

San Jose State University
BS in Nutritional Science with Concentration in Dietetics
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Careers in Dietetics

1. What is a Registered Dietitian (RD)?

A Registered Dietitian (RD) is a food and nutrition expert who has met the minimum academic and professional requirements to qualify for the credential of RD. In addition to RD credentialing, many states have regulatory laws for dietitians and nutrition practitioners. State requirements are met through the same education and training required to become an RD.

For more information on the field of dietetics, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) at www.eatright.org.

2. What types of jobs do Registered Dietitians hold?

Registered Dietitians work in a variety of settings including hospitals and other health care organizations such as skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, community based organizations, corporate wellness, sports nutrition, food and nutrition industry communication and public relations firms, government agencies, and school systems.

3. What is the salary range in the field of dietetics?

Salaries vary considerably according to the type of position, years of practice, level of education, and area of the country. Every few years, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics completes a benefits and compensation survey for the field of dietetics. The most recent survey results can be found in "Compensation & Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession 2015". RD or RDN median annualized wages were \$63,700 in 2015 and up from \$60,000 in 2013. For more information on the job outlook for dietitians, read the Bureau of Labor Statistics section on careers in nutrition and dietetics.

4. What is a Nutrition and Dietetics Technician Registered (NDTR)?

Nutrition dietetics technicians, registered (NDTRs), are trained in food and nutrition and are an integral part of the health-care and foodservice management teams. These individuals generally work under a RD to perform routine duties at the technical level. Some hospitals will employ B.S. dietetics majors without the RD credential as a dietetic technician.

5. What types of jobs do Nutrition and Dietetics Technician Registered (NDTR) hold?

Some hospitals will employ B.S. dietetics majors without the RD credential as a dietetic technician. Dietetic technicians registered work independently or as a team member under the supervision of registered dietitians in a variety of employment settings, including health care, business and industry, community/public health, foodservice and research.

Many work environments require that an individual be credentialed as a NDTR. NDTRs work in:

- a) **Hospitals, HMOs, clinics, nursing homes, retirement centers, hospices, home health-care programs and research facilities** helping to treat and prevent disease by conducting screens, gathering data and performing other tasks to assist the registered dietitian in providing medical nutrition therapy as an important part of health-care teams.
- b) **Schools, day-care centers, correctional facilities, restaurants, health-care facilities, corporations and hospitals**, managing employees, purchasing and food preparation and preparing budgets within foodservice operations.
- c) **Women, infant, children (WIC) programs, public health agencies, Meals on Wheels and community health programs**, developing and teaching nutrition classes for the public.
- d) **Health clubs, weight management clinics and community wellness centers**, helping to educate clients about the connection between food, fitness and health.
- e) **Food companies, contract food management companies or food vending and distributing operations** developing menus, overseeing foodservice sanitation and food safety and preparing food labeling information and nutrient analysis.

6. What is the difference between a Registered Dietitian (RD) or Nutrition and Dietetic Technician, Registered (NDTR), and a Nutritionist?

The "RD" and "NDTR" credentials can only be used by dietetics practitioners who are currently authorized by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to use these credentials. These are legally protected titles. Individuals with these credentials have completed specific academic and supervised practice requirements, successfully completed a national registration examination, and maintained requirements for re-certification.

All RDs and DTRs study nutrition and applications to food and health. Some RDs or DTRs call themselves nutritionists. However, the definition and requirements for the term "nutritionist" vary. Some states have licensure laws that define the scope of practice for someone using the designation nutritionist.

Educational Pathway for Dietetics

1. What are the steps to becoming a Registered Dietitian (RD)?

Becoming a Registered Dietitian (R.D.) requires completion of three steps:

1. A minimum of a bachelor's degree with completion of the Didactic Program in Dietetics coursework from an accredited US institution and receiving the DPD Verification Statement.
2. Successfully obtaining and completing an accredited supervised practice program (dietetic internship).
3. Taking and passing the National Registration Examination, a national exam to assure competence of practicing dietitians.

See the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) at www.eatright.org and the [BS in Nutritional Science with Concentration in Dietetics](#) Program at San Jose State University for additional details.

2. What are the steps to becoming a Nutrition and Dietetics Technician Registered (NDTR)?

Becoming a Nutrition and Dietetics Technician Registered (NDTR) requires completion of one of the two routes:

- a) Completed a Dietetic Technician Program by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, that includes 450 hours of supervised practice experience in various community programs, health-care and foodservice facilities and has completed at least a two year associate's degree at a U.S. regionally accredited college or university.

OR

- a) Completed coursework in an ACEND-accredited didactic program or coordinated program in dietetics and has completed at least a bachelor's degree at a U.S. regionally accredited college or university.
- b) After completing the degree and dietetics coursework, pass a national examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR). For more information regarding the examination, refer to the [CDR website](#).
- c) Completed continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration.

3. Is a Masters degree required to practice as a Registered Dietitian (RD)?

A Masters degree is not required to practice as a Registered Dietitian (RD). Although a significant percentage (50%) of RDs hold Masters degrees in areas including nutritional science, public health, health education, exercise physiology, business, and psychology, a Master's degree is not currently required by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND). Master's degree may be preferred or required for certain positions for RDs and may help the RDs to be more competitive for jobs and earn higher salaries.

To advance the profession of dietetics, the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics released in 2017 standards and competencies for the Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Associate, Bachelor and Graduate degree Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics. The entry level requirement for a Registered Dietitian (RD) will change to a Master's degree starting January 1, 2024.

4. Do those RDs who obtain Masters degrees pursue them immediately after finishing the dietetic internship?

You will be able to work as an RD once you complete the Dietetic Internship and pass the Registration Examination for Dietitians. While some RDs choose to pursue their Masters degree immediately after they complete their internships, it is not necessary to do so. Many RDs work

for a few years before entering a Masters program and may complete a part-time Master's degree program while continuing to work. There are several combined dietetic internship/Masters degree programs in the U.S. and this may be a good option for those students who know that they would like to pursue their Masters degree.

Information on programs of this type and a list of all Dietetic Internships can be found on the program list from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs>.

5. If you are planning on doing a Masters program in the future, should you finish the internship first or focus on the MS program and then complete the dietetic internship?

As mentioned in the answer above, the entry level requirement for a Registered Dietitian (RD) will change to a Master's degree starting January 1, 2024. It is suggested by the DPD Director that you complete the dietetic internship immediately after graduating with the Bachelor's Degree in Dietetics. This way you will be able to work as an RD once you complete the Dietetic Internship and pass the Registration Examination for Dietitians and you will not be required to get a Masters after the entry level Masters degree requirement goes into effect starting 2024.

While some RDs choose to pursue the Masters degree immediately after they complete their internships, it is not necessary to do so. Many RDs work for a few years before entering a Masters program and may complete a part-time Master's degree program while continuing to work.

6. What advance degree programs qualify to meet the advance degree requirement starting in 2024?

The Future Education Model Standards for Graduate Degree Programs do not specify the title of the degree (MS, MA, MBA, MPH etc.) or the focus area of the degree (nutrition, dietetics, public health, etc.). Programs are allowed to determine the title and focus of the graduate degree program they are offering. What the Future Education Model Standards do specify are the required minimum competencies that must be achieved by graduates of the program. The competencies specified in the Future Education Model Standards for Graduate Degree Programs are at a higher level and are more comprehensive than the competencies in the 2017 Accreditation Standards for the preparation of RDNs.

It is believed that a higher level of competence will be needed for future practice and will better protect the public. It is also expected that the graduate degree programs accredited under the Future Education Model Standards are structured to include the didactic and experiential learning needed to develop the required competencies regardless of the title or focus area.

7. I have worked in the field of dietetics. Will my work experience exempt me from the coursework or internship?

It is possible that work experience may be substituted for some Dietetics coursework. Dietetics Program Directors will make these determinations on a case-by-case basis. Some dietetic internships will grant credit for previous work experience and others will not. This information

should be included in materials that each internship distributes and can also be found on their websites. Contact information for all dietetic internships in the U.S. can be found on the program list from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

8. Will I be eligible for financial aid while I am taking the coursework to pursue the RD credential?

As a degree-seeking undergraduate you are eligible for federal financial aid. The dietetic internships are non-degree seeking programs, therefore you are not eligible to receive federal financial during your internship. Some internships may enable you to defer student loans.

9. What is a “Declaration of Intent”?

A Declaration of Intent is a document needed when applying for a dietetic internship before graduation. A Declaration of Intent form signed by the Director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) verifies the student’s intent to complete the baccalaureate degree and/or ACEND minimum academic requirements. This intent is based upon the courses that a student has already completed and the projected courses that the student has yet to complete. These remaining courses are documented on the Declaration of Intent form.

At San Jose State University, this form is completed a year before graduation with a concentration in dietetics. The Declaration of Intent allows students to apply for a dietetic internship during this final semester as long as they will complete the dietetics program by the time your internship or grad program starts.

10. What is a “Verification Statement”?

All students completing the BS degree in Nutritional Science with Concentration in Dietetics and who have completed all SJSU DPD requirements will be given a signed “Verification Statement” that documents completion of the DPD. This is issued at the time of graduation, once the degree has been officially posted by the University Registrar, typically 2 months post-graduation. The Verification Statement is used when preparing for admission to a supervised practice program (dietetic internship), professional membership and registration.

The Verification Statement is valid for 10 years, after which an individual would need to complete additional course work (a minimum of 9 units) to receive a new Verification Statement. The required courses are NUFS 110A and NUFS 110B Medical Nutrition Therapy and NUFS 220A Advanced Medical Nutrition Therapy. Additional courses will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Individual Dietetic Internships may or may not consider applicants with degrees received over 10 years ago.

Additional information on Verification Statements is available on the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ ACEND website](#).

Questions for Current San Jose State University Students and Potential Transfer Students

1. Is the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University accredited by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND)?

The Dietetics Program at San Jose State University is currently granted accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), the credentialing body of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, as a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). ACEND is located at 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-0040.

2. Is the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University an undergraduate or graduate program?

The Dietetics Program at San Jose State University is accredited at the undergraduate program leading to a Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Science with a Concentration in Dietetics and the DPD Verification Statement.

San Jose State University offers a MS in Nutritional Science and students can complete the DPD courses along with the masters level courses to receive a DPD Verification Statement. MS in Nutritional Science alone without the completion of DPD courses will not be sufficient background to pursue a dietetic internship.

3. What courses are required for the dietetics degree (or to pursue the RD credential) at San Jose State University?

The Dietetics Program includes courses in chemistry, biochemistry, microbiology, physiology, nutrition, food science, foodservice management, and business. For a listing of specific courses, view the full curriculum at <http://www.sjsu.edu/nufspkg/docs/Dietetics%20Advising%20form%20Final%202018-2019.pdf>.

4. Is the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) required to pursue the courses for the RD credential?

Students applying into the Master's Program in Nutritional Science at San Jose State University and planning to complete the DPD courses are required to complete the GRE with a minimum score.

Undergraduate students enrolled in the Bachelor's in Nutritional Science Program with Concentration in Dietetics are not required to complete the GRE.

5. How long will it take me to complete the coursework necessary to pursue the RD credential?

If you are enrolling as an undergraduate student with a Concentration in Dietetics at San Jose State University (SJSU), you complete the degree in four years if you follow the academic plan

and roadmap. The degree in Dietetics combines the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' 2017 Accreditation Standards for Didactic Programs in Dietetics (DPD) and the San Jose State University's General Education requirements.

For more information on the courses required for the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University, please check out the department website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/nufspkg/programs/bs-nutritional-science/bs-nutritional-science-dietetics/index.html>.

6. What if I completed a bachelor's degree in a major other than foods and nutrition? What do I need to do to become a RDN?

If your degree comes from an accredited college or university in the United States, you have to apply into the Master's Program at San Jose State University and you do still need to complete ACEND- accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) requirements before applying to a supervised practice program. The amount of time it will take to complete the DPD courses will vary based on your previous coursework and the number of credits you take each semester. In general, it takes six semesters to complete the undergraduate level DPD courses and the Master's courses at San Jose State University. This assumes that you are entering the program having completed two semesters of general chemistry and organic chemistry, and one semester of physiology, microbiology (all of these courses should include laboratories). It is recommended that you complete all of your coursework within the seven years prior to applying for a Dietetic Internship.

For more information on the courses required for the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University, please check out the department website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/nufspkg/programs/bs-nutritional-science/bs-nutritional-science-dietetics/index.html>.

7. Does the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University offer any courses via distance education?

San Jose State University does not offer any of the dietetics courses via distance education. A few of the lower level courses in the program may be taken via distance education through one of the community colleges and transferred to San Jose State University.

8. Does the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University offer any courses at night, on the weekends, or by independent study?

The BS in Nutritional Science with a Concentration in Dietetics at San Jose State University does not offer any courses at night, on the weekends, or by independent study. It is also possible to complete the majority of the courses for the first two years of the Dietetics Program at a community college where courses are offered at more flexible times. However, the second two years of the program will have to be completed at San Jose State University. If you are unable to attend San Jose State University during the daytime hours you may want to consider a distance

education program. These programs are listed at the bottom of the overall program list on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website.

9. Is it possible to take the coursework for the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University on a part-time basis?

It is not necessary for you to be a full-time student in order to complete the courses required to pursue the RD credential. However, all undergraduate dietetics courses at San Jose State University are offered during daytime hours so you must be able to attend courses during the day. If you are unable to attend during the daytime hours you may want to consider distance education.

10. Is it possible to study abroad if you have already taken NUFS 139 Hunger and Environmental Nutrition, NUFS 135 Health in Multicultural Societies or NUFS 144 Food and Culture?

It is possible to study abroad even if you have completed the above courses. The College of Professional and Global Education provides several different programs to give SJSU students a chance to study abroad. These programs may include short-term, summer or semester long opportunities to study abroad.

It is highly recommended that students enrolled in the Dietetics Concentration contact their department advisor and the advisor at the College of Professional and Global Education to come up with a plan. The SJSU DPD Program is an accredited program and certain DPD courses are sequential and may be offered in a Fall semester and Spring semester pattern. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the DPD Director to make sure the classes taken abroad are transferable into the Dietetics program and the student remains on track to complete the DPD program. Information regarding study abroad can be found at:
<http://www.sjsu.edu/cies/internationaleducation/index.html?>

11. Is the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University the only dietetics program in the Bay area?

A few other schools in the Bay Area and Northern California offer dietetics programs including UC Berkeley, UC Davis, San Francisco State University, Cal State Sacramento, Chico State, and Fresno State University. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics maintains a program list of all undergraduate dietetics programs in the U.S.

12. How do I apply to San Jose State University?

If you are a first-time freshman or a transfer student who has not yet completed an undergraduate degree, contact Undergraduate Admissions for application information at <http://www.sjsu.edu/admissions/>.

If you already have an undergraduate degree, you can apply as a graduate student. Please contact Graduate Admissions at <http://www.sjsu.edu/graduateadmissions/>.

13. Does San Jose State University offer an accredited dietetic internship?

San Jose State University offers general focus dietetic internship with an emphasis on management. The internship program is currently granted accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), the credentialing body of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, as a Dietetic Internship (DI). ACEND is located at 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-0040.

14. If I complete the DPD Program at San Jose State University, will I automatically be accepted into the San Jose State University Dietetic Internship?

The San Jose State University Dietetic Internship is only available to students graduating with a BS in Nutritional Science with Concentration in Dietetics or those who complete the MS Program in Nutritional Science with the DPD courses.

Undergraduate students in dietetics are required to complete 10 units of graduate level coursework, 450 hours of work experience and passing of three content exams in Nutrition, Foodservice and Food Science. Please see information on the SJSU Dietetic Internship at <http://www.sjsu.edu/nufspkg/programs/bs-nutritional-science/bs-nutritional-science-dietetics/dpd/index.html>

San Jose State University Dietetic Internship does not accept non-SJSU students.

15. Are graduates of the San Jose State University Dietetics Program successful at getting dietetic internships and passing the Registration Examination for Dietitians?

For the past five years, the average dietetic internship acceptance rate for graduates of San Jose State University Dietetics Program is 88%. For 2018, the passage rate for the RD exam is 94.5% while the national average is 73%. Acceptance into dietetic internship programs is extremely competitive and a GPA > 3.2 is required by the SJSU dietetic internship.

16. I am currently a student at San Jose State University but am enrolled in another major. How do I change my major to Dietetics?

You can apply for a change your major in the main department office in Central Classroom Building (CCB) 200. Change of major forms for the Dietetics Concentration are accepted only twice a year in January and June. Applications are reviewed by the Department Chair and DPD Director and students are notified of acceptance or rejection. Admissions to the Dietetics program is competitive and students are required to receive a grade of C or better in Chem 1A General Chemistry and an overall GPA of 3.0.

If you have questions about the major or careers in dietetics that are not answered here, contact the DPD Program Director.

17. I am currently enrolled at a community college or another four-year college or university. How can I find out which courses I should take to transfer to the Dietetics Program at the San Jose State University?

It is possible to complete the majority of the courses for the first two years of the Dietetics Program at a community college or another four-year college or university. There are a variety of resources you can use to determine which courses you should take at the community college including the school's transfer counselors, www.assist.org, the [SJSU Articulation Agreements](#), the nutrition faculty at your college or university, and the College of Health and Human Sciences Student Success Center.

The Department of Nutrition, Food Science and Packaging also has Graduate Student Advisors who are available for advising related questions. If you plan to transfer to the Dietetics Program at San Jose State University from a community college, it is advised that you contact the Counselor or the College of Health and Human Sciences Student Success Center early so that they can assist you in choosing courses that will transfer to the program.

Questions for International Students

1. What if I have a nutrition/dietetics degree from outside the U.S.?

In order to be considered by the admissions at San Jose State University, your course work must be evaluated by an external evaluation agency, which will validate your academic degree as equivalent to the bachelor's or master's degree conferred by a U.S. regionally-accredited college or university. For more information, see the Academy's information on independent [Foreign Degree Evaluation Agencies](#). The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' information on obtaining [Dietetics Credentials with a Foreign Degree](#). Once your degree is deemed as equivalent to an undergraduate degree, and you've applied to and been accepted to our Masters program, your coursework will be evaluated and a plan will be developed to meet the didactic requirements.

The Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) Director will review your college transcripts upon admission to the Masters Program at San Jose State University and advise you on the undergraduate coursework needed to complete DPD requirements and become eligible to apply for supervised practice programs, such as dietetic internships.

Note: Pre-evaluations for course equivalencies before admission to the MS Program are not provided.

2. I am an RD in another country. How do I get licensed to practice in the United States?

There is reciprocity between the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the credentialing boards of a few other countries. Reciprocity means that individuals who have completed the education and credentialing requirements in one country may be eligible for another country's credentialing examination if the two countries have entered into an agreement to allow this. The Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) currently has registration eligibility reciprocity agreements with the following foreign dietetic associations and regulatory boards: Dietitians of

Canada, Dutch Association of Dieticians and Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Culture, the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission, the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute and the Dietitians Board of the Health Professions Council in the United Kingdom. Individuals who have met the qualifications established by these associations and regulatory boards should contact CDR directly at 312/899-0040, ext. 5500 to obtain information regarding establishing registration eligibility under the provision of CDR's reciprocity agreement with these associations and regulatory boards. For more information, read the AND's [FAQs for International Students](#).

If you are an RD in another country that does not have reciprocity with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, then you have to apply into the Master's Program at San Jose State University and you do still need to complete ACEND- accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) requirements before applying to a supervised practice program. The amount of time it will take to complete the DPD courses will vary based on your previous coursework and the number of credits you take each semester. In general, it takes six semesters to complete the undergraduate level DPD courses and the Master's courses at San Jose State University. This assumes that you are entering the program having completed two semesters of general chemistry and organic chemistry, and one semester of physiology, microbiology (all of these courses should include laboratories).