

Master of Dietetics Administration (MDA) Assessment Report 2025

Pre-RD MDA

Program Overview

The Pre-RD Master of Dietetics Administration (Pre-RD MDA) program is an educational program designed for students seeking the Registered Dietitian credential. The program is a 1-year program that includes 37 graduate credits and integrates 1,000 hours of supervised experiential learning with a Master’s project (Plan C), leading to a Master’s degree in Dietetics Administration. Graduates of the program are qualified to take the national RD Exam and are prepared for diverse roles in the field of nutrition and dietetics. The program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics.

Program Mission: The mission of the Utah State University Master of Dietetics Administration is to prepare entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists in a distance format to empower them to be future leaders through learning, critical thinking, discovery, and engagement who utilize their experience and individual perspectives to improve the health and well-being of the communities they serve.

Program Numbers

Graduated Cohorts:

MDA Cohort	No. of Applications	No. of students	Completion time 1 year	Completion time > 1 year	Total students graduating	Percent of students graduating in 1 year
2023-2024	54	35	35	0	35/35	100%
2024-2025	72	38	37	1	37/38*	97%
*This student plans to complete the program but needs additional time.						

Current Cohort:

MDA Cohort	No. of Applications	No. of students	Completion time 1 year	Completion time > 1 year	Total students graduating	Percent of students graduating in 1 year
2025-2026	85	38	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available

Outcome Standards

As part of ACEND Accreditation, students must meet 39 competencies and over 250 performance indicators. Details of these requirements can be seen in the [ACEND Standards for FEM](#). We are committed to excellence in providing curriculum development that meets or exceeds all required standards. The assessment of these competencies and performance indicators is conducted by program faculty in conjunction with industry partners and preceptors, who provide the learning experiences for the supervised experiential learning portion of the program. Preceptors complete and submit student evaluations for the competencies in which they observe. Students must meet expectations and show

competence in 100% of the requirements to meet program completion requirements. In addition to collecting data for the University, the program prepares an annual program report for ACEND.

Program Outcomes:

The program director conducts an annual systematic evaluation of program goals and objectives.

Program Goal #1: USU MDA graduates will demonstrate competence in the knowledge and skills required of entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists.	
Objective 1.1: At least 80% of program students complete program requirements within 1.5 years (150% of the planned program length).	2023-2024 35/35 100% 2024-2025 37/38 97% 2025-2026 **/38
Objective 1.2: At least 80% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.	2023-2024 35/35 100% 2024-2025 **/38 2025-2026 **/38 **Outcomes not yet available
Objective 1.3: 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%.	2023-2024 18/33 60% 2024-2025 **/38 2025-2026 **/38 **Outcomes not yet available
Objective 1.4: Of graduates who seek employment, at least 80% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.	2023-2024 29/32 90% 2024-2025 **/38 2025-2026 **/38 **Outcomes not yet available
Objective 1.5: At least 80% of the employers who respond to the employer survey will indicate they are satisfied with their employee's (USU MDA graduate's) preparation for entry-level practice.	2023-2024 100% 2024-2025 ** 2025-2026 ** **Outcomes not yet available
Objective 1.6: At least 80% of graduates will rate themselves as competent and prepared for entry-level dietetics practice.	2023-2024 32/33 [^] 94% 2024-2025 **/38 2025-2026 **/38 **Outcomes not yet available [^] Based on responses from 1-year graduation survey.
Program Goal #2: USU MDA graduates will participate in nutrition and dietetics-related leadership opportunities within the communities they serve.	
Objective 2.1: At program completion, 80% of graduates will score higher on the leadership attributes self-assessment compared to the pre-program leadership attributes self-assessment.	2023-2024 34/35 97% 2024-2025 37/38 97% 2025-2026 **/38 **Outcomes not yet available

<p>Objective 2.2: Within one year of graduation, 50% of graduates who respond to the one-year follow-up survey will report feeling competent in serving in a nutrition and/or dietetics-related leadership position.</p>	<p>2023-2024 33/33[^] 100% 2024-2025 **/38 2025-2026 **/38 **Outcomes not yet available [^] Based on responses from 1-year graduation survey.</p>
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Program Assessment and Improvements

Program faculty review assessment information, including student outcomes, student evaluations, and preceptor feedback, to revise the program curriculum and ensure that it meets accreditation and practice requirements. The data collected from assessments are compiled and discussed by MDA faculty to help guide program improvement efforts. If program changes or modifications are needed, they are implemented before the next academic year and documented accordingly.

Data-driven Changes

In 2025, the Pre-RD MDA program made various changes to the curriculum, orientation resources, and student evaluations based on the data collected from our assessments. Below is a summary of key changes.

- Orientation: The clinical skills training continues to be expanded to meet educational and accreditation requirements. We invite RDN credentialed guest speakers to help teach these clinical skills. It is one of the highlights for students. Based on prior clinical evaluations, a new session covering inpatient versus outpatient education was included at orientation. There was also a session added on metacognition.
- Pre-graduation: An ongoing focus is on supporting students taking the RD Exam. Historically, individual pre-graduation meetings were held to cover studying for the RD Exam and applying for jobs. This year, we combined our meetings and shared additional learning resources on studying methods. A study methods module was also added to the curriculum.

Post-RD MDA

The Post-RD Master of Dietetics Administration (Post-RD MDA) program is an educational program for students who already have the Registered Dietitian credential and are working in the dietetics field.

MDA Program Changes

The MDA underwent a transition to accommodate changes in dietetics education requirements two years ago. Beginning in Fall 2023, the MDA has two tracks, the Pre-RD MDA (described above) and the Post-RD MDA. The Post-RD MDA, which is the historical version of the MDA, continues to be available to past graduates of the USU Dietetic Internship (DI) and other dietitians who are seeking a master's degree with a management and leadership focus. During the 2023-2024 academic year, significant changes were made to the core MDA coursework, and changes continue to be made to align with industry and technology trends as well as student feedback.

Program Numbers

The average cohort size for the Post-RD MDA the last 3 years is 18.7. The numbers are lower than 5 years ago because around 90% of students are graduates of the USU Dietetic Internship (DI). Most DI graduates start the MDA right after or within 2 years after completing the DI. The last DI cohort graduated in 2023, so significantly fewer DI grads are now coming into the Post-RD MDA. See the spreadsheet below for yearly numbers, total students, and graduates since 2012. Completion rates and time frame continue to be very good. For cohorts that began in 2012 through 2024, there are a total of 273 graduates. Approximately half of students graduate within one year, and % graduating within 2 years is typically close to 90%. The COVID-19 pandemic likely resulted in longer graduation timeframes for the Fall 2020 cohort. For most continuing students, graduation is anticipated within or around the 2-year mark.

MDA Cohort start	# students	Years to Completion							Continuing	% graduating at 1 year	% graduating within 2 years
		1	1.33	1.67	2	2.33	2.67	3+			
Fall 2012	9	6	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	67%	89%
Fall 2013	12	8	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	67%	92%
Fal 2014	11	5	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	45%	100%
Fall 2015	31	17	7	4	1	1	1	0	0	55%	94%
Fall 2016	25	13	5	6	0	0	0	1	0	52%	96%
Fall 2017	19	6	3	3	4	1	1	1	0	32%	84%
Fall 2018	33	18	4	2	3	1	1	3	0	55%	82%
Fall 2019	36	16	9	1	4	1	2	3	0	44%	83%
Fall 2020	26	6	3	5	0	4	1	6	1	23%	54%
Fall 2021	29	13	7	3	3	3	0	0	0	45%	90%
Fall 2022	19	8	6	2	1	0	0	1	1	42%	84%
Fall 2023	18	12	1	2	2				1	67%	94%
Fall 2024	23	9							14	39%	
Total (2012-2024)	291	137	50	31	21	12	7	15	17	47%	87%
Fall 2025	15										
		306 Total # students including current cohort									
		273 Total # grads (2012 cohort thru 2023 cohort graduates)									
		18.67 Average cohort size for past 3 years									