

2018 Dietetic Internship Class Achieves 100 Percent Pass Rate on National Registration Exam

Graduates poised for success in a dynamic and growing field

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JULIA WILLIAMS, 2018 DIETETIC INTERNSHIP GRADUATE, AT THE HEAD OF THE CLASS — LITERALLY.

The entire UNH dietetic internship class of 2018 has passed the national registration exam for dietitians, bringing the 5-year average pass rate for the program to 98 percent.

"We are thrilled to have achieved this milestone with our most recent class of graduates," says Joanne Burke, the program's

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director. "The UNH dietetic internship has a strong reputation for providing a comprehensive experience for future dietitians that prepares students well for the national registration for dietetics (RD) exam. The pass rate is the result of hard work by the students as well as the dedicated staff and preceptors."

The UNH [dietetic internship program](#) is nationally accredited by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Beginning in August 2018, the dietetic internship became a part of a new master's program, allowing students to combine graduate course work with over 1,300 hours of practicum-based learning.

Each year, the program receives over 50 applications for 10 spots. While all dietetic internship programs across the country are required to provide set experiences in clinical nutrition, food service management and community nutrition, what makes UNH's program unique is its emphasis on sustainable food systems, a topic becoming increasingly important to many working in fields of both agriculture and nutrition.

"As we grow more aware of the inextricable links between diet, health and the health of our planet, the need for nutrition professionals with food systems expertise becomes more evident," Burke says. "The role of the dietetics professional is expanding to include careers in telehealth counseling, sports nutrition, retail nutrition, food system planning, policy making, communications and research. It's an exciting time to be joining the field of dietetics."

Mikayla Stoyak '18, one of the 10 students to achieve the 100 percent pass rate earlier this year, agrees. Stoyak recently started working at Concord Hospital in Concord, New Hampshire, where she had completed a five-month clinical

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rotation while in the dietetic internship program. An inpatient clinical dietitian, Stoyak's time is now divided between a cardiac, orthopedic and progressive care unit.

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"Spending my clinical rotation at Concord Hospital allowed me to develop professional relationships that helped me to get a job after graduation," Stoyak says. "I'm in a job that I think is perfect to give me a complex base knowledge at the start of my career. I spend a lot of my day assessing and educating high-risk patients but also have the opportunity to do some community outreach."

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the job market for dietitians is expected to increase by 15 percent by 2026, compared to 7 percent for all other professions – with a median starting salary in 2017 of nearly \$60,000.

"The UNH program is consistently turning out students who are well prepared to enter the work force," Burke says. "We pay close attention to the competencies established by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, but the critical elements for our UNH program success are the hard-working dietetics students who work with UNH faculty and countless community mentors who provide in-depth practicum experiences."

In 2018, the nutrition program introduced [two new master's degree options](#), one of which combines the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics accredited dietetic internship program with a master of science in nutritional sciences. The other is an accelerated option that allows students to start their master of science in nutritional sciences during their senior year and complete it with one additional year of study.

For undergraduates planning to become registered dietitians,

UNH's nutrition major offers an accredited [dietetics program](#) option that provides a strong foundation in nutrition, food science, dietetics and management, with integrated laboratory, research, and clinical experiences. The other options offered by the nutrition program are [nutrition and wellness](#), which prepares students for employment in a variety of wellness and health promotion settings and [nutritional sciences](#), which prepares students for entry into professional schools of medicine, dentistry, nursing and physical therapy, graduate school or technically oriented jobs in science.

For more information on the UNH dietetic internship program, contact Joanne Burke at Joanne.Burke@UNH.edu or 603-862-1456.

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