



Prospective Student Brochure

The Texas WIC Dietetic Internship (TX WIC DI) is administered through the Texas WIC Program of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and is comprised of two tracks:

1. Traditional WIC track: Designed to assist qualified nutritionists employed within the Texas WIC program, either by the Texas WIC State agency or WIC local agencies, to become registered dietitian nutritionists. A maximum of 12 WIC track interns may be accepted per year.
2. Individual Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) track: A maximum of two Individual Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) slots may be available for applicants that previously participated in a DICAS dietetic internship match and did not receive a match. Applicants for the ISPP must first discuss with and get permission from the Dietetic Internship Director to apply to the Texas WIC DI.

Accreditation Status

The Texas WIC Dietetic Internship is currently granted full accreditation with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-0040, ext. 5400, <http://www.eatrightpro.org/acend>.

Registered Dietitian Credentialing Process

There are several pathway options to obtain the Registered Dietitian (RD) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) credential. Details of the various pathway options can be found on the website of the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) located here: <https://www.cdrnet.org/certifications/registration-eligibility-requirements-for-dietitians>

The Texas WIC Dietetic Internship falls under two of these options: option one (Dietetic Internship - DI) and option three (Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway – ISPP, for those with DPD verification), as described on the CDR website. Following these two pathway options, there are three steps to becoming a registered dietitian, as outlined below.

The first step is the successful completion of an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, ACEND accredited, Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD), with minimum of a bachelor's degree*, after which a DPD verification statement is issued. (Beginning 2023, applicants to the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship must have earned a graduate degree or be enrolled in a graduate program with only 1 to 2 classes or thesis/research project remaining by the start of the pre-internship preparation phase in September. The applicant must be on track to complete the degree by the end of the internship.)

The second step is the successful completion of an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, ACEND accredited, supervised practice program after which a DI or ISPP verification statement is issued. The Texas WIC Dietetic Internship is an ACEND accredited supervised practice program. A verification statement is issued after successful completion of the internship (and a graduate degree effective with the 2024 class). (Note: ISPP applicants must have first participated in the DICAS match and not received a match).

The third step is CDR verification of the above plus the successful completion of the CDR Registration Examination for Dietitians. The successful examinee may utilize the RD (Registered Dietitian) or RDN (Registered Dietitian Nutritionist) credential.

To practice as a Dietitian in the State of Texas, a license is obtained through the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation's Dietitian Program. The Texas Licensed Dietitian (LD) application is located here:

<https://vo.licensing.tdlr.texas.gov/datamart/mainMenu.do>

Effective January 1, 2024, the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) will require a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). In order to be approved for registration examination eligibility with a bachelor's degree, an individual must meet all eligibility requirements and be submitted into CDR's Registration Eligibility Processing System (REPS) before **12:00 midnight Central Time, December 31, 2023. For more information about this requirement visit CDR's website: <https://www.cdrnet.org/graduatedegree>.*

Vision

Graduates of the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship will positively impact the nutritional status of Texans.

Mission

The mission of the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship is to train competent entry level Registered Dietitians to enhance the quality of nutrition services delivered to WIC clients and their communities.

Program Goals and Objectives

The DI goals reflect the program's vision and mission and are accomplished through activities of the faculty, preceptors and graduates.

Goal 1: Prepare graduates to be competent to practice dietetics at an entry-level through high-quality educational offerings.

Objective #1*: At least 80% percent of program interns complete program requirements within 12 months (150% of the program length).

Objective #2*: Eighty percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.

Objective #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%.

Objective #4: Eighty percent of responding program graduates will rate the effectiveness of the internship in preparing them to perform the duties of an entry-level dietitian as above average (4) or better on a 5-point scale with 5 being excellent.

Goal 2: Increase the availability of advanced nutrition skills to Texas communities by increasing the number of registered dietitian nutritionists employed in Texas WIC.

Objective #1*: Of graduates who seek employment, 80% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.

Objective #2: Sixty percent of graduates from the traditional WIC track, that become registered dietitian nutritionists, will be employed by Texas WIC two years after graduation.

Objective #3*: Eighty percent of responding employers of graduates will rate the effectiveness of the internship in preparing the graduates to perform the duties of an entry-level dietitian as above average (4) or better on a 5-point scale with 5 being excellent.

*Those with an asterisk are ACEND required objectives.

Data associated with program goals and objectives is evaluated annually using an average of data from the previous three years for ACEND required objectives and using one-year data for the other objectives. Data associated with program goals and objectives is available upon request to prospective interns and the public.

Program Description

The internship provides the opportunity for nutritionists employed within the Texas WIC program and other community nutrition/public health professionals to become registered dietitian nutritionists. The internship is based upon the accreditation standards of ACEND of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics which designates the practitioner competencies essential to perform the specialized functions of a registered dietitian nutritionist. The program concentration is nutrition education with an emphasis in community nutrition. This builds on the core professional competencies required to prepare dietetic practitioners for the breadth of dietetic practice including health promotion and disease prevention, nutrition therapy, and food service management. Program graduates should be able to work effectively to plan and participate in nutrition education programs in WIC and other community settings.

The dietetic internship is an eight-month program that begins in January and ends in August. With prior learning credit, WIC track interns will typically complete the internship by mid-July. ISPP track interns may complete the program in less than eight months depending on evaluation of any prior learning. The program provides supervised practice experiences reflecting the breadth of dietetics practice. Interns in the traditional WIC track will complete their internship rotations and requirements while remaining employed by Texas WIC State agency or their respective local WIC agency.

Interns employed by Texas local WIC agencies are not allowed to work in their regular WIC jobs anytime throughout the internship. Interns will participate full time (minimum of 40 hours per week) in the internship and will complete assignments that allow achievement of all ACEND competencies. For traditional WIC track interns, the curriculum will include assignments that benefit Texas WIC and ultimately, Texas WIC clients. This allows Texas State WIC employed interns to meet the requirements of their regular employment duties.

In the selection of interns, consideration is given to the applicant's commitment to service in WIC programs and community/public health. The need for registered dietitians in specific geographical areas of Texas is also considered.

During the months of September through December, interns will be required to complete many pre-internship assignments and onboarding tasks to prepare them for the formal internship rotations which begin in January.

Satisfactory and timely completion of all these assignments is required during this preparation period. The intern can be dismissed from the internship during the preparation period for failure to show expected progress, timeliness, or competence. If dismissed, depending on the circumstances of dismissal, the intern may be allowed to reapply after the completion of specified college-level nutrition coursework to better prepare them for the rigors of the internship. All assignments completed during the pre-internship preparation phase are completed via distance education.

Interns will also be expected to arrange to take time from work to meet virtually with the internship administrators and preceptors, participate in internship webinars, and attend in-person pre-rotation site-visits at their planned supervised practice facilities during this preparation period September through early January.

The Texas WIC Dietetic Internship provides over 1000 hours of supervised practice, to achieve the core competencies and nutrition education competencies required for entry-level registered dietitians. Supervised practice experiences are scheduled to include the following:

Food Service Management	112 hours
Medical Nutrition Therapy	392 hours
Community Nutrition/Nutrition Education	544 hours
Alternate Supervised Practice	<u>17 hours</u>
Total:	1065 hours

Registered dietitian nutritionists or other professionals under the direction of the Dietetic Internship Director supervise interns in these experiences.

Supervised practice sites may include:

- School Districts
- Acute Care Facilities (Hospitals)
- Pediatric Acute Care Facilities
- Long Term Care Facilities
- HHSC and WIC State Offices
- WIC Local Agencies
- Lactation Centers
- Senior Nutrition Programs
- Private Practice Dietitians
- Food Banks or Food Pantries
- Early Childhood Intervention
- Other Community Organizations

For the traditional WIC track, the internship staff will arrange supervised practice sites for the intern's Food Service Management and Medical Nutrition Therapy rotations and for certain experiences during the CN rotation. If possible, interns will be placed at supervised practice sites near the community of their local WIC agency. The WIC track intern is responsible for securing rotation sites for some CN rotation experiences with the aid of the internship staff and the intern's WIC Local Agency preceptor.

ISPP interns secure their own facilities, though internship staff may be able to assist in this effort.

The supervised practice component of the internship is augmented with seminars and self-paced instructional learning activities. Completion of readings, study guides and reports is to be done at times not designated for supervised experiences.

Distance Education: One hour of alternate supervised practice is completed via audio-video conference during week two of the MNT pre-rotation seminar. Also, during the Community Nutrition rotation, some aspects of the required supervised practice activities are completed via distance education.

Admission Requirements

The admission requirements for the internship are:

1. A minimum of a graduate degree or enrollment in a graduate program at time of application, and on track to complete the degree by the end of the internship. Only 1 to 2 classes or thesis/research/capstone project should be remaining by the start of the pre-internship preparation phase in September.
2. Completion of an ACEND approved Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) or Foreign Dietitian Education program (FDE).
3. Applicants whose DPD or FDE verification statements are 5 years or older may be required to take at least one upper-level medical nutrition therapy course from an accredited college or university.
4. Preferred overall and DPD GPA of greater than 3.0.
5. A grade of B or better in clinical nutrition courses is preferred. Applicants with grades below this may be requested to retake these courses and achieve a B or better before reapplying. This is handled on a case-by-case basis.
6. Ability to provide own transportation.
7. A reliable laptop computer with Microsoft PowerPoint, Excel, Word, Adobe Acrobat Reader, printer, scanner, e-mail address and internet service.

8. For applicants to the traditional WIC track:
 - (a) Current employment with a Texas WIC local agency or Texas Health and Human Services Commission WIC Program.
 - (b) Supervisor's confirmation of applicant's job performance as satisfactory or better.
 - (c) Signed approval for applicant to participate in the dietetic internship by:
 - WIC local agency director or State WIC Unit Director **and**
 - WIC Local Agency CEO or State WIC Director
9. For applicants to the ISPP track:
 - (a) Pursuing or engaged in a career in community nutrition/public health.
 - (b) ISPP intern will secure facilities and preceptors to meet program requirements.
 - (c) ISPP applicants must have previously participated in the DICAS computer match and not been matched.

Application Process

The application period for admission to the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship 2025 class begins February 1, 2024. Applications for admission must be submitted no later than April 26, 2024 including all application materials, supplemental materials, recommendation letters and transcripts (Transcripts for Spring semester 2024 classes must be submitted by June 1, 2024.) The Texas WIC DI participates in the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS). The DICAS application system can be accessed at <https://dicas.liaisoncas.com/> (email DICASinfo@DICAS.org). The fee is \$50 for the first application and \$25 for each additional application.

DICAS requires a personal statement, online application, official transcripts and 3 letters of recommendation. In addition, we require you to upload the following to DICAS:

1. A current resume
2. For applicants to the traditional WIC track:
 - Texas WIC DI Supplement Documents to be signed by applicant's WIC director and parent agency CEO (These documents must be requested through email from Melissa.Mouton@hhs.texas.gov)

Completing the DICAS application:

1. The application can be accessed at <https://dicas.liaisoncas.com/>
2. **Reference letters:** When completing the online application form, applicants must include the name and contact information (specifically an email address) for each reference. This will trigger an email message to the person writing the reference letter, requesting the completion of a reference form. The form will be completed online. You should have at least one college- level academic reference.
3. **Personal Statement:** Include content about personal and professional goals, interests, experience, continuing education, strengths, weaknesses, and reasons for pursuing the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship, and any other information helpful to the selection committee.
4. **Transcripts:** Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended must be sent to DICAS (see instructions within the DICAS portal).
5. **Verification Statement:** You must provide the requested information on the DICAS application and this will trigger an email to your DPD or FDE Program Director requesting verification of your DPD or FDE completion. Students currently enrolled in DPD or FDE classes must submit a "Declaration of Intent" listing courses in progress. Successful applicants must supply signed verification statements and final transcripts to the Texas WIC DI prior to the start of the internship.
6. **Resume:** A current summary of your academic, employment and professional activities. Please include your email address. You will upload the resume to the DICAS application under "Supplement".
7. **Texas WIC DI Supplement (for traditional WIC track):** Email Melissa.Mouton@hhs.texas.gov for a copy. Allow yourself ample time (6-10 weeks) to get these forms completed and signed by your WIC director and parent agency CEO. This supplement must be uploaded to your DICAS application under "Supplement", no later than May 1st.

In addition, an interview and critical thinking exercise may be requested. All applicants will be notified by July 5, 2024, via email to the **primary email address** on their application, as to whether they have been selected to participate in the internship for the 2025 class.

Computer Matching

Applicants to the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship are exempt from participating in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' computer matching requirement.

Recency of Education

If more than 5 years has lapsed since graduation from an accredited DPD program, additional coursework may be required before acceptance into the Texas WIC DI. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Program Completion Requirements

Graduates of the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship will meet practitioner competencies stated in the Accreditation Standards specified by ACEND. Upon successful completion of the TX WIC DI and graduate degree, interns will receive a verification statement showing they have fulfilled the internship requirements and are eligible to apply to write the Registration Examination for Dietitians.

To receive a verification statement, interns must successfully complete all required competencies by due dates set by the dietetic internship director or preceptors and follow the policies and procedures of the internship and facilities. In addition, the interns must provide an official transcript indicating conferment of a graduate degree. The graduate degree may be in any discipline and should be completed by the end of the internship. The internship director must receive the transcript by the start of the internship or no later than one month after completion of the degree if the intern is still working on the graduate degree at the time the internship begins.

All requirements must be completed within twelve months of starting the program. To be verified, interns must demonstrate that they are competent to practice dietetics.

Insurance

Verification of both health and liability insurance must be available to all facilities providing internship experience.

- **Health Insurance** – Interns are required to obtain health insurance if they are not currently covered by health insurance.
- **Liability Insurance** – Interns are required to purchase malpractice liability insurance. Hospitals generally require a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$5,000,000 annual aggregate.

Immunizations

Texas WIC dietetic interns interact with patients and the public, so they are at risk for exposure to and possible transmission of various diseases. To minimize risk, all interns must have proof of immunizations or immunity for measles, mumps, rubella, varicella, tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis, and hepatitis B, as well as documentation of a TB test and a health verification indicating the intern is in good health. Specifics regarding what constitutes satisfactory proof of these requirements will be provided upon enrollment. Some facilities may require additional immunizations beyond those required by the internship so interns may be required to provide additional proof of immunizations to the internship director and/or preceptors. Although the internship does not require COVID-19 vaccination to be accepted into the program, the vast majority of facilities where interns complete rotations do require the vaccine. In such cases, the intern will not be able to complete the rotation if the facility requirements are not met. All rotations must be completed to obtain a verification statement.

Background Check and Drug Testing

All interns must complete a background check prior to beginning the internship. The intern may be required by various facilities to complete additional background checks and/or drug testing during the internship. The cost of all background checks and drug-testing is the responsibility of the intern. The procedures for completing the initial background check and drug screening will be provided to enrolled interns.

Costs to Intern and Financial Assistance

Texas WIC interns in the traditional WIC track are paid their regular salary from their WIC employer during the internship. Dietetic interns do not receive stipends in addition to their salaries provided by their employer. The intern will be responsible for any costs that are not routinely associated with his/her work. The intern is not charged tuition (unless the intern is an ISPP intern), but all costs listed below are the responsibility of the intern.

All intern expenses related to the internship are WIC eligible. The traditional WIC track intern's local Texas WIC agency can request \$1500 from the State agency to help the intern with these expenses. The local WIC agency may choose to help with additional expenses beyond the \$1500 provided by the State agency. Otherwise, interns are not eligible for any additional financial assistance.

Interns with existing student loans may be eligible for a student loan deferment or forbearance while participating in the internship program. Interns should contact their loan service provider to determine eligibility

and to request a deferment or forbearance. Interns may seek private student loans.

No financial assistance is available from the Texas WIC program to ISPP interns. All costs are born by the ISPP intern. This will vary according to geographic location of intern, and required supervised practice rotations, but is approximately the same as other interns, as outlined below. In addition, a maximum of \$7,000 in tuition (pro-rated according to required supervised practice rotations) will be required for ISPP interns.

The following costs to the intern are estimates and subject to change.

Expenses	Estimated Cost
Books and materials	\$400
Medical Insurance (provided either by employer or intern)	\$0–\$1,500
Liability Insurance	\$26
AND Student Membership	\$58
Texas WIC NBF Conference (travel, housing)	\$800
Laboratory Coats or uniforms (if required by site)	\$150
Medical Exam and vaccinations	\$200
Criminal background check	\$25–\$75+
Drug testing (if required by site)	\$50–\$75
Laptop computer, scanner, fax, printer, and internet access	\$2000+
Copying cost for research articles	\$50
Transportation	\$500–\$1,500
Food costs	\$500–\$1000
Housing Costs (6–23 weeks) – Average \$100–\$400/week	\$600–\$8,000
Tuition (Waived for traditional WIC track interns)	\$7000
Total estimated costs, depending on housing arrangements	\$3,760–\$22,834

The expenses above reflect the costs incurred directly by participation in the program. The estimate for housing, car and other expenses are costs that will be incurred while living away from the present job site. This will occur during seminars and may occur during foodservice management, medical nutrition therapy and community nutrition supervised experiences.

Other automobile expenses and cost of living expenses (rent, utilities, food, clothing, etc.) already being incurred by an intern while being employed at the present job site are not included. During some of the supervised experiences, interns will continue their present transportation and living arrangements.

Although many interns continue living at home during the supervised practice rotations, there is no guarantee that an intern will have a placement in their community. Interns must be able and willing to relocate, if necessary, for up to 21 weeks of the internship. All expenses will be borne by the intern. The expenses are WIC allowable expenses, so that the intern's Texas WIC local agency may help the intern with these expenses.

Intern / Employee Obligation – Traditional WIC Track

Prior to beginning the internship, an intern from local Texas WIC agencies, must sign a letter of agreement with his/her employer. This affirms his/her understanding that, upon successfully completing the internship, and passing the CDR credentialing exam for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists, he/she will continue to work with his/her respective Texas WIC agency for a minimum of 24 full months, or the equivalent part time. If the intern/employee terminates his/her employment with his/her agency prior to completing the obligated time or fails to take the dietetic registration examination by end of the calendar year of completing the internship (or within 4 months of receiving the verification statement if intern did not meet requirements for the verification statement at the completion of the internship), it is expected that the intern will reimburse their employer/agency at the rate of \$35 per hour of completed supervised practice experiences (maximum of 1060 hours/\$37,100).

Interns from local Texas WIC agencies who choose to leave the internship after successful completion of the initial probation period (the first 114 hours of supervised experience) will be required to make monetary restitution to their employer/agency. Interns who are dismissed from the internship may be asked to make monetary restitution to their employer/WIC local agency. The recommended reimbursement rate is \$35 for each hour of supervised experiences completed. No expenses involved with the internship will be returned to an intern who leaves the internship.

Intern Obligation – ISPP Track

ISPP interns may or may not have contract obligations to an employer. Intern obligation is between the ISPP intern and employer, not with the Texas WIC Internship or the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

WIC/Community Nutrition Prior Learning Credit

Working as a nutritionist in WIC has afforded the interns an opportunity to achieve many of the ACEND competencies. Interns with WIC experience can apply for up to 240 hours of community nutrition supervised practice prior learning credit. In certain limited circumstances, additional prior learning credit may be provided on a case-by-case basis. Prior learning credit for ISPP track applicants will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If you have any questions about the Texas WIC Dietetic Internship application process, please contact:

Melissa Mouton, MS, RDN
Director, Texas WIC Dietetic Internship
Phone: (512) 466-8236
E-mail: Melissa.Mouton@hhs.texas.gov

See next page for internship calendar.

Texas WIC Dietetic Internship Calendar

(DRAFT - All Dates Are Tentative)

Date	Activity
January (1 Week)	Preparation Week (and alternate supervised practice option, as needed for graduate students)
January (1 Week)	*Seminar: Orientation and Food Service Management
January – February (3 Weeks)	Food Service Management Supervised Experiences
February (1 Week)	Preparation Week (and alternate supervised practice option, as needed for graduate students)
February (2 Weeks)	*Seminar: Medical Nutrition Therapy (and alternate supervised practice option, as needed for graduate students)
February – April (7 Weeks)	Medical Nutrition Therapy Supervised Experiences
April (1 Week)	*Seminar: Pediatrics (and alternate supervised practice option, as needed for graduate students)
April – May (3 Weeks)	Medical Nutrition Therapy Supervised Experiences – Pediatrics
May (1 Week)	*Seminar: Community and Nutrition Education (and alternate supervised practice option, as needed for graduate students)
May – July (8 Weeks)	Community/Nutrition Education Supervised Practice & Community Nutrition Education Project
Mid to late July (1 Week)	*Graduation Seminar: Project presentations (and alternate supervised practice option, as needed for graduate students)
Mid to late July	*Graduation

* All interns (traditional WIC track & ISPP track) are required to attend all seminars which are typically held in Austin, TX. In certain situations, some or all seminars may be held via video- conference, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic or for other reasons determined by the internship director.