



Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

5 Steps to Become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist



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Do you have a passion for health, food and helping people? A career in dietetics could be the right career choice for you. Becoming a registered dietitian nutritionist requires a science-heavy course load and many hours of patient care. There are opportunities to conduct research, work with children and even join the military. **RDNs work in a variety of settings** including clinical, business and management, private practice and culinary.

To become a registered dietitian nutritionist, a path of higher education is a must as well as a dietetic internship from an ACEND-accredited program, and passing the national registration examination. The pathway listed below is a common route many traditional students take, but it is not the only path to become an RDN.

The 5 Steps

1. Complete a bachelor's degree and receive a verification statement from an ACEND-accredited program (**Didactic Program in Dietetics**).
2. **Get matched** to an ACEND-accredited supervised practice **dietetic internship program** (some dietetic internships are combined with a master's degree, which is optional*). For students who do not match to an internship, applying to an **Individual Supervised Practice Pathway** is an option.
3. Pass the Commission on Dietetic Registration's dietetic **registration exam**.
4. Gain **licensure** in your state of practice, if applicable.
5. Maintain **continuing education**.

Other Pathways to Become an RDN

Coordinated Programs in Dietetics

Combine your degree with supervised practice. Why? Because baccalaureate students can apply to this type of program and begin supervised practice without going through dietetic internship computer matching.

Coordinated Programs in Dietetics may result in a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree, depending on the program. Graduates of these programs are eligible to sit for the dietetic registration exam.

Career Changers

It's never too late to make the switch to a career in dietetics. Individuals with a prior bachelor's degree need to complete a Didactic Program in Dietetics and receive a verification statement. Those without a four-year degree need to complete a bachelor's degree and receive a verification statement indicating completion of the didactic program in dietetics components prior to applying to the dietetic internship match.

International Students

RDNs have been trained in all corners of the globe. There are a few different ways for international learners to become RDNs — visit [ACEND](#) to learn more.

**Beginning in 2024, a minimum of a master's degree will be an eligibility requirement in order to take the CDR dietetic registration exam.*