

VA San Diego Healthcare System Dietetic Internship Virtual Open House



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VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Open House
January 13, 2023

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
VA San Diego Healthcare System

Housekeeping

- Please mute your microphone
- If in a shared area, please use earbuds or headphones to reduce any distractions when asking questions
- Use chat box to post questions
 - Interns will be monitoring the chat box

VASDHS Open House Agenda

- Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
- VA San Diego Healthcare System
- VA San Diego Dietetic Internship
 - Mission Statement
 - General Information
 - Curriculum, rotations & projects
- DICAS Application Process
- Selection Criteria
- Master's Degree Requirement
- COVID-19 Requirements
- Program Strengths
- Q&A with current interns



VHA Vision

- To provide veterans the world-class benefits and services they have earned – and to do so by adhering to the highest standards of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.

VHA Mission

- Honor America's veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

VA San Diego Healthcare System (VASDHS)

- Wide range of inpatient and outpatient care
- 311 authorized beds, including:
 - Acute care, medical, surgical, intensive care, extended care, Spinal Cord Injury, & advanced rehabilitation services
 - Extensive mental health services including PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, Alcohol/Drug Treatment, suicide prevention
- 7 Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs)
 - In-person & telehealth (virtual via phone and video)
- Over 3,487 employees (FTE)
- VHA leader in patient satisfaction:
 - Patients rate overall quality of care as exceptional
 - Provide patient-centered care
- Accredited by The Joint Commission

VASDHS Serves Over 86,000 Veterans



- Majority of patients are male, however approximately 11% are women.

VA San Diego Healthcare System Commitment to Training

- VHA is the largest provider of health care training in the United States
- VASDHS is a teaching hospital
- VASDHS is affiliated with UC San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine
- Over 1,600 medical residents & students, and over 300 other clinical trainees
- Over 60 traineeships, including dietetics, nursing, pharmacy, dental, social work and more
- Emphasizes the interdisciplinary team approach to patient care

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Mission Statement

The mission of the VASDHS Dietetic Internship is to offer a supportive learning environment in a challenging and dynamic program with a focus on medical nutrition therapy. Our program is designed to promote progressive, patient-centered nutrition services, which prepares our graduates to be highly functioning, competent entry-level registered dietitians.

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship

General Information

- ACEND-Accredited
- No application fee or tuition
- Stipend (2023-2024) > \$24,000
 - paid in bi-weekly checks
- Ten-month program (41 weeks)
- Full time (40+ hrs/week)
- Estimated expenses listed on website
 - [VA San Diego Dietetic Internship](#)
- Established in 1974
 - (2022-2023 class = 49th class)

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship

General Information, continued

- Program concentration:
 - Medical Nutrition Therapy in Inpatient & Outpatient Settings
- U.S. Citizen
- Six interns annually (April match)
- VA onboarding
 - Must pass background check
 - Health screening and immunizations
- Summer “homework”
- Flu shots required in fall (provided free at VA)
- COVID-19 vaccine required
 - full immunity required by start date in August 2023

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Curriculum

- Orientation (2 weeks)
- Food Service/Management Rotations (7 weeks)
- Clinical Rotations (23 weeks)
- Community Rotations (5 weeks)
- Clinical Staff Relief (4 weeks)
 - Inpatient & outpatient
- Full-day weekly classes or project days
- Food Service/Management & Clinical Oral Exams
- RD Exam preparation
- Resume writing & practice interviews

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Food Service/Management (7 weeks)

- Rotations
 - Food Service Systems Mgt (5 weeks)
 - Assistant Chief (admin), NFS (1 wk)
 - Assistant Chief (clinical)/Clinical Nutrition Manager (1 wk)



VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Food Service/Management (7 weeks)

- Rotations include:
 - Menu & recipe development
 - Food production & service
 - Management & supervision
 - Food/equipment ordering & procurement
 - Budgetary controls
 - Staff Inservice
 - Marketing
 - Informatics



VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Clinical (23 weeks)

- Rotations

- In-Patient (Acute Care) (~10 weeks)

- Dietetic Technicians (DTRs)
 - Med/Surg, Nutrition Support/ICU, Spinal Cord Injury, Psychiatry, Long-Term Care/Rehabilitation

- Outpatient (Ambulatory Care) (~13 weeks)

- Community-Based Outpatient Clinics
 - Specialty Outpatient Clinics
 - Diabetes, Renal, Obesity/Bariatric, Oncology, Liver, ASPIRE Center, Home-Based Primary Care



VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Clinical (23 weeks)

- Activities/Projects:
 - MNT & NCP
 - NFPE
 - Electronic Medical Records
 - Computrition
 - Telehealth
 - Interdisciplinary Rounds
 - Case Study
 - Clinical Seminar
 - Research Study
 - NNM Activities
 - Cooking Demonstrations



VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Community Affiliations (5 weeks)

- American Red Cross *WIC Program* (1 week)
- San Diego County Public Health (2 weeks)
- San Marcos Unified School District (2 weeks)



VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Class Day



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Dietetic Internship Application Process

- Complete DICAS application online at:
 - [DICAS Application Portal](#)
 - Portal opened in October & closes **Feb. 15, 2022 @ 11:59pm (Central Time)** for Spring 2023 match;
DICAS Fee= \$50 first application; \$25 each additional
- Personal statement (≤ 1000 words in response to six questions)
- Three letters of recommendation
 - Recommend at least one from DPD faculty
- DPD Course List Form
- DPD *Declaration of Intent to Complete -or- Verification Statement* – DPD Program Director
- Official transcripts – ALL colleges sent to DICAS

Dietetic Internship Match Process

- D&D Digital (www.dnddigital.com)
 - Register online and pay \$65 D&D fee
 - Submit and prioritize selected Dietetic Internships online before **March 27, 2023 @ 11:59pm (Central Time)**.
- Match Day, Sunday, April 2
- Appointment, Monday, April 3rd by 6pm local time

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Selection Criteria

- Holistic application review process
- U.S. Citizen
- Letters of recommendation
- Work experience
 - Experience in dietetic field is helpful
- Leadership experience/potential
- Clarity of personal statement
- Minimum GPA = 3.0
 - Cumulative & DPD GPAs (Science, Professional & Total)
- Recency of education requirement
 - DPD Verification Statement within past 3 years
 - MNT course(s) within last 3 years
- FlipGrid interviews (asynchronous)

Master's Degree Requirement

- Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) administers the RD Exam
- Effective January 1, 2024, CDR will require a Master's Degree to take the RD exam
 1. Master's Degree
 2. DPD requirements
 3. Supervised practice (internship)
- Effective with this **Spring 2023** application cycle, Master's degree is required for admission to the VA San Diego Dietetic Internship

COVID-19 Requirements

- COVID-19 vaccination is required
- COVID screening questions when entering medical center and VA clinics
- Masks required:
 - In the hospital, including intern office, RD/DTR offices & NFS kitchen
 - VA offsite clinics
- VA provides medical masks and face shields/safety goggles

COVID-19 Requirements

- Internship Classes
 - In-person with some virtual presentations
 - Masks and social distancing in the classroom
 - Limited eating & drinking in the classroom

COVID-19 Requirements

- VA rotations
 - Inpatient interactions
 - Most patient visits are in person
 - Some visits via telephone, if needed
 - Outpatient appointments
 - Some are virtual (phone or video) & some are in-person
 - Specialty outpatient appointments are in person (i.e., diabetes, hemodialysis)
 - Most patient nutrition classes are currently virtual (video)

COVID-19 Requirements

- Affiliate (community) rotations
 - School Nutrition – Onsite
 - Public Health – Virtual with some onsite events
 - WIC – Transitioning back to onsite

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Program Strengths

- Preceptors and Staff
 - Organized, pre-determined rotation schedule
 - Supportive director, preceptors & staff
 - Qualified, knowledgeable and experienced preceptors with varied backgrounds, educational experiences and advanced credentials
 - Positive & constructive feedback
 - Patient & open to questions



VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Program Strengths

- Rotations/Projects
 - One-on-one rotations with clinical preceptors
 - Hands-on with opportunity to learn from experienced preceptors and staff
 - Challenging clinical rotations
 - Telehealth experiences
 - Interesting food service and management rotations
 - Challenging but practical projects: clinical seminar, clinical case study, menu project, theme meal, plate waste study, sustainability product evaluation, cooking demo, etc.
 - Clinical inpatient and outpatient staff relief
 - Community rotations
 - Administrative & Clinical Orals

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Program Strengths

- No application fee
- Stipend
- 97% RD Exam Pass Rate
- Excellent teaching hospital
- Up-to-date and evidence-based
 - Nutrition Care Process, Electronic Medical Records, and Nutrition Focused Physical Exams
- Challenging, high quality program
- Organized rotation schedule & class days
- Interdisciplinary team meetings and rounds
- Resources: Intern office, computers/workspace, and access to UCSD Biomedical library, online reference databases, & the Academy's Nutrition Care Manual

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship Comments From Past Interns

- Time management & flexibility are essential
- Challenging rotations and projects
- Lots of evaluations; be open to feedback
- Very detailed project guidelines and lots of deadlines
- Course work from college is used; keep your books
- Be prepared to do homework & projects on your own time
- It is like a full-time job plus school and homework
- Choose roommate with similar commitments

VA San Diego Dietetic Internship

Diversity of Graduate's Employment

- Clinical (inpatient & outpatient settings)
 - VA and non-VA hospitals
- Community/Public Health
- School Nutrition
- Private Practice
- Management (long-term care, schools, healthcare)
- Education/Research
- and others....

