Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition

The master's degree in dietetics and nutrition is designed for professionals in nutrition and for others with a science background.

Advantages of this program:

- **Practice Competence**: Students gain advanced knowledge of the biochemical, pathological, and physiological processes of disease to build a better understanding of disease prevention and treatment. While the practice competencies of the dietetics professional are continually evolving, entry into practice as a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) will require a master's degree, beginning in 2024.

- **Research Competency**: Research experience is more important than ever in today's health care fields. Students graduating from the MS degree program, with or without the RDN credential, are able to participate in research and apply findings in research, public health, and/or clinical practice. Graduates with RDN credentials are required to conduct outcomes research and utilize evidence-based practice to translate research findings in clinical settings. Participating in research and applying research findings to dietetics and nutrition practice are useful and valued skills.

The master’s degree alone does not lead to the registered dietitian credential. More information about becoming a registered dietitian is found here: eatrightPRO.org (https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs/)

An online master’s degree for registered dietitians is offered through the Great Plains IDEA (http://catalog.ku.edu/health-professions/dietetics-nutrition/ms/greatplains/) (Interactive Distance Education Alliance) program.

The application process for this program is online. Detailed instructions on how to apply are posted on the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition (http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-health-professions/dietetics-nutrition/master-of-science-in-dietetics-and-nutrition.html) website. Application deadlines are June 1 for fall semester, October 30 for spring semester and March 31 for summer semester.

Admission requirements:

- A bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited institution is required and must be documented by submission of official transcript indicating the degree has been conferred before entering the program. Official transcripts for all classes taken from all institutions attended are also required. The bachelor’s degree may be in any field.

- Students with degrees from outside the U.S. may be subject to transcript evaluation indicating the degree is equivalent to a U.S. degree and meets the minimum cumulative grade-point average requirement.

- Applicants must possess a cumulative grade-point average of at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for his or her bachelor’s degree program.

- Applicants who are not native speakers of English, whether domestic or international, must demonstrate they meet the minimum English proficiency requirement.

- Before entering the program, students must have completed prerequisite courses in biochemistry (one semester), physiology (one semester), and nutrition (more than one semester preferred).

- A resume or curriculum vitae is required and must include prior employment and participation in professional and/or voluntary organizations (e.g., hospital, alumni or nonprofit.)

- A goal statement will be submitted in the online application and will explain the applicant’s educational and professional goals.

- Three references are required. The references must be from a faculty member, adviser, employer, or other person familiar with the applicant’s work and character. The recommendations may not be obtained from family members, friends, etc.

- The Joint Commission requires all incoming students to pay for a background check (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#BackgroundCheck). This one-time fee must be paid directly to the company performing the background investigation. For more information, please see the School of Health Professions Background Check Instructions. (http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-health-professions/background-checks-and-drug-screening-for-students.html)

Applicants will be assessed based on these requirements. Applicants who meet admission requirements will be interviewed by department faculty. After an applicant has been admitted, a program may defer an applicant’s admission for one year after which time the applicant must submit a new application.

Admission requirements are subject to change. In most cases, use the catalog of the year student entered the program. Other years’ catalogs. The Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition degree program consists of 30 credit hours with both thesis and non-thesis research options. This program offers course work in the biochemical, clinical, and behavioral aspects of nutrition.

Degree requirements:

- Degree requirements are normally completed within 2 years of admission to the program although a maximum of 7 years is allowed.

- Completion of a minimum of 30 credit hours.

- Cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of at least a 3.0 for all KU graduate coursework.

- Enrollment in a minimum of one credit hour the semester the student will graduate.

- Successful completion of the following courses:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DN 818</td>
<td>Seminar in Dietetics &amp; Nutrition II</td>
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<tr>
<td>DN 870</td>
<td>Health Behavior Counseling</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>DN 819</td>
<td>Scientific Writing for the Nutritional Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>DN 834</td>
<td>Methods of Research in Nutrition</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>DN 895</td>
<td>Advanced Macronutrients and Integrated Metabolism</td>
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<tr>
<td>DN 896</td>
<td>Advanced Micronutrients and Integrated Metabolism</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIOS 704</td>
<td>Principles of Statistics in Public Health (or another Biostatistics 700-800 level course)</td>
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Non-thesis option

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DN 854</td>
<td>Special Problems in Dietetics and Nutrition</td>
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</table>

Number elective credit hours 12

Thesis option
participation with a faculty member in the design, collection and/or analysis of data in conjunction with a faculty member engaged in research. For the thesis option:

- Successful completion of a general examination (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#programtext) the semester the student will graduate. The general exam is an oral exam administered by three faculty members that covers the competencies students are expected to gain through the M.S. degree program.

- Completion of DN 854-Special Problems in Dietetics and Nutrition occurs the semester the student successfully defends the project. Students submit a written report and conduct an oral presentation of the proposal. If satisfactory, students then prepare a final written report and conduct an oral presentation (defense) of the report which is followed by questions from the research committee. The project is generally completed in 1 to 2 semesters and may include one or more of the following:

  - written intensive review of the literature on a given topic, based on "Evidence-Based Analysis" procedures of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics;
  
  - participation with a faculty member in the development of a research proposal or grant;
  
  - participation with a faculty member in conducting a pilot project;
  
  - participation with a faculty member in the design, implementation, or evaluation of a program in a specialized area of dietetics practice;
  
  - and/or collection and/or analysis of data in conjunction with a faculty member engaged in research.

- Successful completion of a minimum of 12 credit hours of elective coursework. For students in the KU dietetic internship program, 9 hours of electives completed during the internship count as the elective hours. For master's students who are not former KU interns, up to 3 graduate credit hours of electives may be taken outside the department if the courses are relevant to the career goals of the student.

Degree requirements and course descriptions are subject to change. Any courses taken as an equivalent must be approved by the Graduate Director and the Office of Graduate Studies. In most cases, use the catalog of the year student entered the program. Other years' catalogs:

Typical Plan of Study
Non-thesis option (30 minimum credit hours with 12 hours elective credits.)

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<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<th>Year 2</th>
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<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Successful completion of oral examination, taken final semester of enrollment</td>
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Total Hours 30

Thesis option (30 minimum credit hours with 9 hours elective credits.)

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<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>DN 899</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(required course thesis option)</td>
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Elective 3

Successful completion of thesis defense and oral examination, taken in final semester of enrollment

Total Hours 30

KU offers a Dual MS degree/Dietetic Internship Program with a medical nutrition therapy emphasis that prepares graduates for a career as a registered dietitian. The mission of the program is to produce competent entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists with enhanced skills in nutrition therapy using evidence-based practices to support the health of citizens of Kansas, the region, the nation, and the world.

The program prepares graduates to be competent entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists.

- At least 80% of program interns complete program requirements within 30 months (150% of the program length).
- 80% of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.
- 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%.
- 80% of employers who respond to a survey on program graduates in their first year of employment indicate that graduates demonstrate adequate knowledge and practice ability for entry-level practice as a dietitian (rating of at least 4 on a 5-point scale) over a 3-year period.
- Three years post program completion, 80% of respondents to graduate surveys rate their preparation for entry level practice as adequately prepared or better over a 3-year period.

The program prepares graduates for practice in the field of dietetics and nutrition and participation in professional organizations.

- Of graduates seeking employment, 75% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.
- 60% of respondents to graduate surveys are members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics or related professional organizations over a 3-year period.

Students completing the Dual MS/DI program receive a Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition and a verification statement which allows them to be eligible to take the national RDN examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration for the purpose of receiving the registered dietitian nutritionist credential. KU dietetic interns have an excellent first-time pass rate on the national exam. All U.S. states with licensure and certification requirements currently accept the registered dietitian credential for state licensure and certification purposes. The Commission on Dietetic Registration provides information on specific state licensure requirements.

Accreditation

The University of Kansas dietetic internship graduate certificate program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) (https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/), which is the accrediting agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (https://www.eatrightpro.org/about-us/who-we-are/). Documents relating to accreditation may be obtained from the department office.

Admissions

Applicants to this program follow the national computer-matching procedure mandated by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/students-and-advancing-education/application-process-for-students/) for application to internships. The application process is conducted online through the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Services (DICAS) and also requires a supplemental online application to KU.

The program begins in the fall semester. The application window is December 1 through February 15 each year. Information on how to apply and related links for the DICAS application and the supplemental application are posted on the Department of Dietetics and Nutrition (http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-health-professions/dietetics-and-nutrition/dietetic-internship-graduate-certificate/how-to-apply.html) website. Applicants must also complete the computer match process and indicate KU as one of the desired institutions for enrollment by February 15. For information on the process and computer match forms, contact your didactic program director or D & D Digital Online Dietetics Internship Matching Service. (https://www.dnddigital.com/)

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

- A bachelor’s degree from a didactic program in dietetics (DPD) (https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/accredited-programs/about-accredited-programs/) accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics is required and must be documented by submission of official transcript indicating the degree has been conferred before entering the program. Official transcripts from all institutions attended are also required.

Please note: the University of Kansas does not offer an accredited DPD program that meets this requirement.

Degrees earned outside the United States must be evaluated for equivalency. For guidelines, see the international fact sheet (https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/students-and-advancing-education/international-students/education-and-credentialing-requirements-for-those-with-foreign-degrees/) provided by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) (https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/). Students with degrees from outside the U.S. may be subject to transcript evaluation indicating the degree is equivalent to a U.S. degree and meets the minimum cumulative grade-point average requirement.

A cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the bachelor’s degree is required.

- Applicants who are not native speakers of English, whether domestic or international, must demonstrate they meet the minimum English proficiency requirement (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#EnglishProficiencyRequirement). (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#EnglishProficiencyRequirement)
- Applicants will submit a resume or curriculum vitae indicating prior employment, participation in professional and/or voluntary organizations (e.g., hospital, alumni or nonprofit) and evidence of leadership.
- A verification statement or declaration of intent form must be completed by the applicant’s didactic program director and must have an original or digital signature.
DEGREE REQUIREMENTS:

• Three references are required and must be from faculty, advisors, employers, or others who are familiar with the applicant's work and character. The recommendations may not be obtained from family members, friends, etc.

• Personal statement of no more than 1000 words is required. Questions to be addressed in the personal statement include the following:
  • Why do you want to enter the dietetics profession?
  • Discuss experiences that have helped to prepare you for a career as an RDN.
  • What are your short-term and long-term goals?
  • What are your strengths and weaknesses or areas needing improvement?

• If an Applicant meets the admission requirements, he/she will be asked to complete a brief virtual interview.

• The Joint Commission requires all incoming students to pay for a background check (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#BackgroundCheck). This one-time fee must be paid directly to the company performing the background investigation. For more information, please see the School of Health Professions background check instructions. (http://www.kumc.edu/school-of-health-professions/background-checks-and-drug-screening-for-students.html)

Applicants will be assessed on academic performance, work and volunteer experience, leadership and research experience, personal statement, responses to virtual interview, awards and honors, and references. After an applicant has been admitted, a program may defer an applicant's admission for one year after which time the applicant must submit a new application. Admission requirements are subject to change.

The Dual Program: MS in Dietetics and Nutrition and Dietetic Internship Certificate consists of 38 credit hours of graduate course work and a minimum of 1,000 hours of supervised practice experience. The program prepares graduates for entry into careers as a registered dietitian.

Students completing the Dual MS/DI program receive a Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition degree, Dietetic Internship Graduate Certificate, and a verification statement which allows them to be eligible to take the national RDN examination administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (https://www.cdrnet.org/RDN/) for the purpose of receiving the registered dietitian nutritionist credential.

For the Non-thesis option:

• Successful completion of a general examination (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#programtext) the semester the student will graduate. The general exam is an oral exam administered by three faculty members that covers the competencies students are expected to gain through the M.S. degree program.

• Completion of DN 854-Special Problems in Dietetics and Nutrition occurs the semester the student successfully defends the project. Students submit a written proposal and conducts an oral presentation of the proposal. If satisfactory, students then prepare a final written report and conduct an oral presentation (defense) of the report which is followed by questions from the research committee.

For the thesis option:

• The project is generally completed in 1 to 2 semesters and may include one or more of the following:
  • Written intensive review of the literature on a given topic, based on "Evidence-Based Analysis" procedures of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics;
  • Participation with a faculty member in the development of a research proposal or grant;
  • Participation with a faculty member in conducting a pilot project;
  • Participation with a faculty member in the design, implementation, or evaluation of a program in a specialized area of dietetics practice;
  • Collection and/or analysis of data in conjunction with a faculty member engaged in research.

• Successful completion of a minimum of 3 credit hours of elective coursework.
For the Thesis option:

- Successful completion of a general examination (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#programtext) the semester the student will graduate. The general exam is an oral exam administered by three faculty members that covers the competencies students are expected to gain through the M.S. degree program.

- Successful completion of a thesis defense (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#programtext) and of DN 899-Thesis. The defense occurs during the semester the student will graduate. Thesis research is usually conducted over 3 semesters and involves all aspects of research including preparing a proposal, collection and analysis of data, and a thesis. The thesis is presented in written form and orally in a presentation to the thesis committee followed by questions (or defense) and an oral examination before the thesis committee.

- Successful thesis submission and publication (http://catalog.ku.edu/graduate-studies/kumc/#programtext) (according to Office of Graduate Studies policy.)

- Successful completion of 3 credit hours of DN 890 – Graduate Research. This course is taken in place of the 3 hours of elective coursework.

- Degree requirements and course descriptions are subject to change. Any courses taken as an equivalent must be approved by the Graduate Director and the Office of Graduate Studies. In most cases, use the catalog of the year student entered the program. Other years’ catalogs.

Upon acceptance into the Master of Science in Dietetics and Nutrition Program, students are asked to acknowledge their ability to meet these standards with or without accommodations. The following technical standards, in conjunction with the academic standards, are requirements for admission, retention and program completion.

Reasonable accommodation will be considered and may be made to qualified students who disclose a disability, so long as such accommodation does not significantly alter the essential requirements of the curriculum and the training program, or significantly affect the safety of patient care.

Qualified students with a disability who wish to request accommodations should provide appropriate documentation of disability and submit a request for accommodation to:

The Office for Academic Accommodations

Cyn Ukoko, Senior Coordinator of Academic Accommodations

913-945-7035 or 711 TTY

cukoko@kumc.edu

1040 Dykes Library

Academic Accommodations Intake Form (https://redcap.kumc.edu/surveys/?s=LKXK9HHJ9HH37KN)

The Department of Dietetics & Nutrition and the University of Kansas Medical Center have a commitment to nondiscrimination, access and reasonable accommodation of students with disabilities. Therefore, all students admitted to the MS Degree in Dietetics & Nutrition must be able to meet the following requirements and expectations with or without an accommodation. The MS degree prepares students to practice dietetics and nutrition and to interpret and participate in research in nutrition within academic and healthcare organizations. Graduates need knowledge and skills to function in diverse practice and research settings. All students who are admitted into the MS degree program in Dietetics & Nutrition are able to do the following:

Observation: Specific observation skills include, but are not limited to, being able to observe lectures, demonstrations, research, and practice situations in the practice and research of health sciences.

Communicate: Students must have the ability to use multiple communication techniques (oral, written, nonverbal) that enable them to communicate with clients, teachers, health providers, and faculty. Students must be able to report to members of the team, express accurate information to clients, and teach, explain, direct, and counsel people.

Ethical Standards: Students must demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviors and must perform in an ethical manner in dealing with others as outlined in the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics for the Nutrition and Dietetics Profession. Personal integrity is required and the adherence to standards that reflect the values and the functions of the profession of dietetics and nutrition. Students are required to abide by student honor codes and research ethics.

Psychomotor: Students must be able to demonstrate the following skills: ability to generate, calculate, record, evaluation and transit information; prepare assignments; deliver public presentations to large and small audiences; collect specimens and perform basic tests and physical assessments on individuals, e.g., finger sticks for blood glucose testing, using glucometers, assessing skin fold thickness, taking blood pressure, and placing feeding tubes; working in institutional and food demonstration kitchens to prepare foods and direct employees involved in food services; and conducting patient visits individually and with health care team members to provide nutrition care. Graduate students who are not involved with clinical experiences are expected to demonstrate during their research assistantship sufficient motor capabilities and abilities to execute various tasks similar to those in the clinical rotations.

Intelectual and Cognitive Abilities: Students must be able to measure, calculate reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate, and remember to apply information. Creative problem solving and clinical reasoning requires all of these intellectual abilities.

Professional and Social Attributes: Students must promptly complete all responsibilities required of the program. They must develop mature, sensitive, and effective professional relationships with others. They must be able to tolerate taxing workloads and function effectively under stress. They must be able to adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and function in the face of uncertainties and ambiguities. Concern for others, interpersonal competence, and motivation are requisites for the program.