



# Preceptor Manual

## Coordinated Program

### Georgia State University

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## Introduction

Preceptors are the center of the Georgia State University's Coordinated Program! Our students would not become accomplished, successful registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) without the willingness, patience and expertise you provide. We realize being a preceptor requires time, skill, and dedication. This training guide is meant to assist you through the process of precepting our students. Again, THANK YOU!

## History

The College of Health Sciences was founded in 1968 and enrolled its first students in 1969 in the health professions of respiratory therapy, nursing, physical therapy and medical technology. The first class of students was graduated in each discipline in 1971. Also in 1971, the College opened what is now the Department of Nutrition.

The Master of Science degree with a major in Allied Health Professions was authorized by the Board of Regents in 1978. The College was organized into a School of Nursing and a School of Allied Health Professions in 1987. The School of Allied Health Professions was dissolved as an organizational entity in the spring of 1996. During the 1996-97 academic year, the Department of Criminal Justice and the Department of Social Work joined the college and a new college name, The College of Health and Human Sciences, was approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents.

In 2002, the name of the major was changed from Allied Health Professions to the Health Sciences in the School of Health Professions. The master's program is now administered by the Office of the Associate Dean, in collaboration with a committee of representatives from participating divisions. In 2003, the School of Nursing was named for Mrs. Byrdine F. Lewis. In 2011, the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and the School of Health Professions joined to form the new Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions and the Departments of Criminal Justice and Social Work moved to the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Health Informatics Technology was added in 2013 and Occupational Therapy was added in 2016 creating a total of six departments within the school. On August 1, 2017, the "school" became a "college" and the nutrition department is now officially part of the Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing and Health Professions. In 2018 the Lewis College will celebrate 50 years of educating healthcare professionals from bachelor degrees through doctoral degrees.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Coordinated Program is to prepare entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists to serve a culturally diverse population through the promotion of optimal nutrition, health and well-being, and to serve the profession and community through leadership.

The mission statement is founded on the beliefs and vision expressed in Georgia State University's mission statement and strategic plan, the Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing & Health Professions' mission statement and is guided by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 2017 Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists:

- The registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) provides quality service based on customer expectations and needs
- The registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) applies, participates in or generates research to enhance practice
- The registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) effectively applies knowledge and communicates with others
- The registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) uses resources effectively and efficiently
- The registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) systematically evaluates the quality of services and improves practice on evaluation results
- The registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) engages in lifelong learning

## **Accreditation**

The Coordinated Program is currently granted accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), 120 South Riverside Plaza, Ste. 2190, Chicago, IL 60606, 800-877-1600, ext. 5400.

## **Role of the Preceptor**

By definition, a preceptor is one who teaches or instructs. The preceptor's role is critical in preparing students to function as dietitian nutritionists. Being a dietetic preceptor introduces additional responsibilities and requires a level of professionalism and dedication. In addition, your facility has agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding in order to precept students.

Many preceptors may not always feel prepared for their role in educating and evaluating students. Through this guide, we hope to assist you in developing your teaching, communication, and evaluation skills as you strive to be effective preceptors to Coordinated Program students.

## Benefits of Being a Preceptor

There are numerous benefits to being a preceptor. See the following list for some of the most common:

- 1. Receive FREE Continuing Professional Education (CPE)**  
All preceptors are eligible to receive 3 CPEU's per year for a total of 15 CPEU's per certification cycle for acting as a preceptor. All you need to do is complete a "Verification and Self-reflection Form" and have it signed by the program director.
- 2. Satisfaction of Shaping Future Registered Dietitian Nutritionists**  
You have invested time and effort into developing your skills and one of the greatest rewards is being able to pay-it-forward by working with Coordinated Program students to develop their skills.
- 3. Providing Service to the Dietetic Profession**  
All RDNs have completed supervised practice programs where they worked with preceptors. If you ever ask an RDN what their greatest experiences were during their supervised practice program, they always say the rotations and the preceptors. Providing service to the profession is often noted as an intangible benefit of precepting.
- 4. Makes the Job More Interesting**  
Jobs, no matter what the job, can get monotonous. Coordinated Program students break the routine. They bring questions, insight, and provoke discussion. In addition, they can free up the RDN to do more pressing work.
- 5. Recruitment of Future Colleagues**  
When a Coordinated Program student has had a satisfying experience at your facility, they are more likely to want to pursue a career there in the future. Many students become entry-level dietitians in facilities where they have completed rotations.
- 6. Coordinated Program Students Can Complete Needed Projects**  
Most RDN's have multiple projects that have been put on hold due to time restrictions. Students are the perfect candidates to assist in completing those projects.
- 7. Increase Awareness of New Research**  
Coordinated Program students have the most up-to-date research due to their courses, thesis, and master's projects. Many preceptors report learning from the students as a strength of precepting.
- 8. Coordinated Program Students Bring New Ideas**  
Coordinated Program students have been rotating through other facilities and can share things they have learned along the way. In addition, it's always nice to have "fresh eyes" view your projects and give you opinions.

#### 9. Teaching Coordinated Program Students Increases Knowledge

In preparing to take Coordinated Program students, preceptors often review current material in order to teach the material in an effective way. Students ask questions that provoke discussion resulting in increased knowledge.

#### 10. Adds Prestige to Your Job

Having Coordinated Program students is seen as a contribution to your profession and should be added to your resume.

#### 11. It's Fun

Being a preceptor can be one of the most rewarding and enjoyable parts of your profession. There is something to be said about surrounding yourself with fresh, new faces on a consistent basis.

## Characteristics of an Effective Preceptor

1. Organized and focused
2. Presents a positive attitude and commitment toward the profession
3. Values student-preceptor interactions
4. Dynamic and enthusiastic
5. Participates in local nutritional organizations and continuing education
6. Models professional behavior
7. Competent and confident
8. Relates well to students
9. Creates an atmosphere for open communication and answers learner questions clearly and precisely
10. Supports students with appropriate, frequent feedback in a timely fashion
11. Challenges students to perform by giving them increasing responsibility
12. Demonstrates respect and patience as students continue to learn
13. Applies evidence-based guidelines when making recommendations
14. Communicates clear goals and expectations
15. Open to contradictory ideas and opinions
16. Performs fair and thoughtful evaluations

## Supervised Practice

Practice is what you, the preceptor, do every day. The intent of supervised practice is to give the student the opportunity to learn what it is that you do and develop the skills needed for an entry-level position in the field of dietetics. Coordinated Program students should not be expected to perform your job at the same level as you but have the ability to practice and develop their skills under your supervision.

A good starting point would be to think of training a new employee. Orient the student to the facility and start going over the tasks you complete on a day-to-day basis. Allow the student to observe and then practice what they have learned. Students will learn more when allowed to practice, get feedback, and practice again. Solely observing does not increase student confidence.

A meaningful rotation is one that provides a positive work environment and encourages the student to contribute to the team.

## **Program Competencies**

Upon completing the Coordinated Program, the student will have met the 2017 core competencies established by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND).

### **1. Scientific and Evidence Base of Practice: Integration of Scientific Information and Research into Practice**

- CRDN 1.1**      Select indicators of program quality and/or customer service and measure achievement of objectives.
- CRDN 1.2**      Apply evidence-based guidelines, systematic reviews and scientific literature.
- CRDN 1.3**      Justify programs, products, services, and care using appropriate evidence or data.
- CRDN 1.4**      Evaluate emerging research for application in nutrition and dietetics practice.
- CRDN 1.5**      Conduct projects using appropriate research methods, ethical procedures and data analysis.
- CRDN 1.6**      Incorporate critical-thinking skills in overall practice

### **2. Professional Practice Expectations: beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the Professional dietitian nutritionist level of practice.**

- CRDN 2.1**      Practice in compliance with current federal regulations and state statutes and rules, as applicable and in accordance with accreditation standards and the Scope of Nutrition and Dietetics Practice and Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics

- CRDN 2.2** Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communications.
- CRDN 2.3** Demonstrate active participation, teamwork and contributions in-group settings.
- CRDN 2.4** Functions as a member of interprofessional teams.
- CRDN 2.5** Assign duties to NDTRs and/or support personnel as appropriate.
- CRDN 2.6** Refer clients and patients to other professionals and services when needs are beyond individual scope of practice.
- CRDN 2.7** Apply Leadership skills to achieve desired outcomes.
- CRDN 2.8** Demonstrate negotiation skills
- CRDN 2.9** Participate in professional and community organizations
- CRDN 2.10** Demonstrate professional attributes in all areas of practice.
- CRDN 2.11** Show cultural competence/sensitivity in interactions with clients, colleagues and staff.
- CRDN 2.12** Perform self-assessment and develop goals for self-improvement throughout the program.
- CRDN 2.13** Prepare a plan for professional development according to Commission on Dietetics Registration guidelines.

### **3. Clinical and Customer Services: development and delivery of information, products and services to individuals, groups and populations**

- CRDN 3.1** Perform the Nutrition Care Process and use standardized nutrition language for individuals, groups and populations of differing ages and health status, in a variety of setting
- CRDN 3.2** Conduct nutrition focused physical exams.
- CRDN 3.3** Demonstrate effective communications skills for clinical and customer services in a variety of formats ad settings.
- CRDN 3.4** Design, implement and evaluate presentations to a target audience.
- CRDN 3.5** Develop nutrition education materials that are culturally and age appropriate and designed for the literacy level of the audience,
- CRDN 3.6** Use effective education and counseling skills to facilitate behavior change.

#### **4. Practice Management and Use of Resources: strategic application of principles of management and systems in the provision of services to individuals and organizations**

- CRDN 4.1** Participate in management of human resources
- CRDN 4.2** Perform management functions related to safety, security and sanitation that affect employees, customers, patients, facilities, and food
- CRDN 4.3** Conduct clinical and customer service quality management activities.
- CRDN 4.4** Apply current nutrition informatics to develop, store, retrieve and disseminate information and data.
- CRDN 4.5** Analyze quality, financial and productivity data for use in planning.
- CRDN 4.6** Propose and use procedures as appropriate to the practice setting to promote sustainability, reduce waste and protect the environment.
- CRDN 4.7** Conduct feasibility studies for products, programs, or services with consideration of costs and benefits.
- CRDN 4.8** Develop a plan to provide or develop a product, program or service that includes a budget, staffing needs, equipment and supplies.
- CRDN 4.9** Explain the process for coding and billing for nutrition and dietetics services to obtain reimbursement from public or private payers, fee-for-service and value-based payment systems
- CRDN 4.10** Analyze risk in nutrition and dietetics practice

### **Characteristics of the Student**

Students vary in their cultural backgrounds, skills, knowledge, personalities, level of maturity, strengths and weaknesses. These differences warrant different teaching methods among students. Students:

1. Are intelligent with lots of book knowledge but may have limited practical experience
2. Are enthusiastic and ready to practice
3. Have limited experience communicating within the work environment
4. Have limited team skills other than working with their peers
5. Have an untested work ethic
6. Are unsure of their abilities
7. May not know how to prioritize work in a business environment



8. Are idealistic. Often, they do not understand limitations imposed by reality
9. Have different modes of learning
10. Overall, want to learn and develop their skill set

## **Responsibilities of the Student**

1. Maintain liability insurance through Georgia State University
2. Exhibit professional conduct throughout the field experience by complying with the site's code of conduct and standards for professionalism as well as the AND Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics
3. Arrive on time and dressed to code of the facility
4. Communicate issues immediately and effectively with the preceptor
5. Complete assignments in a timely manner

## **Evaluation**

Successful supervision includes a strong emphasis on evaluation. Evaluation is an important part of the learning process and should be viewed in a positive light. Evaluation communicates what the Coordinated Program student has done correctly and helps them identify things they need to work on.

Evaluation should occur in two ways during the student's rotation – formative evaluation (feedback) and performance evaluation. Feedback should be ongoing to help the student modify their skills and behaviors throughout the rotation. Feedback is part of the learning process and helps build student confidence. Feedback is most productive when it is provided in a positive, constructive and timely manner.

Performance evaluation is completed at the end of the rotation. The evaluation is included with the rotation syllabus provided to the student and the preceptor prior to the rotation start date. Please go over your evaluation with the student on the last day of their rotation. The evaluation assists the Coordinated Program student in identifying their strengths and areas of improvement. This should be a positive experience and should be communicated to the student in a positive way. This type of evaluation is also used by the program director to assist in strengthening the student for future rotations.

Preceptors need to be very specific in their reinforcement and suggestions for improvement. Students provide beneficial feedback of preceptors as well and submit the evaluation to the program director. By learning Coordinated Program student's views, the preceptor can determine if s/he is truly being an effective preceptor. Remember that what is obvious to you, as a seasoned professional, is not always obvious to a student. Strive to be clear and consistent with your expectations. The program director compiles preceptor evaluations annually and

submits them to the preceptors. If you would like feedback sooner, feel free to reach out to Jessica Todd at 404-413-1237 or [jjohnson22@gsu.edu](mailto:jjohnson22@gsu.edu).

Confronting poor performance as soon as possible is essential in the development of the Coordinated Program student. Delaying or ignoring evaluation of a problem can lead the student to believe he/she is doing a satisfactory job. Students who are evaluated and corrected early on have fewer difficulties in performance later. It is unfair for a preceptor to tell a student very little about his/her performance and then give a highly critical evaluation at the end.

Through the use of feedback and productive evaluation the student should leave the rotation confident and possessing a higher level of knowledge.

## Handling Difficult Situations

Difficult situations may be a result of:

1. Inadequate knowledge prior to the rotation
2. Skill deficiencies
3. Personality difficulties
4. Situation difficulties (e.g., a Coordinated Program student may have personal experiences resulting in difficulties working in certain settings)
5. Cultural differences
6. On-going medical problems
7. Lack of self-confidence

The Coordinated Program's selection process is very competitive and eliminates many potential problems with students. Faculty consistently evaluate students throughout the program to help identify potential problem areas and implement a plan of correction. Even with the best efforts of the faculty and preceptors, problems may occur.

Suggestions for dealing with difficult situations:

1. Frequent, ongoing evaluation so that Coordinated Program students know exactly what areas need strengthening.
2. Problems should be identified and dealt with as early as possible.
3. Make consequences of actions clear to the student from the beginning.
4. Rules and expectations should be communicated early.
5. For knowledge deficiencies, students can be given extra reading to do outside of the rotation.
6. For situation difficulties, talk to the student about feelings that make them apprehensive.

7. Use the program director as a reference. Significant problems should be communicated to the director as early as possible.

## Additional Training and Continuing Education

1. Beginning fall of 2018, the program director and coordinator will offer a webinar for all preceptors to review mission, goals, and objectives of the program as well as the ACEND requirements and tips on how to be an effective preceptor. The webinar will be recorded and be available for all preceptors to view after the initial presentation. Refresher webinars on specific topics will be provided annually to all preceptors to keep them up to date with ACEND or curriculum changes, and to support training of students.
2. A free online module is available to preceptors for 8 continuing professional education units (CPEUs). The Commission on Dietetic Registration offers Dietetics Preceptor Training to help preceptors of dietetics students prepare for and excel in their important role. It includes 7 modules including topics such as facilitating student learning and preparing for your role as a preceptor.  
The module can be accessed at: <https://www.cdrnet.org/news/online-dietetics-preceptor-training-course-free-of-charge>
3. All preceptors can record 3 CPEU's for precepting per year, for a total of 15 during a cycle, under Activity type 190: Professional Leadership and Precepting. Preceptors must complete a *Preceptor Self-Reflection and Verification* form that is signed by Jessica Todd, the Program Director. For more information please visit: <https://www.cdrnet.org/cpeu-credit-for-preceptors>
4. Join the GSU CP Students in their quarterly virtual journal club for a total of 4 CPEU's per year. Students survey active preceptors each year to determine which topics within the field of nutrition and dietetics is of interest to them. The results guide the students in choosing new and emerging research to present via WebEx. Preceptors are sent invitations via email and earn 1 CPE per 1-hour journal club session.
5. Review Nutrition and Dietetic Educators and Preceptor's "Guide to Being an Effective Preceptor" for 1 FREE CPE. Consider joining NDEP, an Academy DPG, for the most current information regarding nutrition and dietetic education programs.  
<https://eatright.webex.com/eatright/ldr.php?RCID=00b439e0615cff9ba448a070ee8e73de>

Opportunities such as these occur often and our preceptors are notified via email, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica Todd, Coordinated Program Director at [jjohnson22@gsu.edu](mailto:jjohnson22@gsu.edu) or 404-413-1237.

# THANK YOU PRECEPTORS!