The Application Process

About the Standard Application

Applicants applying in 2010-2011 became the first to use the new centralized on-line application service referred to as “DICAS.” Not all Dietetic Internship programs participate in this service, so it is imperative that you check with the program to see whether they require the standard application in paper or submitted via DICAS. Also visit www.eatright.org/ACEND > computer matching for the list of programs participating with DICAS. DICAS may be accessed at https://portal.dicas.org. You are encouraged to review the video overview of the centralized online application.

The paper standard application forms are available at http://www.depdpg.org. Be sure to type or word-process your application. Applications should not be handwritten unless otherwise indicated by individual program instructions. Downloading the files onto your own computer will allow you to easily word process your application.

Regardless of the application used, be sure to triple-check your application for typos and errors before it is submitted. Many internship directors use the application process to determine how well applicants follow directions. Be sure to sign necessary paper forms in blue ink wherever signatures are indicated (e.g. on the Declaration of Intent form).

Program admission committees will review your application according to program standards. Most programs will make an initial determination of your candidacy based on a first look at your application. This may include evaluating your GPA, completeness of your application and appearance of your application. It is imperative that your complete application be received before the due-date. Applications that are not typed (if paper), submitted late, and/or incomplete may be removed from the selection pool. To assist you in putting together the highest quality application possible, review of your application is available. The DPD director will assist you in reviewing your application for completeness and accuracy prior to submitting it to your programs of choice if adequate time is allowed to do so.

On the application you must list most of the courses you have taken throughout your college career and calculate a separate DPD GPA. To help you do this, see “Instructions for Completing Grade Point Averages” in the standard Dietetic Internship Program Application or refer to the instructions provided by DICAS. For courses where you used AP credits to fulfill the requirement, list the course title, prefix and number exactly as it appears on the transcript. Put in the appropriate lecture/lab/etc, the appropriate number of credits, the grade type as “letter,” the transcript grade as “CR-CREDIT, and note “Advanced Placement” under special classification.

Proof of Completing Dietetics Requirements

Most students applying for internships have not completed undergraduate course requirements and are not yet eligible to obtain a verification statement (please see policy on “Issuance of Verification Statements”). Students who are currently in the process of completing requirements
should complete the transcript evaluation form and a rough draft of the Declaration of Intent to Complete Coursework form and submit these to the Dietetics Office with an unofficial copy of all of your transcripts by November of the academic year you are applying. Using this information, a formal Declaration of Intent form will be prepared for you. Before the Dietetics Office finalizes the version that will go with your application, you will need to submit proof of your fall grades. You may use Just the Facts as proof; please send this information to the Dietetics Office.

For applications submitted via DICAS, an electronic version of the Declaration of Intent form will be completed by the DPD director after you have submitted the appropriate information to the Dietetics Office (please see above).

Transcripts for Applications

You will need to provide official copies of your transcripts with your application. You will need transcripts from every school you have attended. For program applications with due dates after the fall semester, be sure that your Cornell transcript shows your fall grades. You should also order an extra transcript for your Cornell file in case you don't match with a program. If we have an extra copy of your application materials in our files, we are able to quickly fax the materials to the program if you give us permission to do so. DICAS requires only one official transcript from each school you attended. Send official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended to DICAS-Transcript Dept; PO BOX 9118, Watertown, MA  02472. If you are applying to programs that require paper applications, be sure to order enough transcripts so that you may submit an original transcript with each application. For example, if you are applying to programs that use DICAS and two programs that don’t, you will need 4 original transcripts from each school: one for your Cornell DPD file, one for DICAS and one each for the two paper applications.

After you graduate, please remember to send the Dietetics Office your official Cornell transcript with degree posted. This is required to complete Verification Statements, whether you intend to attend a dietetic internship or not.

Letters of Reference

Your job is to request letters of recommendation from people who can write a strong letter of support for your acceptance into supervised practice. Most programs require that you provide three letters of reference with your application. Programs differ in their requirements for who should write your letters. Check program application requirements for details, but in general you are likely to need two letters from faculty and one from an employer/work supervisor. For the DICAS standard application, you will use the same three letters of recommendation for all the programs you submit your DICAS application to. At least one of your letter writers should be an RD. You should select letter writers who know you best and can write the strongest letter of support possible for you. You should make your requests and receive confirmation from your letter writers by October 1. To help your writers compose a strong and supportive letter, you
should complete and provide your letter writers with your self-evaluation (see website for forms). Provide your letter writers a copy of the self-evaluation, your resume, and an unofficial copy of your transcript. For paper applications, you will need to provide the same items as well as the forms for letters of reference located at http://www.depdpg.org and envelopes to return the letters to you by December 20. If using the paper application, remember to include a signed waiver form to your letter writer. You may obtain envelopes from the Dietetics Office. You should type a notation on the outside that the envelope contains a letter of recommendation for you from the individual. If the program requires that the letters be mailed directly to the program by the letter writer, you should also address the envelope and provide postage. Otherwise, request that the letters be forwarded to the Dietetics Office for inclusion in your file so that we will have them in time for you to compile your application packets.

If a program you are interested in requires a letter from someone who doesn't know you well, call the program and explain your situation and ask that you be allowed to substitute an alternate letter. Program Directors typically appreciate this kind of initiative!

Letters of reference should address the following items:

- How well the writer knows the applicant and in what capacity
- If the letter is from a job supervisor, the activities and responsibilities of the job
- Intellectual capabilities of the applicant
- Performance on the job or in the classroom
- Personal characteristics
- Potential as a Registered Dietitian

**Writing Your Personal Statement**

One of the most important parts of your application is your personal statement or essay. This is your opportunity to sell yourself to the program. The more you set yourself apart from the other applicants the stronger a candidate you will be. The self-evaluation that you complete for your letter writers will help you to write your personal statement.

Some programs have specific requirements for your statement so be sure to read program directions carefully. If your application is submitted via DICAS, you are allowed to save different versions of your statement online. This allows you to tailor your essay to individual programs, if desired or required. There is however a 1000 word limit. If there are no specific questions to answer outlined by your program, at a minimum, you should address:

- Why you want to enter the dietetics profession
- Why you want to go to a particular program (you will need to change this in each letter)
- What you have to offer in the way of experiences and qualifications that have helped to prepare you for your career
- Any community services activities you’ve participated in
- What are your short-term and long-term goals
- Explanations for a low GPA of lack of work experience, if appropriate
- What are your strengths and weaknesses or areas needing improvement

If you have an idea about an area of dietetics practice that interests you, talk about that. Programs appreciate applicants who are focused. Commitment to the profession of dietetics is valued. Are you a member of Academy? Have you ever attended a dietetic association meeting? If so, discuss what membership or attendance meant for you.

**Computer Matching**

Computer matching is a separate step in the application process and requires a separate fee from the application. Please note that completing an application with DICAS does not automatically enroll you in computer matching. The majority of DI programs participate in computer matching to identify the students who will be attending their programs in the coming year. In this process, students register on-line with D & D digital at [www.dnddigital.com](http://www.dnddigital.com) and rank the internships that they are applying in order of preference.

After reviewing all of the applications they receive, the programs indicate the students they would like to attend their programs in their order of preference. D & D Digital then runs the software matching program that matches together applicants and programs.

Instructions for “Applicants Participating in Academy Dietetic Internship matching” is available on the D&D website ([www.dnddigital.com](http://www.dnddigital.com)). Be sure to note important deadlines for registering with D&D Digital and for submitting your rankings. Information is also available on how to remove your name from match eligibility should you choose to do so.

Visit [http://www.eatright.org/ACEND](http://www.eatright.org/ACEND) for links to the following information:

- FAQ’s regarding Computer Matching
- Applicant Responsibilities
- Computer Matching Calendar

**Top 10 Questions about Computer Matching for Dietetic Internships (DIs)**
(From [www.eatright.org/ACEND](http://www.eatright.org/ACEND) > Computer Matching, accessed September 7, 2012)

10. **What is computer matching?**
9. **If computer matching is one part of the process, what else do I need to do to apply to DIs?**
8. **Is there a limit to the number of programs that one can apply to and rank for computer matching?**
7. **Is it possible to receive a match to more than one DI?**
6. **If a program offers both a full and part-time option, can I apply to both?**
5. **When does computer matching occur?**
4. **Are there deadlines for the computer matching/internship application process?**
3. **If I don't receive a match the first time I apply, can I apply again?**
2. How can I increase my chances of receiving a DI appointment?
1. Where can I get more information about this whole process?

10. What is computer matching?
Computer matching is one part of the process necessary to obtain an appointment to most DIIs. Academy has contracted with D&D Digital Systems to facilitate matching through a computerized process. An applicant is “matched” with the highest ranked program that offers the applicant a position. In this way, computer matching helps applicants to obtain a position in the DI of their choice and helps DI programs obtain the applicants of their choice. It eliminates premature decisions by programs about applicants and acceptance at multiple programs by applicants.

Computer matching occurs using the applicant's prioritized list and the programs' prioritized lists until all possible matches are complete. There is a fee for computer matching that must be submitted at the time you register for the match online with D&D Digital Systems. The process is explained in detail in the "Instructions to Applicants" booklet provided by D&D Digital Systems.

9. If computer matching is one part of the process, what else do I need to do to apply to DIIs?
To begin the application process, you must request and complete the application materials from the DI programs of your choice. Most DIIs participate in computer matching for their admission process. Those that are exempt accept applications only from individuals employed by the sponsoring organization. These are noted on Academy’s Web site in the DI list.

Each DI reviews its own applications and submits a priority listing of acceptable applicants to D&D Digital Systems, along with the number of positions to be filled. Computer matching does not change the applicants' or programs' selection process.

8. Is there a limit to the number of programs that one can apply to and rank for computer matching?
No. Just remember that an application must be submitted to each program you rank on the preference list that you submit to D&D. If you do not rank a program with D&D Digital, the program cannot consider your application.

7. Is it possible to receive a match to more than one DI?
No. Only one match is made, the highest priority choice for which a program match occurs.

6. If a program offers both a full and part-time option, can I apply to both?
Yes. Be sure to check the computer matching codes for each option. Many programs have one code number for the full-time option and one code number for the part-time option. If you wish to be considered for both options, you need to rank the full and part-time options according to your preference and include both options on the list submitted to D&D Digital Systems.

5. When does computer matching occur?
Computer matching occurs in April and November of each year. The DI list includes information
about when each DI appoints its students. Programs may participate in either one or both computer matching periods.

4. Are there deadlines for the computer matching/internship application process?
Yes, there are two deadlines that you must be aware of when applying to DIs. First, each program should have a deadline line date in their materials that tells you when all application materials must be submitted to the program. It is very important that you adhere to this deadline; otherwise your application may be invalid if it is not received by the deadline date.

Second, there is a deadline established by Academy and D&D Digital Systems, Inc. for registering for the computer match with D&D Digital Systems and submitting your prioritized list of DI programs and your computer matching fee payment. The deadline for the February match is generally during the 2nd week of February and for the November match approximately September 25th. However, you should check with your DPD program director, Academy Accreditation staff or D&D Digital Systems for the exact deadline date. If you do not register for the match by the established deadline date to D&D Digital Systems, you will not be in the match and the DI Programs cannot consider your application.

Please be sure to allow sufficient preparation time so that you will have your materials ready to be submitted online on or before the deadline date.

3. If I don't receive a match the first time I apply, can I apply again?
Yes. You may continue to apply as often as you wish and in both April and November. You must register for the match with D&D Digital Systems and submit new DI application materials for every matching period.

2. How can I increase my chances of receiving a DI appointment?
Appointments to these programs are very competitive. Program Directors are looking for students with high academic ability (GPA), work experience, strong letters of recommendation, and professional potential. An application package that follows directions explicitly, and is neat is very important. If required, a well-written application letter may be a good reflection of your maturity and communication skills. Be flexible about your Program choices. The ability to relocate from densely populated urban sites also may be helpful.

1. Where can I get more information about this whole process?
If you are still in school, your Didactic Program Director and/or faculty advisor should be your resource person for information and guidance with the appointment process. The Accreditation staff at Academy is also available to answer questions. Call 1-800-877-1600 ext. 5400 or e-mail education@eatright.org. D&D Digital Systems can provide information about the computer matching process. Visit their Web site at http://www.dnddigital.com/, call 515-292-0490, or e-mail dnd@sigler.com.
Computer Matching: Applicant Responsibilities

(From www.eatright.org/ACEND  > Computer Matching, accessed June 29, 2011)

All complete computer matching information, including computer matching dates with deadlines, is on the Academy/ACEND Web site.

APPLICATION PHASE

Applicants are responsible for obtaining current application materials from the Dietetic Internships (DI). The basic steps in this process are:

- Obtain current application materials from selected DIs at least 6 months prior to the computer match in April and November annually. Please note that DI application forms are not available on the Academy Web site or from Academy staff. You must get all required application information from the DI programs.
- Discuss application materials with your Didactic Program Director, if available.
- If required, apply to take Graduate Record Examination (GRE).
- Obtain the Declaration of Intent to Complete form or a Verification Statement from your Didactic Program Director. One of these standardized forms is provided by the Didactic Program Director and is required as part of the DI application materials.
- Request references from advisor/faculty/employers and order official transcripts as needed for each DI application.
- Complete each DI application according to instructions provided with the application and submit the materials to the DI director by the designated deadline date. Questions about completing applications should be referred to the DI Director or your DPD Director, not Academy staff.
- Provide telephone number(s) with applications where you can be reached on Appointment Day.
- Send all materials before the postmark deadline and by receipted mail for proof of mailing date and delivery. Enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard if you want to be notified of receipt of the DI application from the program.
- Applicants must register on the D&D Digital Web site, pay the $50.00 computer matching fee with a credit card and submit their prioritized list of selected dietetic internships online to D&D Digital before the designated deadline dates (Refer to Dates for the Computer Matching Process for each appointment period). Applicants should call D&D Digital prior to the deadline if they do not receive an e-mail with login information.
- If you do not receive a match, you must register with D&D Digital for each Spring and Fall computer matching period.

COMPUTER MATCHING PHASE

- Applicants are responsible for notifying D&D Digital, in writing, of a decision to withdraw from the matching process if circumstances will prevent them from accepting a match that may occur.
• Applicants are responsible for telephoning D&D Digital if they cannot access the D&D Digital Internet site to view their personal matching results on Notification Day.

**APPOINTMENT PHASE**

• Applicants who receive a computer match DI appointment are responsible for accepting or rejecting the match by telephone or fax by 5:00 pm (of the program’s time zone) on Appointment Day.
• Applicants who submitted a Declaration of Intent to Complete form with their DI applications must obtain a signed DPD Verification Statement from their DPD Program Director and official transcript documenting completion of the bachelor’s degree before they may begin the DI.

**IMPORTANT APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Participants in the computer matching process are expected to adhere to the results of the match and accept a match that may occur. It is unethical to decline a match in order to pursue appointment to another program.

Programs with open positions will be posted on the D&D Digital Web site the day following Appointment Day. Applicants who do not receive a computer match must not contact any program with open positions until the day following Appointment Day. In addition, please do not ask your Didactic Program Director to inquire about programs with open positions until the day programs with open positions are posted. This allows the DI programs time to confirm acceptance from their matched applicants and determine the process they will use to fill open positions.