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.

Some programs do not use DICAS. If this is the case, the appropriate application is typically provided. See the DPD Director if you have any question about what application to use. 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.

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. At least one of your letter writers should be a Registered Dietitian. 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. If a paper application is needed, remember to include a signed waiver form to your letter writer.

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.