Nutrition and Dietetics

Professional Development Hours (PDHs) Requirements

Overview

Nutrition major students with Dietetics specialization are required as part of their specialization courses to acquire professional development hours to enable them to gain practical experience and additional training outside of the traditional classroom setting. This guide explains the purpose of these hours and how they may be fulfilled. Please contact with Dr. Qian Jia (856.256.4500 ext. 3708 or jia@rowan.edu) with additional questions or comments.

Why Do I Need Professional Development Hours?

While classroom learning is essential, there are certain skills and knowledge that can only be obtained through outside experience. Employers usually refer to practical experience outside of the classroom for a good job opening in nutrition professions, even for those who have just graduated. It also helps you get prepared for your Supervised Practice once you enter into the professional phase in dietetics. Finally, it is practical experience that will enable a student to determine his/her specific interests and the direction he/she wants to take in the field upon graduation.

What Are Professional Development Hours?

Professional Development Hours (PDHs) represent time and effort a student spends gaining practical experience, credentials, certifications and new knowledge and skills outside of the traditional classroom setting. They are divided into the following categories:

Professional Work Experience includes both paid and volunteer work that gives a student hands-on experience in screening and assessment, administration, management, education, counseling, marketing or evaluation in a clinic, nutrition & food service or community setting. Minimum 13 hr

Training and Certification includes completion of professional workshops, webinars, seminars, attending conferences and the successful passage of certification exams related to food safety, specialty training, wellness management, health promotion/fitness, etc. Minimum 13 hr

Professional Service Involvement includes active membership and participation in a professional organization, such as Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), New Jersey Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (NJAND), the Rowan Chapter of the National Wellness Institute, Nutrition Care Club and other HES Clubs, American Academy of Sports Dietitians and Nutritionists (AASDN). Serving on committees, organizing professional events, attending meetings, holding offices, and providing professional services counts toward credit in this category. Participating research in major related fields also might be counted in, please check with Dr. Jia for sure. Minimum 13 hr
**How Do I Accumulate PDHs?**

A total of 40 PDHs prior to graduate with a B.S. for Dietetics students. You are required to accumulate 20 PDHs in each of the two major courses during foundational phase: Introduction to Nutrition Professions, and Health Behavior. You will continue to obtain field experiences but collect Supervised Practice hours after you start the Coordinated Program in Dietetics (CPD).

Specifically, 20 PDHs (with a minimum of 3 hours in each of the 3 categories) are required for Introduction to Nutrition Professions. 20 PDHs are required for Health Behavior; the hours are earned as part of the course and account for a certain percentage of the course grade. Extra hours earned in the previous semester may be applied to the following semester’s course. Hours earned during the summer may be applied to the following academic year (fall or spring). **Hours earned more than one semester previously may not be applied toward PDHs. Hours cannot be double claimed in different courses.**

A minimum number of 13 PDHs need to be earned from each of the 3 major categories in which you earn them. The remaining 1 hour can be earned from any category. Some activities are qualified for either category 1 or 3 PDHs. You may not “double count” an activity. Each activity can be applied to only one category.

**How Do I document PDHs?**

All PDHs must be well-documented in order to count! You will submit your documentation from the Blackboard course, *Nutrition Majors-Specialization in Dietetics*. Students will be enrolled into the major shell after meeting with the academic advisor or program coordinator during the first year of study. Please notify your academic advisor if you change your major or specialization.

There are designated spots in the Blackboard course. You will submit your documentation just like submitting an assignment. Work experience is documented through a letter from your supervisor on company letterhead verifying the dates and average hours per week that you have worked. Certifications and conference attendance/presentation are documented through certificates, letters of acceptance and conference receipts. You may take a screenshot of the certification for the documentation. A reflection paper about your learning and comments documents seminars and webinars. Professional organization involvement is documented through a letter from the advisor/president verifying your active membership in the group.

**What If I Don’t Finish My PDHs?**

While you may still pass a course without completing your PDHs, you will not be allowed to graduate with a B.S. degree and begin your Supervised Practice in Master study year.

**How Can I Find Opportunities for PDHs?**

There are several ways to find PDHs. Some PDH opportunities will be posted in Blackboard.
Opportunities will also be announced in class, announcement from the department, Nutrition club meeting and other HES club meeting, Rowan newsletter, etc. Please keep up with your email to stay on top of the news and register a desired event ASAP. If you are having difficulty getting hours, please see Dr. Jia for help and suggestions.

**Suppose I Don’t Have A Car and/or I Have Limited Finances?**

With careful planning, all of the hours can be earned at locations within walking distance of the campus. A car will, however, allow you to have more flexibility in choosing what you want to do. If you wish to attend an event but don’t have transportation, please speak to Drs. Jia, Sterner or Spencer. They can probably find someone else who is going who can take you.

Almost all of the hours can be earned at no cost to you. The one exception is for conferences, training and certification. You need to plan in advance and save money to pay for these. Costs vary widely, so you should make the most of low-cost opportunities. Often, conference presenters (as opposed to those only attending) may attend for free. You might consider submitting a presentation to a conference.
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Activities and Hours for Category 1

The following is a list of approved activities for each category and the “hours” the activity is worth. If you wish to do something not on this list, please speak to Dr. Jia to have it reviewed and, if acceptable, approved. You need to earn a total of 40 hours, with a minimum of 13 hours from each category. Make sure you document and submit your hours in the Blackboard course, Nutrition Majors-Specialization in Dietetics.

Professional Work Experience

This may include both paid and volunteer work. The work you do must involve some aspect of nutrition/food service/wellness management/health promotion/fitness/, such as: nutrition assessment, screening, education, counseling, marketing, evaluation or administration of the program or service, or fitness or wellness management. Each hour of productive work is considered a “development hour”. Interviews and observations are not considered as productive work but could count as 1 hour for each of the professionals that you meet or shadow with.

Acceptable settings include but not limit to:

- A worksite health/fitness/nutrition program for employees
- A clinical dietetics/nutrition/food service facility, such as hospital, outpatient center, rehab or nursing home
- A hospital-based wellness or rehabilitation program
- A community agency, such as the Jewish Community Center, Food Bank or YMCA
- A college/university recreation/fitness facility, such as the Student Recreation Center at Rowan or the fitness/wellness center at Gloucester County Community College
- A commercial fitness/wellness facility
- A formal wellness program based in a senior citizen’s center, school or other organization
- Strength and conditioning coaching
- A hospital or community based nutrition program
- A specific food service facility, such as Rowan dinning service

The following are NOT acceptable settings:

- Any type of retail enterprise, such as a food store, GNC store, fitness equipment store or home-based business selling health-related products unless a nutrition service is provided.
- Medical/hospital work that is NOT related to nutrition, food service, wellness or rehabilitation.
- Administrative work in a physician’s or chiropractic office.

To obtain credit for these hours, please have your supervisor write a brief letter or email verifying that you are employed by or a volunteer for the organization, your duties/activities and the number of hours you have provided productive work (up to 15 hours). The letter should be on letterhead, signed and dated. It may be emailed to Dr. Jia. A telephone number and email address should be provided from the supervisor.
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Activities and Hours for Category 2

Training and Certification

This may include the following:

Attending a professional conference, workshop, or an event (one hour earned for each hour of the event that you attend)

* Local (NJ), regional or national conferences on related fields of Nutrition, Dietetics, Exercise Science, Health Promotion, etc.
  * AND, NJAND, NWI, and other regional and national conferences
  * Any training session sponsored by the Student Recreation Center
  * Any workshops sponsored by Office of Career Advancement (OCA)
  * Any webinars sponsored by professional association such as AND, NJAND, etc.
  * Webinar Archives from qualified speakers may count, too – please verify with your instructor or program coordinator
  * Any seminars presented by professional speakers
  * Workshops related to professional development in nutrition and dietetics

Earning a nationally-recognized certification from AND and other professional organizations

Earning the certificate for the NWI Rowan Chapter’s blood pressure and cholesterol screening

Presenting at a professional conference. (Note: By attending other workshops at the conference, you can earn additional hours.)

CPR/First AID training

ServeSafe certificate

To obtain credit for these hours, you must supply full and complete verification of your successful completion of the event. If a certification, you need to turn in a copy of the certificate. If a workshop, you need to supply a receipt or other official statement of your participation, along with a brochure or program describing the event. If an event, you need to supply a verification documenting your activity from a co-worker, supervisor or advisor. If you have presented at a conference, you need to turn in a copy of your acceptance letter. If a seminar/webinar or archived webinar, you need to write a page (at minimum a paragraph) to summarize what you learned from the webinar and indicate the date that you attend/watch it. Please also indicate the date the archived webinar was originally presented.
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Activities and Hours for Category 3

Professional Service Involvement

This category includes time and energy you have invested in active participation in a professional organization. It includes:

Serving as an officer or committee chairperson for the NWI student chapter, AND, NJAND, Nutrition Care Club or other HES Clubs, or Healthy Campus Initiatives for one academic year (fall and spring semesters, **15 hours per term**)

Note: to earn the hours, you must be active and productive throughout your term

Participate in professional meetings and serve on a committee (one hour for each meeting attended)

Active Participation in professional activities organized by Nutrition Care Club or other HES Clubs

Active participation in any other professional organization or society and provide professional service. Please contact Dr. Jia for approval and assignment of hours

Provide professional service as nutrition professionals

For Nutrition Care Club or other HES Club credit, ask your faculty advisor or a Club Officer write and sign a note to verify your participation. Dr. Jia is the faculty advisor for Nutrition Care Club. To obtain credit for the NWI hours, have Dr. Spencer verify your attendance at meetings and events. For participation in other professional events, provide an emailed letter signed and dated by the leader of that organization verifying the date, location and type of activity and your level of participation in it.