

The Requirements to Become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

ACEND® sets the guidelines for what every registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) needs to know and do as an entry-level practitioner. The Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) is the governing agency to become an RDN. There are three steps in this process:

1. In-class learning: An applicant to the ISPP must have already completed the required core knowledge requirements (KRDN) for entry-level practice in nutrition and dietetics through a Didactic Program in Nutrition and Dietetics (DPD) as documented in a verification statement signed by the applicant's DPD Director. In addition, an applicant must have completed a minimum of a baccalaureate degree* as documented by submitting an official transcript showing degree and date degree conferred. Applicants who have earned a PhD must arrange a meeting with the DPD director of the ISPP to determine which, if any, DPD knowledge requirements need to be met prior to applying to the ISPP
2. Supervised practice: A minimum of 1200 hours of supervised practice experience must be completed in an ACEND®-accredited program. Individuals eligible for the ISSP must have not been matched to a supervised practice program but will complete the supervised practice requirements through the ISPP. Supervised practice provides hands-on experience in a variety of practice areas following prescribed guidelines and learning experiences to ensure mastery of specific required competencies (CRDN). Upon successful completion of 1200 hours of supervised practice experience and achievement of all competencies (CRDN), ISPP graduates are issued a Certificate of Completion and an official Verification Statement making them eligible to sit for the national registered dietitian examination.
3. Pass the exam: Three components are required to register for eligibility for the RD exam: successful completion of the didactic coursework (DPD Verification Statement), completion of 1200 supervised practice hours (ISPP Verification Statement), and holding a baccalaureate degree*. Thus, individuals completing the ISPP are eligible to take the national Registration Examination for Dietitians. Prior to completing the ISPP, interns will receive all information and forms required to complete the eligibility requirements to take the RD exam. Successful completion of this exam allows the individual to indicate that he/she is credentialed and to use the initials RD or RDN after his/her name. The RD exam is a computer-adaptive test which is available year-round at approved testing centers.

The ISPP at Purdue University is designed to meet the second (supervised practice) mandated step for an individual to become a Registered Dietitian. The ISPP at Purdue University meets Practice Experience Requirements (IC 25-14.5-3.3) to become a Licensed Dietitian in Indiana. Depending on where the graduate works, state certification or licensure may be required. The ISPP currently meets the required number of supervised practice hours for licensure in all states.

*Effective January 1, 2024, the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) will require a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). In order to be approved for registration examination eligibility with a bachelor's degree, an individual must meet all eligibility requirements and be submitted into CDR's Registration Eligibility Processing System (REPS) before 12:00 midnight Central Time, December 31, 2023. For more information about this requirement visit CDR's website: <https://www.cdrnet.org/graduatedegree>. In addition, CDR requires that individuals complete coursework and supervised practice in program(s) accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).

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