

**Nutrition 490**  
**Field Experience in Dietetics**  
**Summer 2018**  
**Student Handbook**

## **Arranging Your Field Experience**

The Field Experience in Dietetics (NUTR 490) is a 3-credit course that is completed in the summer semester between your junior and senior years. You must enroll for the course through MyMadison, as you do for any course, and will be responsible for paying tuition for the course as required by James Madison University. Please note that financial aid for summer classes can be difficult to obtain.

You will be expected to arrange your own site and preceptor for this experience. The course instructor will discuss NUTR 490 during special meetings held in the fall semester of the junior year after you are fully admitted to the program. During those meetings you will hear about best ways to approach someone to ask them to work with you for this course and all course requirements.

Each student will be required to contact Registered Dietitian Nutritionists in the area in which you wish to do your field experience to discuss the course and see if the RDN is willing to work with you to complete the experiences. The course instructor can provide information on preceptors that have been used in previous semesters to aid your search for a location. The main contact person (preceptor) at the institution must be an RDN and be licensed in his/her state of practice, if required, and sites must be fully accredited medical centers.

You will be provided with a letter of introduction that can be shared with RDNs as you talk with them. It describes the course, explains that the course is required in your undergraduate program, briefly outlines your educational preparation for the experience, and clarifies that you are not to be used to replace an employee during the practicum. A listing of competencies expected to result from the class is also provided so the preceptors can determine if they and their institution can participate in this course.

Once a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist has agreed to work with you, he or she will need to complete the "Preceptor Qualifications" form found in the appendix of this manual and you need to give that form to the course instructor by April 1<sup>st</sup> prior to your summer experience. The course instructor will determine if the site is appropriate and the preceptor is fully qualified to work with you for this course and will notify you of his or her decision by the end of April. Students will evaluate their preceptors at the conclusion of the practicum. This information will be used by the course instructor for judging the appropriateness of using the preceptor in future rotations.

The course instructor has prepared a training video for preceptors about best practices for precepting students and the requirements of this course. Approved preceptors will be provided the training program and are expected to complete the training prior to the experience, especially if they have not served as a preceptor for this class before.

The course instructor will maintain contact with preceptors over the timeframe of the practicum. Preceptors are encouraged to contact the course instructor with

suggestions for improving the class and class materials, any difficulties encountered during the class and feedback concerning the performance of the student during the practicum. The course instructor will mediate disagreements between preceptors and students as needed.

James Madison University and the facility in which the RDN works will need to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (contract) outlining the responsibilities of all parties involved. These include what the medical center needs to provide, the role of the university to conduct and evaluate your performance in the class, and your responsibilities as a student during your experiences. A Memorandum of Agreement is included in the appendix of this manual. Many medical centers will want to use a contract developed for their institution, rather than the one included here. That is acceptable, Provide, or have the institution provide, the contract to the course instructor. The instructor will see that contract is processed and signed by the appropriate university officials. Contracts are required for all facilities used as sites for this class.

## **Background Checks and Drug Screens**

Most medical centers will require that you complete a criminal background check and a urinary test to detect illegal substances. You will be required to pay any charges incurred to complete these requirements to the satisfaction of the practicum site.

## **Course Requirements**

The student enrolled in the three (3) credit hour field experience is required to work 100 hours which should be spaced over at least four weeks. Report preparation, readings for case studies or other assignments, or readings for special assignments are above these hours. The work hours should be flexible to allow for observing all aspects of the dietary and/or nutrition departments. There may be some days you will be asked to report to work at 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. to observe the breakfast cooks. You will not be compensated financially by the university or the practicum site for time spent in this class.

Although there are worksheets to complete, and the guidelines of this course are to be met, there is a great deal of intentional flexibility. Students are to follow the instructions given by the supervisor at the hospital, and should be eager to learn any type of information that the dietitians and foodservice managers have to offer. In some cases, assignments may be made for which there is no worksheet on Canvas. This is to be expected. The student should NOT indicate to the supervisor that he or she has already learned the requested information, or that the worksheet is to be completed during the specified week, and that the guidelines must be followed. The hospital supervisor will see that the requirements are met by the time the course has ended, but the student is responsible for completing any assignments that the dietitians give.

Worksheets for the class will be available to students in Canvas. Worksheet responses will be submitted to the course instructor as quiz assignments in Canvas. The quizzes should not be completed during your work hours each week. They are like homework for any other class. The other course requirements include weekly reports, readings, critiques, and completion of a case study on a client. The final grade is assigned by the university course instructor. You will be evaluated by your preceptor and you will evaluate the preceptor. Forms for both evaluations are included on Canvas.

## **Professionalism**

At all points of this process, from initial contact with the RDN or the institution through your final evaluation of your preceptor, you are expected to behave as a professional. You are representing James Madison University, the Dietetics Program, and yourself during this practicum.

While working at the hospital, your dress will be professional or professional casual. You will be expected to follow any dress code of the medical center. Your supervising RDN will tell you if uniforms or lab coats should be worn. Lab coats or uniforms should be clean and neatly pressed, not crumpled. Lab coats should be worn over dresses or dress slacks, never over shorts or jeans. Check with the supervising agency about the dress code.

## **Policy On Insurance Coverage**

Agencies who cooperate with the dietetic field experiences need to know how student health expenses and liability will be handled in the event the student becomes ill or becomes involved in a professional liability situation. These two matters should be clarified with the agency prior to beginning the field experience.

The DPD accepts no responsibility for health or mental care of the student above that provided to all students by the University Health Center and the Counseling Center. The university does not provide health insurance policies, and encourages students to seek coverage under the policy of their parents, in the Marketplace, or through a company of their choice as outlined here

<http://www.jmu.edu/healthcenter/StudentCare/insurance.shtml>.

This course requires no direct patient or client care; therefore, liability insurance is not required by the program. If liability coverage is required by one of the experience sites used for NUTR 490 Field Experience in Dietetics, the university liability policy is extended to your activities at that site. The Certificate of Coverage is described by the Risk Management Office on their web site at <https://www.jmu.edu/riskmgmt/certcov.shtml>.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics endorses Mercer Consumer Professional Liability Insurance administered by [Mercer Consumer](#) (formerly Marsh USA). Professional liability insurance is available for private practice or traditional employment at reduced member rates. Contact Mercer Consumer for information on the availability of policies covering students.

Students in the DPD are responsible for arranging their own travel as necessary to meet program requirements. The DPD assumes no liability for safety of students in travel to and from the university and any other instructional site, such as field trips. The program assumes no liability for travel necessary between a student's home and a site used for experiential learning in NUTR 490, nor for travel between the student's home and the university.

The Department of Risk Management provides suggestions for safety during fieldwork and has prepared a manual accessible here [http://www.jmu.edu/riskmgmt/wm\\_library/Fieldworks\\_Guide\\_110216.pdf](http://www.jmu.edu/riskmgmt/wm_library/Fieldworks_Guide_110216.pdf).

# Appendix

**James Madison University**  
**Didactic Program in Dietetics**  
**Preceptor Qualifications**

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Preceptor name (last, first, initial):

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Preceptor employer:

Employer address:

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Preceptor daytime phone:

Preceptor email:

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Years preceptor has worked for this employer:

How many hours per week does this preceptor work for this employer?

Has this preceptor previously supervised students/interns?

Yes       No

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Preceptor's highest degree achieved:

Preceptor's professional credentials:

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What licensure or professional certification is required for your role as a practitioner?

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Check the rotations for this preceptor and facility:

Clinical Rotation

Foodservice Rotation

Community Rotation

Concentration  
Rotation

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe continued competency (CPEs or other professional development) appropriate to precepting responsibilities in the past seven years:

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Other Information:

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Memorandum Of Agreement  
between  
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY  
and

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PURPOSE:

This Memorandum establishes an agreement between James Madison University (hereinafter University) and \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter Agency), regarding cooperation of the University Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics field experience program (NUTR 490: Field Experience), a three credit-hour course offered during the summer semester each year. Since no financial obligation between the University and the Agency is involved, this agreement is focused on the activities and responsibilities of both parties.

GENERAL AGREEMENTS:

1. Both parties agree that the Agency retains ultimate responsibility for the standards and delivery of patient care, and the University retains ultimate responsibility for planning and conducting the Dietetics program.
2. To the extent permitted by Virginia law, James Madison University shall be responsible for the negligent or intentional acts or omissions of its agents or employees in connection with the agreement. The Agency shall be responsible for the negligent or intentional acts or omissions of its agents or employees in connection with the agreement. Nothing shall be deemed as an express or implied waiver of the sovereign immunity of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. The number of students using the facilities of the Agency at any time will be mutually determined by the University and Agency. This determination will include the total number of students placed. Placements will be determined in accordance with the purpose of the specific learning experiences.
3. The University will provide insurance coverage in accordance with the limits prescribed in the Commonwealth of Virginia Risk Management Plan; and sections 2.2-1837 and 2.2-1840 of the Code of Virginia.
4. General planning for the subsequent year will be arranged for by the University, and jointly discussed with the Agency, no later than April for implementation in the summer semester, which begins mid-May.

This includes the tentative number of students to be assigned in the Agency, and the type of clinical experiences, which are explained in the Field Experience manual. A copy of the manual will be sent to the Chief Clinical Dietitian at this time. Specific dates and times of clinical experiences will be arranged between the student and the dietitians.

5. This agreement may be terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days written notice to the other. Unless terminated, it shall continue in force from year to year, subject to any amendment or modification which may be introduced at any time by mutual agreement.

## RESPONSIBILITIES:

### THE AGENCY AGREES:

1. To extend the use of the facilities to the Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics students as agreed on by the University and the Agency.
2. To provide mechanisms for keeping Agency personnel informed about the philosophy, objectives, and implementation of the NUTR 490: Field Experience class.
3. To familiarize the Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics faculty with services, purposes, policies and programs of the Agency and to assist them in keeping informed regarding changes in policies by providing opportunity to attend appropriate staff meetings and by providing materials in writing.
4. To assist in planning and implementing an orientation for Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics students, as appropriate.
5. To collaborate with Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics faculty in planning for, selecting and evaluating specific clinical experiences.
6. To provide facilities for emergency care to Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics students injured during clinical experiences, and to notify the faculty representative when such emergency health care or services are provided. The student will be responsible for the cost of such services provided.
7. To permit the student to use the agency cafeteria during scheduled hours of experience; students shall pay for their own meals.

8. To notify the Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics regarding any problems which might necessitate changes in plans and projections for clinical experiences.
9. To be involved in interaction with Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics faculty and students as necessary concerning the student role and/or the conduct of projects.
10. To provide access for Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics students to in-service programs offered by the Agency and to the use of the Agency library.
11. To provide identification badges for the students, as appropriate.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SCIENCES/DIETETICS AGREES:

1. To acquaint the Agency personnel with the philosophy, objectives, and program of the Department for the purpose of information and to provide an opportunity for discussion and interchange.
2. To provide Agency personnel with materials concerning purposes and objectives for the specific clinical experiences to be offered in the Agency.
3. To provide for the selection of student learning experiences by Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics faculty and student in collaboration with Agency staff.
4. To provide Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics faculty who will be responsible for planning and evaluating the learning experiences of the students, in conjunction with the Agency staff.
5. To provide Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics faculty who will work closely with Agency personnel to maintain the quality of service rendered to the Agency.
6. To work collaboratively with agency personnel in resolving situations where there are issues relative to students' performance or health status.
7. It will be mutually agreed that a student or faculty member whose health or behavior constitutes a threat to the safety and welfare of patients or staff will be removed from the clinical area.

STUDENTS The University will advise students that they:

1. Will be responsible for all arrangements and expenses related to transportation for clinical experiences.
2. Will wear clothing which is acceptable to the Agency.
3. Will comply with written policies governing practice in the Agency.
4. Will report illness and absence to the Department of Health Sciences/Dietetics and Agency.
5. Will have health insurance and malpractice insurance if required, or assume financial responsibility for health care. Students recognize that they are NOT covered by hospital insurance.
6. Will provide written evidence of immunity to communicable diseases, if required by the Agency.

In Testimony Whereof, Witness the duly authorized signatures of the parties hereto:

HOSPITAL:

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY:

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ozlem Ersin, Interim Academic Unit Head  
Department of Health Sciences

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

John F. Knight  
Assistant Vice President for Finance