

## **Dietetic Internship Program Application Process**

Sea Mar Community Health Centers is a non-profit health and human-service organization founded in 1978. Sea Mar's Dietetic Internship (DI) offers interns a unique opportunity to work with clients from Latino and a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Interns gain cultural competence that adds a competitive edge in a job search. The internship is 38 weeks long including orientation, winter and spring breaks. Sea Mar's DI is located in Seattle, the Emerald City! Interns will enjoy Seattle life, with professional sports events, theater and concerts, museums, amazing restaurants, coffee and many food and farmers' markets, including the famous Pike Place Market. Ocean and mountains are nearby with plenty of hiking, skiing and biking trails close by. Even more importantly, Seattle offers renowned medical centers and community organizations with exceptional dietitians who support our program, acting as preceptors and educators. Lastly, it does not rain every day and the weather is quite temperate!

Each intern class many opportunities to work together as a group, thus developing team-building skills and relationships of support that enhance the learning experience. Mondays may start off with an intern seminar (mostly in fall and spring), where interns gather to hear dynamic speakers, discuss assignments or present case studies and work on nutrition education projects that benefit those in need in the Seattle community. Interns come together to talk about their rotation experiences and assist each other in problem solving and conflict resolution. A vehicle and ability to check email every day is necessary for this internship. All experiences take place in the greater Seattle area; no international experience provided. Community is the focus and designated concentration and dietetic students who desire careers in outpatient clinics, WIC, health clubs, public health or other nutrition education practice settings are strongly encouraged to investigate this internship. In addition to clinical and food service administration rotations, other community nutrition rotations include long-term care, child development, community nutrition administration and migrant/homeless services (see Generic Rotation Schedule). Each rotation differs in amount of objectives to complete/required supervised practice hours while performing real-life activities such as role-playing, simulations, case studies, etc. The Internship Director reviews and updates curriculum at minimum annually using intern and preceptor evaluations and communication & input from other internship directors, peers, past interns and Sea Mar staff. The Sea Mar DI offers learning experiences in a multicultural and bilingual environment and is in complete alignment with the organization's mission and goals. If a strong passion for community nutrition combined with exposure to cultural experiences, water & mountains make up the perfect internship, the Sea Mar Dietetic Internship has it all!

### **Overview of Sea Mar Community Health Centers Dietetic Internship**

The 38 week, full-time community-based internship begins in September/October with graduation in June. An initial one-week orientation prepares eight interns for the experiences ahead. The time commitment range from 30 to 40 hours per week during normal business hours, but this may fluctuate depending on rotation, preceptor hours and class time. It is

possible for interns to work outside of the internship on weekends but this is very difficult to do during the week.

**Program Mission:** The Dietetic Internship at Sea Mar Community Health Centers is committed to providing a comprehensive learning environment for those interested in community health, offering an emphasis in experiences serving multicultural and low-income communities, while preparing them to become entry-level Registered Dietitians.

### **Program Goals:**

**Goal #1: To contribute to the development of mature and responsible entry-level Registered Dietitians capable of utilizing knowledge and skills learned to meet the nutrition needs of society**

#### **Objectives:**

- At least 80% of program students complete program requirements within 14 months (150% of the program length) [ACEND Required]
- When surveyed at their exit interview, the mean rating for the question, “I feel that I have mastered the skills necessary to succeed in entry-level nutrition counseling and education position,” is marked as “Agree” or 1-3 by 85% of program graduates
- 12 months after completing the internship, employers will rate 85% of program graduates as “Prepared” when surveyed if “the employee is highly capable of meeting the nutrition needs of society.”

**Goal #2: To provide quality training that supports the personal development and professional growth of program graduates**

#### **Objectives:**

- 80% percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion [ACEND Required]
- The program’s one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80% [ACEND Required]
- When surveyed at their exit interview, the mean rating for the question “I have felt supported in my attempts to develop personally and to grow professionally” is marked as “Agree” or 1-3 by 85% of program graduates

**Goal #3: To prepare program graduates to deliver nutrition services to population groups such as those at Sea Mar or other community healthcare clinics**

- Of graduates who seek employment, 70% percent are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation. [ACEND Required]
- 25% of program graduates secure a position at Sea Mar or other community nutrition position within one year after graduation
- 12 months after completing the internship, employers will rate 85% of program graduates as “Prepared” when surveyed if “the employee is able to provide nutrition care for individuals from across the lifespan and with diverse cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.”

Program outcome data measuring achievement of program objectives available upon request.

In addition to the Academy's Core Competencies required to become a Registered Dietitian, interns must meet Sea Mar's Community Concentration Competencies in the community nutrition rotations. They are as follows:

CO1. Conduct community-based food and nutrition program outcome assessment/evaluation and research

CO2. Manage nutrition care for diverse population groups across the lifespan by participating in nutrition surveillance and monitoring of communities

CO3. Develop community-based food and nutrition programs and/or a health promotion/disease prevention intervention project

Please note: The Sea Mar DI has a policy for assessing prior learning or competence but does not give credit for prior experience internationally.

#### ACEND<sup>®</sup> Standard 10.2i. Policy for Prior Assessed Learning (PAL)

**Policy:** The PAL program grants credit towards supervised practice hours in specific rotations of the internship based on the qualified applicant's learning/knowledge, as demonstrated through paid work or volunteer experiences. The credit is not for experience, but is when the applicant demonstrates an increase in knowledge and learning. Experiences considered for PAL must meet competencies required by ACEND<sup>®</sup> and must not include experiences undertaken during undergraduate/graduate education or in the process of earning a DPD verification statement. No credit given for college coursework.

**Purpose:** Ensure that the SMCHC DI has a systematic process to administer, evaluate and document PAL. If the program grants credit, supervised practice hours or direct assessment for interns' prior learning, it must define procedures for evaluating equivalence of prior education or experience.

Upon satisfactory completion of this program, graduates are eligible to become active members of the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics.

For more information about becoming a Registered Dietitian, visit

<https://www.cdrnet.org/certifications/registered-dietitian-rd-certification>

Sea Mar Community Health Centers does not discriminate based on age, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, political ideology, marital status, Vietnam veteran status or any disability. We encourage you to explore Sea Mar's website to learn about our wonderful community health centers' vast array of services.

We do not offer an internship open house at this time, as most time is spent offsite at rotation sites.

\* This program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition & Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (AND), 120 S Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606-6995; 800.877.1600 ext. 5400; email at ACEND@eatright.org, URL: [www.eatright.org/acend](http://www.eatright.org/acend).

### Prior Assessed Learning (PAL)

Sea Mar Community Health Centers Dietetic Internship Program will consider the Prior Assessed Learning (PAL) program recognized by the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](http://www.eatright.org/acend) if an intern chooses to pursue obtaining credit. This program design grants internship credit in specific rotations of the internship based on the qualified applicant's previous life experiences including work, volunteer, achievement, education or family responsibilities. Typically, the individual qualifying for this credit has significant, relevant work or life experiences.

### Criteria

For consideration, the applicant must do the following:

- complete a portfolio or submit a resume. Do not submit this until **after** you have matched to the SMCHC DI. Provide samples of projects, reports, presentations, and professional practice that demonstrate advanced knowledge and skill in the area of dietetics for which assessment is requested and have a supervisor/peer be willing to validate samples provided and proficiency in such experiences
- complete all PAL Information. The Program Director will provide the Academy's educational competencies for specific rotations in this program and the applicant must adequately show/demonstrate advanced knowledge and skill, not just work history. A current/former supervisor/peer must validate proficiency as well
- understand that fees related to PAL evaluation are equivalent to tuition
- discuss pursuit of PAL with Program Director after accepted to the internship to allow for adequate evaluation

### Requirements

The following requirements apply regardless of the amount of PAL credit qualified for:

- the SMCHC Dietetic Internship program is a full-time program; interns required to complete any required supervised practice hours as a full-time intern
- most interns who receive PAL credit must still complete at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of required hours in the rotation given credit for and omission of specific rotation projects and assignments will be determined by the Program Director with rotation preceptor input based on your demonstrated knowledge and skills
- tuition does not change if intern receives PAL credit

## Evaluation

The Program Director will:

- evaluate submitted information in a timely manner
- request additional documentation or clarification as deemed appropriate
- formulate decision related to assessment of individual intern's prior learning based on evaluation of portfolio provided & any verification of information provided deemed appropriate

## **PAL Credit**

In order to identify the equivalent credit hours for your PAL request, the evaluator will be looking for completion of related ACEND competencies in submission. Not every experience will be worth credit, but that does not devalue the experience. There is a difference in “skill-oriented” learning and “theoretical” learning.

Description of previous experience

- list the specific job, volunteer position, practicum experience and job tasks in relation to rotation applying for PAL
- describe experience from which learning is derived
- document the exact learning that occurred, do not just list what was done

Use the same examples for the competencies when appropriate. Include in discussion what learned (for example, to use PowerPoint) but also deeper understanding of the knowledge. (For example, one must measure if a presentation was effective and what audience learned, etc.)

After evaluation of application, the Program Director may be grant credit in the following areas:

- Community nutrition (COM) – 1-2 weeks of rotation hours
- Food Service Management (FSA) -- up to 2 weeks of rotation hours
- Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) – 2-3 weeks of rotation hours

Questions or concerns? Please contact: [rananelson@seamarchc.org](mailto:rananelson@seamarchc.org) for further clarification

## **Application Guidelines for the Sea Mar Community Health Centers Dietetic Internship**

Sea Mar considers students for admission only after completion of an Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' accredited didactic program in dietetics. Applicants must have an original verification statement from a Nutrition and Dietetics Didactic Program (DPD) or Foreign Dietitian Education program (FDE) and must have earned at least a bachelor's degree in nutrition, dietetics or an equivalent program granted by a U.S. regionally accredited college/university or foreign equivalent. Candidates should have a strong background in science and high academic.

Experience, whether volunteer or paid, in clinical nutrition (hospital or long-term patient care), food service and community nutrition is highly desirable. Evaluation of final candidates via in person or telephone interview in mid-March is final step. We do not contact each applicant if not selected for an interview ~ sorry!

#### Program Retention and Remediation Procedures:

Interns must meet ACEND core competencies, complete assignment/projects on time, pass supervised practice rotations and abide by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics. If an intern is displaying unsatisfactory performance at a practice site, the preceptor will hold a meeting with the intern to outline areas of concern and will notify the Program Director of the concerns. In a timely fashion, the intern, preceptor and Program Director will meet to discuss the performance issues and devise a performance improvement plan to pass the rotation. The rotation evaluation will outline the knowledge and skills needed and a date when reassessment occurs. The Program Director will encourage the intern to strengthen academic skills and be available for assistance. If the preceptor gives the intern a satisfactory rating at reassessment, the intern continues in the program. However, if the intern does not receive a satisfactory rating, the Program Director may find an alternate site for the intern. If the second site determines the intern's performance is unsatisfactory, the intern may be dismissed from the program and discuss other career paths for the intern.

**The application team evaluates qualified applicants on the following criteria:** (not necessarily in any prioritized ranking)

1. Overall GPA - Applicants must have an overall GPA greater than 2.75. The program does not track average GPA of accepted interns.

2. DPD GPA >3.0 desired

3. Work/Volunteer experience in clinical nutrition (hospital/long term patient care), foodservice or community nutrition (1+ years experience receives maximum points), experience working with multicultural populations and expressed desire to work in a community or public health career

4. Recommendation Scoring Forms

When completing the application form, applicants must include a name and e-mail address for each reference. This will trigger an e-mail message requesting completion of a reference form. Complete the form online. Students submitting more than one application will need to use the same individuals as references for each application. Sea Mar does NOT require letters of recommendation, only the DICAS scoring form, so if Sea Mar is the only internship you are applying for, a letter is optional.

5. Personal statement

Applicants who apply to internships using DICAS must complete a personal statement no longer than 1000 words; please be as succinct as possible.

Questions to address in the personal statement include these:

- Why do you want to enter the dietetics profession?
- What experiences have helped to prepare you for your career?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses or areas needing improvement?
- What are your reasons for applying to the Sea Mar internship specifically? Would you stay in Seattle after the internship? Would you consider working for Sea Mar?
- Experiences working with diverse populations.
- Language skills – indicate any languages you speak, how you obtained those language skills, and the level at which you speak (i.e. high school and/or college courses and time frame for all, time spent in non-English speaking countries, fully **bilingual, bicultural**, etc.)

Bilingual/Bicultural applicants receive full points on application screening form in those categories.

Note: Because Sea Mar supports education and employment of dietitians in clinics which serve a multicultural population, students who have taken Spanish-language classes, or who possess language skills that would be beneficial in serving our client populations are given extra points during the application process. However, it is not required that interns speak Spanish. We urge all students who have a strong passion and desire to work in community health to apply, regardless of language skills. Final candidate selection depends on the qualifications of the entire applicant pool.

#### 6. Interview (if applicable)

Selected applicants will participate in a short telephone or personal interview with the selection panel by mid-March. An in-person is not required or advantageous in any way.

#### 7. Dietetic internship preferences

All applicants must participate in computer matching. Applicants should request instructions to prioritize their DI preferences. Applicants should request this information from D&D Digital Systems early enough to allow turnaround time for submitting by the postmark deadline. There is no charge for this material. However, there is a \$55.00 charge (or fee listed on website) for computer matching due with the applicant's prioritized ranking. Requests should be addressed to: D&D Digital Systems Suite 301

304 Main Street Ames, IA 50010 <https://www.dnndigital.com>

## Submission of Application for the Sea Mar Community Health Centers Dietetic Internship

1. To apply to the Sea Mar Dietetic Internship, submit a centralized online internship application at DICAS' website at <https://portal.dicas.org> by 11:59 pm of their deadline date in February established by The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Fees associated with this centralized application process are \$45 for the first application and \$20 for each additional application (visit DICAS website to confirm deadline, fees and more information but generally info is available early December for the spring match.) The Sea Mar Dietetic Internship participates in the spring computer matching application process. Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended should be sent to: DICAS- Transcript Dept PO Box 9118 Watertown, MA 02472

2. Applicants must also register online for computer matching through <https://www.dnndigital.com> and select dietetic internship priority choices by February deadline date at 11:59 p.m. Central Time (visit website to confirm deadline). There is a \$55 registration fee. All applicants must follow the instructions for Notification and Appointment days on DND Digital website. Sea Mar selects all eight interns during First Match.

\*3. Please mail a **separate APPLICATION review fee** of \$50 to Sea Mar postmarked before or by February 15<sup>th</sup> to be considered for the internship (no need to overnight payment and we will contact you if payment not received). Please mail a check or money order (do NOT send cash). You may also pay via credit card and to do so, please contact Rana Nelson ~ [rananelson@seamarchc.org](mailto:rananelson@seamarchc.org). Send payment via check or money order to the address below with same APPLICANT NAME on DICAS application in the check/money order memo line (especially if made out by someone other than applicant or if name on check is inconsistent with DICAS application name, maiden/married name, etc.) payable to:

**Sea Mar Community Health Centers**

**ATTN: DIETETIC INTERNSHIP APPLICATION**

**Rana Nelson, MS, RD, Dietetic Internship Director**

**8915 14th Avenue S**

**Seattle, WA 98108**

### **Graduate Requirements**

To graduate, all interns complete at least 1200 hours of supervised practice. These hours may include direct/hands on supervised practice (minimum 900 hours), simulation, case studies or role-playing alternative learning experiences (less than 300 hours).

Interns also must pass each rotation with a 3.0 average on each preceptor evaluation form, complete all assignments with a passing grade of 80%, have a final grade of at least 800/1000 points and earn  $\geq 3.0$  on the Program Director's final evaluation. It is possible to graduate with a lower score, but this effects ability of Program Director to write a recommendation for the graduate. Program Director and/or preceptors determine make-up projects, assignments

and time owed to obtain required points, hours or score. After intern completes all requirements and submits final evaluation of the Sea Dietetic Internship, Program Director issues verification statements with original signature, typically done on the last day of the internship. This information is included in the student handbook sent out prior to the start of the internship. For more information about Sea Mar's Dietetic Internship program, contact Rana Nelson, MS, RD at [rananelson@seamarchc.org](mailto:rananelson@seamarchc.org) (preferred) or call 206.764.8074

Good luck on the internship application process!

### **Program Costs**

Tuition **\$8,000** if paid in full first day of internship or can pay in three installments of \$4100 due first day internship, \$2,000 due December 1 and \$2,000 due March 1 (\$100 administrative fee added if installment option selected. Sea Mar accepts credit card payments for tuition.

Non-Refundable Application Fee \$50

Liability Insurance approximately ~ \$20-35

ADA Associate Membership ~ \$50

Washington State Dietetic Association Annual Meeting ~ \$90

Lab Coat (may not be required; do not buy beforehand) ~ \$35

Housing ~ \$600-800/month

Food ~ \$200-300/month

Books & Materials ~ \$100

Transportation/gas - \$200-300 A car is necessary and students must possess auto insurance

Medical Insurance Required, intern's own responsibility

Intern may be required to pay for a national background check ~\$50 and/or drug screening ~\$25 for site placement

\*Sea Mar does NOT offer any financial aid, although there are a few scholarships from other area agencies to apply for once the internship commences.

\*\*If graduates go on to work for Sea Mar or any other community health center in Washington state for a minimum of one year, Sea Mar will reimburse \$1,000 of tuition at the end of that one year anniversary of employment.