



## **National HealthCare Corporation (NHC) Dietetic Internship/Graduate Program**

### **Who are we?**

So, you're looking for a Dietetic Internship with a graduate program in the Nashville area? Look no further! Since 1971, National HealthCare Corporation (NHC) has combined exceptional care with a compassionate focus on patients and their families. Throughout the southeast, our affiliated centers provide rehabilitating care as well as skilled nursing care, homecare, hospice, independent and assisted living services. With over 170 facilities in 9 states, NHC is delivering the highest level of care, pioneering new approaches and celebrating achievements from the commitment that has guided us throughout our 50+ years and continues to lead us forward.

### **What's the program all about?**

Accredited in 1982, the program includes rotations in hospitals, dialysis centers, long-term care centers, as well as community experiences. NHC's dietetic internship faculty believes in providing a nurturing environment that is conducive to learning, as well as challenging academically. In conjunction with the supervised practice rotations, dietetic interns may complete an online Master of Professional Studies (MPS) with a concentration in Leadership in Nutrition graduate degree. NHC seeks to employ graduates of the program. Many graduates have accepted jobs with NHC and have long and successful careers.

### **Why should you apply?**

- Great job opportunities within NHC available in several states in the areas of clinical and food service management in a rapidly growing job market
- NHC has provided quality dietetic training for 42 years for over 300 graduates
- Over the past five years, 100% of our graduates have passed the RD exam within one year
- Variety of experiences working with over 25 preceptors in 10+ sites in middle TN
- Economical program including a \$500 monthly stipend, tuition-free DI program, liability insurance, meals, textbooks, and travel expenses
- If needed, a graduate degree may be completed online, in conjunction with the supervised practice portion in 12-15 months. If the applicant already has a graduate degree, the supervised practice portion is only 9 months and tuition-free.
- Opportunity to travel including staff relief, pediatric rotation, and state and national convention, as available

## Letter to Prospective Applicant

August 1, 2024

Dear Prospective Applicant:

Thank you very much for your interest in the National HealthCare Corporation (NHC) Dietetic Internship (DI) program. The NHC Dietetic Internship is celebrating 42 years of providing quality dietetics education. Included with this information are specific guidelines and information about NHC's DI Program and applicant responsibilities for the dietetic internship application and graduate school application, if needed. The NHC Dietetic Internship Program is participating in the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Services (DICAS) process. Applicants should see our Admissions and Application section to receive instructions and timelines for the DICAS application. There is a \$50.00 DICAS fee and a \$50.00 graduate school application fee (only if you accept a position with NHC and do not have a master's degree yet). There is no fee charged by NHC for applications.

I am pleased that you are interested in our program. In the next few months, you will have to make many important decisions. With the NHC DI program, you have options to not only continue your education but also begin a promising career. Potential applicants are welcome to contact the program director to schedule in person or virtual visits to the program. Summer and fall visits are encouraged to help prepare you for the October 1, 2024, and February 1, 2025, application deadlines. Virtual open house dates are listed on the website. If you have any questions or need an open house zoom link, please call (615) 890-2020, ext. 1830 or email Olyvia Hester at [Olyvia.Hester@nhccare.com](mailto:Olyvia.Hester@nhccare.com).

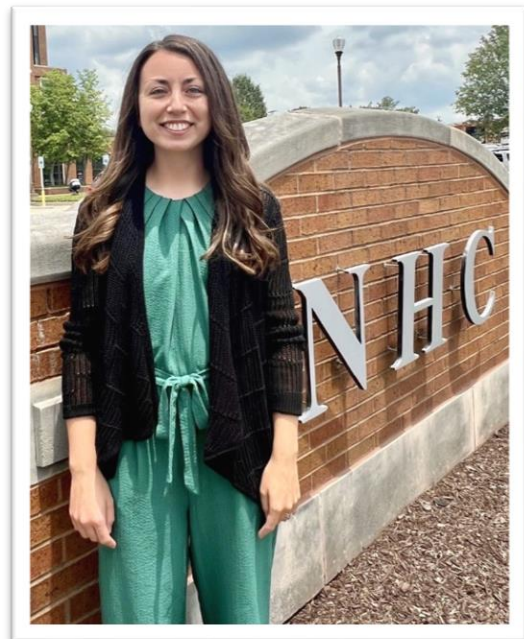
Sincerely,

*Olyvia Hester*

Olyvia Hester, MPS, RD, LDN  
NHC Dietetic Internship Director



2024-25 NHC Dietetic Interns



Olyvia Hester, MPS, RD, LDN

## **Program Overview**

The primary objective of the program is to train qualified individuals to become competent dietitians. For the 2025-26 class, six dietetic interns will be selected for the program. The DI program will be a 12-15-month internship program beginning in early June 2025 and ending the following summer in August 2026 for those also completing the graduate degree. If you already have a graduate degree, it is only 9 months. You will experience supervised practice rotations in over 10 different sites, including hospitals, long-term care, dialysis, foodservice, community and pediatrics. In addition, interns may complete a totally online 30-credit hour graduate program. Our team of over 25 preceptors and faculty focus on you being prepared and confident as you begin your career.

## **How To Become a Registered Dietitian (RD)**

To become a RD or registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN), an individual must complete a process as outlined on the Academy website:

- **Completed a minimum of a graduate degree** at a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.
- **Completed an ACEND<sup>®</sup>- accredited supervised practice program** at a health-care facility, community agency, or a foodservice corporation or combined with undergraduate or graduate studies. Typically, a practice program will run six to 12 months in length.
- **Passed a national examination** administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR). For more information regarding the examination, refer to [CDR's website](#).
- **Completed continuing professional educational requirements** to maintain registration.

Please visit this webpage to learn more about the pathways to becoming a registered dietitian (RD): <https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend/students-and-advancing-education/information-for-students/registered-dietitian-nutritionist-fact-sheet>

In most states, graduates also must obtain licensure or certification to practice. For more information about state licensure requirements click <https://www.cdrnet.org/licensure> . While state interpretations of statutes may vary, it is ACEND's considered opinion that the program meets the educational requirements for dietetics licensure and certification in all states. However, completing an ACEND-accredited academic program alone does not qualify an individual for licensure or certification as a dietitian in any state. Individuals should review their state's licensing statutes and regulations to understand the specific requirements, including supervised practice and examinations, needed to obtain a dietetics license. More information about state licensure and certification can be found at this link: State Licensure.

## **Accreditation Information**

The NHC Dietetic Internship Program is currently granted accreditation status by ACEND of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, 800-877-1600, Ext. 5400. (<https://www.eatrightpro.org/acend> ; email [ACEND@eatright.org](mailto:ACEND@eatright.org)). ACEND is the only accrediting agency for dietetics education recognized by the USDE.

## **Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

Specific outcome levels achieved for these objectives are available from the director upon request. The mission of NHC's DI program is "To prepare interns to become successful entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists through supervised practice and didactic learning experiences in clinical, foodservice management, community, and leadership in nutrition. " The mission of the program drives the goals and outcome measures that are listed below:

### **Goals and Objectives:**

**Program Goal 1:** The program will produce competent graduates who are prepared for entry-level practice as registered dietitian nutritionists.

Objective 1.1: At least 80% of program interns complete program/degree requirements within 23 months (150% of the program length).

Objective 1.2: Of graduates who seek employment, 89% are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.

Objective 1.3: 89% percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion.

Objective 1.4: 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%.

Objective 1.5: Program graduates will rate knowledge and preparedness for entry-level dietetics practice as adequate, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.0 or higher (out of 5.0) on the graduate/employer survey.

Objective 1.6: Employers of program graduates will rate knowledge and preparedness for entry-level dietetics practice as adequate, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.0 or higher (out of 5.0) on the graduate/employer survey.

**Program Goal 2:** The program will prepare graduates to practice in the nutrition field and provide a return on investment (ROI) for the sponsoring institution.

Objective 2.1: Over a five-year period, 40% of graduates provide the sponsoring institution with one to two years of work, to provide a return on investment (ROI) to NHC and encourage further sponsorship of the program.

**Program Goal 3:** The program will prepare graduates to demonstrate a commitment to the community through professional involvement, leadership and service in a variety of personal or professional settings.

Objective 3.1: The interns will become members of the national, state, and local dietetic association and will attend either in person or virtually, a local district dietetic association meeting and a national dietetic association meeting while in the program.

Objective 3.2: When surveyed, graduates will rate their level of involvement in professional activities, community service or leadership activities as adequate, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.0 out of 5.0 or above on the graduate/employer survey.

## Complaint Policy

Any grievances or complaints about the dietetic internship should first be presented to the director. If the intern is dissatisfied with the results of the conference with the director, then the intern should make a request, in writing, for a conference with the grievance committee. The Grievance Committee will be composed of the Program Director and the NHC Assistant Vice-President (AVP), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS). If the intern is still dissatisfied, then a written request should be made for a conference with the senior vice president of patient services. All grievances will be documented and signed by the director and the intern. The original will be filed in the intern's folder and kept on file in the office of the director.

If the intern has a grievance or complaint related to their graduate courses, they will be encouraged to discuss it with their graduate school professor first, then their advisor. If that does not resolve the issue, they will be encouraged to discuss it with the DI Director who will help direct them to the proper contact.

If an individual other than an intern such as faculty, preceptor, dietetics practitioner and/or member of the public has a complaint, they may submit a complaint against the program. If the complaint can be addressed with the program director, that is the first course of action. If it is believed that it can't be resolved through the program director, the complaint can be brought to the NHC AVP of FNS. The procedure to file complaints against accredited programs to ACEND is discussed in the policy and procedure manual. Please submit complaints directly to ACEND only after all other options with the program and the institution have been exhausted. All grievances will be handled in a manner that prevents retaliation.

## Curriculum and Schedule

**The 9-month, supervised practice portion of the DI program currently provides approximately 1020+ hours (August 2025-May 2026) as follows:**

Orientation	Mid-August (2 weeks)
Dietetic intern classes	Mondays, approx. once a month
Alvin C. York VA Medical Center	5 weeks (160 hours)
Horizon Medical Center (clinical)	3 weeks (96 hours)
Fresenius Kidney Care	3 weeks (96 hours)
Lebanon Special Schools	2 weeks (64 hours)
NHC (clinical)	4 weeks (128 hours)
NHC (food services)	4 weeks (128 hours)
Pediatric (LeBonheur, UT CDD)	1 week (32 hours)
Skyline Medical Center (clinical)	4 weeks (128 hours)
PromptCare (nutrition support/wellness)	1 week (32 hours)
NHC (staff relief)	4 weeks (128 hours)
Community	1 week (32 hours)

A graduate degree is required to sit for the dietetic exam. Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) is a local university that offers a Master of Professional Studies (MPS) with a concentration in Leadership in Nutrition degree. The NHC DI is not affiliated with MTSU but would like to provide the following information about the program. Please consult the official MTSU website for specific questions about applying for the MPS program. The 12-15-month, fully online MPS degree (June 2025-May or August 2026) may be completed in conjunction with the supervised practice portion of the program. Listed below is a sample of how the courses may be completed.

Summer 2025 (9 credit hours, does not have to be completed in middle TN)  
PRST 6600 – Statistical Analysis  
PRST 6100 – Professional Environment: Issues and Ethics July Session  
3 credit hours from a list of several courses in the MPS or NFS program

Fall 2025 (6 credit hours)  
PRST 6300 – Research Methods  
HSC 6530 – Effective Program Management

Spring 2026 (6 credit hrs.)  
PRST 6000 – Leading Organization Transformation  
NFS 6300 – Entrepreneurial Skills for Nutrition Professionals

Summer 2026 (9 credit hours, does not have to be completed in middle TN)  
PRST 6998 – Professional Project  
Final 6 credit hours are awarded after completing the program, at no cost

The NHC Dietetic Internship is completed in approximately 9-15-months on a full-time schedule beginning in early June and extending into mid-May or August of the following year, depending on whether you already have a graduate degree or not. Most weeks consist of at least 40 hours per week of classes and supervised practice experiences, with completion of written assignments on rotations and in graduate classes. A two-week orientation is mandatory for all interns held at NHC corporate office in Murfreesboro, TN in mid-August. Before starting the program, interns must have proof of medical insurance, have professional liability insurance (paid for by NHC), drug screen (paid up to \$50 by NHC), background check (completed and paid for by NHC), and health form requirement. Currently, the supervised practice hours are completed Tuesdays through Fridays except for approximately two weekends when interns would possibly travel. If a leave of absence is requested and approved by the director, the program requirements must be completed within 150% of the program length or 23 months. Information regarding leave of absences will be discussed further in the policy and procedure manual upon acceptance into the dietetic internship. A master rotation schedule is given to each student at the beginning of the program and monthly Monday class schedules are given to interns at least two weeks ahead of time.

Both didactic and supervised practice experiences shall be included in the dietetic internship program. Planned learning experiences shall be offered in logical progression from introductory to the expected degree of competence in program graduates. RD Exam practice tests will be administered throughout the year and will require a passing score to graduate from the program. In addition, once rotations and coursework are completed, the interns will complete procedures for eligibility to take the RD exam. The RDE misuse form will be explained by the director and signed by students to be kept in their student files.

Upon graduation, students are expected to have met core competencies and all graduate courses with the required grades. Successful completion of all didactic training, 1000+ supervised practice hours, rotation assignments and graduate coursework, will ensure that the core competencies for entry-level dietetics have been met and that a verification statement will be issued to graduates. Grading

expectations are listed in the policy and procedure manual. Grades and evaluation outcomes are handled on an individual basis, and space is provided in the internship director's office for private counseling as needed.

## **Memphis Training**

One week of pediatric training will be scheduled in the spring in Memphis, Tennessee. When traveling to Memphis, housing is paid for by NHC. Some meals and gas are reimbursed as well. The projected cost to the intern for the Memphis rotation is approximately \$100.



## **Staff Relief**

Staff relief is scheduled at an approved NHC facility in a convenient location for minimal lodging and/or travel costs to the intern.

## **Classes**

Interns will meet approximately once a month on Mondays for dietetic internship classes on various topics throughout the entire program. For interns enrolled in the online graduate degree program, they will complete any graduate coursework on evenings, weekends and Mondays.

## **Policy on Granting Credit for Prior Learning Experience**

Graduates of ACEND-accredited didactic programs who have held post-graduate (unless otherwise approved) paid positions in the field of dietetics with responsibilities that fulfilled certain ACEND competencies may be granted credit for prior learning. In addition, applicants with a completed graduate degree may also receive credit for prior learning and all or a portion of the required graduate coursework may be replaced. It will be determined by the program director if the experience will replace a portion of a rotation or course or if an alternate rotation will be provided to provide time to focus on a special interest of the intern.

The process must be initiated prior to beginning the internship to accommodate changes in scheduling. The process for establishing credit for prior learning is as follows: 1. Intern will contact director after internship appointment between April and June to request an assessment of prior learning. If the request to assess adequacy of prior learning is verbally approved, then the intern will follow up with a written request describing in detail the prior learning experience. 2. Intern will provide contact information to verify prior learning experiences. 3. Program director will determine if prior credit replaces a portion of a rotation or course or if an alternate rotation will be provided for the intern. 4. Intern will provide official transcripts of previously completed graduate degree, if applicable.

## **Benefits and Costs**

### **NHC Stipend**

A stipend of \$4,500.00 (total for the year) during the supervised practice portion of the program is provided by NHC. The first check will be mailed in September 2025 and the final check in May 2026. Monthly checks of \$500 will be mailed on the first Friday of the month.

## Insurance

Interns are REQUIRED to obtain their own health insurance and professional liability insurance while completing the NHC DI program. Interns provide proof prior to beginning the internship. The cost of the liability insurance premium will be reimbursed once the intern starts the program. Interns are responsible for all medical expenses incurred during the internship, including having a physical exam and required vaccinations prior to starting the program. Interns are required to have automobile insurance and assume their own liability while traveling to and from internship practice experiences and classes.

## MPS Graduate Degree

If applicable, graduate school tuition and fees (textbooks not included) at MTSU are listed below. In-state students pay in-state tuition and fees, and out-of-state students pay the e-rate in the two summer semesters when they are not on their supervised practice rotations and in-state tuition during the spring and fall semesters while they are in middle TN for their supervised practice rotations. Fees for the 2023-24 sessions were approximately:

Summer 2023 (9 credit hours, does not have to be completed in middle TN)  
\$5562 (for in-state interns)      \$8064 (e-rate for out of state interns)

Fall 2023 (6 credit hours to be completed in middle TN)  
\$3708 (in-state and out-of-state interns)

Spring 2024 (6 credit hrs. to be completed in middle TN)  
\$3708 (in-state and out-of-state interns)

Summer 2024 (3 credit hours for the professional project) does not have to be completed in middle TN). Tuition for the 6 DI credits is free for NHC dietetic interns.  
\$1854 (for in-state interns)      \$2688 (e-rate for out of state interns)

<b>MPS total tuition and fees for in-state would be approx.</b>	<b>\$14,832</b>
<b>MPS total tuition and fees for out-of-state would be approx.</b>	<b>\$18,168</b>



## Financial Aid

Interns may apply for NHC DI scholarships of \$1,000 each to assist in the payment of education expenses during the program. Scholarships are awarded to applicants demonstrating professional potential in long-term care. Interns who choose to work for NHC will also receive a \$2,000 recruitment bonus at graduation. The recruitment bonus is available to graduates' accepting employment with NHC up to one year after graduation.

Once you have matched to NHC and, if applicable, applied to the MTSU graduate program, you may complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). A FAFSA may be submitted before an MTSU admission decision. Information on how to apply for FAFSA or financial aid may be found at the MTSU graduate school financial aid link at [www.mtsu.edu/financial-aid/graduate.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/financial-aid/graduate.php)



## Meals

During assigned training only, lunch will be provided on most rotations. Interns will be responsible for meals on class day and when attending meetings.

## FNCE or other National Meeting

Attendance is required at a national meeting. The dates and location will be discussed upon acceptance into the program. Registration and hotel are paid by NHC. Interns are responsible for paying for their travel (gas or airfare) and meals while at the meeting.

## Holidays/Vacations

Interns are permitted a two-week vacation during late December and early January, and a one-week vacation during March. The holidays for the year will be Labor Day, Thanksgiving (2 days), Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

## Housing

Interns will be responsible for all housing costs during all training, except the weeks of FNCE and Memphis. Numerous apartment complexes are available in Murfreesboro and Nashville. Monthly rental for one or two-bedroom apartments is approximately \$1000 to \$2000 per month, depending on location and roommate availability.

## Supplies

Some supplies for special projects are reimbursed. Supplies purchased must have a receipt and be turned in on the proper form to the internship director. This does not include routine daily supplies,

e.g., paper, pencils and pens, which are the responsibility of the intern. Some textbooks are provided for the dietetic intern but are to be returned upon program completion. Interns will be responsible for buying scrubs and lab coats but will be reimbursed in the amount of \$100.00. NHC will provide the interns with NHC embroidered polo shirts which can be worn on most rotations if desired. All copying should be done at NHC's corporate office if possible. The cost of the textbooks and supplies for the graduate courses will be the intern's responsibility. Interns will need access to a computer with internet access for completion of projects, internet research, and e-mail communication. Interns are required to have a laptop computer (not a tablet or iPad) for completion of RD exam practice tests, projects, internet research, and e-mail communication to use outside of rotations, as well as, during internship classes.

## **Transportation**

Interns must have access to a vehicle at all times. All maintenance and mileage expenditures will be the responsibility of the intern. Facilities are in Murfreesboro, Nashville and surrounding middle TN area except for the Memphis pediatric rotation. A gas allowance is given for some rotations. Monthly transportation costs can range from \$200-\$500 depending on where you live and gasoline prices.

## **Application and Admission**

There is a two-step application process when applying to the Combined NHC DI/MPS Program:

Step One: Dietetic Internship Centralized Services (DICAS) online application

Step Two: Once accepted into NHC's program, you may apply to the MTSU MPS Program

\*\*If you will complete a graduate degree by August 2025, you do not need to apply to a graduate program.

### **Step One: Centralized Application: DICAS**

- NHC will participate in two application periods this year, depending on internship position availability after the fall application period. The online application will be available in DICAS August 5, 2024, and MUST be completed by October 1, 2024, for the fall application period. Virtual interviews will be held between October 10-25, 2024. Students will be notified of acceptance on November 1, 2024, and must accept or reject the internship offer by November 15, 2024. If the six positions are not filled in the fall application period, the DICAS application will remain open and MUST be completed by February 1, 2024, for the spring application period. Virtual interviews for these dates will be held between February 10-25, 2025. Students will be notified of acceptance on March 1, 2024, and must accept or reject the internship offer by March 15, 2024. Confirm this deadline on the DICAS website. Email [DICASinfo@DICAS.org](mailto:DICASinfo@DICAS.org) for more information or questions.
- The fee to DICAS is \$50.00 for the first application and \$25.00 for each additional application.

- On the DICAS application, applicants will be asked to complete a personal statement in 1,000 words or less. Information to be addressed includes:
  1. Why do you want to become a dietitian?
  2. What are some experiences that have helped you prepare for your career?
  3. Short and long-term goals.
  4. Strengths and areas needing improvement.
  5. Why are you applying for the NHC program?
  6. If you are interested in the supervised practice option only (Graduate degree completed).
  
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended should be sent to:
 

DICAS-Transcript Dept.  
PO Box 9118  
Watertown, MA 02472
  
- Recency of Education
 

At the discretion of the Dietetic Internship Director, additional courses in nutrition or dietetics related area are required to update a degree which was completed five or more years prior to application to the NHC Dietetic Internship program. Courses must be taken at a U.S. regionally accredited college or university and require a grade of B or better. An official transcript of these courses must be provided. If your degree was completed 5 to 10 years ago, at least six semester hours is required. If your degree was completed within the past 0 to 5 years, no updated courses are required.
  
- GRE score is NOT required with an undergraduate GPA of 3.25 or higher. There are also exceptions for graduates with lower GPAs who have prior professional work experience in a related field. If applicable, please review the graduate degree webpage for admission requirements at <https://www.mtsu.edu/university-college/mps/>
  
- The recommended minimum GPA is 3.0 (overall) and 3.2 (DPD). The average GPA over the past three years has been 3.5 to 3.7.
  
- When completing the application form, you must list three references and include the names and contact information (email address) for each. This will trigger an email message requesting completion of a reference form. The form will be completed online. At least one recommendation from your advisor or a professor in your major field and a work recommendation are preferred.
  
- Work experience, especially in a nutrition or food service-related field, is recommended. Leadership roles, length of employment, number of hours worked, and volunteer experience will also be considered.

Care is taken during recruitment and selection, as well as actual administration, to protect student civil rights. The program director seeks a diversified class and works to maintain an appropriate percentage

between minorities who interview for the program and those accepted. The program and sponsoring organization both adhere to policies regarding the selection, hiring and promotion based on ability regardless of race, color, religion, creed, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), age, national origin, disability, and genetic information. Student privacy is respected during the program. Grades and evaluation outcomes are handled on an individual basis, and space is provided in the internship director's office for private counseling as needed.

### **Step Two: If applicable, apply to MTSU MPS Program**

- Once accepted into NHC's DI program, if you do not have a graduate degree, submit application with the application fee of \$50.00 online at [www.mtsu.edu/graduate/apply.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/apply.php) . Once this initial application has been accepted, the applicant will receive directions on how to enter the graduate portal to be able to submit documentation.
- Submit official transcripts from all collegiate institutions attended.
- For applicants with a GPA of 2.75 GPA or higher and five (5) years of full-time work experience OR those with a 3.25 GPA with less than five (5) years of full-time work experience, portfolio of works will need to be submitted. Applicants who meet this requirement may inquire about the portfolio requirements by e-mailing Pamela.Morris@mtsu.edu or going to [www.mtsu.edu/university-college/mps/portfolio.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/university-college/mps/portfolio.php).

### **Application for Nutrition and Dietetics Scholarships for 2025–2026 Academic Year**

- Students must be members of The Academy to be eligible. Dietetic internship applicants may also contact their state dietetic association to check on available scholarships awarded for completion of the dietetic internship. The application can be downloaded from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics from September 2024 to February 2025. Traditionally, the scholarship application must be completed and postmarked by February 15, 2025, but please check the website for updated deadlines. <https://eatrightfoundation.org/why-it-matters/scholarships/>

