

Finding Preceptors and Preparing for Dietetic Internships

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Internship Programs

- Two kinds:
 - Traditional
 - Distance

Distance Internship Programs

- Allow you to choose where to complete rotations
- May allow flexibility on when to begin rotations
- Allow you to set up the order of rotations
- Allow you to work with the preceptors that you have already connected with

What is a Preceptor?

- RDs who allow you to work with them under their credential
- In most cases they do not get paid for being a preceptor
- They do it because someone else did it for them

How to Find Preceptors

Work

- Finding jobs in the nutrition field while you are in school is a great way to meet potential preceptors and get experience working with patients
 - Diet Clerk at a hospital
 - Non-profit community nutrition

Volunteer

- If you are not able to work in the nutrition field, volunteering is another way to meet potential preceptors and increase your skills
 - Hospitals
 - Community settings like Olivewood Gardens or WIC

Networking

- There are many nutrition networking events in SD throughout the year, get involved
 - CAND <https://www.dietitian.org/>
 - CANDSD <https://www.dietitian.org/san-diego/>
- Many of your professors are RDs, get to know them!
 - They know lots of other RDs who may be able to precept you

Why is Networking Important?

- Preceptors are more likely to work with you or recommend you to others if they know you and your work ethic
- Everyone knows each other in this field, it's important to make a name for yourself
- You never know when a relationship you made while in school could turn into a great job opportunity
- These people will eventually be your peers

When to Start?

- Start now!
- Many preceptors are booked up for 1 year or longer
- It's never too early to start building relationships

How Many Do You Need?

- Varies by program
- Look on the website for each distance program to find requirements
- Contact the distance program you are interested in directly with any questions

How to Contact Potential Preceptors

- If you know them personally, speak to them in person whenever possible
- If you were referred by someone else, call them
- If you are “cold calling”, an email is fine but be sure to include:
 - Where you did your education
 - When you are graduating
 - Which program(s) you are applying to
 - Your resume
 - Thank them for their time – remember they are under no obligation to help you!

What Happens Next

- Most potential preceptors (unless you know them personally) will want to interview you to ensure that you are a good fit
- Dress professionally for this interview
- Bring a hard copy of your resume
- Bring a notepad or something to take notes with
- Offer to provide references if they would like

Summary

- Just by being here you are already ahead of a lot of students
- Start now, it will make life much easier when you are getting ready to apply
- Don't be afraid to start networking, it will help you in the long run
- This is the next step on your journey to becoming a Registered Dietitian, you should be very proud of yourself!!!

Any Questions?

