a slight dip in interest due to the length of the program. When combined with an MPH it takes 4 semesters to complete the CAPD program. This is almost one year longer than the alternate program at USU. We have started marketing the program to undergraduates with the MPH program. Combining the MPH and CAPD essentially doubles the workforce possibilities for students. This has proved to be a beneficial strategy. We have been able to keep the program filled with at least 10 students per cohort.

Another challenge comes with the 2025 change to the DICAS application process. All programs must use this application program and all due dates and acceptance dates are the same nationwide. The challenge comes when there is little to prevent students from dropping the CAPD program and accepting other offers. There also is not a waitlist like there has been in the past to bring in students. We are working on ways to recruit more students when other students drop out. One method to try is to advertise the empty spots to other programs through NDEP.

Issue #2: Decline in RD exam scores

A change in the RD exam format resulted in declining rates for many programs, including USU. The national pass rate has dropped to 54%. Utah State University remains much higher than the national average. Because of the change to our program in 2023 we do not have a lot of data as many students have not yet taken the exam. USU invested in two computer programs to help students prepare for the RD exam during the summer after graduation. Professors also reviewed the new exam content to make certain courses reflect current concepts used on the exam. Students are provided with many various exam preparation options they can purchase on their own upon graduation. A mock RD exam has been added to the curriculum.

Issue #3: Job Preparedness

Recent employer and alumni surveys have shown a downward trend for student preparedness for their first job. The stakeholder's survey revealed this was largely in areas of "soft skills" including negotiation and communication. As the DI expands its curriculum, attention is being given on how to recruit, train, and prepare students for the modern workforce.

Issue #4: Poor employer and alumni response rate to surveys

Over the past few years, there has been a significant decline in response to email surveys. We are actively working to develop new assessment techniques that will provide adequate stakeholder input. New assessment techniques could include improved use of social media, text messages, or focus groups.

