

Dietetic Experience Hours - Frequently Asked Questions and Examples

Participating in dietetics-related activities before you apply can help you...

- Determine if dietetics is a major that fits you
- See what types of career options are available in the field of dietetics
- Define some personal and professional goals before you start Junior-level classes
- Become acquainted with professionals who can serve as references (for applications, scholarships, internships, future employment, etc)

If you are admitted to the DPD program, you will need to complete a supervised practice and graduate degree program after upon graduation. Most supervised practice programs require you to have dietetic-related experience hours. The hours you accumulate prior to applying for a dietetics program at USU will often count towards the additional hours you will need when you apply for your supervised practice program.

Experiences in a clinical, community, or food service setting that are related to food or health, and/or include interaction with patients, customers, or consumers are very beneficial and will usually “count” (see examples below). Ideally, it’s best (but not required) to have experiences from a combination of these areas when you apply to the DPD Program. When recording your key responsibilities (on the Dietetics Related Experience Hours Tracking Sheet), describe any knowledge and skills you gained that could serve you in the dietetics profession.

FOODSERVICE

Work experience in food production and time spent in supervisory positions in foodservice establishments can provide valuable experience related to dietetics. Back-of-the-house food preparation is preferred over wait staffing, hosting, cashiering, and other front-of-the house duties. Focus on experiences that provide exposure to the production, sanitation, and service areas of food service. Experience with meal preparation for individuals who have dietary restrictions or who require a therapeutic diet (low-sodium, mechanical soft, pureed, etc) are also valuable. Examples of facilities that could provide foodservice hours include...

- **Clinical Facilities** (Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Center, etc)
- **School Lunch/Child Nutrition Program**
- **University/College Dining Service**
- **Commercial Restaurant or Eating Establishment**
- **School Lunch Program or School Food Service** (i.e. Edith Bowen School)
- **Catering**

PATIENT CARE / CLINICAL

Although it’s unlikely that you will have a lot of dietetics-related experience at a hospital, any experience with direct patient contact or patient records can be valuable and prepare you for your experience in the Dietetic Program. Examples include...

PATIENT CARE / CLINICAL

- **Diet Clerk, Diet Tech, or Dietary Aid**
- **Experience in Medical Billing and Reimbursement**
- **Experience as a CNA, Nurse, Surgical Tech, Aid for Physical Therapy, Pharmacy Tech, etc**
- **Any other positions that involve direct patient care in a medical facility**

COMMUNITY SERVICE / EDUCATION

Many of the opportunities in the community will be volunteer rather than paid, although some paid positions exist. Any agency that has nutrition education/feeding as a component of its mission is a possibility. Examples could include...

- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program at a Health Department**
- **Child Nutrition Services**
- **USU Extension, SNAP-ED, Food Sense, EFNEP Nutrition Education Program, Eat Well Utah**
- **American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, American Cancer Society**
- **March of Dimes**
- **Food Banks, Food/Shelter Coalition, Soup Kitchens, Organizing a Food Drive**
- **Meal Preparation for Special Olympics, Head-Start, Aging Services etc**
- **Meals on Wheels Program at a Senior Citizen Center**

MANAGEMENT

Holding supervisory or management positions (even in a non-dietetic-related group or organization) can help in the development of skills that can be transferred to dietetics. Management and leadership positions are valued over customer-service types of activities.

- **Management or Leadership Position** (Creating staff work schedules, overseeing employee training, ordering, inventory, project management, developing/enforcing policies and procedures, financial operations other than cashiering)
- **Human Resource Position** (Hiring, terminating, and/or conducting performance evaluations)

RESEARCH

Any participation in clinical or undergraduate research or data collection (except as a study participant)

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Government Organizations** (like Food and Drug Administration, World Health Organization, US Department of Agriculture, or other agencies that provide experiences in the legislative and oversight aspects of nutrition and food)
- **Teaching Assistant (TA), Undergraduate Teaching Fellow (UTF), or Supplemental Instructor (SI) Positions** in a nutrition or food science course, anatomy lab, or other dietetics-related class.
- **Dietetic-Nutrition Organizations** (service or leadership in student, state, or national dietetic related organizations)
- **Dietetic Student Association / Dietetics Club** (Involvement in activities, Leadership as an Officer (i.e. President, Vice-President, Secretary, etc)