

# Dietetics Program



**Samford  
University**<sup>®</sup>

Master of Science in Nutrition,  
Dietetics Concentration

Student Handbook  
2026-2027

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## Program Introduction (RE 7.3 b)

The Master of Science (MS) in Nutrition with a Concentration in Dietetics (Dietetics Program) at Samford University is a program that integrates didactic coursework and over 1,000 hours of supervised experiential learning, meeting the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) competencies for entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) under the [Future Education Model Accreditation Standards](#). Graduates are [eligible](#) to sit for the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) [exam](#) to become RDNs.

### Becoming a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) (RE 7.3 d)

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) are food and nutrition experts who have met the Commission on Dietetic Registration's (CDR) criteria to earn the RDN credential. RDNs work in a wide variety of employment settings, including health care, business, and industry, community/public health, education, research, government agencies, and private practice. After completing [eligibility requirements](#) and being validated by CDR, individuals are eligible to take the [registration examination for dietitians](#).

Some states require RDNs to obtain licensure or certification to practice. State licensure requirements vary; more details are available on [CDR's website](#). For licensure in Alabama, information is available on the Alabama State Board of Examiners for Dietetics/Nutritionists [website](#).

### Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook provides comprehensive information on the Dietetics Program policies, procedures, prerequisites, and application steps. This handbook is reviewed annually, with the most recent update completed on April 20, 2026. All students enrolled in the Dietetics Program are required to thoroughly review this handbook and complete the [Verification of Receipt and Agreement, Confidentiality Statement](#) form before starting the program.

### Accreditation Status (RE 7.3 a)

Samford University's Dietetics Program is accredited by the [Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics \(ACEND\)](#). ACEND is the accrediting agency for education programs preparing students for careers as registered dietitian nutritionists or nutrition and dietetics technicians, registered.

**Contact ACEND:** 120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190, Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995; (800) 877-1600 ext. 5400, [acend@eatright.org](mailto:acend@eatright.org)

## Letter from the Dean

Welcome To Samford University!

Congratulations on reaching this most exciting stage in your life, and welcome to Samford University's Dietetics Program! Samford University is the 87th-oldest university in the United States. It was founded as a private Christian university under the name of Howard College in Marion, Alabama, in 1841. The campus moved to Birmingham in 1887, and in 1965, the school was renamed Samford University to honor benefactor and trustee Frank Park Samford. The University is known for its high educational standards and its beautiful campus that is in Birmingham, Alabama. It was described as the "Williamsburg of Alabama" when the present campus opened in 1957. From humble beginnings in Marion, with only 31 students, Samford is now home to over 5,700 students and is ranked #1 in Alabama and #2 in the nation in student engagement by the 2021 Wall Street Journal university rankings.

Founded by the Alabama Baptists, Samford stresses vigorous learning and personal faith by developing innovative teaching, learning, and research, and maintaining in the campus community an exemplary Christian ethos and culture.

The Nutrition and Dietetics Department's Master of Science (MS) in Nutrition with a Concentration in Dietetics (Dietetics Program) is a fully accredited program. The Department of Nutrition and Dietetics is one of four departments within the School of Public Health, in the College of Health Sciences.

Our goal is to provide rigorous didactic coursework combined with unparalleled learning experiences, supervised by preceptors, that will prepare you to be successful registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs). Our Christian philosophy as a university and as a program calls us to a high standard. Our hope is that you will continue to provide this high standard for those you will be serving.

We look forward to working with you as a student and later when you become a registered dietitian nutritionist.

Blessings,



Suresh Mathews, PhD, MPhil, MSc, FACN, FICS  
Dean and Professor  
School of Public Health

## About Samford University

### **Mission**

Samford University nurtures persons in their development of intellect, creativity, faith and personhood. As a Christian university, the community fosters academic, career and ethical competency while encouraging social and civic responsibility, and service to others.

### **Core Values**

The Samford community values lifelong:

- belief in God, the Creator of the heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord
- engagement with the life and teachings of Jesus
- learning and responsible freedom of inquiry
- personal empowerment, accountability and responsibility
- vocational success and civic engagement
- spiritual growth and cultivation of physical well-being
- integrity, honesty and justice
- appreciation for diverse cultures and convictions
- stewardship of all resources
- service to God, to family, to one another and to the community

### **Vision**

Anchored in Christian understanding, Samford University will be a diverse community, stressing vigorous learning and personal faith, in the Baptist tradition. Within that commonality, the community will be innovative in teaching, learning and research; sensitive to global issues; aggressive in self-assessment and continuous improvement. Faithful to its mission, Samford will be known and acknowledged worldwide by holding to its core values. The world will be better for it.

### **The School of Public Health**

The mission of the School of Public Health is to prepare servant leaders who demonstrate God's love by promoting health and wellbeing in individuals and communities. Students within the School of Public Health pursue a variety of disciplines focused on the prevention of disease and the promotion of improved health among entire communities and populations. Majors within the School of Public Health are inherently interdisciplinary, with teams of professionals working together to solve some of society's most complex challenges. The school includes the Department of Healthcare Administration and Informatics, the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Department of Public Health, and the Department of Social Work.

### **The Department of Nutrition and Dietetics**

For more than 100 years, Samford University has been preparing students for careers in nutrition and dietetics. The Department offers two undergraduate degrees: a Bachelor of Science in Culinary and Nutrition Wellness Management and Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics, and a Master of Science in Nutrition.

## Program Faculty & Staff



Emily Bourne, PhD, RDN, LD, CLC  
Assistant Professor  
Director, Dietetics Program  
ebourne@samford.edu  
205-726-4789



Amy Cameron, MS, RDN, LD  
Assistant Professor  
Director, DPD Program  
acamero1@samford.edu  
205-726-4870



Clara Darling, MS, RDN  
Assistant Professor  
Director, Wellness Kitchen  
cdarling@samford.edu  
205-726-2930



Megan Kaal, MS, MBA, RDN,  
LD  
Assistant Professor  
Clinical Coordinator  
megan.kaal@samford.edu  
205-726-4670



Ashley Licata, PhD, RDN, LD  
Assistant Professor  
Director, MS in Nutrition  
ashley.licata@samford.edu  
205-726-2570



Sally Holmes, BSPH, BSN  
Department Assistant  
sholmes4@samford.edu  
205-726-4672



Maddie Lunday  
Graduate Recruiter  
mlunday@samford.edu  
205-726-4637



Amber Kustos  
Director of Graduate and Undergraduate  
Student Services  
akustos@samford.edu  
205-726-4691



Lisa Baker, PhD, LCSW  
Professor and Chair  
Interim Chair  
lbaker2@samford.edu  
205-726-4882



Suresh Mathews, PhD, MPhil, MSc, FACN,  
FICS  
Dean and Professor  
smathew1@samford.edu  
205-726-4511

## Program’s Mission, Goals, and Objectives (RE 7.3 b)

### Mission

The mission of the Samford University Dietetics Program is to produce entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists who are resourceful leaders, effectively serving the nutrition needs of diverse persons in their communities with integrity, compassion, and respect.

### Program Goals

- 1) Program graduates will be competent for entry-level practice as registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN) in all required competencies. ☐
  - a. Program Objectives for Goal 1
    - i. At least 80% of students complete program requirements within 3 years (150% of the program length). (RE 2.1.c.1.a)
    - ii. Of graduates who seek employment, at least 80 percent are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation. (RE 2.1.c.1.b)
    - iii. At least 80 percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists within 12 months of program completion. (RE 2.1.c.1.c.1)
    - iv. “The program’s one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of the first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietitian nutritionists is at least 80%. (RE 2.1.c.1.c.2)
    - v. At least 80 percent of employers who respond to a survey on program graduates in their first year of employment will rate them as “above average” on professional knowledge and skills expected in entry-level dietitians. (RE 2.1.c.1.d)
    - vi. On the alumni survey one-year post program completion, at least 80 percent of graduates will rate themselves as “satisfied” or above with their ability to perform entry-level RDN competencies in their work.
  
- 2) Program graduates will be prepared to be entry-level dietitian nutritionists who can work with an interdisciplinary team and individuals from diverse economic, ethnic, and educational backgrounds.
  - a. Program Objectives for Goal 2
    - i. One year after program completion, 80 percent of graduates will report the supervised experiential learning improved their skills in delivering information, products, and/or services to a culturally diverse population.
    - ii. One year after program completion, 80 percent of graduates will report the supervised experiential learning experience improved their skills in working with an interdisciplinary team.
    - iii. After the program, at least 80 percent of graduates will evaluate their ability to work with an interdisciplinary team and individuals from diverse economic, ethnic, and educational backgrounds as “more than satisfactory.”
  
- 3) Program graduates will be confident leaders capable of beneficial service on behalf of the community and the dietetics profession at large.
  - a. Program Objectives for Goal 3
    - i. After the program, at least 80 percent of graduates will indicate improvement in their leadership ability.

- ii. One year after program completion, 80 percent of graduates will report involvement and service in the dietetics profession and/or the community at large.

Data to support program goals and objectives will be collected during the program, at program completion, and 12 months after program completion. Data will be collected from graduates, preceptors, the Registration Eligibility Processing System Report, and employers. ACEND's required objectives must be evaluated annually using an average of data from the previous three years.

Program outcomes data are available upon request. Contact Emily Bourne for more information at [ebourne@samford.edu](mailto:ebourne@samford.edu) or 205-726-4789.

## Admissions

Samford University seeks students who have demonstrated high standards of scholarship, outstanding personal character, and serious educational aims. Admission standards are competitive and selective. [Samford complies with applicable laws](#) prohibiting discrimination and does not unlawfully discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

### Qualifications for Admission (RE 7.3 f, I)

To be considered for admission, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- A baccalaureate degree in any field from a college or university that holds institutional accreditation or is in the senior year of undergraduate study
  - A final transcript with the degree date must be received before the program start date.
- A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Achieve a C or better (B or better in Introductory Nutrition) in all prerequisite courses from a college or university that holds institutional accreditation. All prerequisite courses must be completed within 10 years before application.
- Applicants who hold a Verification Statement from an ACEND-accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) are considered to have met all prerequisite coursework requirements. However, a DPD Verification Statement is not required for admission to this program.
  - Required prerequisite courses include:
    - Statistics, including statistical tests and analysis, or Business Math (3 semester hours) \*
    - Psychology or Sociology (3 semester hours)
    - General Chemistry (3 semester hours) \*
    - Organic Chemistry (3 semester hours)
    - Biochemistry (3 semester hours)
    - Microbiology (3 semester hours), acceptable courses include food microbiology or microbiology of bacteria.
    - Human Anatomy & Human Physiology or Anatomy & Physiology I and II (6 semester hours)
    - Introductory Nutrition (3 semester hours), students lacking this course may enroll in NUTR 500 - Principles of Human Nutrition the summer before beginning the program.

\*AP, IB, or CLEP credits will be accepted as pre-requisite courses if the courses are documented on your transcripts and have been accepted by your undergraduate College or University.

- No GRE required.
- Exceptions to any admission requirements will be handled on an individual basis.

### International Student Applicants (RE 7.3 f, I)

All supervised experiential learning must be completed within the United States per accreditation requirements. This program does not offer sufficient in-person courses to meet the requirements for issuing an I-20 visa. Review the ACEND guidance for International Students.

### Transfer Credit/Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) (RE 7.3 I, RE 8.2 i)

At this time, students may not transfer any credit to count towards the Dietetics Program. The program does not accept credit for prior learning and/or experience.

### Admissions Process (RE 7.3 f, I)

Applications will open during the first week of August each fall. In addition to personal information and academic history, all applicants must:

- Submit a personal statement (3-5 double-spaced pages) that discusses your interest in the dietetics profession and your reasons for applying to Samford. Please include an explanation of the following:
  - Significant professional responsibilities held
  - Professional goals
  - Personal strengths that will contribute to success in the program and in reaching goals
  - Any other additional information important for the selection committee to know
- Submit three letters of recommendation. At least one letter should be from a professor, instructor, academic advisor, or another professional who has supervised academic studies. Other recommendations may be from an employer or someone who can provide a knowledgeable testament regarding character, ethics, responsibility, the potential for success, and other attributes that predict favorable performance in graduate school.
- Submit an updated resume.

### Dietetic Inclusive Centralized Application Services (DICAS) (RE 7.3 f, I)

Students applying to the program who are not already enrolled at Samford must complete an online centralized application through the [Dietetic Inclusive Centralized Application Services \(DICAS\)](#). DICAS is a web-based application service used by students to apply to multiple programs by completing a single online application. DICAS simplifies and streamlines the application process as only one application needs to be completed. Transcripts must be sent to the DICAS Transcript Department.

DICAS Applications will include the following:

#### Personal Information

- Biographic Information
- Contact Information

#### Academic History

- Colleges Attended
- Coursework Entry

- Race & Ethnicity
- Citizenship Information
- Other Information
- Release Statement
- DPD Confirmation – not required for admissions.
- Standardized Tests – not required for admissions.

#### Supporting Information

- Achievements
- Experiences
- Memberships
- Licenses and Certifications
- DPD Documents – not required for admissions.

#### Program Materials

- Personal Statement
- Recommendations
- Samford specific questions

### Interview (RE 7.3 f, I)

Applicants who meet the qualifications for admission will interview with members of the selection committee during the admissions process. Interviews will be scheduled virtually via Zoom. Students should be prepared to discuss the following topics in their interview:

- Why do you want to be a dietitian
- How you can effectively serve the nutritional needs of diverse persons in their communities with integrity, compassion, and respect.
  - The mission of the Samford University Dietetics Program is to produce entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists who are resourceful leaders, effectively serving the nutrition needs of diverse persons in their communities with integrity, compassion, and respect.
- The value of supervised experiential learning and mentorship
- What it means to be a resourceful leader
- Use this opportunity to ask questions about the program

### Additional Requirements (RE 7.3 f, I)

- Background Check: Once admitted, students must complete an initial background check.
- Immunization Records and Health Insurance: Students must submit these at their own expense before starting the program.

### Fast Track

With our fast-track option, Samford undergraduate nutrition students can earn their bachelor's degree and Master of Science in Nutrition (Dietetics Program) in just five years of study. Interested students must meet with their undergraduate academic advisor to determine eligibility. More information is [available here](#).

## Acceptance

### Fall Applications - Early Action Deadline

- Application Opens: August 5
- Application Deadline: October 1

- Students will be notified of acceptance before or by November 1.
- Students are required to confirm acceptance before or by November 15.
- Applications submitted by the Early Action Deadline will receive priority consideration when scholarships are awarded.

### Spring Applications

- Application Deadline: February 1
- Applicant Notification: March 1
- Students will be notified of acceptance before or by March 1.
- Students are required to confirm acceptance before or by March 15.

Applications submitted after March 15 will be reviewed on a rolling basis if space is available in the program. Please contact the School of Public Health recruiter at [publichealth@samford.edu](mailto:publichealth@samford.edu) if this applies to you. Application Closes for Fall Start: June 1.

Both fall and spring applicants will begin the fall semester (August) after they apply. The program will follow Samford's CHS Graduate Programs Calendar: <https://www.samford.edu/events/academic-calendar>. (RE 7.3 g)

Students communicate with the program director by telephone or e-mail to confirm acceptance. Once the student has accepted the program offer, the Director of Graduate and Undergraduate Student Services with the School of Public Health will contact each student accepted to the program with information on finalizing admission, paying the initial deposit, and signing up for fall (and future) courses. The following information must be received by Samford University prior to orientation.

### Estimated Program Cost (RE 7.3 e)

Tuition and fees are the same for all students, no matter the location (in or out of state). Fees are subject to change without notice. See the [Samford One Stop website](#) for the latest tuition and fee info. The information below includes estimated costs that are incurred during the program to assist with budgeting and planning.

#### Estimated Tuition: \$48,240

- Tuition Deposit: \$500 (applied to first semester tuition)
- Year 1: \$32,160 (32 credits)
- Year 2: \$16,080 (16 credits)
- Graduate Tuition for AY 2025-26: \$1,005/credit hour

#### Estimated Supplemental Program Fees: \$4,670

- Program Fees: \$475 (charged during the first semester)
- Digital Learning - Online/Hybrid Course Fee: \$100/course (18 course in the program)
- University Fee (for all graduate students) - \$2,395 total
  - \$520 per semester (fall/spring)
  - \$315 per summer/May term

#### Total Estimated Program Cost: \$52,910

### Other Anticipated Expenses

- Books and Other Resources: Varies per course (approximately \$0-\$200)
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Student Membership (required): \$58/year
- Housing: Rent for local apartments is approximately \$900-\$1,700/month
- Private Vehicle/Gas Costs
- Technology: Phone, computer
- Health Insurance

For more details, visit [Samford University Graduate Tuition and Fees](#).

### Financial Aid and Graduate Student Scholarships: (RE 7.3 i)

Students are eligible to receive federal financial aid. Financial aid from external sources such as scholarships and private loans are also available. Students are responsible for all expenses incurred during the program but may seek the assistance of a One Stop Advisor at the Samford One Stop office to identify low-interest educational private loans for graduate students. Advisors can be reached via phone or email at 205-726-4023 and [onestop@samford.edu](mailto:onestop@samford.edu). Information about Graduate Student Scholarships can be found here: <https://www.samford.edu/publichealth/graduate-scholarships>.

### Health Accountability

Students completing supervised experiential learning are required to complete the College of Health Sciences health and immunization forms ([CHS Health Form](#), [CHS Immunization Form](#)). These forms must be signed by a physician and document general health, medical history, and proof of the following:

- Measles (or Rubeola), Mumps, and Rubella
- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis
- Varicella (or Varicella Surface Antibody)
- Hepatitis B series (or Hepatitis B Surface Antibody)
- PPD (TB) test
- Influenza vaccination
- COVID-19 vaccination (recommended, but not required)

All proof will be uploaded to Corporate Screening or other companies as contracted by the College of Health Sciences.

### Medical or Religious Exemption from Immunization

Medical and religious exemption from immunization is considered by Samford. In both instances, students must be informed of the benefits and risks of immunization against vaccine-preventable diseases and the risks of not being immunized. Students who are granted an immunization waiver on medical or religious grounds may be subject to additional restrictions concerning clinical education since clinical sites may require certain immunizations irrespective of a religious waiver.

A Medical Waiver Form may be obtained [here](#). Medical waiver forms must be completed by a licensed medical professional who certifies that the immunization for which the waiver is requested may pose a medical risk for the student. The student must upload the completed form to their Corporate Screening account.

A Religious Waiver Form may be obtained via the student's Corporate Screening account. To receive an immunization exemption(s) based on religious beliefs, students must provide a statement detailing the religious beliefs that prevent them from receiving each required school vaccination(s). The document must be signed by a licensed medical professional who has reviewed the benefits of immunizations and health risks to the student in the community from communicable diseases for which immunization is required. The student must upload the form to their Corporate Screening account.

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease for which the student is not immunized, they may be subject to exclusion from campus at the discretion of the Director of University Health Services or the Vice President of Student Affairs. The student must agree to assume the risks resulting from declining these vaccines and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Samford University from any liability resulting from declining these vaccines.

#### **Health Insurance (RE 8.2 a)**

Students must have health insurance. Proof of coverage is required before the start of the program. Health insurance will be automatically supplied and billed by Samford University unless the student provides proof of insurance to waive this coverage. Proof of health insurance should be uploaded to Corporate Screening or another company as contracted by the College of Health Sciences.

#### **Professional Liability Insurance (RE 8.2 a)**

The University covers students under its professional liability and general liability insurance. However, students may get their own professional liability insurance in addition to what the University carries on the students. Professional liability insurance can be purchased through [Proliability](#) (powered by Mercer) which has a relationship with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Student insurance costs about \$22.

#### **Substance Use and Background Check Policies (RE 8.2 d)**

Students must pay for clearance through Corporate Screening or a contracted company. Clearance includes drug testing and a criminal background check. Students will receive instructions for clearance via Samford email. Completion of all required testing and checks is the student's responsibility.

##### **Substance Use Policy:**

- Samford University prohibits the illicit use, possession, sale, and distribution of illegal drugs, controlled substances, and the abuse of non-prescription and prescription drugs. Drug tests must comply with Alabama laws, even if conducted in states where certain substances are legal.
- Students testing non-negative without a valid prescription may violate Alabama State Board regulations. Students aware of peers using or possessing illegal substances must report this to the program director.
- The Substance Abuse Policy aims to identify chemically impaired students and help them return to safe practice, focusing on deterrence, education, and reintegration.

##### **Background Check Policy:**

- Background checks are required for all students, to be completed through Corporate Screening or another contracted company.
- Students must report any arrests or legal convictions. Failure to report results in dismissal.
- Admission or continued enrollment may be affected by background check findings; readmission considered case-by-case.
- Students are responsible for costs associated with additional checks required by specific facilities

Corporate Screening Customer Service: (205) 879-0143

### Valid Driver's License and Car Insurance (RE 8.2 b)

Students are required to drive to the location of their SEL (see [Supervised Experiential Learning \(SEL\) Overview](#) for more information). Local SEL experiences are scheduled within approximately 60 miles/one-hour radius of Samford's campus (the goal for distance students is a similar radius). Each student must have a valid driver's license, a dependable mode of transportation, and valid car insurance. If the driver's license expires before the completion of the program, the student is expected to provide an updated driver's license. If the car insurance expires before the completion of the program, the student is expected to provide an updated copy of their car insurance. The student is responsible for their own liability and safety during travel to and from assigned supervised practice sites, field trips, meetings, and to and from Samford University.

## Academic Information

### Curriculum (RE 7.3 g)

The Dietetics Program adheres to the [CHS Graduate Programs Academic Calendar](#). The curriculum was developed to prepare competent entry-level registered dietitian nutritionists, aligning with the program's mission and goals in a distinctively Christian learning community. It integrates GP competencies and performance indicators through online didactic coursework and Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) experiences.

For detailed course information, refer to [Attachment 2: Plan of Study](#).

### On-Campus Requirements:

- All students (local and distance students) must attend an initial orientation on campus in August prior to the start of classes (2 days).
- All students are required to be on campus for 5 days during the summer for NUTR 511 and NUTR 514 Culinary Science.
- All students will participate in the Capstone Presentation at the end of the program.

Orientation dates will be provided to students in the summer before the program starts. Summer on-campus dates will be provided to students during orientation. Capstone presentation dates will be provided to students during their final semester and will align with graduation.

## Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) Overview

### Local and Distance SEL Experiences:

- Local Students: SEL experiences within a 60-mile radius of Samford's campus in Birmingham, AL, coordinated by program faculty.
- Distance Students secure their own SEL sites and preceptors in areas such as food service, community and public health, nutrition management, clinical nutrition, and a student-selected area. Preceptors do not need to be identified before admission.

Students should understand that SEL is part of a required academic course, not an internship or employment experience. While students are physically onsite in professional practice settings, their activities and responsibilities are completed as part of a credit-bearing graduate course and are directly tied to course objectives, ACEND competencies, and program learning outcomes.

SEL experiences are intentionally designed to provide students with structured, supervised opportunities to apply knowledge and skills gained through didactic coursework in real-world nutrition practice settings. These experiences support competency development are necessary for entry-level practice as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). A student's grade in NUTR 511, NUTR 513, and NUTR 610 is based on participation, completion of required SEL components, faculty-assigned coursework, and preceptor feedback, rather than on hours alone.

### Support for Distance Students (RE 7.3 k)

Upon admission, distance students receive the Samford Distance Preceptor Guide, which includes instructions for finding appropriate preceptors, a list of required SEL experiences, and examples of communication with potential preceptors. Faculty assist throughout the preceptor search process. Once a preceptor is identified, the clinical coordinator secures a contract, provides program orientation to the preceptor, and supplies necessary competency lists and evaluation forms.

### Preceptor Requirements

Preceptors are Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) who are also Licensed Dietitians (LD). Exceptions are made for food service management and public health nutrition. For these areas acceptable preceptors may include chefs, registered nurses (RN), nurse practitioners, public health professionals, and individuals with nutrition-related backgrounds. For clinical experiences and the capstone experience, preceptors must be RDNs.

See the Samford Distance Preceptor Guide in [Attachment 3](#).

### Competencies

The following Core Competencies for entry-level practice as a registered dietitian nutritionist from the [Future Education Model Standards](#) will be achieved through didactic coursework and supervised experiential learning; upon completion of program, students are able to:

#### Unit 1: Foundational Knowledge

Applies foundational sciences to food and nutrition knowledge to meet the needs of individuals, groups, and organizations.

- 1.1 Applies an understanding of environmental, molecular factors (e.g. genes, proteins, metabolites) and food in the development and management of disease. (S) - **PowerPoint Presentation/Seminar (NUTR 600)**
- 1.2 Applies an understanding of anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry. (S) - **Case Study Presentation (NUTR 511)**
- 1.3 Applies knowledge of microbiology and food safety. (S) - **ServSafe Certificate (NUTR 513)**
- 1.4 Integrates knowledge of chemistry and food science as it pertains to food and nutrition product development and when making modifications to food. (S) - **Experimental Recipe Project (NUTR 514)**
- 1.5 Applies knowledge of pathophysiology and nutritional biochemistry to physiology, health and disease. (S) - **Case Study Presentation (NUTR 511)**
- 1.6 Applies knowledge of social, psychological and environmental aspects of eating and food. (S) - **Community Engagement Project (NUTR 502)**
- 1.7 Integrates the principles of cultural competence within own practice and when directing services. (D) - **Community Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**
- 1.8\* Applies knowledge of pharmacology to recommend, prescribe and administer medical nutrition therapy. (S) - **Case Study Presentation (NUTR 511)**
- 1.9\* Applies an understanding of the impact of complementary and integrative nutrition on drugs, disease, health and wellness. (S) - **Clinical Nutrition Lecture Assignment (NUTR 612), Case Study Assignment (NUTR 601)**
- 1.10\* Applies knowledge of math and statistics. (S) - **Research Proposal Assignment (NUTR 611)**
- 1.11 Applies knowledge of medical terminology when communicating with individuals, groups and other health professionals. (D) - **Clinical Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**
- 1.12 Demonstrates knowledge of and is able to manage food preparation techniques. (D) - **Experimental Recipe Project (NUTR 514)**
- 1.13\* Demonstrates computer skills and uses nutrition informatics in the decision-making process. (D) - **Clinical Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**
- 1.14 Integrates knowledge of nutrition and physical activity in the provision of nutrition care across the life cycle. (D) - **Community or Clinical Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**
- 1.15\* Applies knowledge of nutritional health promotion and disease prevention for individuals, groups and populations. (S) - **Community Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511), Community Engagement Project (NUTR 502)**
- 1.16\* Gains a foundational knowledge on public and global health issues and nutritional needs. (K) – **Final Exam (NUTR 502)**

## Unit 2: Client/Patient Services

Applies and integrates client/patient-centered principles and competent nutrition and dietetics practice to ensure positive outcomes.

- 2.1\* Applies a framework to assess, develop, implement and evaluate products, programs and services. (D) - **Small Business Project (NUTR 511 – Management Block)**
- 2.2 Selects, develops and/or implements nutritional screening tools for individuals, groups or populations. (D) - **Clinical Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**

- 2.3 Utilizes the nutrition care process with individuals, groups or populations in a variety of practice settings. (D) - **Clinical Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**
- 2.4\* Implements or coordinates nutritional interventions for individuals, groups or populations. (D) - **Clinical Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**
- 2.5\* Prescribes, recommends and administers nutrition-related pharmacotherapy. (S) - **Case Study Assignment (NUTR 601)**

### Unit 3: Food Systems Management

Applies food systems principles and management skills to ensure safe and efficient delivery of food and water.

- 3.1\* Directs the production and distribution of quantity and quality food products. (D) - **Food Preparation Experience Evaluation and Layout and Design Project and Presentation (NUTR 513)**
- 3.2\* Oversees the purchasing, receipt and storage of products used in food production and services. (D) - **Food Preparation Experience Evaluation and Layout and Design Project and Presentation (NUTR 513)**
- 3.3 Applies principles of food safety and sanitation to the storage, production and service of food. (D) - **ServSafe Certificate and Supervised Practice Experience Summary (NUTR 513)**
- 3.4 Applies and demonstrates an understanding of agricultural practices and processes. (S) **Agriculture Practices and Processes Discussion (NUTR 513)**

### Unit 4: Community and Population Health Nutrition

Applies community and population nutrition health theories when providing support to community or population nutrition programs.

- 4.1\* Utilizes program planning steps to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate community and population programs. (D) - **Community Preceptor Evaluation (NUTR 511)**
- 4.2 Engages in legislative and regulatory activities that address community, population and global nutrition health and nutrition policy. (D) – **Advocacy Assignment (NUTR 502)**

### Unit 5: Leadership, Business, Management and Organization

Demonstrates leadership, business and management principles to guide practice and achieve operational goals.

- 5.1\* Demonstrates leadership skills to guide practice. (D) - **Small Business Project (NUTR 511 – Management Block)**
- 5.2\* Applies principles of organization management. (D) - **Small Business Project (NUTR 511 – Management Block)**
- 5.3\* Applies project management principles to achieve project goals and objectives. (D) - **Small Business Project (NUTR 511 – Management Block)**
- 5.4 Leads quality and performance improvement activities to measure, evaluate and improve a program's services, products and initiatives. (D) - **Small Business Project (NUTR 511 – Management Block)**
- 5.5 Develops and leads implementation of risk management strategies and programs. (D) - **Small Business Project (NUTR 511 – Management Block)**

### Unit 6: Critical Thinking, Research and Evidence-Informed Practice

Integrates evidence-informed practice, research principles and critical thinking into practice.

- 6.1 Incorporates critical thinking skills in practice. (D) - **Capstone Project (NUTR 610)**

- 6.2\* Applies scientific methods utilizing ethical research practices when reviewing, evaluating and conducting research. (D) - **Seminar Presentation (NUTR 602)**
- 6.3 Applies current research and evidence-informed practice to services. (D) - **Capstone Project (NUTR 610)**

### Unit 7: Core Professional Behaviors

Demonstrates professional behaviors and effective communication in all nutrition and dietetics interactions.

- Assumes professional responsibilities to provide safe, ethical and effective nutrition services. (D) - **Self-reflection assignment (NUTR 509), Preceptor evaluations (NUTR 511)**
- Uses effective communication, collaboration and advocacy skills. (D) - **Preceptor evaluations (NUTR 511)**

#### Notes on Competencies

- **Bolded is the specific, required summative assessment method(s) used to measure achievement of the competency; these are subject to change and will be communicated in course syllabi.**
- Competency (level): Knows (K), Shows (S), Does (D)

### Course Descriptions

[Reflected in the 2026-2027 Graduate Course Catalog](#)

**MHCA 603: Healthcare Management** - Study of the principles and theories of healthcare management, and the analysis and application of these principles and theories to effective leadership, management, and decision making. Students will learn knowledge and skills for healthcare professionals to address management needs in healthcare and healthcare delivery organizations, including private and public sector healthcare organizations.

- Dietetics Program: Fall 2

**NUTR 501: Nutrition Care Process** - This course introduces the Nutrition Care Process (NCP), the systematic approach used by registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) to provide nutrition care. The course will explore the NCP in detail, including the four steps of assessment, diagnosis, intervention, and monitoring and evaluation. Students will learn to use the standardized terminology of the NCP to provide effective, evidence-based nutrition care. The course will also cover interviewing and counseling methods, incorporating principles of counseling skill development, and client-centered counseling techniques focused on behavior change.

- Dietetics Program: Fall 1

**NUTR 502: Public Health Nutrition** - Exploration of evidence-based approaches in the broad realms of public health nutrition which have demonstrated success in promoting sustained health improvements. Application of evidence-based nutrition-related health promotion strategies in a public health setting utilizing an interdisciplinary approach and employing the principles of health promotion program management.

- Dietetics Program: Spring 1

**NUTR 509: Professional Development in Dietetics** - This course is designed to equip students with the skills and tools necessary to begin a successful career as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. This course will focus on preparing students to take the registration examination for dietitians. Students will build job readiness skills and gain a comprehensive understanding of the professional expectations required in the field of dietetics.

- Dietetics Program: Spring 2

**NUTR 511: Supervised Experiential Learning in Nutrition Practice** - Supervised Experiential Learning is a key component of academic preparation to meet the competencies and performance indicators as outlined by ACEND in the Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Graduate Degree Programs (GP). This course provides students with a unique opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout their didactic coursework in a real-world, supervised clinical setting. Under the guidance of registered dietitian nutritionists and other experienced preceptors, students will gain hands-on experience in various aspects of public health nutrition, clinical nutrition, and nutrition in management needed for entry-level practice as a registered dietitian nutritionist. May be repeated for a maximum of 8 credits.

- Dietetics Program: Spring 1 (Community & Public Health), Summer 1 (Healthcare), and Fall (Specialty Practice/Management).

**NUTR 513: Food Service Organization and Management** - Covers the theory, functions, and management principles applied to foodservice organizations. Includes management of equipment, personnel, production, and cost within large quantity foodservice operations. Incorporates professional guest lectures and site visits to local food service operations.

- Dietetics Program: Fall 1 (includes SEL)

**NUTR 514: Culinary Science** - This five-week graduate-level course is designed to provide students with advanced knowledge and skills in food preparation, culinary techniques, food science, and research methods. Students will explore the art and science of food preparation while also engaging in a research component that allows them to delve deeper into a specific culinary topic of interest. Through hands-on cooking experiences, lectures, discussions, and research projects, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of culinary science and the ability to conduct culinary research.

- Dietetics Program: May Term (3 weeks)

**NUTR 600: Advanced Nutrition and Metabolism** - This advanced, graduate-level course explores complex relationships between the biochemistry of nutrients and their metabolism in normal physiology at the molecular, cellular, organ, organ system, and whole-body level.

- Dietetics Program: Fall 1

**NUTR 601: Clinical Nutrition** - Explore the fundamentals of clinical nutrition in this comprehensive course. Gain expertise in nutrition assessment, biochemical interpretation, enteral and parenteral nutrition, fluid-electrolyte management, and critical illness. The study of common chronic diseases and how they relate to clinical nutrition will also be covered. Acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for evidence-based nutrition interventions in healthcare settings.

- Dietetics Program: Spring 1

**NUTR 602: Nutrition Seminar** - Provide students with the opportunity to gain experience in research, organization of material, dissemination of library and/or original research, and communication skills in the nutrition sciences.

- Dietetics Program: Summer 1

**NUTR 610: Capstone Project in Nutrition** - Encompassing individuality, creativity, and rigor, this course provides an opportunity for students to synthesize, integrate, and apply the skills and competencies they have acquired to a nutrition science, clinical nutrition, and/or nutrition in public health problem that approximates a professional practice experience. Embedded in the nutrition capstone project should be a systematic collection and analysis of data and thoughtful reflection evidenced in both written and oral components.

- Dietetics Program: Spring 2

**NUTR 611: Research Methods and Applications** - Interpretation of qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and epidemiological research and evaluation methods; literature review, critical review of published research and practice protocols; research grant protocols; institutional review board process. The course includes the development of a formal research proposal in the field of nutrition and/or public health. Offered

- Dietetics Program: Fall 1

**NUTR 612: Pediatric Nutrition** – This course will cover nutrition recommendations for infants, children, and adolescents. Topics covered will include public health issues impacting growth and development, medical nutrition therapy for pediatric patients, and nutrition for children with special healthcare needs.

- Dietetics Program: Spring 1 or 2

**NUTR 613: Nutrition in the Older Adult** - This course will focus on nutritional considerations for older adults. Students will learn about unique physiological and social factors that influence nutrient requirements and the nutrition care process in this population.

- Dietetics Program: Spring 1 or 2

**NUTR 614: Clinical Nutrition 2** - Advance your expertise in clinical nutrition with a focus on specialized nutrition therapy for a wide range of disease states and health conditions. Explore topics such as gastrointestinal disorders, liver disease, kidney disease, oncology, and neurological disorders, among others. This graduate-level course equips you with in-depth knowledge and practical skills to address complex nutritional challenges in diverse clinical settings, enabling you to make a meaningful impact on patient health and well-being.

- Dietetics Program: Fall 2.

## Grading Policies

Samford University's grading system uses a plus and minus variation except for "A+," "F+" and "F." A statement of the meaning of each symbol is found on the university catalog website. Grades represent faculty appraisal of the quality of work. Term grades are assigned by faculty members and can be

changed only for just cause and with administrative approval. Each grade is assigned a numerical value, and quality points are determined by multiplying the value assigned to the grade earned in the course by the credits. See the university catalog website for the current requirements. The grading scale used follows the College of Health Sciences.

<b>A</b>	100-93	<b>B</b>	86.9-83	<b>C</b>	76.9-73	<b>D</b>	66.9-63
<b>A -</b>	92.9-90	<b>B-</b>	82.9-80	<b>C-</b>	72.9-70.00	<b>D-</b>	62.9-60
<b>B+</b>	89.9-87	<b>C+</b>	79.9-77	<b>D+</b>	69.9-67	<b>F</b>	<59.9

A minimum GPA of 3.0 is required to progress in the Dietetics Program. Courses with grades lower than B may be re-taken one time. When a course is retaken, both grades remain on the transcript and are used to calculate the student's grade point average (GPA). Students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher and may not re-take more than two courses during the Dietetics program.

Students whose GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation and will not be permitted to take more than nine credit hours during any semester they retake courses. Students who remain on academic probation for more than two semesters or students who receive a grade lower than B in two or more courses will be terminated from the program. Students retain the right to appeal termination decisions via the grievance procedure outlined in the student handbook. Refer to [Appendix 8 – Course Progression Policy](#).

### Preceptor Evaluations

Preceptors will use the following rating scale when evaluating competencies that are associated with SEL experiences:

- **Competent (or Proficient):** The student consistently performs this competency satisfactorily on their own, demonstrating a solid understanding and application of the required skills and knowledge. This student can work on their own.
- **Developing (or Progressing):** The student is making progress but is not yet able to meet this competency independently. Additional guidance and support are needed to reach proficiency.
- **Beginner (or Introductory):** The student is at the beginning stage of this competency and does not yet meet it satisfactorily. This term acknowledges the initial stage of learning and the need for significant development.
- **Unable to Meet at This Site:** The student is unable to demonstrate this competency at this site due to specific limitations or lack of opportunities. This assessment is not a reflection of the student's abilities but rather of the constraints of the site.

The program faculty will review preceptor evaluations to provide structured, targeted support to students who receive "developing" or "beginner" ratings. These ratings are not indicators of failure but opportunities for growth. To complete the program, students must be competent in all areas following the [Future Education Model Standards](#).

## Academic Integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate personal integrity in their work and actions. Refer to Samford's Academic Integrity Policy located in [Appendix 6 - Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate and Professional Students](#).

# Dietetics Program Expectations

## Samford University Responsibilities to Students and Facilities (RE 8.2 s)

The Clinical Coordinator schedules SEL experiences for local students and assists distance students with scheduling arrangements. They ensure that both students and preceptors are adequately prepared for these opportunities. Their responsibilities include providing preceptors with detailed orientation materials, including, (1) the overall philosophy and goals of the program, (2), (3) expectations for preceptors, including their role in providing feedback on program participants, (4), contact information for university faculty, (5) expected knowledge and skill levels of students at various stages of the program, (6) objectives & competencies for SEL experiences, (7) the role of supervising faculty and what preceptors can expect from them, (8) effective teaching strategies for experiential learning environments, (9) evaluation methods, including tools and formats used to assess students. The Clinical Coordinator will maintain communication with preceptors to ensure that learning opportunities align with both facility capabilities and student needs. Additionally, the Clinical Coordinator will assist students in providing any required written documentation to their assigned facility.

The Program Director will establish and maintain a confidential file for each student. These files will contain rotation evaluations, examples of student projects or work, and other relevant academic records. These records will be private but accessible to students upon request.

## Service Animals in Rotations

Service animals are allowed by site standards. Note that service animals are not allowed in food prep areas. A student requiring a service animal will need to notify the program director or clinical coordinator at time of admission to make accommodations when planning rotations.

## Facilities and Preceptors Responsibilities (RE 8.2 e)

Each facility will enter into a written agreement with Samford University, agreeing to participate in having students in SEL. The facility selected will provide health care to patients/customers in a setting that is suitable for the instruction of students. Each facility will have a designated preceptor. The preceptors will be knowledgeable, up to date in their specialty, demonstrate logical thinking for students, and relate theory to practice. Preceptors will be responsible for supervising the SEL education, which includes working with the student or delegating the responsibility to a qualified staff person, tracking attendance, and completing a performance evaluation. The preceptor will not use a student as a replacement for an absent employee.

## Monitoring Students' Progress (RE 8.1 a, 8.2 j, t)

The program director and academic advisor review students' progress at the conclusion of each semester. Preceptors complete an evaluation of student performance in SEL sites at the end of the students' SEL experience.

The program director (or other program faculty) meets with students once a year through face-to-face or Zoom meetings. These meetings are required for all students aiming to create a supportive environment for open communication, allowing students to express their needs, goals, and concerns while receiving personalized guidance and assistance from the program director. These meetings are a critical part of the program, ensuring that students receive personalized guidance and support for successful academic progress.

Students who are struggling in class or SEL experiences will receive one-on-one support from the program director or other faculty. Additionally, students can expect a referral to tutoring, the [Academic Success Center](#), or the [Care Team](#) as a proactive measure to provide support. Difficulty in grasping key concepts or applying core knowledge and skills in experiential learning is identified through preceptor assessment. [Remedial work](#) will be provided to help the student demonstrate [competency](#). If a student needs to repeat an SEL experience, it will be completed during the student's scheduled off time and/or after the conclusion of the regular program year. There is no guarantee that the same site or rotation will be available. The timeframe for remediation will depend on the student's needs and on the nature of the remedial work. Any remedial work must be completed within 150% of the two-year program length (3 years).

## Student Responsibilities

### Attendance (RE 8.2 q)

The program follows the College of Health Sciences [graduate calendar](#). The schedule will have a short break between each semester in addition to observed holidays. There is a May Term class between the spring 1 and summer 1 semesters. Holiday breaks include Thanksgiving and the Monday after Easter. Each student will receive individual communication from the clinical coordinator regarding SEL dates. Depending on the schedule, the Martin Luther King holiday, Memorial Day, July 4, Juneteenth, and Labor Day may be taken. If a student must make up for any hours missed during the year due to illness or approved absence, the missed time will be made up during the student's time off. Students will schedule routine medical or dental appointments during vacation time or open weeks.

### *On Campus Events*

All students are required to come to campus for orientation, summer training, and capstone presentations. Transportation to Birmingham and lodging is not provided by Samford University. If a distance student is unable to attend on-campus learning opportunities, this must be discussed with the program director.

### Absences (RE 8.2 q)

Students must be present for scheduled SEL experiences. If it is necessary for the student to be absent for any reason (including illness, pregnancy, or other circumstances) from their SEL experience, the director and the preceptor must be notified within two hours of the scheduled arrival time. Personal business is not an acceptable reason for an absence. Doctors' appointments are not acceptable reasons for an absence and must be made during off-duty time. If this is not possible, a student must request permission from their preceptor to reschedule the time. Students should not schedule appointments before receiving approval from their preceptor and the program director. All SEL hours will be

documented by the student using Competency Software. The SEL schedule must be completed as pre-determined by the clinical coordinator and preceptor. The primary preceptor will verify and sign for the hours for which the students were in attendance and designate an approved manager/supervisor/or secondary preceptor to verify any remaining hours in his/her absence. The distance students' SEL schedule is determined by the clinical coordinator, the student, and preceptors, and must be completed according to the submitted schedule. If an extenuating circumstance arises that necessitates altering an experience and/or facility, a request must be written to the preceptor immediately, and at least one month prior to the scheduled start.

### **Personal/Sick Days (RE 8.2 q)**

A student may have two personal/sick days to use at their discretion per semester. These must be scheduled ahead of time and in writing with the program director and site preceptor and documented on Canvas. If the student is absent from a site without prior notification and permission, the site preceptor will notify the program director. Documentation will be made in the student's file, and the director will meet with the student within one week to discuss the reason for absenteeism. If a student is absent for more than three days throughout the year, the program director will determine whether the student will be dismissed from the program or whether other consequences will apply. It is important to note that while students may use personal days, they will still be responsible for completing the required SEL hours requirement per course.

### **Tardiness**

Students are expected to be at each SEL site at the required time. Upon arrival at the site, the student is to report to the site director or assigned personnel. At the discretion of the site supervisor, any degree of lateness will result in the site supervisor notifying the program director. Regular tardiness is unacceptable behavior. Depending on the number and severity of cases, tardiness will result in the student receiving a written notice and possibly being dismissed from the program.

### **Illness, Accident, Injury (RE 8.2 c)**

In the event of injury or illness while at an assigned SEL site, the student should contact their site supervisor immediately and the program director or clinical supervisor as soon as possible. If an illness or injury requires the student to leave or miss hours at a facility, it is the student's responsibility to contact the site supervisor as soon as possible and arrange a schedule to make up for the missed hours. For an injury while at a SEL site, the student should contact the site supervisor immediately and seek appropriate medical treatment while following the policies and procedures of the facility for on-the-job injuries. The program director must be notified as soon as possible. The incident form is found in [Appendix 7 - Incident Form](#).

### **Attire/Dress Code**

Students are expected to dress professionally and conservatively on all SEL sites, on campus events, professional growth opportunities, and volunteer activities as a representative of Samford University unless otherwise noted. Business casual attire is appropriate. The Samford identification badge should always be worn in class, in rotations, and on field trips. Jewelry should meet facility policies.

Hygiene: students are expected to be neat, clean, and well-groomed. Hair must be clean and neatly styled. Facial hair must be neatly trimmed.

For food production areas, all regulations from the Health Department must be followed. Closed-toed, non-slip shoes must be worn. Hair shoulder-length or longer must be pulled back in a restraint, and hairnets or other hair covering which contains all hair must be worn while in production or service areas. Facial hair must be covered while working in food production or service areas. Fingernails must be short and clean. If fingernail polish is worn, then food service gloves will be required.

If a lab coat is required by the rotation, students will wear their clean and pressed white lab coat over professional attire. White lab coats will have the Samford University program patch ironed on the left sleeve three inches below the shoulder seam.

Students are only allowed to wear scrubs if approved by the rotation site. All scrubs must be professional and solid in color. If assigned to a fitness center or teaching garden, students are to attire appropriately, yet professionally for the setting.

Footwear should be appropriate for the site and follow all codes and regulations of the site. If there are any doubts regarding footwear requirements, always ask your preceptor before starting the rotation. Footwear restrictions are for safety purposes.

The following items are considered inappropriate and are not to be worn, even if allowed by the rotation facility dress code: flip flops, shorts, midriff tops, clothing that is too tight or too short, sheer fabric without undergarments, tops with spaghetti straps, wrinkled apparel, hats or headgear unless related to cultural/religious beliefs or practices (caps are allowed if they are permitted as hair restraints by a foodservice rotation site) and excessive make up and perfume.

The dress code is in effect regardless of the standards at a site unless a site has more stringent or formal dress requirements. The student should obtain a copy of the facility dress code on or before the first day on site. If a student's appearance is considered inappropriate by the preceptor, the student will be asked to correct the situation before participating in scheduled activities and the student will be required to make up time missed. In such cases, the preceptor shall notify the program director. A repeat violation within the same experience will result in removal from the site.

## Minimum Hardware and Software Requirements

### Computer

Either Window-based or Macintosh Computer Minimum Requirements

- 2.5 GHz or faster processor, dual core or greater
- 240 GB hard drive
- 4 GB memory
- USB port (or adaptor for newer devices)
- Wired Ethernet port (or adaptor for newer devices)
- Wireless capability (WPA2 Enterprise-Compatible)
- Webcam + Microphone capability.

- Computers over 5 years old are not recommended.

### Software

Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and browser software are needed, at a minimum. Office 365 is available for free to faculty, staff and students who are currently attending school or working at an academic institution. <https://www.samford.edu/departments/technology-services/services>

### Wireless Network Access

Samford University offers wireless network access across the entire campus. This service provides students and employees with the convenience and flexibility of using portable computing devices. For more information, see the [wireless networking web page](#).

### Canvas

Canvas is the web-based learning management system used at Samford. Canvas is used for posting assignments, tracking progress, posting graded assignments, and many other functions.

### Competency Software

Competency Software is used for SEL documentation for time logs and competencies met. All SEL hours will be documented using.

### Security

- [DUO 2 Factor Authentication](#)
- [Malware and Antivirus for Home Use](#)
- [The Rise of Cyberattacks](#)

### Professionalism

Students are always expected to maintain a high standard of professionalism and conduct themselves with honesty and integrity. Students are expected to adhere to the [Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics](#) and follow the scope of practice as detailed by the facility. During SEL experiences, eating, chewing gum, and smoking will be permitted only in designated areas and at assigned times. As a professional courtesy, cell phones must be turned off or set to vibration/silent during rotations. Phone calls and/or text messages should only be received during work hours for emergency purposes or as approved by the preceptor. Many facilities do not allow the use of cellular devices due to the interference with medical equipment. There should be no texting or use of social media during work hours. Some hospitals will provide the student with a pager during clinical experiences. These must be returned to the facility at the conclusion of the rotation.

### Attitude

Activities and attitudes should be consistent with high academic standards and Christian commitment and should be in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the university.

### Preparedness

Students are expected to be adequately prepared for courses and SEL experiences. This includes contacting site supervisors at least one week prior to beginning the SEL experience and completing any outside readings and assignments before starting the rotation.

## Scope of Practice

[The Scope and Standards of Practice](#) are a comprehensive framework describing both the competent level of practice as well as the depth and breadth of practice in nutrition and dietetics for RDNs or NDTRs. The Scope and Standards of Practice serve as a key resource for credentialed nutrition and dietetics practitioners to understand the practice environment and standards that guide practice; evaluate, improve, and expand their practice; and demonstrate and assure safe and quality practice for the individuals and organizations they serve.

## Program Completion Requirements (RE 8.2 m)

### Maximum Time for Program Completion

The Dietetics Program is two years long (5 semesters total). To receive a verification statement, students must complete the program within 150% of the initial program length, which is equal to 3 years.

### Program Completion

Successful completion of the Dietetics Program requires the demonstration of competencies essential for entry-level practice as a registered dietitian nutritionist, aligning with the [Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Graduate Degree Programs \(GP\)](#) and meeting [Samford Graduation Requirements](#).

#### *Samford Graduation Requirements*

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of all graduation requirements. Students must satisfy all graduation criteria outlined in the Samford University Catalog (or, if more current, any official publications from the school/department) that were in effect at the time of their major enrollment, assuming continuous enrollment except for stated vacation periods. To initiate the graduation process, students must apply for graduation, prompting their advisor to conduct a degree audit/grad check. During this audit, the advisor will assess completed coursework against either a department checklist or a degree audit generated by the Office of the Registrar. Following the review, if the student is progressing toward graduation that semester, the advisor will forward the signed degree audit/grad check to the Office of the Registrar.

#### *Dietetics Program Completion Requirements*

- Completion of required academic coursework and 1,000 hours of experiential learning within 150% of the two-year program length (3 years).
- Documentation of competent (or proficient) performance in all supervised experiential learning (SEL) experiences and associated assignments.
- Achievement of a B in Samford's Letter Grading System policy, see [Graduate Course Catalog](#) or higher in all didactic courses, and a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher (this includes both didactic and experiential learning courses).
- Adherence to all behavioral and academic integrity standards as outlined in the Academy's [Code of Ethics](#) and [Scope and Standards of Practice for RDNs](#) and the Samford University [policy on academic integrity](#).

## Degree and Verification Statement (RE 8.2 n)

Upon fulfilling the Samford Graduation Requirements and meeting the Completion Requirements of the Dietetics Program, students will be granted their degrees. The program director will submit Verification Statements and necessary information to the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) to confirm eligibility for the Registered Examination for Dietitians. Subsequently, the program director will present students with copies of the Verification Statement for use in state licensure applications and as evidence of eligibility for potential employers.

### *Registration / RDN Credentialing*

After graduates are validated by CDR, individuals are eligible to take the [registration examination for dietitians](#). Passing the CDR exam grants the privilege of using the Registered Dietitian (RD) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) credentials. The two credentials have identical meanings. The RD / RDN credential signifies that an individual has undergone the appropriate education, training and mentoring to protect the safety of the public where food and nutrition issues are concerned and indicates to the public that the individual is the recognized nutrition expert. RDE is not a credential and should not be used. A complaint with CDR can be filed against an individual using RDE, RD Eligible, Registered Dietitian Eligible or RD if they are not registered as an RD with CDR. Upon completing the advanced degree as well as any future additional certifications, [follow the guidelines](#) on the appropriate order for credential placement.

### *State Licensure*

Some states require RDNs to obtain licensure or certification to practice. Specific licensure requirements vary from state to state, and among territories. Individual state licensure requirements can be found on [CDR's website](#).

### *Alabama Licensure*

In Alabama, the Alabama Dietetics/Nutrition Practice Act of 1989 provides for licensing qualifications, renewals and revocation, exemptions, reciprocity, and penalties. It is the purpose of this Act to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by providing for the licensing and regulation of persons engaged in the practice of dietetics and nutrition. More information is available on the Alabama State Board of Examiners for Dietetics/Nutritionists [website](#).

## Programmatic Issues and Concerns (RE 8.2 g, k, l)

### Student Complaints

Students have a right to file a complaint regarding any aspects of the program, including but not limited to preceptors, training sites, faculty, or course or SEL experiences without fear of retaliation. When a complaint is received by a student, it will be communicated with the program director, and the complaint will be discussed in detail with the student. The next step will include the program director discussing the complaint with the Nutrition and Dietetics Department Chair. When necessary, the situation will be discussed with the Dean of the School of Public Health. Each step in the complaint process will be documented and will culminate in a written summary and action plan in the student's file. If the complaint is not resolved, a grievance may be filed with Samford University according to the guidelines provided in the university student handbook.

## Handling Complaints from Preceptors

When a complaint is received from a preceptor, the complaint will be discussed in detail with the preceptor and the student separately and then together. The next step will include the program director discussing the complaint with the Nutrition and Dietetics Department Chair. When necessary, the situation will be discussed with the Dean of the School of Public Health. If necessary, a meeting may be held between the program director, the student, the preceptor and the Nutrition and Dietetics Department Chair. Each step in the complaint process will be documented in the student's file and will culminate in a written summary and action plan.

## Remediation

If a student's performance needs improvement or is unacceptable for any didactic course or SEL experience, the student will meet with the program director to review the unsatisfactory performance. The unsatisfactory performance, communication, remediation plan, and remediation plan outcome will be documented in the student's file.

For academic performance, the program director will discuss the student's performance with the faculty member who reported concern. The program director and faculty members will discuss a plan for the student. For supervised experiential learning, it may be necessary to schedule time to repeat the task(s) required to demonstrate competence. This time is scheduled in conjunction with the preceptor of the experience in question.

Tutorial support is provided as needed. Students who are struggling with class or SEL material can expect one-on-one support from the faculty member teaching the course or directing the supervised practice. Difficulty in grasping key concepts or applying core knowledge and skills in SEL is identified through preceptor assessment or by faculty grading of assigned work. Students having difficulty will be counseled by the supervising faculty and assisted with applying specific approaches to improve the learning process.

If necessary, remedial work will be provided to ensure the student has grasped the material and can apply it in more than one situation. Students desiring tutoring will be assisted in identifying appropriate options. Samford's Communication Resource Center offers free tutoring for all Samford students for all types of oral, written, and critical reading assignments, including research projects.

## Withdrawal (RE 8.2 p)

If a student fails to adhere to the program's policies and procedures outlined in this handbook, the graduate course catalog, and guidelines provided on the University website, they will be required to withdraw from the program. Students encountering difficulties will be guided through a process aimed at achieving performance improvement:

- Early Identification: The program proactively identifies struggling students through initial interviews, interest surveys, and midpoint check-ins, allowing for early intervention.

- **Individualized Counseling:** Struggling students receive personalized attention from program faculty and may be directed to resources such as tutoring or the Academic Success Center. Remedial measures are customized to address the student's specific needs and timeframe.
- **Exploration of Alternative Career Paths:** Students are encouraged to explore alternative career paths through the Career Development Center, offering individual counseling sessions to discuss their interests and aspirations.
- **Ongoing Support and Monitoring:** Continuous support is provided throughout the student's career exploration journey to ensure they receive the necessary assistance and guidance.

If a student's performance consistently falls below the defined expectations to the extent that they are unable or unwilling to correct the deficit, and therefore cannot fulfill the required program competencies, they will be mandated to withdraw from the program.

Students have the option to withdraw from the program at any time. Upon withdrawal, their position in the program is closed and no longer available for re-admittance. If a student wishes to reenter the program, they must reapply as a new student. Any previously paid tuition and fees are non-refundable, and if the student is re-accepted upon reapplication, the previous fees and tuition will not be credited toward program costs.

### Leave of Absence

A student wishing to take a leave of absence from the program may request to do so in writing to the program director. The granting of the requested leave is at the discretion of the program director and the Director of Graduate and Undergraduate Student Services. Approvals may be required from the Department Chair of the Nutrition and Dietetics and the Dean of the School of Public Health. The time frame associated with a leave of absence is not counted in the 3 years necessary to complete the program.

### Reinstatement

If a student has been dismissed from the program for any reason, no future application will be considered. (This is not the same as withdrawing) Students returning from an approved leave of absence will be reinstated into the program and will continue at the point where they left off.

## Samford's Student Services and Resources (Online Students)

### Procedures for Protecting the Privacy of Distance Education Students (RE 8.2 o, r)

Program faculty and staff must follow specific procedures to protect the privacy of distance education students, including using Canvas for course instruction, Banner for grade reporting, and university email or Canvas messaging for confidential communication. Student work, scores, and grades must remain confidential, and login credentials should not be shared. Unauthorized access to Canvas courses is prohibited, and role assignments must follow an educational need-to-know basis. Faculty and staff must complete mandatory FERPA training and comply with FERPA guidelines when sharing student information. Outside reviewers must be approved through the non-disclosure agreement process before temporary access to Canvas is granted. See [Appendix 1: Protecting the Privacy of Distance Education Students](#).

### Academic Success Center

The Academic Success Center provides academic consultations online and outside of regular business hours (posted on website) upon request. These consultations can be in-person or via phone, email, or virtually to help students identify academic goals and locate the needed resources to meet those goals. Additionally, several resources are posted online and are accessible to all students. These include free tutoring schedule (online support may also be available during these times based on tutor availability and upon request); private tutor list in various subjects; study tips and resources, including links to Dr. Chew's "How to Study" video series on YouTube; links to other areas of student support where referrals are needed. <https://www.samford.edu/departments/academic-success-center/>

### Accessibility & Accommodations

Samford Online students who wish to request accommodations may visit Accessibility and Accommodations' website for information regarding the steps in the registration process and to complete the application for accommodations. Accessibility and Accommodations is available to meet with students via telephone, virtually or other accessible platforms. Students are encouraged to contact the office at 205-726-4078 or [disability@samford.edu](mailto:disability@samford.edu) with any questions.

### Career Development Center

The Career Development Center's resources are available to students located on campus, those enrolled in online programs, and alumni. Online assessments and resources, a virtual career library, resume examples, job postings, and more are accessible through the department's website. In addition, career counselors are available for telephone and virtual meetings, including mock interviews, on an as-needed basis. <https://www.samford.edu/departments/career-development-center/>

### Communication Resource Center

The Communication Resource Center (CRC) offers free tutoring for Samford students in oral and written communication as well as support for developing and improving critical thinking skills. Students are encouraged to schedule appointments at [samford.mywconline.com](http://samford.mywconline.com). Students in online programs may opt for online appointments through the same link and can upload files for the tutor to review. <https://www.samford.edu/departments/communication-resource-center/>

### Counseling Services

The Office of Counseling Services and Wellness Programs (C&WP) provides face-to-face mental health counseling for all Samford University students. Some of the areas of assistance include adjustment to college, personal exploration/growth, managing anxiety, relationships, substance abuse and psychotherapy. We maintain an up to date resource list online, which outlines various services and providers a student may need for ongoing and specific mental health issues in the larger Birmingham area.

For distance and online students who cannot travel for a face-to-face session, our office additionally provides phone consultations for brief assessment and referral purposes in and beyond Birmingham, AL. The National Suicide Hotline (1-800-273-8255) and local Birmingham Crisis Center (205-323-7777)

provide 24/7 phone counsel for suicidal individuals in crisis, as well as Rape Response resources and counsel (205-323-7273). <https://www.samford.edu/departments/counseling/>

### Samford Bookstore

The Samford Bookstore offers Bulldog gear and course-required materials, available in-store or online for shipping or in-store pick-up. Textbooks are available often in used and for rent or purchase.

<https://www.bkstr.com/samfordstore/home>

### Spiritual Life

The Office of Spiritual Life provides online Convocation credit options for online-only students in the form of recorded lectures and other programs on iTunes U. <https://www.samford.edu/spiritual-life/>

### Technology Services

All Samford students have access, free of charge, to two collaboration suites, G Suite for Education and Microsoft Office 365. Both suites provide collaboration space for students to work with each other and with faculty. Both also provide unlimited document storage in the cloud, accessible from anywhere.

MS Office 365 includes the full Office Suite, Word, PowerPoint and Excel (downloadable to a student's personal computer), as well as OneNote, OneDrive, Yammer and Teams. G Suite for Education provides student email by Gmail, Calendar, Classroom, Contacts, Google Drive, Docs, Forms, Groups, Sheets, Sites, Slides, and Vault. All students also have access to online mathematics software - Mathematica, SAS, SPSS and Minitab.

Students and faculty have access to Canvas, the university learning management system, online and through the Canvas mobile app. Canvas can be used for course delivery and support, online testing and grade management. Canvas Studio is available to assist with and support video content. Web and videoconferencing are provided centrally virtually. Additionally, many classrooms on campus are fitted with Echo360 lecture capture devices. Echo360 video content can be uploaded through Canvas Studio into Canvas or may be accessed directly from Echo360 in the cloud.

Other online course management tools include Qualtrics Research, a cloud-based survey instrument, Respondus for exam creation and management, and Turnitin for plagiarism detection, online grading and peer review.

The Samford Service Desk is available 24 hours, 7 days per week, 365 days per year for students as well as faculty and staff at 205-726-2662 or through email at [support@samford.edu](mailto:support@samford.edu). After normal business hours, calls to the Service Desk automatically roll to the off-site help desk to assist with tier 1 issues and/or to escalate system outages or issues that affect multiple callers.

<https://www.samford.edu/departments/technology-services/>

### University Library

The University Library provides a range of [resources and services](#) in support of online students.

Resources available to students include access to video tutorials that cover how to use the online

catalog, electronic databases, citing sources as well as how to construct search strategies. Additionally, students may click the “Ask Us” button on this or any library page in order to ask questions via chat, email, text, telephone, or schedule a consultation related to library research and services. Links to services such as interlibrary loan and checkout are also covered on this page.

Additional resources may be accessed on the [Student Services webpage](#).

## Samford Policies and Requirements

All Academic Policies and Regulations for Samford graduate programs are available in the most recent Graduate Catalog: <https://www.samford.edu/departments/registrar/academic-catalogs>. Students are required to consult the syllabus for each course to access course-specific policies and procedures.

### Emergency Readiness

RAVE is the primary method of communication used by Samford University during a campus emergency. If you have not registered for RAVE alerts, please use the link provided below and go to the My Contact Information box on your Portal homepage to update your RAVE Emergency Alert Information. <https://connect.samford.edu/group/mycampus/student> Samford University utilizes Alert Samford for desktop, laptop, tablet, and mobile devices to provide students with information, procedures, and links about what to do in the event of a variety of emergency situations that could occur on our campus. If you do not already have the Alert Samford app on your mobile device, laptop, desktop, or tablet, please click on this link <https://connect.samford.edu/group/mycampus/student> and go to the Emergency Information box on your Portal homepage for instructions on downloading the App. Once you have downloaded the App, please take time to review the information provided. It is important that you know what to do in case of a campus emergency.

### Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities or chronic health conditions who wish to request accommodations should register with the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations (205) 726-4078, [access@samford.edu](mailto:access@samford.edu), DBH 203, [www.samford.edu/dr](http://www.samford.edu/dr). Students who are registered with OAA are responsible for sending me an official notification of their accommodations through the OAA online portal. Accommodations will be implemented after we discuss how they apply for this course. Accommodations may not be applied retroactively and should not alter fundamental course outcomes.

### Title IX

Samford University and its faculty are committed to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for all students and the entire University community. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or discrimination based on sex or gender, please know that help and support are available. Samford University strongly encourages all community members to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office. You may contact the Title IX Office at 205-726-2764 or [titleix@samford.edu](mailto:titleix@samford.edu).

Please be aware that all faculty members are required to disclose information concerning suspected or alleged sexual harassment or other violations of the Samford University Sexual Misconduct Policy to the Title IX Office. You can also make a disclosure yourself, including an anonymous report, through the Sexual Misconduct Report Form accessible on the [Title IX website](#). If the Title IX Office receives information about an incident, they will reach out to offer information about resources, rights, and available procedural options. It is a student's choice whether they wish to engage in or respond to that outreach.

If you, or another student you know, wish to speak with a confidential resource who is not obligated to report information to the Title IX Coordinator, please reference the list of confidential resources in the online student handbook. You can also connect with a confidential resource through the Counseling Office at 205-726-4083 or the Office of Spiritual Life at 205-726-2825.

### **Student Bereavement Policy**

In the event a student experiences the death of a significant member of his or her family or community, the University may excuse absences up to five days for travel and bereavement. The provost's office will notify advisors and instructors of excused absences. It will be the responsibility of the student to follow up with faculty regarding missed exams, quizzes and required work for the class.

### **Inclement Weather**

Inclement weather or other events beyond the control of the University that might cause risk or danger to students, faculty and staff may occasionally result in changes to normal University operations, including cancellation of classes or events; the class schedule and/or calendar may be adjusted.

### **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Records Privacy Act, also known as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment, first became law in 1974 and has been amended numerous times. It specifies the rights students have to control certain information held as part of their educational record. See additional information [here](#).

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with applicable federal and state laws, such as Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act and ADA Amendments, the University does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, religion, or any other protected status under federal, state or local law applicable to the University, in its education policies, programs, and activities, in its admissions policies, in employment policies and practices, and all other areas of the University. As a faith-based institution, the University is exempt from certain laws and regulations concerning discrimination.

The university has a responsibility to clearly communicate its commitment to equal opportunity in education and employment, and to making its programs and services accessible to those with disabilities. Use the full statement above in catalogs, long recruitment pieces, collegiate bulletins,

employee handbooks and application forms or the following approved statements as appropriate on other marketing materials.

### **Insurance Coverage**

The university does not assume any responsibility for personal items brought onto campus. Items damaged in the buildings due to, but not limited to the following: maintenance, inclement weather, theft, water or fire are not covered by university insurance.

# Appendix 1: Protecting the Privacy of Distance Education Students

## Samford University Office of Academic Affairs Procedures for Protecting the Privacy of Distance Education Students

As described in Samford University Policy 6.04, *Computing and Information Technology Values and Policies*, the institution provides for security of user and institutional data (including data within distance and correspondence education courses or programs, and on campus programs and courses) through a variety of commercially reasonable practices. In addition to maintaining the security measures required in Policy 6.04, staff and faculty are expected to adhere to the following procedures for protecting the privacy of distance education students:

- Teach all distance education courses using Canvas, the University's learning management system, to ensure security of student work and grades.
- Utilize the University's secure student information system, Banner, to report student grades.
- Utilize Canvas messaging or the University's email system for all official, confidential communication such as providing feedback on student work, releasing course progress information to students, etc. Personal email accounts are not permitted for corresponding with students.
- Keep student work, scores, and grades confidential. Students enrolled in the course should not have access to other students' work or grades.
- As per the Confidentiality-Security agreement signed each year, keep course, Canvas, and email account information secure. Sharing of login information is not permitted.
- Unauthorized access to Canvas courses is not permitted. This includes assigning students a different role than that of a student. Anyone not assigned as the official "instructor of record" should only be assigned a teaching role if there is an educational need-to-know rationale for having access.
- Complete mandatory FERPA training and follow FERPA guidelines for sharing student educational record information with other faculty, staff, parents, or others outside the university.
- Outside reviewers (accreditation, academic program review, etc.) must be approved through the non-disclosure agreement process before given access to Canvas and are only temporarily enrolled in applicable courses. This process originates with review by the Director of Instructional Design ([samfordonline@samford.edu](mailto:samfordonline@samford.edu)).

## Appendix 2: Samford University Dietetics Ethical Behavior

<b>Policy Area:</b> Ethical Behavior
<b>Title of Policy:</b> Academic Integrity and Professional Behavior
<b>Effective Date:</b> February 3, 2014
<b>Approved Date:</b> August 15, 2014
<b>Review Date:</b> May 2016, May 2018, May 2019, June 2021, March 2024

### Rationale or background to policy

The program must have systems to maximize the likelihood that all students who are accepted into the program will successfully complete it with the knowledge, skills and professional values required for practice. This entails adherence to Samford University policies and procedures for academic integrity as well as to the Academy's Code of Ethics.

### Policy Statement

In keeping with the missions of Samford University and the College of Health Sciences, students are expected to adhere in every instance with the following ideals:

A degree from Samford University is evidence of achievement in scholarship and citizenship. Activities and attitudes should be consistent with high academic standards and Christian commitment and should be in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the University. At Samford, academic integrity is expected of every community member in all endeavors and includes a commitment to honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and respect.

The University Statement on Academic Dishonesty is as follows: students, upon enrollment, enter into a voluntary association with Samford University. They must be willing to observe high standards of intellectual integrity, respect knowledge, and practice academic honesty. Those who cheat on an examination or class assignment are not only academically dishonest, but also are deficient in the scholarly maturity necessary for college study. Those who engage in academic dishonesty are subject to severe punishment. The more dependent, the more inevitable becomes ultimate failure, often accompanied by public disgrace. Any act to obtain an unfair academic advantage is considered dishonest.

Code of Ethics for the Profession of Dietetics, from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

- The dietetics practitioner conducts himself/herself with honesty, integrity, and fairness.
- The dietetics practitioner supports and promotes high standards of professional practice.

### Procedures

In accordance with the Samford University's *Code of Values* and the definitions of academic integrity outlined in the student handbook, and with expectations set forth in the Academy Code of Ethics, if a student's behavior is found to be unethical by a consensus vote of the program faculty, the following progressive steps will be applied:

- A verbal warning and counseling
- A written warning and notification of the program admissions committee
- Dismissal from the program based on consensus decision of the admissions committee, with each step in the process fully documented and placed in the student's permanent department file.

For violations of academic integrity, the program aligns itself with university procedures as described in the Samford University Student Handbook, located on the university website. A copy of Samford University's policy and procedures is also included in the Appendices. There can be an overlap between the two realms of dietetics ethical violations and university academic integrity. If inappropriate conduct violates both domains, the procedure for handling the matter will default to the Code of Ethics violation procedures in the interest of maximally assuring protection of the public from potentially harmful practice.

## Appendix 3: Samford University Dietetics Precepting Facilities and Organizations

<b>Policy Area:</b> Precepting Facilities and Organizations
<b>Title of Policy:</b> Process for Site Selection and On-Going Review for Effective Dietetics Student Training
<b>Effective Date:</b> February 3, 2014
<b>Approved Date:</b> August 15, 2014, May 14, 2024

### Rationale or background to policy

Following the [Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Graduate Degree Programs \(GP\)](#), the program must have policies and procedures to maintain written agreements with institutions, organizations, and/or agencies providing supervised experiential learning experiences to meet the competencies. The policies and procedures must address the selection and periodic evaluation of adequacy and appropriateness of facilities to ensure that facilities can provide supervised experiential learning experiences compatible with the competencies that students are expected to achieve.

### Policy Statement

The program director and/or clinical coordinator will select supervised experiential learning sites based on the ability of the site to provide students with practical experiences that facilitate the achievement of the program mission, goals, objectives, and competencies. The program director or faculty having relevant expertise will discuss with the lead preceptor and review competencies and learning activities appropriate to the site's emphasis area. Scheduling procedures, length of experience, and learning activities will be mutually agreeable to both the program and primary preceptor. An affiliation agreement will be obtained for all sites providing a supervised experiential learning experience, and/or which will have an ongoing relationship for student training throughout the program. The exception is for learning sites located on Samford University's campus. Affiliation agreements must be signed by both parties before students may be placed at that site. Ongoing site evaluation will occur through student evaluations, correspondence with the primary preceptor, and observations of the program director or other faculty when visiting the site. Formal affiliation agreements have been developed, or if the agreement is prepared by the precepting site, reviewed by Samford University's College of Health Science's Contracts and Operational Services office. The program director follows the rules and guidelines set and mandated by the Contracts and Operational Services office. The affiliation agreements are maintained in good standing and are filed in the Contracts and Operational Services office. The duration of each affiliation agreement is three years.

### Procedures

The formal agreement is in effect when the following have occurred:

- a) The site indicates willingness to precept Samford dietetics students.
- b) Facility and preceptor credentialing/expertise have been confirmed.
- c) The program policy and procedure manual has been reviewed.
- d) Program mission, goals, objectives, and competencies have been reviewed to determine whether the site can provide experiences that meet requirements.
- e) The program director (or other faculty) has visited the facility, or conducted an in-depth interview via phone or email, to ensure adequacy and provide preceptor training.
- f) The facility acknowledges it can meet expectations for student training and signs the agreement.

## Appendix 4: Samford University Dietetics Precepting Facilities and Organizations for Distance Supervised Experiential Learning

<b>Policy Area:</b> Precepting Facilities and Organizations for Distance Supervised Experiential Learning
<b>Title of Policy:</b> Process for Site Selection and On-Going Review for Effective Dietetics Student Training
<b>Effective Date:</b> February 3, 2014
<b>Approved Date:</b> August 15, 2014; May 2017; March 2018; May 2019, May 14, 2024

### Rationale or background to policy

Following the [Future Education Model Accreditation Standards for Graduate Degree Programs \(GP\)](#), the program must have policies and procedures to maintain written agreements with institutions, organizations, and/or agencies providing supervised experiential learning experiences to meet the competencies. The policies and procedures must address the selection and periodic evaluation of adequacy and appropriateness of facilities to ensure that facilities can provide supervised experiential learning experiences compatible with the competencies that students are expected to achieve.

### Policy Statement

All components of facility and preceptor qualifications expressed in the “Process for Site Selection and On-Going Review for Effective Dietetics Student Training Policy applies, with the following additions:

Using the guidelines provided by the program, students will be responsible for identifying and engaging supervised experiential learning sites that are appropriately accredited and which provide qualified preceptors. Once identified the student will submit facility and contact names to the program director or faculty no less than 10 weeks prior to the beginning date of the rotation. The program director or faculty having relevant expertise will establish contact via phone, email, and/or virtually in order to meet with the lead preceptor and review competencies and learning activities appropriate to the site’s emphasis area. The facility must demonstrate, through documentation of accreditation, licensure, and credentialing. Tools such as a website, descriptive brochure of the facility and its services, or other reliable information will be reviewed to validate an appropriate supervised experiential learning experience will be provided. Scheduling procedures, length of experience, and learning activities will be mutually agreeable to both the program and primary preceptor. An affiliation agreement will be obtained for any site providing the equivalent of a full supervised experiential learning experience, and/or which will have an ongoing relationship for student training throughout the program. Affiliation agreements must be signed by both parties before students may be placed at that site. Ongoing site evaluation will occur through student evaluations, correspondence with the primary preceptor, and analysis of the depth and quality of the distance students’ work as demonstrated on assignments. The remaining sections of the “Process for Site Selection and On-Going Review for Effective Dietetics Student Training” Policy apply as written.

## Appendix 5: Samford University Dietetics Student or Facility Complaints

<b>Policy Area:</b> Complaint Resolution
<b>Title of Policy:</b> Student or Facility Complaints
<b>Effective Date:</b> February 3, 2014
<b>Approved Date:</b> August 15, 2014
<b>Reviewed:</b> August 3, 2017, April 20, 2026

### **Rationale or background to policy**

The program or sponsoring institution must produce and make available to students a complaint policy that includes procedures to be followed in the event of a written complaint related to the ACEND accreditation standards, student rights to due process, and appeal mechanisms. Students must receive information on how to submit a complaint to ACEND for unresolved complaints related to the ACEND accreditation standards.

### **Policy Statement**

Students have the right to file a complaint regarding any aspect of the program, including a preceptor, supervised practice facility, course or supervised practice requirements, etc. without fear of retaliation.

### **Procedures**

Complaints will be addressed with the following process:

1. File a written complaint with the program director within 90 days of the recording of the final grade in the relevant didactic or SEL experience.
2. Provide information to the program director at a mutually agreed time and forum about the circumstances of the complaint so the process may go forward.
3. Participate in the scheduled meeting with the program director and any other parties directly involved in the complaint for the purpose of developing a resolution to the complaint.
4. If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily in the department, a grievance may be filed with the university according to the guidelines provided in the university student handbook.
5. As a last resort, any unresolved complaints related to professional accreditation standards or other professional issues, students may contact:

The Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics  
 120 South Riverside Plaza  
 Suite 2190  
 Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
 1-800-877-1600, ext. 5400

## Appendix 6: Academic Integrity Policy for Graduate and Professional Students

### Academic Regulations

Students are expected to know regulations and policies found in the [Samford Academic Catalog](#) and the Samford University Student Handbook (for their program of study). Keeping abreast of the school calendar, critical deadlines, as well as all university communication is also the student's responsibility.

### Academic Integrity

A degree from Samford University is evidence of achievement in scholarship and citizenship. Activities and attitudes should be consistent with high academic standards and Christian commitment and should be in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the university. At Samford, academic integrity is expected of every community member in all endeavors and includes a commitment to honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and respect.

The University Statement on Academic Dishonesty is as follows: students, upon enrollment, enter into a voluntary association with Samford University. They must be willing to observe high standards of intellectual integrity, respect knowledge, and practice academic honesty. Those who cheat on an examination or class assignment are not only academically dishonest, but also are deficient in the scholarly maturity necessary for college study. Those who engage in academic dishonesty are subject to severe punishment. The more dependent, the more inevitable becomes ultimate failure, often accompanied by public disgrace. Any act to obtain an unfair academic advantage is considered dishonest.

If a student is accused of a violation, a hearing panel composed of faculty and students will review the violation and may impose sanctions that include probation, suspension, or expulsion. The types of misconduct that constitute a violation, as well as the full text of the policy, including procedures and appeals, is available on the [Registrar's Office page](#) of the university website.

All Academic Policies and Regulations for Samford graduate programs are available in the most recent Graduate Catalog: <https://www.samford.edu/departments/registrar/academic-catalogs>.

# Appendix 7: Incident Form

This form is to be completed and turned into the program director’s office within 24 hours of the incident.

**CLINICAL INCIDENT REPORTING FORM**  
**SAMFORD UNIVERSITY**  
**College of Health Sciences**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department of \_\_\_\_\_  
Clinical Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Clinical Site \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Incident:**

Provide a brief description of the incident (omitting all Patient Health Information, (to comply with HIPAA)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Action Taken by Student**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notified Department                | Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Incident report completed          | Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative Written                  | Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notify liability insurance carrier | Date _____ |

**Action Taken by Department**

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notified Dept. Chair                       | Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notified Dean of School                    | Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discussed incident with student            | Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of narrative to student clinical file | Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samford Risk Mgmt. notified                | Date _____ |

THIS FORM IS FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

## Appendix 8: Course Progression Policy

<b>Policy Area:</b>	Academic Policies
<b>Title of Policy:</b>	Course Progression Policy
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Aug. 24, 2020
<b>Approved Date:</b>	Jan. 28, 2020

In order to progress in the Master of Science (MS) in nutrition program, the student must:

1. Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or above on all coursework.
2. Make a grade of B or better in each required or prescribed course in the MS in nutrition curriculum. Note: A grade of C or lower constitutes failure in any required or prescribed course in the MS in nutrition curriculum.
3. A student will be allowed to take a failed MS in nutrition course one additional time but must get a B or above for a passing grade.
4. Failure in a course may cause an interruption in the students' matriculation in terms of scheduling courses.
5. A student who fails (C or lower) two MS in nutrition courses will be terminated from the program.
6. A student may not enroll in any MS in nutrition course more than twice.
7. A student who fails to successfully complete a required MS in nutrition course within one calendar year of academic probation notification will be dismissed from the program.
8. Students must be aware that matters of plagiarism, unethical, unprofessional, or unsafe conduct may result in immediate dismissal from the MS in nutrition program.

Students may not receive grades lower than B for MS in nutrition courses. Courses with grades lower than B may be re-taken one time. When a course is retaken, both grades remain on the transcript, and both are used in calculating the student's grade point average (GPA). Students must maintain a GPA of 3.00 or higher and may not re-take more than two courses during their MS in nutrition program.

Students whose GPA falls below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation and will not be permitted to take more than nine credit hours during any semester they retake courses. Students who remain on academic probation for more than two semesters or students who receive a grade lower than B in two or more courses will be terminated from the MS in nutrition program. Students retain the right to appeal termination decisions via the grievance procedure outlined in the MS in nutrition student handbook.

# ATTACHMENTS

## Attachment 1: Handbook Verification

### VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT AND AGREEMENT, CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Samford University  
MS in Nutrition, Dietetics Concentration: Dietetics Program  
Handbook of Policies and Procedures

### VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT AND AGREEMENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT FILE COPY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name) have received a copy of the Samford University Dietetics Program Handbook. I understand that it contains important information regarding the program’s policies and my obligations as a student. I have familiarized myself with the material in the Handbook and understand that I am governed by its contents. I attest that I understand all the material presented in this handbook, and that I have been given the opportunity to clarify any information I did not understand.

I understand and agree that I am bound by all policies and procedures outlined in the handbook, Samford University, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics for dietetics professionals.

I understand and agree that the Samford University School of Public Health and the Dietetics Program have made no promise or guarantee that upon completion of the program, I will obtain employment in dietetics, nor do they ensure that upon completion of the program, I will pass the registration examination for registered dietitians.

I also understand and agree that in my performance as a student, I will maintain the confidentiality of all medical and/or personal information regarding the patient, client and/or family always. I understand that any violation of this confidentiality will constitute a breach of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Honor Code of Samford University, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics.

Student Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    (month)                                    (day)                                    (year)

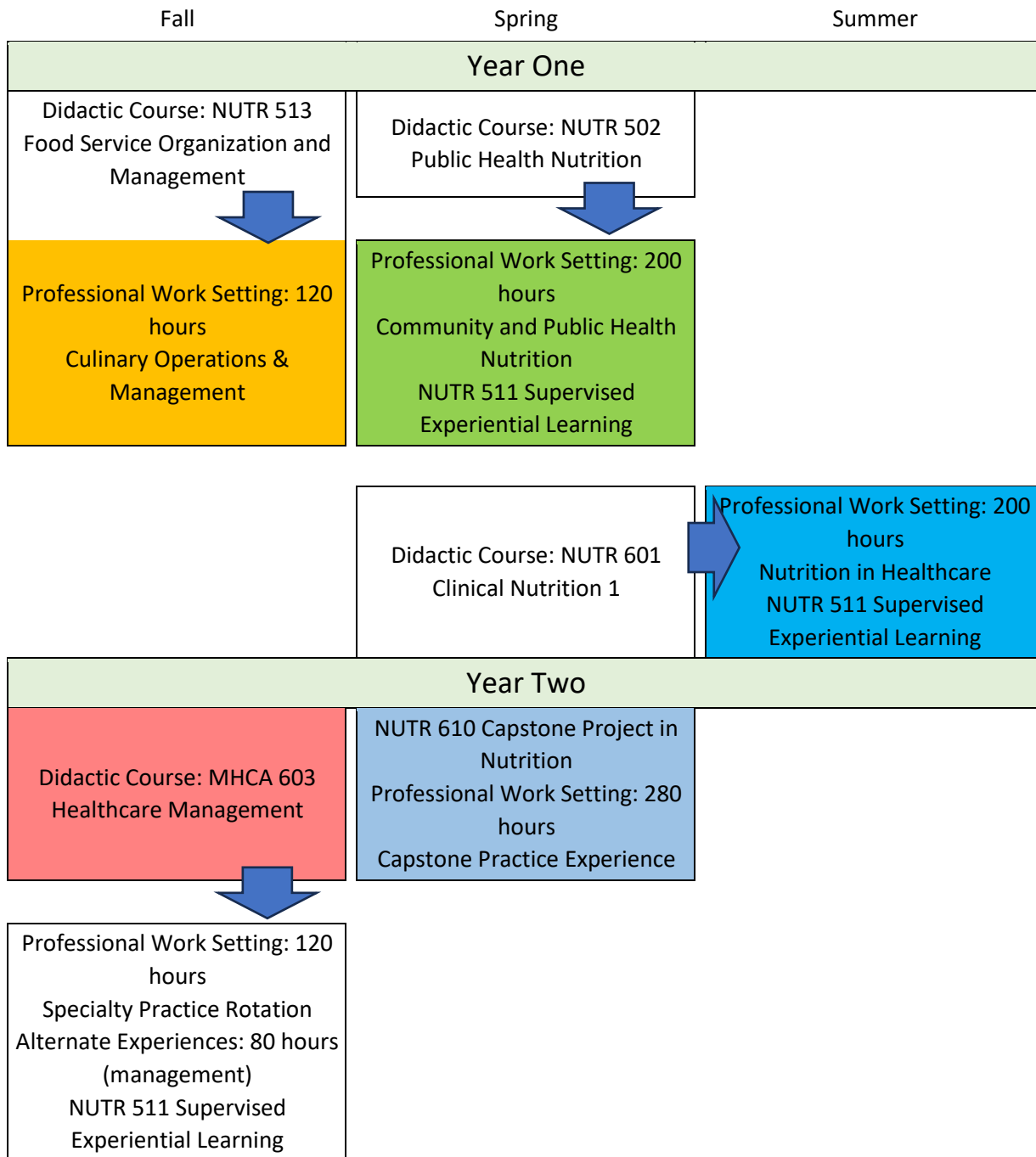
## Attachment 2: Plan of Study

<b>Fall 1</b>	<b>Class</b>	
NUTR 501	Nutrition Care Process	3
NUTR 513	Food Service Organization and Management (includes SEL)*	3
NUTR 600	Advanced Nutrition and Metabolism	4
NUTR 611	Research Methods	3
	<b>Credits</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Spring 1</b>	<b>Class</b>	
NUTR 502	Public Health Nutrition	3
NUTR 511	Supervised Experiential Learning in Nutrition Practice*	3
NUTR 601	Clinical Nutrition	3
NUTR 612	Pediatric Nutrition (or NUTR 613 Nutrition in the Older Adult)	3
	<b>Credits</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Summer 1</b>	<b>Class</b>	
NUTR 511	Supervised Experiential Learning in Nutrition Practice*	2
NUTR 514	Culinary Science	2
XXX	Elective (students may take their elective during Summer 1, Fall 2, or Spring 2)	3
	<b>Credits</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Fall 2</b>	<b>Class</b>	
NUTR 511	Supervised Experiential Learning in Nutrition Practice*	3
NUTR 602	Seminar	1
NUTR 614	Clinical Nutrition 2	3
MHCA 603	Healthcare Management	3
	<b>Credits</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Spring 2</b>	<b>Class</b>	
NUTR 509	Professional Development in Dietetics	1
NUTR 610	Capstone Project in Nutrition*	3
NUTR 613	Nutrition in the Older Adult (or NUTR 612 Pediatric Nutrition)	2
	<b>Credits</b>	<b>9</b>
*Notes courses which include supervised experiential learning (SEL)		

## Planned Supervised Experiential Learning Hours

<b>Rotation /Course</b>	<b>Estimated # of hours in Professional Work Setting</b>	<b>Estimated # of hours in Alternate Experiences</b>
NUTR 513 Food Service Organization and Management	120	
NUTR 511 Supervised Experiential Learning (Community/Public Health Block)	176	24
NUTR 511 Supervised Experiential Learning (Clinical Block*)	200	
NUTR 511 Supervised Experiential Learning (Management Block)	120	80
NUTR 610 Capstone Project in Nutrition	280	
<b>TOTAL</b>	896	104
<b>Total Estimated Planned Hours</b>		1000
*Notes SEL experiences which must be completed in person		

### Didactic and Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL) Connection



## Attachment 3: Samford Distance Student - Preceptor Guide

### *What is a preceptor?*

A dietetics "preceptor" is an expert or specialist, such as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, who provides guidance, practical experience, and training to a dietetics student. A preceptor is someone involved in the field of nutrition and dietetics who can help guide and oversee the student and has the authority to arrange experiences to help meet the required competencies of the internship.

### *Who can be a preceptor?*

Samford prefers that preceptors are Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN), who are also Licensed Dietitians (LD). In some situations, other professionals are acceptable, especially if the person is considered a leader or expert in the area. are made are in Food Service Management, Community Nutrition, and Child Nutrition. Examples may include chefs, registered nurses (RN), nurse practitioners, or persons with a public health background in community-based programs, and nutrition graduates or similar in child nutrition programs. **The preceptor must be an RDN for hospital, outpatient, long-term care, lifestyle, and the final practicum.** See below for the list of rotation sites.

Preceptor required to be RDN:	Hospital, Outpatient, Long Term Care, Final Practicum
Preceptor NOT required to be RDN:	Food Service Management, Community Nutrition, Child Nutrition

### *How can I find a preceptor?*

- Contact the state and district dietetic associations and ask for assistance in locating preceptors.
- Contact RDs who work with any DPD program in your area.
- The accrediting body of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics maintains a list of RDs who have indicated that they are willing to be Preceptors. You may find the list [here](#) if you are a Student Member.
- Utilize LinkedIn to identify potential dietitians.
- If someone is leaning toward agreeing to be a preceptor but has questions that you cannot answer to their satisfaction, you may have them call the Internship Clinical Coordinator at Samford University, 205-726-4670.

If you have exhausted these options, please reach out to the Clinical Coordinator for assistance and ideas.

### *Example Email to Potential Preceptor*

Hi Ms./Mr. Smith (always use Ms.- not Miss or Mrs.),

I am a graduate nutrition student enrolled in Samford University's program. I will be completing my supervised experiential learning experiences in the Nashville area, and I am looking for a preceptor for my clinical rotation. The rotation dates are June 21-August 5; however, these dates are flexible if other dates work for you. I am attaching a summary of my competencies to give you an idea of what is expected of me. Please let me know if you would be able to serve as my preceptor. If you have any questions, please let me know. If we proceed, my clinical coordinator will provide more information to you.

Sincerely,

Mary Jones

Note: If someone gave you the contact info of the potential preceptor, you should include that.  
Example: My former professor, Lucy Wallace, recommended I reach out to you.

*Once the preceptor is identified, what are the next steps?*

Students will provide the following information to the Clinical Coordinator:

- Preceptor's name
- Preceptor's email address and phone number
- Facility name
- Facility address
- Dates

The Clinical Coordinator will step in and complete the needed paperwork to confirm the rotation site and notify the student when the site is confirmed.

*What is a contract or an affiliation agreement?*

The contract, also called an affiliation agreement, is a legal contract that is required between Samford and the practice site/facility. The clinical coordinator will work with the preceptor to obtain the contract. A contract MUST be in place before the student can start at the site. Occasionally, some facilities prefer to use their version of an agreement, in which case the legal counsel of Samford and the site/facility attempt to work together to reach an agreement. Not all affiliation agreements can be successfully negotiated.

*How does Samford's program help find preceptors?*

To help round out the experiences, the Samford University Clinical Coordinator can help you determine whether a preceptor is acceptable, offer other leads, or help identify possibilities. It is your responsibility to take the initiative in searching for preceptors. However, the Clinical Coordinator will assist if you hit a roadblock. Communication is key! Always feel free to reach out with questions and concerns.