



Nutrition and Dietetics Programs Advising Reference Sheet

This reference sheet is for University of South Carolina (USC) faculty to advise undergraduate students who are interested in becoming Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs). Please see the table below for the prerequisites required for program admission to two nearby dietetics programs, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) Nutrition and Dietetics Program and the University of Georgia (UGA) M.S. in Nutritional Sciences. A graduate dietetics program is pending at USC and prerequisites will be added when available.

Requirements for Becoming an RDN

1. Earn a degree from an accredited dietetics graduate degree program. Programs must be accredited by The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) for students to be able to sit for the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) exam. A complete list of accredited dietetics programs can be found here: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/program-directory>
2. Pass the CDR Registration Examination for Registered Dietitians. *Note: Effective January 1, 2024, a minimum of a master's degree will be required to be eligible for the exam.*
3. Meet the requirements to practice in your state. Many states have regulatory laws (i.e., licensure) for food and nutrition practitioners. All states accept the RDN credential for state licensure purposes. South Carolina's regulatory laws can be found here: <https://lcr.sc.gov/diet/laws.aspx>
4. Stay up-to-date on the latest research, recommendations, and best practices in dietetics through continuing education and professional development.

Dietetic Program Pathways

There are several kinds of accredited dietetics education programs—each offering a different experience and “pathway” to RDN eligibility:

- **Coordinated Programs (CP) Pathway:** Coordinated programs combine classroom learning with supervised practice experiences within one program. When you graduate from a graduate-level coordinated program, you satisfy both the degree and supervised practice requirements and are eligible to take the national RDN exam.
- **Future Education Model (FEM) Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics (GP) Pathway:** This pathway consists of graduate-level coursework and supervised experiential learning activities integrated into coursework. When you graduate from a GP, you satisfy both the degree and supervised practice requirements to be eligible to take the national RDN exam. *Note: USC has applied under the FEM GP model for its pending program.*
- **Didactic Programs in Dietetics (DPD) + Dietetic Internships (DI) Pathway:** This pathway consists of two education programs. Before starting the DI, you must first complete the DPD dietitian coursework. The DI will provide you with supervised practice in real-world settings. When you successfully graduate from both a DPD and a DI and earn a master's degree, you satisfy both the degree and supervised practice requirements and are eligible to take the national RDN exam. *Note: The DPD may not be offered at the graduate level at some schools, so it is important for students to check that the programs they are applying to offer a master's degree due to the new eligibility requirements for the RDN exam effective January 2024. Currently, the DPD is typically only offered at the bachelor's level. Students can complete a DPD at the bachelor's level, but an additional graduate degree in any field would be needed to be eligible for the RDN exam. Students can obtain a master's degree before or after completing the DI.*

Please visit <https://www.eatright.org/become-an-rdn> and <https://www.cdrnet.org/> for more information on becoming an RDN.

Prerequisites for Admission to a Dietetics Program

Most post-baccalaureate dietetics programs will require or recommend the following types of courses as prerequisites for admission: chemistry I & II with lab, biochemistry, human anatomy and physiology, microbiology with lab, human nutrition, general psychology, and introduction to anthropology or introduction to sociology. Some programs specify that students have no more than 2 remaining required courses to complete before enrolling.

Examples of Nearby Nutrition and Dietetics Programs and the Required Program Prerequisites			
Prerequisites Required for Program Admission	UNC Nutrition and Dietetics Program (CP)*	UGA M.S. in Nutritional Sciences (CP)	USC (Program Pending) (FEM GP)
Organic Chemistry	CHEM 333 and CHEM 331L	CHEM 333 and CHEM 331L	Pending
Biochemistry	CHEM 550 and CHEM 550L	CHEM 555	Pending
Anatomy and Physiology	EXSC 223 and EXSC 223L**	BIOL 243 and BIOL 243L	Pending
Human and Nutrition	HPEB 502 OR HPEB 620	Recommended but not required	Pending
Microbiology	BIOL 250 and BIOL 250L	BIOL 250 and BIOL 250L	Pending
General Psychology	PSYC 101	Recommended but not required	Pending
Introduction to Anthropology/Introductory Sociology***	ANTH 101/SOCY 101	Recommended but not required	Pending

**Note: The UNC dietetics program requires that students take the Microbiology lab (BIOL 250L) and recommends but does not require that students take the other life science labs.*

***Note: The UNC dietetics program highly recommends that students taking a combined Anatomy and Physiology class also take Anatomy and Physiology II.*

****Note: Students only need to take ANTH 101 or SOCY 101.*

For more information on these program admission requirements, please visit the program websites linked below.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Nutrition and Dietetics Program:
<https://sph.unc.edu/nutr/mphrd-admissions/>

University of Georgia M.S. in Nutritional Sciences Program: <https://www.fcs.uga.edu/fdn/graduate-m.s.-non-thesis-admission-requirements>