

Directions for Securing Distance-Online Preceptors

Terminology:

Preceptor: The Registered Dietitian Nutritionist or Food Service Professional who agrees to provide a Supervised Practice Experience at their worksite and assures, you will have the opportunity to accomplish all learning experiences and required competencies.

Supervised Practice Experience: The hours you spend at a site with your preceptor for each experience course, working on the required competencies for each. There is a specific number of minimum hours for each Experience course, found in the Learning Outcome Tool (LOT) and listed below.

Supervised Practice Experience Site: The physical site you will be at with your preceptor when completing the required hours for each experience. As distance-online students, your sites for Supervised Practice Experience are **Student-Identified Remote Sites**, which simply means you are responsible for securing these sites approximately 100 miles or more from our Ypsilanti main campus.

Applicants are responsible for locating, contacting, and securing all preceptors and corresponding sites. For guidance, contact the Dietetics Clinical Coordinator by November 30th, before the January of application. DO NOT assume you can locate all preceptors within the close vicinity of your home. Some of our on-campus students drive up to 90 minutes or more one-way.

You need three preceptors for your first-year. Some facilities or preceptors may accommodate more than one experience. For example, a medical/trauma center, community hospital or sub-acute rehabilitation center may be able to provide DTC 351/ 551 (Food Systems I) and DTC 575 Outpatient (Nutrition Therapy II), likely with a different preceptor working in those areas of the food/nutrition services department. They may also have a Long Term Care Facility/Skilled Nursing or Rehabilitation Units that could provide the DTC 575 Long Term Care (Nutrition Therapy II) Experience.

Use this list to complete the **Preceptor Summary Form (see link in the academic catalog or Program Application directions)** template for your application.

First Fall:

- 1 preceptor for DTC 351 or 551 Foodservice Systems Management I Experience

First Winter:

- 2 preceptors for DTC 575 Nutrition Therapy II Experience (1 for Long Term Care, 1 for Outpatient)

Second Winter:

- 1 preceptor for DTC 671 Nutrition Therapy III Experience. The remaining Second Year preceptors are arranged by the student after admission to the program (Second Fall Community Nutrition and Second Winter Foodservice Systems II).

Eastern Michigan University
Distance-Online Coordinated Program in Dietetics

For each facility where you secure an experience, you must complete an **Online Preceptor Commitment Form** (see link in the academic catalog or Program Application directions). If you have a preceptor who precepts for multiple experiences, they don't need to complete another form. Just add the additional DTC 3-digit course numbers on that line in the form. If different preceptors are supervising each experience at the same facility, you still need an additional Online Preceptor Commitment Form for each person or lead person (such as a chief clinical dietitian). Incomplete forms will not be accepted.

IMPORTANT: Applications that do not contain preceptor forms for all Supervised Practice Experiences noted above (with 3-digit EMU DTC course code specified), will not be considered for admission, meaning, 1 form - DTC 351 or 551, 2 - DTC 575 and 1 - DTC 671.

Helpful Information for Securing Preceptors and Remote Student-Identified Sites

We are not an internship program; we are a Coordinated Program in Dietetics. The Preceptor experiences are correctly referred to as "Supervised Practice Experiences," not internships. *Your Supervised Practice Experiences are not shadowing, mentoring, preceptorships or work studies and should never be referred to as such.*

Most Preceptors must be Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) and will need to include their CDR (Dietetic Registration) number on the **Online Preceptor Commitment Form**. In Foodservice Systems Management Experiences (DTC 351/551), the qualified individual may be a Certified Dietary Manager (CDM), hold a related college degree, food safety, or chef's training certificate. This person would be a qualified preceptor and does not need to be an RDN. All preceptors for the other Experiences must be RDN's.

To find potential preceptors, join the national Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) as a student member, to access their website (<http://www.eatright.org/programs/rdfinder/>). All Registered Dietitians will not be listed in this database. You can also check online for a list of facilities where RDNs may work.

Your AND membership makes you an automatic member of your home state AND. You can also join your district (local) dietetic association. It is a great way to meet Registered Dietitian Nutritionists and begin the networking process to build your future career. Successful students do this early and find the process of obtaining Preceptor commitments easier. If you join national AND as a student member, you can access their Find-a-Preceptor Database at www.eatright/preceptors and follow the prompts/information on that page.

Once you have a list of facilities, with addresses, phone numbers, and contact persons, set up appointments. If you only have a facility name to start with, call each facility and ask to speak with the food/nutrition services director. First, talk personally by phone to determine whether that person and site are willing to consider having a student. Many RDNs enjoy doing this and view it as an investment in the future of their profession.

Go to each appointment dressed professionally, with copies of the **Online Preceptor Commitment Form**, a copy of your resume, and a positive attitude! Regardless of the outcome, thank each person for the meeting and follow-up with a thank-you note. Perhaps they may be willing to precept in your second year. If in-person meetings are not possible, request a virtual meeting or phone appointment. Remember, professional appearance (and background) are important for virtual meetings. Provide the Online Preceptor Commitment Form and your resume electronically in advance of virtual or phone meetings.

When a Preceptor agrees to provide the experience, leave them a copy of the **Online Preceptor Commitment Form**. Ask them to complete the form with the EMU course numbers. You can fill those numbers in first if they agree.

The form needs to be returned to you (scanning and emailing to you is fine). If potential preceptors have questions, please direct them to contact the EMU Dietetics Clinical Coordinator (Diane Reynolds, RDN at dreynol2@emich.edu).

When selecting preceptors/sites, students are not to choose places where they have been or are currently employed. The learning experience may be compromised by the facility staff's perception of the student as an employee, not a student. Under no circumstances are students to be paid for any Supervised Practice Experience hours. Students are not to choose sites where friends or family are employed, as this may interfere with the preceptor's ability to assess student performance fairly. If you have questions about your specific situation, contact the Clinical Coordinator.

Supervised Practice Experience Descriptions

First Fall Semester:

DTC 351/551 – Foodservice Management – (192 + 16 = 208 hours total) Food Service facility – 24 eight-hour experiences (192 hours) + field trips (16 hours)

This experience is scheduled between the preceptor and student to begin on or after the 5th day of Fall classes start (to allow for orientation to the program and with your SPE course instructor) and completed by last day of classes. See EMU academic calendar dates. A pace of 2 days per week is suggested, but may vary according to site preference. Preceptor does not have to be an RDN.

The emphasis is on the basic components of operating a non-commercial quantity food service facility. Appropriate choices; an acute care hospital or medical/trauma center, a long-term care facility (nursing home, skilled nursing facility/unit, assisted-living, an inpatient rehabilitation center), k-12 school system or college/university dining services.

Field Trips – Two 8 hour field trips (16 hours) Arrange after admission to the program Preceptors can assist you in finding field trip opportunities. They do not need to accompany you; however, it is helpful to gain their insight by discussing what you saw. **Select two field trip choices from this list;** Food distributors and state restaurant association vendor food shows for their customers to try and taste their products. (Your preceptor most likely purchases the majority of their food, disposables, tabletop, and small equipment from one major distributor and would know where their shows are held and if students are welcome.) Other options include touring a food distribution center such as Sysco, FNCE sessions related to food systems, a state dietetic assoc. mtg., a local dietetic association-sponsored seminar/conference, touring a cook-chill or central kitchen facility, a food manufacturing facility tour, touring a fresh produce processing/packaging plant/facility, touring a commercial farm, touring a meat processing plant or touring a facility type different from where you are completing the DTC 351/551 Experience. Check with your DTC 351/551 EMU Instructor if unsure about field trip choices. **Field trips must take place within EMU Fall Semester dates, NOT before or after.**

First Winter Semester:

DTC 575 – Nutrition Therapy II Experience - (136 + 136 + 40 = 312 hours total) Long Term Care Facility - 17 eight-hour experiences (136 hours) + Outpatient Facility - 17 eight-hour experiences (136 hours) + 40 hours simulation preparation with instructor at semester start

It is best to complete one type of experience in the first half of the semester, then the other in the second half. It does not matter whether Outpatient or Long-Term Care is scheduled first. These experiences are to be scheduled between the preceptor and student to begin on or after the first two weeks of January classes start (to

Eastern Michigan University

Distance-Online Coordinated Program in Dietetics

allow for 2 weeks of 40 hours total of orientation/simulation practice material with your SPE course instructor) and completed by the last day of classes. See EMU academic calendar for dates. A pace of three days per week is suggested, but may vary according to site preference.

- **Outpatient:** Preceptors working in outpatient diabetes and weight management will be effective in helping the student to achieve the competencies connected with the outpatient facility practice experience. Other opportunities are in cardiac rehabilitation, cancer treatment, nutrition counseling services associated with hospitals/medical centers, doctor's office practices or RDN private practices. Renal (kidney) dialysis centers and eating disorders practices are usually NOT ALLOWED, as this is advanced practice a first-year student is not ready for. These settings will be more appropriate choices for Fall of Year Two.
- **Long Term Care:** Preceptors at rehabilitation centers, sub-acute Long Term Care or Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing facilities have the client base needed to help the student achieve the competencies. Some Registered Dietitian Nutritionists in private practices specialize in providing services for these facilities and may be a potential preceptor. An RDN must be present at the facility to supervise the student. If the facility only has an RDN as a part-time consultant, it would not be a good choice.

Preceptor Commitment Forms for Second Year Fall & Winter DTC 655 are due to the Clinical Coordinator by February 15th of the first-year students are in the program.

Second Fall Semester:

DTC 535 – Community Nutrition Experience – (40 + 104 + 64 + 24 + 4 = 236 hours total) (3 preceptors needed PLUS 3 single day experiences.) *These experiences are to be scheduled between the preceptor and student to begin on or after the 5th day of September classes start (to allow for orientations with your SPE course instructor and the program) and completed by the last day of classes on the EMU academic calendar*

Three Preceptors Needed:

- 1) **WIC – Women, Infant and Children Clinic (40 hours total)**
- 2) **Specialty Experience (104 hours total)** - The student selects the area of practice based on their interest in a particular area of the dietetics field. These may include; eating disorders, sports nutrition, renal dialysis, long term care clinical, acute care clinical, food systems, private practice/entrepreneur (adding additional time to the private practice experience within this semester to further skills in this area), grant-funded programs for nutrition education in school systems, nutrition research, WIC (adding additional time to the WIC experience within this semester to further skills in this area), functional medicine, corporate or community wellness programs.
- 3) **Private Practice (64 hours total)** – RDN Preceptor would be the owner of or working for a private practice owner. Check the websites of potential preceptors, as it often has great information on the focus of the practice and how services are delivered (in person individually or as a group class, virtual counseling or classes, public speaking, cooking demonstrations, grocery tours, etc.)

Three-Single Day Experiences: Preceptor forms and affiliation agreements are NOT needed for:

Elementary School or Middle School or High School – (one day - 8 hours)

Senior Nutrition Center or Congregate Meal Site – (one day - 8 hours)

Health Fair – (one day - 8 hours)

Special Assignment from Instructor: 4 hours

Second Winter Semester:

Both experiences are to be scheduled between the preceptor and student to begin on or after the 3rd day of January classes start (to allow for orientation with your SPE course instructors) and completed by the last day of classes on the EMU academic calendar.

DTC 655 – Food Systems Management II Experience – (144 hours total)

This is your 2nd and final Food Service Facility experience. Ideally, this should be a different site from the first-year DTC 351/551. We also recommend a different type of site. Examples: school nutrition food service, university/college dining services, hospital or healthcare site, long term care facility, etc.) Plan for 4.5 weeks @ 32 hours/week (18 days) as the suggested schedule.

DTC 671– Nutrition Therapy III Experience- (288 + 12 + 300 hours total) 12 hours simulation with instructor + 288 hours at the site with your preceptor.)

Acute Care Hospital or Medical Center or Sub-Acute LTC Rehabilitation are the appropriate settings. Nine weeks @ 32 hours/wk. is the suggested schedule. This experience is intensive to prepare the student to practice at the entry level. Students present an in-depth patient case study to their preceptor(s). Larger facilities are preferred. Avoid small critical access hospitals typically found in rural or mountainous areas. The number of in-patients is typically low (often around 25). Do not arrange at a children’s hospital, as you will not be able to complete all the competencies there and it is too specialized.

Ideal sites offering a variety of exposure to medical/surgical cases are good choices, preferably with range of adult ages represented in their patients. Students will need experience in these areas: Chronic Kidney Disease, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Obesity, Cardiovascular Disease, Cancer, Gastrointestinal Disorders, Liver, Wound Care and Malnutrition. It is also best for the student to be able to practice in the Intensive Care and area of nutrition support with tube feedings, supplements and (if possible) TPN.

The Supervised Practice Experience hours for this last semester are demanding. In addition, you still have intensive didactic coursework. We recommend you plan for this semester carefully and have this program take priority over jobs and other commitments. If you can manage not having an outside job, it is best. You will be preparing for passing the RDN exam after graduation and becoming confident to seek an entry-level position.

Supervised Practice Experience Hours Programs by Content Area

Nutrition Therapy:

DTC 575: 312 hrs. + DTC 671: 300 hrs. =

Total: 612 hours

Community Nutrition:

DTC 535: 236 hrs.

Total: 236 hours

Foodservice Systems Management:

DTC 351/551: 208 hrs. + DTC 655: 144 hrs. =

Total: 352 hours

Total Program Hours: 612+236+352 = 1200