

# PRE-DIETETICS

Interested in pursuing an educational pathway leading to the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) credential? You have come to the right place!

Registered Dietitians (RD) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) are specially-trained health professionals who use their expertise in food and nutrition to improve the health and well-being of individuals, groups, and communities. RD/RDNs utilize evidence-based practice to translate and leverage the science of nutrition to help others understand the connection between food and health, and provide tailored, practical guidance to meet their needs and goals. Because of this, the RD/RDN credential "unlocks" a wide array of unique career opportunities (<https://www.eatright.org/become-an-rdn-or-ndtr/>).

Becoming an RD/RDN requires several ingredients including completing an ACEND-accredited program(s) (<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs/>) which includes coursework and supervised practice, earning a graduate degree, and passing the RDN credentialing exam. There are multiple "routes" to becoming eligible to sit for the RDN exam. Learn more about the various pathways to become an RDN (<https://www.eatright.org/become-an-rdn-or-ndtr/>).

UWM offers coursework required by most ACEND-accredited Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics (GPs; including UWM's MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics Graduate Program). The following pathways to being RDN exam eligible are available to UWM students:

- BS Nutritional Sciences + Pre-dietetics coursework #Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics
- Bachelor's degree (any field) + Pre-dietetics coursework #Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics
- Explore ACEND-accredited programs available nationwide (<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/program-directory/>) (specify Program Type as "Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics")

UWM does not offer an undergraduate Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) which means the following pathways to being RDN exam eligible are not available to UWM students:

- Didactic Program in Dietetics #Dietetic Internship (DI; obtaining a master's degree also required)
- Didactic Program in Dietetics #Graduate-level Coordinated Program in Dietetics (CP)

**Pre-Dietetics at UWM is a set of courses commonly required for admission to an ACEND-accredited Graduate Program in Nutrition and Dietetics (GP).** There are over 80 ACEND-accredited GPs nationwide and the number is growing. The majority of GPs consider students with a bachelors degree and specific prerequisite coursework.

Most Pre-Dietetics courses are integrated into the BS in Nutritional Sciences - making it an efficient option for students interested in pursuing the RDN credential. However, Pre-Dietetics can be combined with any undergraduate major. More information about Pre-Dietetics courses can be found in the **Requirements** tab.

By declaring your interest in pursuing Pre-Dietetics, UWM advisors will be able to provide you with appropriate academic and pre-professional

guidance. More information about how to declare Pre-Dietetics can be found in the **Advising** tab.

## Now available at UWM: Master of Public Health (MPH) - Nutrition and Dietetics

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics program has been granted candidate status\* by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (<http://www.eatrightpro.org/ACEND/>) (120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, (312) 899-0040 ext. 5400).

UWM's MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics program has been designed to align with ACEND's® Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Graduate Programs in Nutrition and Dietetics (GP). These accreditation standards require the integration of didactic coursework with supervised experiential learning in a competency-based curriculum designed to prepare students for careers as registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs).

More information (including admission requirements) can be found on the MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics program webpage.

*\* A new program that has been determined to be eligible to enroll students or accepting interns as the result of an on-site evaluation visit but has not had a graduating class may be granted candidate status. The granting of candidate status denotes a developmental program, which is expected to mature in accord with stated plans and within a defined time period. Reasonable assurances are expected to be provided that the program may become accredited as programmatic experiences are gained, generally, by the time the first class has graduated. Graduates of a class designated as having candidate status have the same rights and privileges as graduates of an accredited program.*

## Requirements

If you are considering pursuing an academic pathway to the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) credential, it is highly encouraged that you enroll in NUTR 101 New Student Seminar in Nutritional Sciences & Pre-Dietetics (Fall only; 1 credit) as early as possible.

Many graduate-level dietetics programs (including UWM's program) will consider students with a bachelor's degree in any field of study if certain prerequisite coursework for admission is completed. UWM's BS Nutritional Sciences degree (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/public-health/nutritional-sciences-bs/>) can be customized by adding Pre-Dietetics to prepare you to apply for UWM's Master of Public Health – Nutrition and Dietetics program (<https://catalog.uwm.edu/public-health/nutrition-dietetics-mph/>) along with many other ACEND-accredited programs (<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/program-directory/>) in dietetics.

Commonly required prerequisite coursework ("Pre-Dietetics" at UWM) for graduate-level dietetics programs includes:

- Introduction to nutrition (NUTR 235 OR BMS 232)
- Introduction to food/food science with lab (NUTR 110)
- Lifecycle nutrition (NUTR 245)
- General biology (BIO SCI 150)
- Microbiology (BIO SCI 101)
- Anatomy & physiology (2 semesters; BIO SCI 202 & BIO SCI 203)
- Chemistry sequence culminating in biochemistry

- CHEM 101 & CHEM 103 OR
- CHEM 102, CHEM 104, CHEM 341, & CHEM 501
  - Many programs require a chemistry sequence similar to the one above (2 semesters of general chemistry, 1-2 semesters of organic chemistry, and 1 semester of biochemistry). If you'd like to maximize your eligibility to apply to a number of dietetic programs, the lengthier chemistry sequence is strongly recommended.
- Introduction to psychology or sociology (PSYCH 101 OR SOCIOL 101)
- Public speaking (COMMUN 103)
- College algebra (MATH 105 OR MATH 108)
- Medical terminology (HS 222)
- Statistics (KIN 270 OR MTHSTAT 215)
- Study of diverse populations/cultural diversity (many options available at UWM)

Admission to graduate-level dietetics programs is competitive so try and earn the highest grades you can in the prerequisite coursework (e.g., C or better) and strive for a high cumulative GPA. Specific **prerequisite courses and admissions requirements vary (particularly chemistry coursework requirements) from program to program** so carefully research each ACEND-accredited program (<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs/>) you are considering.

There is no hiding the fact that pursuing a degree in nutritional sciences and dietetics requires you to take several science courses that may be quite challenging – particularly biology and chemistry. However, you do not have to be a rockstar in these disciplines to pursue a career in this field. The world of nutrition and dietetics offers many career options that suit those individuals whose strengths lie in the areas of public health, social science, education, communication, and more.

For more information, contact:

- Lori Klos, PhD, RDN, MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics Program Director, Nutritional Sciences Undergraduate Program Director, lklos@uwm.edu, 414-251-8220
- Kelsi Faust, MS, Academic Advisor, meyer378@uwm.edu, 414-251-6070

## I'm a new student. How do I start?

You are assigned an academic advisor upon admission to UWM. New Student Orientation (NSO) (<https://uwm.edu/studentorientation/>) helps those who are new to campus learn and understand the enrollment process and enroll in classes for their first semester at UWM. If you are considering pursuing the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) credential, you should ask to have the designation "Pre-Dietetics" added to your academic record as soon as possible. This will help UWM advising staff better tailor their recommendations to your academic and professional goals.

Consider enrolling in UWM's NUTR 101 New Student Seminar in Nutritional Sciences & Pre-Dietetics offered every fall to learn more about this exciting field of study.

## Who is my advisor?

Undergraduate students who have declared an intent to pursue Pre-Dietetics are advised by Kelsi Faust. Contact Kelsi at 414-251-6070 or meyer378@uwm.edu.

Students who wish to learn more about Pre-Dietetics and/or pathways leading to the RDN credential are also encouraged to contact Kelsi Faust or Lori Klos, MPH-Nutrition and Dietetics Program Director, Nutritional Sciences Undergraduate Program Director (414-251-8220, lklos@uwm.edu).

## When should I meet with my advisor?

As soon as you decide to declare Pre-Dietetics, reach out to Kelsi Faust as soon as possible for initial guidance. After that, you are encouraged to meet with your advisor at least once per semester to ensure timely progress to graduation.

- **Enrolling for spring semester?**  
Schedule an appointment with your advisor in October or November.
- **Enrolling for fall semester?**  
Schedule an appointment with your advisor in March or April.

You are also welcome to schedule an appointment with your advisor at any time to discuss academic challenges, career opportunities, or any other questions.

## How can my advisor help me?

The Zilber College of Public Health has professional academic advisors who understand the challenges of balancing academics, work, family, and the social aspects of college life. Advisors partner with you to:

- Explore your academic and career interests
- Plan the sequence of your courses
- Prepare for course enrollment
- Access tutoring and other academic support
- Identify opportunities for campus involvement
- Connect you to campus resources
- Plan for graduation
- Prepare for admission to graduate programs