

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SYSTEM ★ NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

MS/DI Nutrition and Integrative Health

Student Handbook

2026-2027



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Faculty Introduction

Faculty

Darla O'Dwyer, PhD, RDN, LD, Professor, MS/Dietetic Internship Director and Food, Nutrition and Dietetics Coordinator

Dr. Darla O'Dwyer is a registered dietitian and holds a PhD in food and nutrition. She has been a faculty member at SFA since 2003 and is currently serving as the dietetic internship director and coordinator for the food, nutrition and dietetics program. Dr. O'Dwyer has a passion for integrative/functional nutrition; she trained with the Kalish Institute for Functional Medicine to learn a more holistic approach to healing. Her research interests are gastrointestinal nutrition, dietary supplements and fermented foods. She helps others with digestive disorders through her online practice and uses this experience to teach her students clinical application and the business of nutrition consulting. She completed her BS at Sam Houston State University, MS, PhD, and Dietetic Internship at Texas Tech University.

Sarah Drake, MS, RDN, LD, Clinical Instructor II, DPD Director

Sarah Drake is a registered dietitian and director of the undergraduate dietetic program. She has worked in a variety of clinical settings as well as in food service management and wellness. Her interest areas include women's health, nutrition counseling and feeding infants and children. She weaves integrative and functional nutrition concepts into her courses. Ms. Drake received her Bachelor of Science in dietetics with a specialization in health promotion from Michigan State University, completed her dietetic internship at Loyola University Chicago and received her Master of Science in Human Sciences from SFA.

Justin Pelham, MS, RDN, LD, Clinical Instructor II

Justin Pelham has worked extensively in clinical dietetics with a focus on community nutrition outreach. In the hospital setting, he collaborated with the interdisciplinary team as well as counseling patients and/or families in various units such as the ICU, medical-surgical unit, women's center and oncology center. When working full time as the dietitian of Nacogdoches Medical Center, he developed a medical nutrition therapy outpatient program to better meet health care needs for the local community. He continues to practice in the clinical and community nutrition settings. Mr. Pelham completed his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science at SFA. He also participated in the highly competitive SFA dietetic internship.

Standards Committee

The standards committee serves as an advisory group to the director in matters pertaining to student violations/complaints regarding the program's policy and procedures. The committee consists of food, nutrition and dietetics faculty and preceptors (if needed). The members of the standard's committee are Darla O'Dwyer, Sarah Drake, Justin Pelham and selected preceptors if needed.

Accreditation

Accreditation Status

The MS/Dietetic Internship program at Stephen F. Austin State University is currently granted accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition & Dietetics of the Academy for Nutrition & Dietetics, 120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL, 60606-6995, (312) 899-0400, ext. 5400, www.eatright.org/acend, acend@eatright.org.

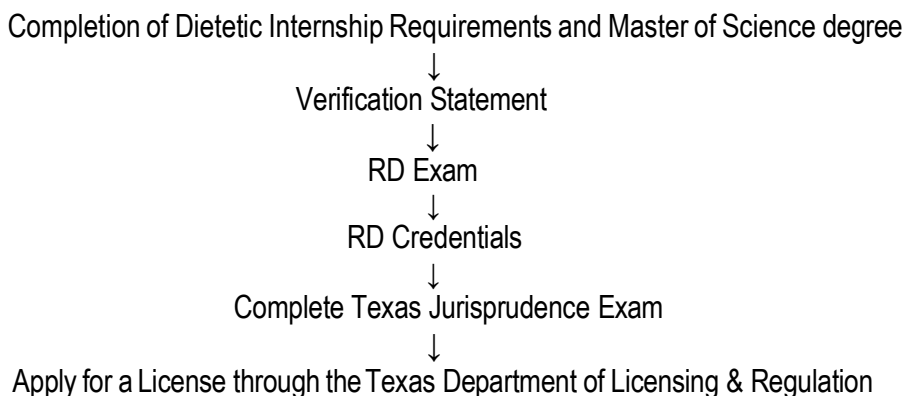
Full accreditation is granted for a 7-year term ending June 30, 2031.

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics



The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition & Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy for Nutrition & Dietetics is the Academy's accrediting agency for education programs preparing students for careers as registered dietitians or dietetic technicians, registered. ACEND exists to serve the public by establishing and enforcing eligibility requirements and accreditation standards that ensure the quality and continued improvement of nutrition and dietetics education programs. Programs meeting those standards are accredited by ACEND.

Pathway to Credentialing/Licensure



Mission Statements

The University

Mission: Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in a global community.

Master of Science/Dietetic Internship

Mission: The mission of the Master of Science//Dietetic Internship program at Stephen F. Austin State University is to prepare competent entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists to serve in traditional and emerging dietetics professions in the communities of East Texas and beyond.

Program Goals & Objectives

Goal #1: Program graduates will be prepared to be competent, entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists in the various areas of clinical, community, foodservice management, and integrative and functional nutrition.

- Objective 1: "At least 80% of students complete program requirements within 3 years (150% of the program length)".
- Objective 2: "Of graduates who seek employment, at least 90% percent are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation".
- Objective 3: "At least 90% percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion".
- Objective 4: "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 5: At least 90% of employers will rate program graduates as satisfactory or above as having skills equivalent to those of an entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (5-point scale: outstanding to unsatisfactory).

Goal #2: Program graduates will be prepared to work in the nutrition and dietetics profession to serve the rural populations of the East Texas region.

- Objective 1: At least 30% of our graduates will be employed in the dietetics field in the East Texas region.
- Objective 2: At least 80% of graduates will agree "the SFA MS/DI program prepared me for my first dietetics-related job" (5-point scale: strongly agree to strongly disagree).

Program outcome data is available upon request. Please contact Dr. Darla O'Dwyer, DI Director by email: dodwyer@sfasu.edu

Program Of Study

Program Description

The Master of Science in Nutrition and Integrative Health, Registered Dietitian (MS/DI) concentration is housed in the Department of Allied Health Studies within the College of Health Professions. The program combines graduate education with supervised practice experience to prepare students for practice as registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs).

The program emphasizes Nutrition in Integrative and Functional Medicine (NIFM), blending evidence-based nutrition therapy with a holistic, systems-based approach to health. It is designed to blend traditional nutrition therapy with integrative nutrition concepts, using evidence-based practices. Students will learn how to look at health from a holistic viewpoint, considering multiple factors to design individualized interventions.

The program consists of:

- 36 credit hours of graduate coursework
- 1,000 hours of supervised experiential learning in clinical nutrition, community nutrition, foodservice management, integrative nutrition and elective practice experiences
- Completion of all ACEND competencies required for entry-level dietetics practice

Students typically complete coursework during the first year (online) and supervised practice during the second year (face-to-face, East TX area). Upon successful completion of all degree requirements and supervised experiential learning, graduates receive a verification statement and are eligible to take the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) credentialing examination to become a registered dietitian nutritionist.

Accreditation

The dietetic internship program was initially accredited in 1992 and is currently accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND®). The program received reaccreditation for a seven-year term through June 30, 2031. In 2023, ACEND approved the combined MS/Registered Dietitian concentration, which meets the Commission on Dietetic Registration requirement that candidates complete a minimum of a master's degree before taking the RDN credentialing examination.

Admission information

The MS program's registered dietitian concentration uses [Dietetics Centralized Application Service](#) (DiCAS) for the application process for external applicants. The student must meet the undergraduate requirements from an ACEND accredited DPD program with a BS degree and have a verification statement indicating completion (or intent to complete) of the requirements for the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD).

SFA DPD students are not required to apply through DiCAS. Additional program-specific application requirements will be provided by the program director.

There is no separate application fee for the SFA program.

Academic Requirements

Minimum overall GPA of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale, and at least 3.4 on a 4.0 scale in all DPD courses is the benchmark. A screening committee reviews applications from a holistic standpoint. GRE scores are not required.

Please see [MS/DI Website](#) for more information about admission requirements, dates and processes.

Overlap Program

Fall DPD Graduates Only, Get an Early Start!

For DPD students who graduate in the Fall, you can get an early start on your MS degree by enrolling in our graduate program while still an undergraduate student.

To be eligible:

- Have 95 or more semester hours of undergraduate coursework
- Have an overall and upper-level 3.0 GPA.

Due to the rigor of the graduate program, you should have no more than 9 hours of undergraduate courses in the fall to be successful.

For further information, please see Policy #24: Overlap Program/MS DI Admission

Note: The graduate program follows the university academic calendar. Supervised practice **does not** follow the university academic calendar. Students will be in rotations during the break between Summer II and Fall and 1-2 weeks of Christmas break.

Supervised Practice Experience Schedule*

Supervised Practice Experience	Number of Weeks	Hours per Week	Total Hours
Clinical Nutrition			
Acute Care Hospital	11	32	352
Diabetes Outpatient Clinic	3-4	32	96-128
Dialysis Centers	2	32	64
Community Nutrition			
County Extension/Wellness	2	32	64
WIC Admin	1	32	32
WIC Clinics	1	32	32
Foodservice Management			
Hospital Foodservice	2	32	64
School Nutrition/Foodservice	2	32	64
Electives (variable hours/availability)	6-7	32	192-224
Clinics and Private Practice- Women's health, Functional Pediatrics, Bariatric, Cystic Fibrosis, LTC			
Private Practice			
Faculty rotation/research			
Market Street			
East Texas Food Bank			
Community Supported Ag			
Head Start			
SFA Wellness			
Lufkin St. Supported Living			
Required Alternate Hours TPN/TF Malnutrition = 44 WIC = 32, CS = 24			100
Total:	33		1,000 hours minimum (92 hours buffer)

***Times listed are approximate. See the schedule provided in class. The schedule is subject to change.
Up to 300 alternate-hour experiences may be provided to meet the required hours.**

Credit Hours for Nutrition and Integrative Health MS/DI Program

Graduate Coursework

The combined MS/DI program requires completion of 36 hours of graduate credit to receive a verification statement of completion and a minimum of 1,000 hours supervised practice experience.

Course and rotation schedule

Year one will consist of graduate courses, all of which are fully online or have hybrid offerings. Students will not be required to live in the area in year one. Year two are the graduate courses associated with supervised practice and will be face-to-face. Students will need to live in the East Texas area starting year two (August).

Fall (6-9 credit hours) Year One

- NUTR 5335 Integrative and Functional Nutrition I (3 cr hrs, hybrid) - This course provides in-depth study of the metabolic processes and nutrition therapy as it relates to integrative and functional nutrition. Analysis and interpretation of research studies will be emphasized. Nutrient supplementation, elimination diets and dietary modifications as part of the therapeutic management of gastrointestinal conditions, weight management, cardiovascular disease and other nutrition-related conditions will be covered. Prerequisite: none required.
- KINE 5350 Intro to Research in Health & Kinesiology (3 cr hrs, online) - Concepts and skills involved in understanding and analyzing research in kinesiology and health science. The course should enhance the student's ability to locate, read, comprehend and critically analyze research. Prerequisite: none required.
- NUTR 5350 Functional Nutrition Assessment (N/A) - Substitution with elective required.

Spring (6-9 credit hours) Year One

- *NUTR 5339 Integrative and Functional Nutrition II (3 cr hours, hybrid) - This course provides an in-depth study of the metabolic processes and nutrition therapy as it relates to integrative and functional nutrition. Analysis and interpretation of research studies will be emphasized. The integration of nutrigenomics and dietary modifications as part of the therapeutic management of autoimmune and neurological conditions, cancer, and other conditions will be covered. Prerequisite: none required.
- *NUTR 5332 Public Health Nutrition (3 cr hours, online) - Survey of food and nutrition issues pertinent to public health and consumerism. Investigation of food and nutrition assistance programs; research and analysis of current policies and goals. (Spring)
- Elective if you want to take 9 credit hours

Summer (6 credit hours) Year One

- *NUTR 5311- Introductory Dietetics Practice (3 cr hrs, livestream) - Historical, philosophical, ethical and legal basis of dietetics practice. Beginning integration of normal and clinical nutrition, community nutrition, food and foodservice management into dietetic practice. Prerequisite: Admission to the SFA Dietetic Internship and MS program.
- Electives to meet 36 credit hours

Fall 2 (6 credit hours) Year Two

- *NUTR 5431 Supervised Practice for Dietetic Interns (4 cr hrs, F2F) - Educationally supervised practice under the direct supervision of a Registered Dietitian. Students complete experiences in clinical, community and foodservice. Prerequisite: Admission to SFA Dietetic Internship and MS Program. Co-Requisite: NUTR 5231 (this course includes approximately 500 hours of supervised practice, 32 hrs/week at facilities, Tuesday-Friday starting in August)

- *NUTR 5231 Supervised Practice Seminar (2 cr hrs, F2F) - Student participation in specific topics related to the field of nutrition and case study dissemination obtained from supervised practice in clinical and community experiences. F2F attendance will be required on certain class days. Zoom capabilities will be available when appropriate. Co-Requisite: NUTR 5431

Spring 2 (6 credit hours) Year Two

- *NUTR 5431 Supervised Practice for Dietetic Interns (4 cr hrs) - Educationally supervised practice under the direct supervision of a Registered Dietitian. Students complete experiences in clinical, community and foodservice. Prerequisite: Admission to SFA Dietetic Internship and MS Program. Co-Requisite: NUTR 5231 (this course includes approximately 500 hours of supervised practice, 32 hrs/week at facilities, Tuesday-Friday, starting in August)
- *NUTR 5231 Supervised Practice Seminar (2 cr hrs) Student participation in specific topics related to the field of nutrition and case study dissemination obtained from supervised practice in clinical and community experiences. F2F attendance will be required on certain class days. Zoom capabilities will be available when appropriate Co-Requisite: NUTR 5431

9 hours of electives to meet 36 hours. Note, students who do not have a statistics course at the undergraduate level will be required to take a statistics course at the graduate level. We have awesome electives. Choose from integrative-focused courses like women's health, pediatric nutrition, sports nutrition, and foodservice management. Elective courses in other areas are also available.

Graduate Comprehensive Project

Throughout the graduate program, students will be required to maintain an ePortfolio. The ePortfolio will be due during the final semester of the MS degree completion. It will contain the following, but not limited to: best 2 case studies (out of the 6 required), pdf document of a presentation (out of 4), blog assignment, grant proposal, IRB proposal, and 3 of the best work samples from supervised practice. The ePortfolio will be presented to the DI Director, Faculty, and students as the comprehensive project component to complete the MS degree requirements.

A verification statement of completion will be issued after successful completion of all ACEND-required competencies, a minimum of 1,000 hours of supervised practice, 36 hours of graduate course credit, and completion of the graduate comprehensive exam project.

Competency Tracking Software

This program uses the Competency data management system created specifically for ACEND-accredited programs to collect critical assessments associated with ACEND competencies. Students will use the program to complete rubrics (site evaluations), review progress on their competencies, and submit time logs for preceptor approval. Work samples will be shared in OneDrive, the Microsoft cloud service subscribed to by the university. Students will be added as a user in the software by the DI Director when they take the course that contains the first competency. Students will receive an email when this occurs with further information.

****Failure to use the software will result in a 0 for the assessment and/or hours accrued at the facility.****

Degree MAP

The graduate program in Nutrition and Integrative Health, Registered Dietitian Concentration
Degree Map

Required Courses

Students who have not taken statistics at the undergraduate level will be required to take a graduate level statistics course.

- [KINE 5350 - Introduction to Research in Health and Kinesiology](#) Credit(s): 3
- [NUTR 5332 - Public Health Nutrition](#) Credit(s): 3
- [NUTR 5335 - Integrative and Functional Nutrition I](#) Credit(s): 3
- [NUTR 5339 - Integrative and Functional Nutrition II](#) Credit(s):
- [NUTR 5350 - Functional Nutrition Assessment](#) Credit(s): 3

Nutrition and Integrative Health Concentrations

Select one of the following areas of concentration:

Registered Dietitian Concentration

For students admitted to the ACEND accredited combined dietetic internship/MS program. Students will complete at least 1,000 hours supervised practice and coursework to meet the MS degree requirements.

Required Courses

- [NUTR 5311 - Introductory Dietetic Practice](#) Credit(s): 3

Supervised Practice

Two semesters of each of the following (total 12 hours)

- [NUTR 5231 - Supervised Practice Seminar](#) Credit(s): 2
- [NUTR 5431 - Supervised Practice for Dietetic Interns](#) Credit(s): 4

Graduate Electives

Six hours from AGRI, BIOL, HDFS, HMSC, HUSC, KINE, NURS, NUTR, PCOU, SOCW.

Internship Assignments

The following are assignments required in NUTR 5431 & 5231 with their associated competencies. Refer to the Competency Assessment 2022 Standards in Brightspace/D2L for all competencies and the specific assessment methods to achieve the competencies:

Case Studies (CRDN 3.1)

The student will complete a total of 4 case studies during supervised practice from the following sites. One of the case studies will be presented in seminar each semester. It is expected that you work with your preceptor on these case studies.

Choose different populations and conditions for each case to illustrate the breadth and depth of your supervised practice experience.

1. Hospital Rotation: 2-3 case studies – each one should focus on a different disorder/problem.
2. Clinics (Outpatient clinics, WIC, Dialysis, other medical sites): 1-2 case studies

For each case study, complete a review of the disease/condition pathophysiology. At least four sources that apply evidence-based guidelines or systematic reviews dealing with the content of your case study are required. A complete ADIME will be conducted, followed by documentation of two peer-reviewed research articles relating to the nutrition intervention/plan for the case.

Case Study Presentation (Requirement in NUTR 5231)

A selected case study from one of the 5 completed cases in supervised practice will be presented to the NUTR 5231 seminar class each semester. A thorough understanding of all concepts and the ability to answer questions thoroughly is expected. In addition to content, you will be graded on your presentation skills. You will be assigned a date to present your case study. See the case study module for specific instructions..

Mentoring Assignment (CRDN 5.1, 5.7)

MS/DI students will be paired with senior dietetics students in medical nutrition therapy in year one. In year two, you will be paired with a first-year MS/DI student. At the least, you will meet with the student once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester. Email and phone communications are encouraged and should be documented. We want this to be a valuable experience for you and the student, not something you check off to meet a competency. Spend the time you feel is necessary based on your mentee's needs. A reflection will be required at the end of the spring semester, year 1 and year 2.

Blog Assignment (CRDN 2.2, 3.8)

Choose a specific topic that will interest a target population and write a blog. The blog may be published on the MS/DI webpage.

Hot Topics Presentations (CRDN 3.12)

You will be responsible for identifying an emerging hot topic, selecting two research papers on your selected hot topic, summarizing the research articles, and presenting them to class. You will be assigned to a specific class day for your hot topic presentation. For the presentation: 1) you will indicate the hot topic, where you found the subject for the hot topic (verbally from a patient, in the news, in a magazine, etc); 2) You will summarize the two research papers that are relevant to the hot topic; 3) indicate why it might be in the news, receiving considerable research attention, or of

importance to health; 4) whether the topic has scientific integrity or support and what the implications might be and 5) lead a class discussion relating to the hot topic over these points. You will upload the presentation to Competency.

Poster Presentation

Create a poster from a topic that you are interested in. It could be from one of the assignments in the MS/DI program (case study, hot topic, blog, etc.) or a new topic. This poster will be presented during the Allied Health Conference in the spring semester on the SFA campus.

Assessment instruments and specific instructions for all assignments will be posted on the learning platform.

Other Assignments

To meet all of the competencies, the student will follow the **Competency Assessment 2022 Standards** provided in D2L/Brightspace. All competencies will be met with a satisfactory or above. In addition to the competencies in NUTR 5431 Supervised Practice, some competencies will be met through assignments required in specific graduate coursework.

Student/Intern Position Description

POSITION TITLE: Dietetic Student

DEPARTMENT: Allied Health Studies

REPORTS TO: MS/Dietetic Internship Program Director (director), facility supervisor and/or preceptors, SFA graduate faculty

POSITION DESCRIPTION: The student will participate as a team member in approved supervised practice settings. These experiences will afford the student the opportunity to achieve the competencies set forth by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) in preparation for the Registration Examination. Students will also participate in graduate education classes and complete an MS degree. Students are expected to develop professional ethics, entry-level dietetics knowledge and skills, enhanced communication skills, and a commitment to life-long learning and continued professional development.

POSITION REQUIREMENTS (see policies in this handbook):

RESPONSIBILITIES: The following responsibilities and duties are expected of students:

- Demonstrate basic knowledge by achieving a score of 80% or higher average on exams covering normal and clinical nutrition, medical nutrition therapy, and food science, **before** beginning supervised practice.
- Abide by the Code of Ethics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Standards for Dietetic Practice and Professional Performance.
- Follow all facility policies and procedures including those regarding patient/client confidentiality and HIPPA regulations.
- Achieve an overall GPA of 3.0 according to the SFA graduate school policy.
- Complete all supervised practice assignments, projects, and applicable competencies promptly with a satisfactory or above performance (on a rating scale of exceeds expectations to needs improvement). All written assignments/projects turned in to the DI Director must earn a satisfactory or above or they will be returned for re-submission.
- Cover the cost of all supervised practice assignments including but not limited to transportation, meals, parking, professional memberships, professional meetings and liability insurance.
- Arrive at supervised practice sites on time and appropriately dressed in accordance with the standard for that specific facility.
- Attend local and state professional meetings when available.
- Contact the assigned preceptor **no fewer than seven days** in advance of the beginning of a supervised practice rotation at their facility and copy the MS/DI Director.
- Be responsible for the completion of time logs, competencies, and site evaluation forms in Competency on time (see NUTR 5431 for specifics).
- Promptly report any problems that affect your work to the MS/DI Director. Contact the preceptor and MS/DI Director if you are absent or arriving late/leaving early to a site.
- Maintain an appropriate positive attitude in all interpersonal interactions and communications.
- Conduct yourself as a professional by acting as a role model for facility personnel and the public by being an advocate for scientifically valid nutrition knowledge, health practices, safety, and sanitation.

Responsibilities of MS/DI Director & Preceptors

Responsibilities of the MS/Dietetic Internship Program Director

Throughout this handbook, the MS/Dietetic Internship Program Director will be referred to as “director.”

1. The director will provide an orientation to the program and provision of a dietetic internship handbook (emailed and posted online).
2. Basic knowledge exams will be administered and graded by the director. Recommendations for further study will be provided if a passing grade is not obtained on the first try.
3. The supervised practice rotation schedule will be developed by the director.
4. The director will mediate any conflicts that may develop between preceptors, faculty and students.
5. The director will assign final grades for the supervised practice course.
6. The director will assess student learning through assignments in supervised practice and review preceptor feedback.
7. The director will maintain a file for each student that contains all original paperwork necessary for verification.
8. Upon satisfactory completion of the MS/DI Program, verification statements will be issued by the director in a timely manner.
9. The director is responsible for maintaining the status of Accreditation Standards and Reports.

Responsibilities of Preceptors

1. Preceptors provide students with an orientation to the facility and/or department.
2. If needed, preceptors will establish a schedule that allows students to work with various people in the department.
3. The preceptor will define work days and times. Typically, these are Tuesday - Friday from 8:00 - 5:00 but may vary by facility and experiences that are available.
4. Students will be informed of the facility dress code by the preceptor.
5. The preceptors will provide opportunities for students to complete applicable competencies.
6. Positive feedback and suggestions for improvement will be provided to the students by the preceptors.
7. Preceptors will approve time logs and complete the competency assessment rubric and student evaluation rubric within Competency for each student before the end of the rotation.
8. If a student performs unsatisfactorily on any competency or assessment, the preceptor will notify the student while the student is in the rotation. The preceptor and student will contact the director for documentation and assistance with resolution.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY No. 1

SUBJECT: Immunization

Immunization is mandated by the Texas Department of State Health Services, the [University](#) and our clinical agencies. Clinical D&D D

that you are assigned to require the following. All students must show proof of:

- a. MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) immunization or serological confirmation of immunity.
- b. DtaP (tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis), Tdap booster immunization or serological confirmation of immunity w/in the last 10 years
- c. Varicella immunization or serological confirmation of immunity
- d. Hepatitis B series or serological confirmation of immunity
- e. Evidence of 2 negative TB skin tests or a negative blood test (must be within the past 12 months) unless they have documented significant reactions (10 mm or more). The second test should be done within 1-3 weeks of the first test. Students with a positive TB skin test or evidence of reaction must show proof of a chest X-ray and/or negative respiratory examination. CDC guidelines for skin tests: <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/healthcareworkers.htm>
- f. Flu vaccination during flu season (October through April).
- g. COVID-19 vaccine

Exemptions

Healthcare facilities must protect their patients based on CDC immunization guidelines for healthcare workers. The Texas Department of State and Health Services has an exemption procedure. However, many sites that the students are scheduled in are privately run entities and are not required to honor vaccine exemptions set forth by the State. Therefore, this program follows the immunization requirements on the [graduate admission website](#). Proof of vaccinations/serological immunity for sections a-d and negative TB skin tests/blood tests (see specifics above) are required. Some facilities will allow exemptions for the flu and COVID vaccines. Each facility will have its own policies on how exemptions are handled. Sites may require that students who are not vaccinated submit to COVID testing, wear a mask, and/or have restrictions on whom they are allowed to interact with. SFASU does not review exemptions. If a site does not have an exemption review process, then the flu and COVID vaccinations may be required.

Specific instructions will be provided with more detail about the vaccinations and requirements upon acceptance into the program.

PROCEDURE

1. Students will submit records to the director showing proof of current immunizations as listed above prior to beginning supervised practice.
2. Students are required to complete all clinical hours as designated in the established schedule. Special consideration and placement will not be granted to students who fail to meet agency vaccination requirements. Failure to meet clinical requirements will result in an inability to complete the required hours. The director is not responsible for rescheduling any sites as a result. If a student fails to meet the above requirements and fails to have all immunizations current and documented with the director prior to the first day of rotations, the student will not be allowed at the sites. Failure to attend will result in an F-day(s) and inability to complete required hours.

POLICY No. 2

SUBJECT: Liability Insurance

POLICY

All persons participating in the MS/DI program will have professional liability insurance coverage.

PROCEDURE

1. The safety officer will send the director a Certificate of Liability Insurance every fall semester. The liability policy protects students while they are participating in supervised practice rotations.
2. Students who have outside employment in health care are covered ONLY during supervised practice and should obtain additional individual liability coverage for outside employment.
3. Student liability insurance is not in effect once the supervised practice component has been completed.

POLICY No. 3

SUBJECT: Criminal Background Check

POLICY

All students shall have a criminal background history check. This is required because of the rules and regulations of Texas regarding the placement of students in public schools, healthcare facilities, and WIC. In some cases, facilities may have an expiration on background checks or require their own background check service. In this event, you may have to complete another one before interning at that facility.

PROCEDURE

Students will complete a criminal background check through www.Castlebranch.com. Results must be available online before you will be allowed to participate in supervised practice.

This will include the following: Residency History, Social Security Alert, NW-Healthcare Fraud & Abuse Scan, NW-Sexual Offender Index, NW – Patriot Act, ST – Criminal History

Healthcare facilities require that the background check be “clear.” If any parameter is positive on the background check, it could result in dismissal from the program. The director and the student will have to investigate a positive parameter on the background check individually and at that point, a determination will be with the supervised practice sites on how to proceed.

POLICY No. 4

SUBJECT: Alcohol and Drug Testing

POLICY

The MS/Dietetic Internship Program at Stephen F. Austin State University seeks to maintain an environment free from substance abuse to promote a safe, healthy and productive learning environment. The MS/Dietetic Internship Program is also mandated by law to ensure the safety and well-being of faculty, staff, preceptors, students, patients and clients.

PROCEDURE

1. The student will submit a sample for drug testing to the SFA Student Health Center (or another facility) based on site placement and according to the policies of the facility. Some facilities have an expiration on drug screens; in this case, you will have to conduct another test prior to interning at that facility.
2. If any preceptor, faculty member, or the director suspects that a student has attended supervised practice or class while under the influence, repeat drug testing will be required as soon as possible after the accusation is made because drugs and alcohol are quickly metabolized and excreted by the body.
3. If a student refuses to submit to drug and alcohol testing the director and Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities MAY
 - a. Deem that this is an admission that the allegation is true and
 - i. Dismiss the student from the program with a grade of "F" in the supervised practice course.
 - ii. Notify the Texas State Board of Examiners of Dietitians
 - b. Hold an informal conference within seven (7) working days, hearing written and oral evidence, including witnesses' statements, from both the accuser and the student. The director and Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities will then:
 - i. Recommend dismissal of the complaint without prejudice OR
 - ii. Recommend a formal hearing within seven (7) working days OR
 - iii. Recommend immediate dismissal from the program with a grade of "F" in the supervised practice course AND
 - iv. Notify TSBED
4. If a student submits to drug and alcohol testing the director and Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities shall review the results as soon as they are available and MAY:
 - a. If the results are negative
 - i. Recommend dismissal of the matter without prejudice OR
 - ii. Set a formal hearing within seven (7) working days.
 - b. If the results are positive
 - i. Recommend immediate dismissal from the program with a grade of "F" in the supervised practice course AND notify TSBED.
 - ii. Hold an informal conference within seven (7) working days, hearing written and oral evidence including witnesses' statements, from both the accuser and the student. The director and standards committed will then
 - a. Dismiss the complaint without prejudice; OR
 - b. Recommend a formal hearing within seven (7) working days OR
 - c. Recommend immediate dismissal from the program with a grade

of “F: in the supervised practice course AND notify TSBED.

Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be “reasonable cause”. It shall be based on the following:

1. Direct observation of drug or alcohol use or possession and/or demonstration of physical and mental symptoms of the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. A pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior consistent with alcohol or drug abuse.
3. Arrest or conviction of a drug or alcohol-related offense.
4. Evidence that the student has tampered with a drug or alcohol test.
5. Possession of drug paraphernalia.

POLICY No. 5

SUBJECT: Use of Technology

POLICY

The MS/Dietetic Internship Program endeavors to support a professional environment at all supervised practice sites. The proper use of personal computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices at supervised practice sites is imperative. It is strongly encouraged that students have a personal laptop to use while at specific sites.

PROCEDURE

Students must follow the specific site’s requirements on the use of technology. It is the responsibility of the student to determine what is and is not allowed regarding technology at each specific site. Students should notify the preceptor if they will use a device to look up information related to supervised practice. All devices should be silenced during supervised practice unless permission is obtained from the preceptor. If the student is expecting an urgent call, they are to notify the preceptor and make necessary arrangements.

The DI Director and preceptors may share their cell phone numbers and ask you to share yours for expedient and/or convenient communication. This communication is typically related to the coordination of schedules on days that you are at the site. Examples of cell phone communication are provided below:

Student to Preceptor/DI Director:

- You contact the preceptor (per preceptor's request) when you arrive at the site.
- You contact the DI Director/preceptor the morning before your rotation starts to alert them of an illness preventing you from being at the site that day.

Preceptor and/or DI Director to Student

- The DI Director contacts you to notify you of a site cancellation at the last minute
- A preceptor or the DI Director contacts you to ensure you arrive at a site if a preceptor notes you are not there as scheduled.
- The DI Director contacts you to retrieve time-sensitive information needed for a site.

All other communication about the MS/DI program should be through email for record-keeping purposes and to ensure communications remain professional. **The DI Director should be copied on all email communication with preceptors.** The student, DI Director, and preceptor can choose whether or not to allow cell phone communication and can discontinue at any time through written notice.

Students are encouraged to bring their laptop computers to supervised practice to take notes, look up information/ research, and complete DI-related assignments during downtime. During downtime, students must ask the preceptor if any other job duties need to be performed before working on DI-related work (e.g. case studies, research, presentations). Students are not allowed to use social media unless it pertains to their duties at the site.

If it is brought to the attention of the director that a student is using technology in an unprofessional manner, then the director may

- a. Hold an informal conference within seven (7) working days, hearing written and oral evidence, including witnesses' statements, from both the accuser and the student. The director will then:
 1. Recommend dismissal of the complaint without prejudice OR
 2. Recommend a formal hearing within seven (7) working days OR
 3. Recommend an "F" day for each incidence reported

Also refer to policy No. 8 Absenteeism, Tardiness, & Early Departure

POLICY No. 6

SUBJECT: Dress Code

POLICY

When officially representing the Stephen F. Austin State University MS/Dietetic Internship Program at either a supervised practice setting or a professional meeting the student will maintain a professional appearance, including wearing an official name tag. If, in the judgment of the preceptor or director, the student does not meet the expectation for professional dress the student may be dismissed from the supervised practice site or professional meeting and will forfeit work hours or meeting hours for that day.

Identification

Note: prior to starting rotations, you will need a name badge that identifies you as "Dietetic Intern." Please see [campus services, ID card](#) for further information

PROCEDURE

While at supervised practice sites or professional meetings, students must wear an SFA ID badge or a facility ID badge. Official dress codes will be established by the individual supervised practice facilities. However, the following general requirements shall apply at all supervised practice facilities and professional meetings.

1. Personal Grooming

- a. **Scents:** due to close contact with others, deodorant or antiperspirant is to be worn. No perfumes, colognes, aftershaves or strong-smelling lotions may be worn during supervised practice.
- b. **Hair:** Follow facility policy. Some facilities may have restrictions on ornate hair bows or ornaments, beards or mustaches, and unusual hair coloring such as blue, green, and purple.
- c. **Nails:** Students will need to follow the facility policy regarding the length of nails, if artificial nails are allowed, if nail polish is allowed and if so, what colors. Typically, artificial nails are not allowed at most facilities (shellac nails are considered artificial). Since you will be interning at multiple facilities, it is best practices to avoid artificial nails while in the internship. Foodservice supervised practice sites will be much stricter than other sites. Many foodservice sites limit the length of the nail to the tip of

the fingertips, and don't allow artificial nails or nail polish. It is the student's responsibility to check with the facility's policy prior to arriving at the facility.

2. Personal Adornments

- a. **Cosmetics:** If used, all make-up should be conservative and worn in no more than moderate amounts.
- b. **Jewelry:** should be kept to a minimum, according to facility policy.
- c. **Body piercing:** Students must follow the facility's policy regarding piercings. Some facilities may require that all piercings be removed except for small stud earrings and single piercings. It is the student's responsibility to check with the facility's policy prior to arriving at the facility.
- d. **Tattoos:** Students must follow the facility's policy regarding tattoos. Some facilities may require that all tattoos be covered. It is the student's responsibility to check with the facility's policy prior to arriving to the facility.

3. Clothing

Clothing should be professional dress or scrubs. Some facilities may allow scrubs, and some may not. Royal purple scrubs are standard for SFA, but the color will vary based on the facility. Some facilities require a white lab coat, while others prefer professional dress or business casual without a lab coat. Students must follow the expectations of the supervised practice facility, generally:

- a. **Shoes:** must be closed-toe and heel and be of a neutral color or color coordinating with your clothing and in good condition. During foodservice rotations, shoes must have slip-resistant soles. The student must review and follow the facility policy.
- b. **Professional Dress:** Should be conservative in appearance. Common professional dress ERRORS TO AVOID include: denim and sweat suit type clothing, tennis shoes (unless allowed by facility policy-should be clean and stain free), flip-flops, sleeveless shirts, halter tops, or lingerie type tops/slip dresses, skirts no shorter than just above the knee, shorts/skorts, tight-form-fitting clothing, clothes that show the bare midriffs, underwear that shows, low-rise pants which reveal the naval, abdomen or lower hip area, and low-cut tops which reveal the male chest or female cleavage.

It is the student's responsibility to determine each facility's dress code policy before arriving at the site.

If it is brought to the attention of the director or standards committee that any student has violated the dress code of a supervised practice facility, there will be an immediate investigation as follows:

- a. The director will hold an informal conference within seven (7) working days, hearing written and oral evidence, including witnesses' statements, from both the accuser and the student. The director and/or the standards committee will then:
 1. Recommend dismissal of the complaint without prejudice OR
 2. The director will recommend an F-day(s) according to the F-day policy
 3. Recommend a formal hearing within seven (7) working days with the Standards Committee OR
 4. Recommend immediate dismissal from the program with a grade of "F" in the supervised practice course.

Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be "reasonable cause". It shall be based on the following:

1. Direct observation by the director, preceptor or other supervising personnel.

POLICY No. 7

SUBJECT: Client/Patient Confidentiality

POLICY

Stephen F. Austin State University has written contract agreements with area healthcare facilities that allow for the clinical training of persons accepted to the MS/Dietetic Internship Program. All SFASU faculty, staff and students participating in educational activities at these facilities will abide by applicable laws and standards of client/patient confidentiality as established by the facilities including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) of 1996.

PROCEDURE

The director will require that students conduct HIPAA training through [CastleBranch.com](https://www.castlebranch.com).

Students will acknowledge their understanding and willingness to comply with any and all facility policies that ensure client/patient confidentiality.

Specifically, students will:

1. Review HIPAA and other policies that regulate the privacy of patient's health information.
2. Review and abide by all policies and procedures regarding client/patient privacy and confidentiality at a supervised practice facility before beginning any activities there.
3. Always be aware of and maintain confidentiality of any client/patient information.
4. Report any violation of client/patient confidentiality to the supervising preceptor of that facility and/or the director.
5. Acknowledge that any violation of client/patient confidentiality will require disciplinary and possibly legal action.
6. Provided documentation to having received training and agreeing to abide by all laws and policies regarding client/patient confidentiality.

Additionally, students will:

1. Never disclose any client/patient information while in the facility unless it is part of a specific assignment or discussion with your preceptor or other health professionals.
2. Never remove or photocopy for removal any part of a client/patient record.
3. Not use client/patient information as part of the learning experience for a case study presentation or classroom discussion without excluding all of the following information as possible:
 - a. name
 - b. age if greater than 89
 - c. geographical place of origin
 - d. date of admission, discharge, or death
 - e. contact information including but not limited to phone numbers, address, and email contact

- e. client/patient identification number or social security number
- f. any insurance information including allowable coverage and identification number
- g. uniquely identifying characteristics that could potentially reveal the identity of the client/patient

Specific HIPAA requirements regarding case studies will be posted in the learning platform and reviewed in NUTR 5311 and 5431.

If it is brought to the attention of the director or Standards Committee that any student has violated the privacy policies of a supervised practice facility there will be an immediate investigation as follows:

- a. Hold an informal conference within seven (7) working days, hearing written and oral evidence, including witnesses' statements, from both the accuser and the student. The director and Standards Committee will then:
 - 1. Recommend dismissal of the complaint without prejudice OR
 - 2. The director will issue an F-day(s) according to the F-day policy OR
 - 3. Recommend a formal hearing within seven (7) working days with the Standards Committee OR
 - 4. Recommend immediate dismissal from the program with a grade of "F" in the supervised practice course.

Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be "reasonable cause". It shall be based on the following:

- 1. Direct observation of the director, preceptor or other supervising personnel.
- 2. Copies of confidential material included with assignments or projects.

POLICY No. 8

SUBJECT: Absenteeism, Tardiness, & Early Departure

POLICY

The SFA MS/DI program has written contracts with facilities that have graciously agreed to provide supervised practice experience to participants of this program. Students are expected to arrive on time, stay the entire scheduled time, and be prepared to work for all scheduled supervised practice experiences.

The required number of supervised practice hours serves as a minimum threshold for competency development. In addition, the scheduled time at the site reflects professional expectations, preceptor planning, and continuity of experience. Students will remain at their assigned sites through the scheduled duration until the last assigned day, regardless of when the 1,000-hour minimum is achieved.

Hours missed due to an excused illness, accidents, or unavoidable delays may be made up at the discretion of the supervising preceptor and the director.

PROCEDURE

- 1. Students are responsible for allowing adequate time needed to commute to the supervised practice facility to arrive at the designated time.
- 2. If a student will be late, absent, or need to leave earlier than the scheduled time required by

the preceptor, **the student must email and/or call/text both the supervising preceptor and the director at the earliest possible time of that working day EVERY DAY until the student returns to the site.**

3. Students must document all hours missed for any reason in the time log. Supervising preceptors will document absences in their records and review the student's time log for accuracy.
4. If more than 3 days are missed due to illness, the director will meet with the student to determine the need for further documentation (i.e., medical excuse) and how to proceed with supervised practice/course grades.
5. Repeated unexcused absences, tardiness, or not completing the full scheduled time at the facility may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to:
 - a. Informal conference within seven (7) working days, hearing evidence from both the preceptor, student and witnesses. The director and Standards Committee MAY:
 - i. Recommend dismissal of the complaint without prejudice OR
 - ii. Recommend removing the student from the supervised practice site and allowing make-up time at a different facility at the end of the year OR
 - iii. The director will issue an F-day(s) according to the F-day policy OR
 - iv. Dismiss the student from the program with a grade of "F" for the supervised practice course.

Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be "reasonable cause". It shall be based on the following:

- Documentation of absence, tardiness, and early departure by the supervised practice preceptor or the instructor of record for a course

Also refer to policy #16 Work Schedule, Holidays, & Personal Time.

POLICY No. 9

SUBJECT: Academic and Supervised Practice Achievement

POLICY

The SFA MS/DI program includes formal course grades and assignments linked to the competencies.

PROCEDURE

Grades Assigned by the director or instructor

1. The program will follow the university's [graduate bulletin](#), which indicates that students must have a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale to earn a graduate degree.
2. Assignments associated with competencies must be turned in on time and grades will be assigned by the director or instructor.

Remediation for competency-associated assignments

3. Competencies associated with NUTR 5431 and NUTR 5231:
 - a. If the assignment associated with competencies is unsatisfactory (< 80%), the director will provide feedback and/or review the assignment with the student and allow them to resubmit an assignment of appropriate quality within one week.
4. Competencies associated with other courses:

- a. If students earn less than 80% on the competencies, the instructor will provide feedback and allow the student to resubmit the assignment of appropriate quality within one week.
- b. Remediation will require additional work but will not impact the original grade in the course or score on the assessment.

Continued submission of unsatisfactory assignments (> 3) related to competencies will result in the following consequences:

- c. The director will formally meet with the student to determine an improvement plan. If the inadequate performance was the result of a temporary personal crisis the director will refer to the withheld grade policy handbook of operating procedures (HOP): [HOP policy 02-206](#)
- d. Students can appeal a final course grade according to the grade appeal HOP [policy 04-109](#).
- e. If the grade cannot be improved by the time final grades are calculated, the director, the instructor of record, and the standards committee MAY deem that the individual is unfit for completion of the program and dismiss the student from the MS/DI program.

Scores Assigned by Preceptors

All supervised practice assignments, projects, and applicable competencies must be scored by the preceptor with a satisfactory or above (on a 3-point rating scale of exceeds expectations to needs improvement). For rotations > 4 weeks, a mid-point evaluation will be conducted. The site preceptor or designee(s) will evaluate the student at mid-point to provide the student with actionable steps to successfully complete the rotation if improvement is needed. The report will be shared with the director.

Remediation in Supervised Practice

If competencies are rated less than satisfactory by a preceptor:

- a. The student and preceptor will contact the DI Director immediately.
- b. The student, the director, and the preceptor will determine what needs to be done to meet the required competency with a satisfactory or above, this could be more time at the site, outside work or no further action taken depending upon if the students has an opportunity to meet the competency at another site. The DI Director will revise the schedule accordingly.
- c. If the inadequate performance was the result of a temporary personal crisis the DI Director will refer to the maximum amount of time policy.
- d. If the inadequate performance cannot be remediated after two failed attempts, the director, the instructor of record, and the standards committee MAY deem that the individual is unfit for completion of the program and dismiss the student from the MS/DI program.

Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be “reasonable cause”. It shall be based on the following: Course grades, assignment grades, and/or competency assessment by the preceptor in Competency, or the mid-point evaluation.

POLICY No. 10

SUBJECT: Maximum Amount of Time

POLICY

The ACEND program objective 1 indicates that “At least 80% of students complete program requirements within 3 years (150% of the program length)”.

PROCEDURE

1. The director will continuously review the time to completion of supervised practice, competencies, and graduate courses.
2. The student will be advised by the director every semester and it is the responsibility of the student to adhere to the advising form and alert the director of any deviations. Deviating from the schedule can delay the student by as much as 12 months given the rotation of graduate course offerings.
3. If the student cannot complete the requirements within 150% of the time frame (3 years), a verification statement of completion will not be issued unless extenuating circumstances are documented.
 - a. The director will meet with the student to determine a plan to improve time to completion.
 - b. If the inadequate time to completion was the result of a temporary personal crisis the director will refer to the withheld grade policy: [HOP policy 02-206](#)
 - c. If the student cannot complete the internship and graduate course requirements, the director, the instructor of record, and the standards committee MAY deem that the individual is unfit for completion of the program and dismiss the student from the MS/DI program.

Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be “reasonable cause”. It shall be based on the following:

- Course grades, assignment grades, and competency assessment by the preceptor in Competency

Supervised Practice – Deviating from Original Schedule May Decrease Availability/Time to Completion

The supervised practice schedule is made prior to the start of supervised practice and spans the entire 1,000-plus hours. Students who deviate from this schedule may not have a placement at the originally scheduled site(s). Sites may limit the number of students and a new cohort of 10 students will be placed in sites every year. Extending supervised practice past the original schedule may delay time to completion, require site changes, and significantly decrease availability. Supervised practice is associated with NUTR 5431/5231 (6 credit hours/repeat twice). Students who stop attending supervised practice will have to drop 6 credit hours of graduate coursework, which may require withdrawal from the university or loss of financial aid. All measures should be taken to complete supervised practice as scheduled.

University Requirements - Limitation of Time for the MS Degree

All work on a graduate degree must be completed within six years of the time the student first enrolls in graduate courses, whether the courses are taken here or elsewhere. In the case of the student who serves on active duty with the armed forces of the United States between the dates of matriculation and graduation, the six-year limitation will be extended one year for each year of active duty up to a maximum extension of four years.

POLICY No. 11

SUBJECT: Professional Disposition

POLICY

The SFA MS/Dietetic Internship requires that students consistently demonstrate a professional disposition to all program stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, fellow students, preceptors, staff, clients, and guests of supervised practice facilities.

PROCEDURE

1. Formal student evaluations will be completed by the preceptor(s) involved in supervised practice and reviewed by the director. Failure to maintain a consistent professional disposition as reflected by scores on the student evaluation by the preceptor, the director, instructor of record, and the standards committee MAY:
 - a. Have an informal conference within seven (7) working days, hearing evidence from both the preceptor, student and witnesses. The director and standards committee MAY:
 - i. Recommend dismissal of the complaint without prejudice OR
 - ii. Recommend removing the student from the supervised practice site and allow make-up time at a different facility OR
 - iii. The director will issue an F-day(s) according to the F-day policy OR
 - iv. Dismiss the student from the program with a grade of "F" for the supervised practice course.
 - b. Determine that inadequate performance was the result of a temporary personal crisis and that the student has the potential to improve their professional disposition in a satisfactory manner. In this case the director and the standards committee MAY:
 1. Work with the preceptor to determine if continuance in the rotation is viable and whether extended supervised practice hours is warranted.
 2. Elect to give the student a "WH" for the final term grade along with a list of assignments that must be completed in a satisfactory manner prior to the beginning of the next semester or other appropriate date.
 3. Suspend the student from supervised practice until such time that the student is able to demonstrate consistent professional disposition. In this instance, the director will arrange for completion of supervised practice hours AFTER a satisfactory improvement has been recorded.

Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be "reasonable cause". It shall be based on the following:

- Evaluations completed by the supervised practice preceptor

POLICY No. 12

SUBJECT: Verification of Completion

POLICY

A verification statement of completion will be issued after successful completion of all competencies, a minimum of 1,000 hours of supervised practice, and completion of the MS degree in Nutrition and Integrative Health (36 hours of graduate course credit, graduate comprehensive exam project).

PROCEDURE

The following items must have been turned in and be on file with the director:

- DPD Verification Statement
- Final official transcript from the institution that conferred your BS degree
- Final official transcript of your Master of Science degree
- Documentation of a minimum of 1000 hours (documented in Competency)
- Evaluations approved by the preceptor(s) indicating satisfactory completion of ALL competencies (documented in Competency).
- Completed site evaluations for all supervised practice sites (documented in Competency)
- Copy of the CDR transcript release form

Burden of Proof

It is the responsibility of the student to complete all required materials and submit documents as indicated to the director. It is the responsibility of the director to maintain accurate files for all students.

An electronically signed verification statement of completion will be emailed to all students at the end of year 2 (early summer), following documentation of all requirements.

The director will submit information to the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) for eligibility to sit for the RDN examination during the early summer.

Student records are kept in a secured, password-protected computer or in file cabinets in the director's locked office.

RD Exam Information

Students who have successfully completed the MS/DI program and have received a verification statement will be eligible to sit for the registration exam. The Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) is the credentialing agency for The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. For more information visit CDR's website: <http://www.cdrnet.org>

POLICY No. 13

SUBJECT: Transportation and Travel to Sites

POLICY

Students who operate a motor vehicle in the State of Texas **must** have a valid driver's license and carry at least liability automobile insurance coverage. The student is responsible for the costs and arrangement of all travel associated with the program.

PROCEDURE

The following items must be turned in and be on file with the director at the beginning of supervised practice:

- Proof of a clean Driver's License with no DUI citation.
- Proof of automobile insurance.

Students may be expected to commute up to 70-90 miles around the East Texas area to meet the program requirements. Commuting time does not count for actual time at the facility and should not be counted on the time log.

The MS/DI program and sponsoring facilities are not liable for accidents that occur while students are traveling to and from assigned areas.

POLICY No. 14

SUBJECT: Health Insurance/Injury/Illness

POLICY

Students must maintain adequate health insurance coverage and notify the director and preceptor of injury or illness.

PROCEDURE

The following items must be turned in and be on file with the director at the beginning of supervised practice:

- Proof of health insurance

The following are suggested companies that students who do not have health insurance can use:

Blue Cross Blue Shield - SFA Student Health Insurance Plan: <https://sfasu.myahpcare.com/> or

United Health's Short Term Health Insurance: <https://www.uhc.com/individual-and-family/short-term-health-insurance>

Health Insurance Marketplace may also be an option: www.healthcare.gov

In the event of an accident or injury at a facility, students should comply with the policies at the supervised practice site. Students should follow up with their healthcare provider following an accident or injury. The director should also be notified concerning any injury or illness that occurs at the supervised practice site. Students must discuss attendance and sick leave policy with the preceptor at the start of each rotation. Students must work with the director and preceptor to schedule a time to make up any hours lost due to illness. SFA is not responsible for any accident or injury at a facility or the results of an accident or injury.

Practicum experiences, like any other activity that exposes an individual to the general public, have

always presented a risk that one might come in contact with a contagious disease or virus. Currently, the most notorious risk is exposure to COVID-19. Symptoms common to COVID-19 include fever, cough, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and shortness of breath. By participating in the practicum experience, you acknowledge and accept the risks associated with potentially being exposed to a contagion, including COVID-19. You agree to follow the site's and university's health and safety protocols, including any disclosure and distancing requirements. Practicum sites are not owned or controlled by the university and therefore are outside its ability to manage and minimize exposure risk. The university cannot ensure the practicum site is free of contagions. You should monitor your own personal health status and determine whether the practicum environment is in your best interest this semester.

PROCEDURE

- If greater than 3 days are missed due to illness or injury, the director will meet with the student to determine the need for further documentation (i.e., medical excuse) and how to proceed with supervised practice/course grades. See policy No. 8 Absenteeism & Tardiness.

Burden of Proof:

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be “reasonable cause”. It shall be based on the following:

- Email of preceptor and director request for time off and approval, preceptor approval of the time log

POLICY No. 15

SUBJECT: Purpose of Supervised Practice and Compensation

POLICY

The supervised practice component of the SFA MS/DI is for educational purposes only. Students are not to act as or be treated as employees of the facility. This policy explicitly prevents the use of students to replace employees (excluding rotations where staff relief is required/expected for educational purposes).

PROCEDURE

1. Students will contact the director if they feel a facility is violating this policy.

Compensation

Supervised practice is typically unpaid, although if the opportunity arises for compensation, this will be allowed as long as the facility remains compliant with this policy.

PROCEDURE

1. If a facility offers a student compensation, the student will discuss the opportunity with the director.
2. The director will contact the facility and discuss the purpose of the supervised-practice policy to determine if there are any changes in the student role based on compensation.
3. The facility must agree if the student is put on the payroll that the roles and responsibilities are of a student and not that of an employee.
4. A preceptor is required to precept the student and complete all evaluations and assessments as required by this handbook.

Burden of Proof:

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be “reasonable cause”. It shall be based on the following:

- Position description or letter from the facility indicating that the student is not acting as an employee.

POLICY NO. 16**SUBJECT: Work Schedule, Holidays and Personal Time****POLICY**

Rotations are scheduled according to availability and kept on a master schedule of rotation sites in the learning platform. The graduate coursework for the Dietetic Internship and MS Program follows the University calendar, but the supervised practice schedules will not directly follow the University calendar. Holidays include 1 week of Thanksgiving break, 2-3 weeks in December/January, 1 week of Spring Break, and possibly 2 days in April for Easter (based on the preceptor’s schedule), and are indicated on the master schedule.

The student will follow the preceptor’s schedule for time at the site, including holidays that are not listed on the schedule. There will be some weekend, early morning, and/or evening work for most students. Personal time off should be requested in writing if it is taken during the work schedule or the schedule that the preceptor requires.

PROCEDURE

1. Students who need to take personal time while in supervised practice will need to request permission 2 weeks prior in an email to the director first, then copy the director when emailing the preceptor to request time off.
2. No more than 3 personal days will be allowed unless there are extenuating circumstances. Students who take personal days without notifying the director will receive formal counseling on the policy and/or an F-day.
3. All personal time/days will need to be made up according to the discretion of the preceptor. Missed hours that are not made up could interfere with the ability to accrue the minimum 1,000 hours of supervised practice. It is the responsibility of the student to calculate accrued hours and know where they stand.
4. Personal study time, homework assignments, or convenience will not typically be considered valid reasons for taking personal time.
5. Absence of burden of proof (see below) could result in an unexcused absence.

Burden of Proof:

The burden of proof in all formal and informal conferences and hearings shall be “reasonable cause”. It shall be based on the following:

- Email of preceptor and director request for time off and approval, preceptor approval of the time log.

POLICY No. 17

SUBJECT: Fail ("F") Day Policy

POLICY

All students are expected to abide by the Academy Code of Ethics, the SFASU MS/DI Program policies and procedures, and the policies and procedures in place at each of the supervised-practice facilities.

Unacceptable behavior is grounds for receiving a Fail Day, further referred to as an "F" Day. This policy applies to any activity for which the student receives supervised-practice hours for the internship or competencies.

A student who receives three (3) "F" days throughout the MS/Dietetic Internship will be dismissed from the program and will not be allowed to re-enter the SFA MS/DI program.

If a student receives an "F" day, they may appeal the decision to the standards committee; a committee comprised of SFA FND faculty.

The following represent one (1) "F" day:

- Failure to abide by the Academy Code of Ethics
- Failure to adhere to all SFA DI program policies and procedures
- Unexcused absence from supervised-practice rotation/hours
- Three failures to arrive at the supervised-practice site on-time, with tardiness described as being 10 or more minutes late to the site.
- Three failures to turn in required paperwork on time
- Failure to use facility technology appropriately (e.g. on social media, checking email, shopping, or using the computer/internet/technology for any reason not authorized by the site preceptor.

PROCEDURE

The director will document, in writing, the basis upon which the student is eligible to receive an "F" day. Following this initial documentation, the director will meet individually to discuss the situation/behavior/documentation with the student. After the information gathered during this conference is considered, the director will determine if an "F" day will be applied. Both the student and DI Director will sign the documentation regarding the conference and the final decision. This signed document will then be included in the student's file.

If a student receiving an "F" day desires to appeal the decision, they must inform the DI Director, in writing, of this request. After the written request is received, the director will contact the standards committee to schedule a meeting with the student to review the situation and consider the student's appeal. If the appeal is denied by the standards committee, the student may choose to make a second appeal to the unit head in the Department of Allied Health Studies. This request must be made in writing to the MS/DI program director, who will then contact the unit head to schedule a meeting between all parties involved.

POLICY NO. 18

SUBJECT: Prior Learning Policy

POLICY

SFA grants credit for assessment of prior learning (APL) allowed by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). APL grants credit to students who can demonstrate documentation of work experiences that are equivalent to the competencies that are provided in supervised practice. Coursework or experience required by the DPD program will not be counted towards APL credit.

Graduate course assignments will NOT be waived unless hours are granted for a specific rotation as part of the APL credit.

The tuition and fees for the MS/DI program will remain the *same*, regardless of the amount of APL granted. APL hours awarded will ***in no instance exceed the number of hours assigned to students for a rotation.*** For example, the hospital foodservice management rotation is 96 hours/3 weeks, WIC clinic is 64 hours/2 weeks (See supervised experience schedule in this handbook). The experiences must be **equivalent** to the required rotations in supervised practice.

Prior learning is granted for one of the following paid work experiences:

Hospital Foodservice Management (FSM)/Independent School District

- 6 months full-time or 1-year part-time work experience = up to 32 hours/1 week APL credit
- 1-5 years (full-time or equivalent) work experience = up to 96 hours/3 weeks APL credit

WIC/Extension

- 6 months-1 year (full-time or equivalent) work experience = up to 32 hours/1 wk APL credit
- 1-2 years (full-time or equivalent) work experience = up to 64 hours/ 2 wks APL credit
- 2+ years (full-time or equivalent) work experience = up to 96 hours/3 wks APL credit

Clinical

- 1+ years (full-time or equivalent) work experience = up to 2 wks APL credit

PROCEDURE

- If you are interested in prior learning credit assessment, please contact the director for the prior assessment worksheet for foodservice management, community, or clinical.
- Provide documentation as evidence for meeting the competencies as per the instructions on the worksheet.
- Paperwork must be submitted by June 1st in the summer prior to the start of supervised practice.
- The director will inform the student as to which competencies have been assessed as “met” and the hours of supervised practice time that will be adjusted.
- Submission of an APL does not guarantee credit will be awarded, in full or in part as requested.
- There are no exceptions for “late” or “delayed” APL
- **Additional documentation**/clarification of activities must be provided to the director **upon request**. Failure to do so in a timely manner may preclude obtaining APL credit.

POLICY NO. 19

SUBJECT: Notification of Potential Ineligibility For An Occupational License Due To Conviction Of Offense

POLICY

Per HB1508, Texas Occupation Code, Chapter 53, if you have been convicted of an offense, then you may be ineligible to be licensed

This is a notification from Texas HB 1508, Texas Occupations Code 58.001. if you are applying for admission to a program that may prepare an individual for an initial occupational license as defined under Texas Occupations Code 58.001, in accordance with state law, please be advised of the following:

- An individual who has been convicted of an offense may be ineligible for issuance of an occupational license upon completion of the educational program;
- Each licensing authority that may issue an occupational license to an individual who completes an educational program must establish guidelines which state the reasons a particular crime is considered to relate to a particular license and any other criterion that affects the decisions of the licensing authority.
- Local or state licensing authorities may issue additional guidelines related to criminal history. Applicants should contact their respective local or county licensing authority for more details.
- A person has the right to request a criminal history evaluation letter regarding the personal eligibility for a license issued by a licensing authority under Texas Occupations Code 53.102.

Applicants are encouraged to review all applicable eligibility requirements related to the respective occupational license. Questions related to eligibility requirements should be directed to the applicable licensing authority. For Texas licensure of Registered Dietitians, please refer to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) on criminal convictions, including the criminal history evaluation letter, at: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/crimconvict.htm> and <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/crimHistoryEval.htm>.

POLICY NO. 20

SUBJECT: Licensure

POLICY

The State of Texas issues licenses for RDNs and many employers in Texas may require a Texas license to practice. Information on licensure for the State of Texas can be found on the [Texas Department of Licensure and Regulation website](#). States vary in the requirements to practice nutrition and title protection. Please see the [Commission on Dietetics Registration](#) for more information on licensure and other requirements for each state.

POLICY NO. 21

SUBJECT: Student and Preceptor Grievances/ACEND Non-compliance

POLICY

Students and preceptors who have a grievance may seek a resolution without fear of retaliation. Students and preceptors who have a grievance with the director should address it with the director in writing. If the concern is not resolved, then it should be brought to the school director.

If students have a concern about a course, they should always speak to the professor on record. If the concern is grade-related, especially a final course grade, they must speak to the professor within five days of receiving the grade as stated in the Grade Appeals procedure.

If the concern has not been resolved, then a formal Grade Appeal following the grade appeal [policy 04-109](#) should be filed.

If there is a complaint regarding noncompliance with ACEND Accreditation Standards, a written copy of the complaint should be provided to the director who will then attempt to resolve the complaint with the student or preceptor. If the concern is not resolved, then it should be brought to the school director. If a resolution cannot be made after filing a written complaint to the school director, a written complaint may be filed with ACEND.

The ACEND board does not intervene on behalf of individuals or act as a court of appeal for individuals in matters of admissions, appointment, promotion, or dismissal of faculty or students. It acts only upon a signed allegation that the program may not be in compliance with the Accreditation Standards or policies. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. Anonymous complaints are not considered. Procedures for filing a complaint can be found on the [ACEND website](#).

PROCEDURE

- Preceptors or students should bring grievances against the director to the director's attention in writing and immediately.
- If the issue remains unresolved, the preceptor or student should bring it to the attention of the school director within 5 days of nonresolution with the director.
- Students with course concerns should contact the professor in writing before the end of the semester.
- If the issue is not resolved, complete the formal grade appeal.
- Complaints regarding ACEND non-compliance should be brought to the director's attention in writing and immediately.
- If the issue remains unresolved, the preceptor or student should bring it to the attention of the school director within 5 days of nonresolution with the director.
- If the issue is not resolved after all courses of action in the procedure are taken, then the complaint can be filed with ACEND.

POLICY NO. 22

SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination policy

POLICY

The MS/DI program complies with the University [Nondiscrimination Policy 01-305](#) related to nondiscrimination and the [Title IX 01-307 policy](#) related to sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking regardless of where it occurs, including both on and off of the university property, if it potentially affects the alleged complainant's educational program, activities, or employment. This policy complies with governing laws, regulations and guidance."

PROCEDURES

The MS/DI program shall practice SFA's policies. Incidents should be reported to a university official (director, faculty, school director, or dean of student affairs) as soon as the incident occurred.

Any allegations of sex-based discrimination may also be directed to the attention of the Title IX Coordinator. Under Texas law, all University employees must promptly report the incident to the University's Title IX Coordinator, within 48 hours.

POLICY NO. 23

SUBJECT: Site Placement

POLICY

This program has two site placements: Nacogdoches/Lufkin and Tyler/Longview. Each site placement can accommodate up to 4-5 students, however, this will vary based on site availability. Students may be required to drive 70-90 miles to a site to meet the program requirements.

PROCEDURES

- Site placements will be made according to site availability, assessed late spring, early summer before supervised practice starts in August..
- Students living in Nacogdoches at the time of acceptance will be given first choice for the Nacogdoches/Lufkin area.
- Students moving into the area will work with the DI Director to determine the ideal site placement. This will be based on a number of factors, including required site availability, site preferences, and location preferences. Site placement will not be based on electives.
- Students will be sent a rotation preference document in late Spring, before supervised practice starts in August. Students will rank their hospital clinical and elective preferences.
- The director will establish the schedule based on 1) site availability and 2) preferences.
- Site placements will be secured early summer, before the DI Director starts developing the schedule. Students are only allowed to change their site placement if there are not enough sites in the area to meet the program requirements. In this case, students will be notified by the director. Site placement changes will be requested in writing for extenuating circumstances only.

POLICY No. 24

SUBJECT: Overlap Program to MS/DI Track for Fall DPD Graduates

POLICY

DPD students graduating in the Fall semester may apply to the graduate school while still completing their undergraduate degree through the overlap program admission process.

To be eligible:

- Have 95 or more semester hours of undergraduate coursework
- Have an overall and upper-level 3.0 GPA.

Because of the rigor of the graduate program, students should enroll in no more than 9 hours of undergraduate coursework during the fall semester to ensure success.

Please note:

- Graduate courses taken during the overlap period cannot be applied toward the undergraduate degree.
- Students in the overlap program are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

PROCEDURES

Students interested in the overlap program must complete the following steps:

1. Consult with the DPD Director to determine whether they are a strong candidate for the overlap program.
2. After March 10, once program positions have been secured by students who applied through the standard process, contact the DI Director via email to express interest and inquire about potential availability in the MS/DI program.
3. The program is accredited for 10 students per cohort. First preference will be given to students who applied through the regular application process and who will have a DPD Verification Statement by the program start date in the fall. The DI Director will determine whether positions remain available after March 10.
4. If space is available, the DI Director will initiate the senior year overlap graduate program form. Once accepted by the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, the student can apply to the Graduate School through the Graduate Admissions website.
 - Select the General Nutrition and Integrative Health (GNIH) concentration when applying.
 - Do not select the Registered Dietitian (DIET) concentration.
 - Students cannot apply directly to the MS/DI track without a Verification Statement or Intent to Complete from the DPD Director.
5. Once accepted to the graduate school, students will be advised by the Graduate Program Coordinator/DI Director and will register for the following courses during the fall semester:
 - NUTR 5335 – Integrative and Functional Nutrition I
 - KINE 5350 – Research Methods in Health and Kinesiology
6. To remain in good standing in the Graduate School and to graduate, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 (B average).
7. Students who complete their undergraduate degree and obtain their DPD Verification Statement may apply to transition into the MS/DI program track. To do so, students must:
 - Provide a copy of their DPD Verification Statement.
 - Be in good academic standing in the Graduate School.
8. After review and approval by the MS/DI admissions committee, the Graduate Program Coordinator/DI Director will update the student's program designation to the MS/DI track for the spring semester.

Financial aid eligibility is based on the number of **undergraduate** credit hours in which you are enrolled.

Forms

MS/DI Time Log

To be completed by the student daily or weekly in Competency

EXAMPLE:

Date	Hours:Min	Comments	Status	Action
MM/DD/YEAR	8:00	Attended hospital managers' daily meeting; visited and charted for patients at nutrition risk in the trauma step-down unit	Approved	Approve/Reject
MM/DD/YEAR	7:30	Worked with preceptor on cooking demo, updated diabetes handout	Pending for approval	Approve/Reject

The preceptor will approve the hours either daily, weekly or before the student leaves the rotation. Please make sure this is done before the student leaves your site.

Student Site Evaluation

To be completed by the student at the end of the rotation in Competency

Statements are rated on a 5-point scale (1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Strongly Agree)

- I had no difficulty contacting the facility/preceptor and establishing my initial meeting time.
- I received an orientation to the facility and/or the assigned department.
- I met with the preceptor(s) and received a schedule of assigned duties and assignments.
- This facility provided me with the opportunity to complete ACEND competencies (put N/A for elective rotations).
- In this facility, a dietitian is a highly respected member of the team.
- During this rotation, I was encouraged to think, question, and evaluate.
- The preceptor(s) at this facility adhered to the Academy Code of Ethics.
- The preceptor(s) displayed mastery of the subject, including current issues
- The preceptor(s) had adequate time and were willing and interested in helping me learn.
- The preceptor(s) provided me with positive feedback and had appropriate suggestions to improve my skills.
- By the end of my rotation, I was encouraged to work with minimal supervision.
- This rotation made a significant contribution to my professional development.

Stephen F. Austin State University Dietetic Internship
Student Disposition Evaluation by Preceptor
The preceptor will complete this in Competency

This assessment is associated with CRDN 2.1, 2.10, and 2.11

While at this facility, the Dietetic Intern:	Excellent- Always	Satisfactory- Most of the Time	Unsatisfactory- Sometimes, Rarely	Not Applicable
Adhered to facility policies and procedures and the Academy Code of Ethics.				
Conducted themselves with honesty, integrity, and fairness; were mindful of individual differences.				
Respected and maintained patient confidentiality (HIPAA).				
Used technology appropriately and ethically (did not text, talk on the cell phone, etc.).				
Possessed effective oral and written communication skills.				
Contacted the preceptor in advance, arrived on time, met obligations/timelines, and was prepared.				
Displayed a positive attitude, emotional maturity, and interest in being at the site and learning new skills/concepts.				
Accepted and respected supervision and guidance.				
Worked well as a team member with all staff and professionals in the workplace; demonstrated respect for the knowledge, skills and abilities, and opinions of others.				

Comments:

Distance Learning

Learning Platform

The university uses Brightspace/D2L, a cloud-based learning management system, to deliver online learning experiences. Please see the [Brightspace Support Website](#) for helpful videos on how to navigate the system and to get help from experts if needed. Your Brightspace username is your mySFA username. If you do not know your mySFA username, visit the [Find Your mySFA Username and Campus ID](#). Your Brightspace password is your mySFA password.

Course Modalities

Graduate course modalities are offered in a hybrid (face-to-face/Zoom Livestream) format or are delivered fully online. The courses with Zoom Livestream options are taught in classrooms with Zoom capabilities, equipped with microphones and cameras that track the movement of the instructor and students in the classroom, and the instructor and students can see those attending via Livestream.

All faculty at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) must be certified through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at SFASU before being approved to develop fully-online distance courses.

Students will be charged an additional \$33 per credit hour for web-based courses in addition to the standard tuition rate.

Students who do not live in the Nacogdoches area and do not have convenient access to the Steen library or campus computer labs will need a computer with internet access (preferably high speed) to complete work associated with the MS/DI program. Students will also need word processing and presentation design software. Students can download Office 365 through mySFA.

Please use the course evaluation tool to provide feedback about the course instructor's online delivery methods to help the faculty continuously improve the format.

Verification of Student Identification

SFA verifies student identity using two-factor authentication (a secure username and password, plus an additional push-based authentication via mobile app, phone, or token), as well as through proctored examinations. You will be provided a username and instructions to access mySFA (the university's secure web portal), where you will establish a password.

Distance education students must use login credentials issued to and known only to them to access all computer systems, including mySFA, the student information system, registration system, electronic mail, library systems, learning management system, and associated instructional content systems. SFA uses a single sign-on authentication system for added security.

For exams, the university uses Honorlock (on-demand proctoring service) which will require students to show identification.

SFA Specific Policies and Procedures

Master's Degree Requirements

1. The master's degree without a thesis requires a minimum of 30 semester hours (with some exceptions, which require 36 hours) of coursework. The master's degree with thesis requires a minimum of 30 semester hours (with some exceptions, which require 36 hours), including six hours thesis.
2. If a graduate minor and/or electives are approved, the graduate major is minimally 18 semester hours and must total more hours than does the minor. The graduate minor is minimally nine semester hours. A maximum of six semester hours may be in electives.
3. To pursue a major the student must present an undergraduate background of a least 18 semester hours in that field or in closely related work.
4. Coursework used to satisfy requirements for a previous master's degree, whether taken at SFA or elsewhere, may not be used to satisfy requirements for a second master's degree at SFA.
5. Under certain circumstances, a student who is concurrently admitted to and enrolled in two differing master's degree programs must satisfy all requirements for each degree and may not use more than nine hours of coursework from one degree to satisfy common requirements for the other degree. Coursework that is used to satisfy common requirements for the two degrees must be approved by the graduate advisor of each degree program, the college dean, and the dean of research and graduate studies.
6. If a student is pursuing more than one concentration for which the same master's degree is awarded, only one master's degree will be granted but with multiple concentrations. The master's degree for multiple concentrations must be conferred in the same semester.
7. Two degrees may not be conferred in the same semester except in approved dual degree programs.
8. To earn a graduate degree, a student must have graduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in both the major and overall. The computation of the overall graduate GPA includes all courses in the major and minor and those elective courses selected to complete the degree requirements. In the case of repeated courses (a student may repeat a maximum of six semester hours of graduate coursework to raise the graduate GPA); the grade earned in the most recent enrollment will be used to calculate GPA as per university policy. No course with a grade below C can be used to satisfy degree requirements.
9. Work offered for the master's degree should be in courses numbered 5000 and higher.
10. No more than two advanced graduate studies courses (5575 and 5576) or a total of eight hours may count toward any master's degree without special permission of the academic dean.
11. At least one-third of graduate semester hours must be completed in residence, including on-campus, off-campus, distance education, field-based, practicum, internship and thesis courses, and at least half of the work in the major and in the minor must be completed in residence.
12. In addition to satisfying all coursework for the graduate degree, the student must satisfy all other requirements, including the final comprehensive examination or capstone course and, if applicable, the thesis.
13. All work on a master's degree must be completed within six years of the time the student first enrolls in graduate courses, whether the courses are taken here or elsewhere. For exceptions, see the statement in the ["limitation of time"](#) section.

Student Ethics and Other Policy Information

Class Attendance and Institutional Absences

See [HOP 02-102 for the University Class Attendance Policy, Institutional Absences \(HOP 04-110\)](#), and the policies in this handbook.

Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity

This policy ([HOP 04-106](#)) prescribes the standards of conduct students are required to adhere to as a student of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA).

Student Appeals

A student who wishes to appeal decisions related to academic dishonesty should follow procedures outlined in Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity ([HOP 04-106](#))

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy

This policy ([HOP policy 02-206](#)) outlines the guidelines for course grades and withheld grades.

Withdrawal from the Program and University

Students who withdraw from the DI program will need to notify the director in writing. The student will also need to withdraw from the university. Withdrawal from the university procedures can be found [Office of the Registrar's](#) website. There are deadlines for withdrawing and the student may have additional consequences related to loss of financial aid, insurance coverage and academic status. Transcripts will not be released until there are no outstanding balances on the account. Please see [Student Business Services](#) for balances and refund procedures.

Leave of Absence

Students will send a formal request in writing to the director for extended leave (considered 1 semester) from the MS/DI program due to illness or life-threatening illness/death in the immediate family. If the student was enrolled and it is after the 12th class day, the director will confer with the student, school director, preceptors, and/or graduate faculty to determine the necessity for a WH ([HOP policy 02-206](#)) in 1 or more graduate courses. If competencies and hours are missed in supervised practice, the director and preceptors involved will formulate a plan with the student to fulfill unmet competencies and supervised practice hours. According to the WH policy, students will have up to 1 year to fulfill the requirements determined by the director, student, and/or graduate faculty. Students must notify the director of their progress and when they will return to the university. Deviating from the schedule can delay the student by as much as 12 months given the rotation of graduate course offerings and site availability. Please also see the Maximum Amount of Time policy.

Institutional Absences

This policy ([HOP 04-110](#)) outlines the expectations of students to attend all scheduled class sessions. It also outlines the parameters for institutional absences and the responsibilities of students and faculty.

Student E-mail

To enhance student services, the University and director will use your SFA email address for communications (OR another verified email account). Students may go to MySFA online to confirm their email address. Please check your email on a regular basis. If students have problems accessing their email account or with any tech support issues, please call 936-468-4357 or email helpdesk@sfasu.edu

Access to Personal Files

Students may inspect and review their education records upon request to the appropriate record custodian. Students should submit to the record custodian or an appropriate University staff person a written request that identifies as precisely as possible the record or records they wish to inspect. The record custodian or an appropriate University staff person will make the needed arrangements for access as promptly as possible and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. Access must be given in 45 days or less from the receipt of the request. Except where pre-empted by a specific provision of FERPA or a request for official copies of Student's transcript is requested, a Student's right to access and/or request a copy of his or her Educational Records, a Student's right of access or to copies such records is co-extensive with the Student's right to access records under the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA). This is outlined in [FERPA HOPS Policy 04-108](#).

Protection of Privacy

Once accepted into the MS/DI program, students are asked written permission to share their contact information with appropriate parties. Files pertaining to the MS/DI program will be kept on a password-protected computer. Students will have access to their own personal file upon written request, except for confidential reference letters. In the event there is a performance issue in question, the director will have the authority to share portions of the file with the Standards Committee and/or a specific preceptor related to the case. This will aid in making a decision regarding the eligibility of the student to continue in the program.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. SFA has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of all students, including those enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs. This is outlined in [FERPA HOPS Policy 04-108](#). The policy includes a description of information considered directory information that may be disclosed without prior written consent unless the student notifies the registrar in writing to the contrary by the twelfth-class day of a regular semester or the fourth-class day of a condensed semester. The Office of the Registrar provides additional information to faculty, staff, students, and parents to promote compliance with FERPA, and all employees are required to complete FERPA training upon hire. University policy 2.10 requires that all university employees, including student employees, with access to student education records repeat Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) training annually. The Registrar and Human Resources are responsible for the deployment of this training. SFA protects the privacy of usernames and passwords via the means listed above.

Probation, Suspension, and Readmission

To remain in good standing in Graduate School and to graduate, a student must maintain a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (B average). During any semester or summer session that the grade point average falls below a B, the student with clear admission to graduate study will be placed on academic probation; the student with probationary admission will be placed on academic suspension. A student placed on academic probation and failing to restore an overall 3.0 (B) average the following semester or summer sessions will be placed on academic suspension. A student placed on academic suspension is denied the continuation of an academic program as well as the privilege of registering for coursework. This suspension period is for one semester or one summer session, whichever follows the period after which the suspension occurred. Thereafter, the student will revert to post-baccalaureate admission status and will be permitted to take coursework not applicable toward a degree program. To be reinstated to a degree program, the student must be recommended by the appropriate academic department and approved by the academic dean, the Graduate Council, and the Dean of Graduate School.

Student Support Services

Stephen F. Austin State University offers a wide variety of student involvement opportunities and student support services. Additional information about student support services, including health services, counseling, housing, and financial services, is available through the university website, [Information for Current Students](#).

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. See the [Students with Disabilities and Disability Services](#) website.

Student Wellness and Well-Being

SFA values students' overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc. See the [Student Wellness and Well-Being](#) website.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students' mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

The Health and Wellness Hub "The Hub" Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching

Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub

936.468.4008

thehub@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202,

<https://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/clinics-labs/counseling-clinic>

936.468.1041

Crisis Resources:

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

Other Resources

The [Handbook of Operating Procedures \(HOP\)](#)

The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby), www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents, 936.468.7249

dos@sfasu.edu

Graduate Assistantships and Employment

Some graduate assistantships are available across campus. For more information, refer to the [Assistantships and Employment Guide](#). The Food, Nutrition and Dietetics program offers 1 graduate teaching assistantship position every 1-2 years. This position requires some face-to-face teaching responsibilities and therefore, the student must live near the SFA campus. If interested, please contact the graduate program coordinator, Darla O'Dwyer at dodywer@sfasu.edu.