The Need for Interprofessional Collaborative-Ready Dietetics Professionals

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“Registered dietitian nutritionists — RDNs — are the food and nutrition experts who can translate the science of nutrition into practical solutions for healthy living. RDNs use their nutrition expertise to help individuals make unique, positive lifestyle changes.”

- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
The role of the RDN

- Members of many health care and prevention teams
  - Eating disorders, HIV/AIDS, coronary heart disease, diabetes, maternal and infant health, pediatrics, and exercise/sports

- Need soft skills for effective teamwork
  - Negotiation, delegation, mutual trust, cooperation and shared leadership (Royeen, Jensen & Harvan, 2009)
RDN Education Pathways

Bachelor’s degree
(Didactic Program in Dietetics)

Supervised practice
(Dietetic Internship)

OR

Coordinated Program
(includes bachelor’s degrees and supervised practice)

2024 new requirement – Master’s degree
### IPE standards in Nutrition and Dietetics Education

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Core Knowledge (KRD)</th>
<th>KRD 2.3 The curriculum must include opportunities to understand governance of dietetics practice such as the Scope of Dietetics Practice and the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics; and interdisciplinary relationships in various practice settings.</th>
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<td>Competency (CRD)</td>
<td>CRD 2.10 Establish collaborative relationships with other health professionals and support personnel to deliver effective nutrition services.</td>
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Incorporation of IPE into Nutrition and Dietetics Curricula

- Minimal research on IPE in Nutrition and Dietetics (N/D)
- N/D students are interested in and ready for IPE (Brehm et al., 2006; Earland et al., 2011)

- Little is known about:
  - The level of IPE participation among N/D programs
  - Benefits of IPE participation to N/D practice
Examples of IPE Components incorporated into N/D curricula

• Workshops (half-day or full day)
• Observational field experiences
• Case-study discussions (face-to-face)
• Interview students from other professions
• Stand-alone interprofessional courses
• Grand rounds presentations
• Research initiatives (collect and analyze data as an interprofessional team)
Other professions involved in IPE collaborations with Nutrition and Dietetics

- Nursing
- Athletic training
- Social work
- Public health
- Medical technology
- Respiratory therapy
- Advanced medical imaging
- Medicine
- Pharmacy
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Communication sciences and disorders
- Creative arts therapy
- Genetic counseling
IPE as Experiential Learning in N/D

**Faculty Assisted Student Run Interprofessional Clinics**

- **Benefits**
  - Large number of patients with nutrition-related health conditions
  - Real interprofessional practice experience helps students become “team-ready”

- **Challenges**
  - Institutional support
  - Accreditation standards
Academy Support for IPE

IOM Global Forum on Innovation in Health Profession Education

Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors IPE Task force

Dissemination of Information

- Announcements on EatRight weekly
Future of IPE in Nutrition and Dietetics

Rationale for Future Education Preparation of Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners

• “...graduates of the future will need to be able to effectively work in interprofessional and interdisciplinary teams, interpret and apply scientific knowledge and have strong organizational leadership and project management skills.”
• “Gaps were identified in the current competencies in areas of research, communication, leadership/management skills, cultural care, interprofessional work…”
• “There is a growing importance for health care professionals to be educated to work more interprofessionally.”

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