GRE® Preparation

The GRE® preparation time is different for each individual; however, it is recommended that you prepare in advance to improve your overall score. The following resources are available to assist in preparation for the GRE®:
- GRE® review courses;
- GRE® computer practice problems that are offered from 9am-4pm on M-R and 9am-2pm on Friday in Room 526
- Blocker Building. For additional information, contact the Center for Academic Enhancement at 845-2724;
- GRE® practice books that can be purchased at most bookstores; and/or
- GRE® preparation materials on the GRE® web site at http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare?WT.ac=grehome_greprepare_b_130807.

Consult the GRE® website for any additional information. The information that is posted at www.gre.org supersedes any information that is printed in this information form.

APPLYING TO THE DI MATCH

Preparing the DI Program Application Using the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS)

Most DI programs use the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS) online applicant portal (https://portal.dicas.org), a centralized application process, for the DI match.

- Applicants are required to create a personal account and are assigned a unique identification number that will be used on all communication with DICAS Online customer service and the selected internship programs.

- Access to DICAS is variable and depends on the DI match that the applicant is participating; DICAS is open during the fall before the spring match and the summer for the fall match. It will close for a period of time but will reopen and applicants can return to their saved application.

- DICAS has tutorials that should be watched before starting your DICAS application.

- Once on the portal, DI applicants will be prompted by an application checklist that includes all information that must be entered into the portal during the application process; required information includes demographic data, coursework, activities, honors, volunteerism, and work experience. Applicants are also required to enter grades for DPD science and professional courses. Use the DPD Course List located in the appendix to identify Texas A&M University DPD science and professional courses. The online program will calculate the GPR based on the entered data. Be sure to confirm the GPR calculations.

- There are occasional challenges that occur with DICAS such as unexpected crashes, difficulty uploading documents, etc., so it is highly recommended to have the majority of the application completed by January 1st preceding the Spring match and by mid-Summer for the Fall match so students can have time to resolve unforeseen problems.

- The following sections described the requirements for preparation of the DICAS application. Your transcripts, personal statement, letters of recommendation, resume, DPD Supplemental Form, Declaration of Intent or Verification Statement and any other forms identified on the respective DI website are required to complete your DICAS application. Failure to meet the DICAS DI application and the D&D Digital deadlines will result in your application not being considered in the match and your fees will not be refunded.

- More information regarding DICAS is located at http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=6442485425.

Transcripts

Applicants must request official collegiate transcripts from all previously attended colleges including study abroad using the Transcript Request Form. The Transcript Request Form and directions to complete and print it are on the DICAS Online program. Be sure to advise the Registrar Office to enclose the Transcript Request Form with your official sealed transcript and mail it directly to the DICAS Online Transcript Processing Center at: **DICAS Transcript Department, PO Box 9118, Watertown, Massachusetts 02472**. DICAS Online has difficulties matching official transcripts that are not accompanied by the Transcript Request Form, and this may delay application processing. Some students report ordering the transcript from the Registrar in-person may reduce the potential for mistakes.

Students who are applying to DI programs that include graduate credit will probably be required to submit a separate transcript to the graduate program as part of the graduate application process.

Personal Statement (Letter of Application)

Applicants are required to write a personal statement (letter of application) for the DI application. The DI program requirements may vary based on their specific guidelines. Therefore, it is critical to refer to the DI Program website and write the personal statement according to the program guidelines. A separate personal statement should be written for each DI program.

Consider the following when drafting the personal statement:
- Customize the personal statement to each DI program.
- Questions that should be addressed in the personal statement include the following:
  - Why have you chosen dietetics as a career?
  - What are your immediate and long-term goals?
  - What can you contribute to the dietetic profession as a whole?
  - What experiences do you have that relate to dietetics? Discuss work, volunteer, and extracurricular experiences that have helped to prepare you for your career
  - Why are you interested in this program? What influenced you to apply here?
- Make this personal. Be yourself! This is like an interview.
- Display a **POSITIVE ATTITUDE**! Point out your strong points and provide examples to support them.
- Appear confident and use "when" not "if."
- State personal/career goals clearly & precisely. Identify your characteristics that "stand out" and make you a strong candidate for this program. This is an opportunity to "sell" yourself.
- Always keep your writing professional, cordial, and factual. Never write or communicate in a tone that could be construed as derisive or complaining.
- Start writing the personal statement early. Do not worry about length at first. Write everything that you can think of, and condense later.
- Be sure to demonstrate good written communication skills and active voice with accurate spelling, grammar, and punctuation. (Use "spell check" as needed.) One small error may eliminate you from the applicant pool.
- Compose the statement in Word and cut and paste the final statement into the applicant portal. This will provide the opportunity to print it out and have others proof it before submitting it.
- Consider taking your statement to the University Writing Center that is located in the Evans and West Campus Libraries. Have the letters reviewed and seek advice on form and grammar. This is a free service. The web site for the University Writing Center is http://writingcenter.tamu.edu; this site provides several helpful resources.
- Obtain feedback from professional acquaintances who know dietetics to proofread your writing and seriously consider their comments. Ms. Beathard, DPD Director, does not proofread letters of application, as this is not fair to all applicants. Please refrain from asking her to do so.
- Offer a copy of the personal statement to those writing letters of recommendation for your DI application packet; this will help them write a stronger recommendation.

Resume

Applicants are required to submit a professional resume. A competitive professional resume is concise and relevant, includes work experience, professional organizational involvement, leadership, and honors and is free of spelling and/or grammatical errors. It is recommended that a resume should be one page and a maximum of two pages. An example of a competitive professional resume is located in the appendix.

The Texas A&M Career Center conducts resume development workshops and many other helpful resources for students; this information can be viewed at http://careercenter.tamu.edu under the current student link. Resume evaluators are also available at the Career Center and will individually review resumes and make suggestions for improvement.   Walk-in resume evaluation is from 8:30-11:00 am and 1:30-4:00 pm on Monday-Friday in room 209 Koldus. Resumes can also be submitted to evaluators online via email if they cannot attend an in-person meeting. There is no charge for this service.

Letters of Recommendation

DI *and* graduate programs will each require three letters of recommendation from professionals who can support your application. The same references can be used for the DI and graduate program recommendations**. Professionals** such as professors and employers should be the writers of these letters; personal letters from friends, religious figures, or employers related to "household" functions (i.e. babysitting, house cleaning, etc.) should not be used. Many programs specify and require certain professionals, such as the DPD Director, write a letter of recommendation. It is very important to check the DI program website for specific application directions and honor *all* requests.

When selecting professionals to write letters of recommendation, select those who know you personally and academically and will write an honest recommendation that accurately reflects your character, work ethic, and potential as a nutrition professional. Make sure the professionals asked to write for you will be able to cover all aspects of the recommendation form. Allow adequate time for the writer to complete the recommendation*; a minimum of one month in advance is required. Requesting letters of recommendation more than two months in advance is appropriate when asking a faculty member who may be writing letters for many students.* The path to obtaining letters of recommendation is as follows:

1. Identify professional references;
2. Complete a letter of recommendation request form (appendix);
3. Contact the professional **in-person** to ask them to write a letter of recommendation for you and give them the letter of recommendation request form **(Do not assume someone will write for you)**;
4. Enter the reference name and contact information including email address into the DICAS portal;
5. An email request will be sent to the reference writer requesting completion of a reference form;
6. Recommender will digitally enter one letter of recommendation for all DI programs that the applicant is applying;
7. Applicant will be notified when letter of recommendation is entered into the DICAS portal; and
8. The applicant should write a "thank you" note to the reference writer.

Note: It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor the status of the application and ensure the letters of reference are completed and received at DICAS by the application deadline. The status section on the main page of the application will provide information regarding completion of the letters of recommendation. The recommendations are not considered complete until they have been marked as "Completed"; a status of "In-Progress" indicates that the recommendation has been started, but has not been submitted. It is acceptable to send polite reminders to writers who have not responded in a timely manner. DICAS cannot accept letters of reference via fax or email under any circumstances. Additionally, members of the Texas A&M University DI Selection Committee cannot write letters of recommendation for candidates applying to the Texas A&M University DI program.

Declaration of Intent/Verification Statements

A **"Declaration of Intent"** is a digital form that Karen Beathard, DPD Director, must complete on DICAS. This form identifies the remaining coursework required for graduation for undergraduates and remaining DPD courses for post-graduates. It serves as a written contract between the student and the DPD Director confirming the identified course will be completed before being eligible to receive the Verification Statement and start the DI Program. DPD students who are planning to apply for a DI in the spring must complete the "Request for a Declaration of Intent" form by the completion of the fall semester prior to the spring semester they plan to apply for a DI.

A **"Verification Statement"** is a document provided by Karen Beathard, DPD Director, that verifies completion of the Texas A&M University DPD program and BS degree. All undergraduates who meet the DPD eligibility requirements at graduation will receive a Verification Statement. Undergraduate DPD students who are graduating should complete the "Request for a Verification Statement" form when they are applying for graduation; this form must be completed before graduation to get the verification statement in a timely manner.

Graduate students who are completing the DPD requirements will receive a Verification Statement once all DPD courses are completed. These students should complete the "Request for a Verification Statement" form during their final semester enrolled in DPD coursework.

All DI applicants are required to request either the "Declaration of Intent" or "Verification Statement" in the DPD Program Information section of the DICAS online application. Only undergraduate DPD graduates and graduate students who have completed DPD coursework should request a Verification Statement. Currently enrolled DPD students should request a Declaration of Intent. All applicants must identify Karen Beathard as the Texas A&M University DPD Director. The proper email to use for this request is kbeathard@tamu.edu. Once the request has been submitted, the DPD Director will receive an email indicating that she is required to submit the identified document.

If the Declaration of Intent form is selected, the DPD Director will enter in the remaining coursework required for graduation and submit it back to the applicant for confirmation of accuracy. Once confirmed, the applicant should accept the form. If for any reason applicants do not accept this coursework, they should add a comment why they do not accept it and return it to the DPD Director. This section will be complete once all parties are satisfied. This section must be complete to submit your DI application.

All applicants who match a DI program will be required to submit an original Verification Statement with an original signature of the DPD Director to the DI Program Director before starting the program. Verification Statements will be mailed to those who graduate from the DPD program or complete DPD coursework within a month of their graduation or completion date. DPD graduates who do not receive a Verification Statement or have misplaced it should contact Karen Beathard at kbeathard@tamu.edu or 979-862-7621 for assistance.

Supplemental Application Forms

DPD Course List Required Supplemental Form

This form lists the required DPD courses at Texas A&M University and must be uploaded to DICAS as part of the DI application packet. The form is located in the appendix.

Graduate School Application

Combined graduate-DI programs usually require a separate graduate school application. The due dates for the graduate application often do not coincide with the due date of the DI application and may occur in the fall prior to the spring match. Be aware the requirements for admission to graduate programs and application due dates so application deadlines can be met. Students can find the specific program requirements by carefully reading information on DI and graduate program websites.

Other Supplemental Application Forms

Some DI programs require additional supplemental application forms including a physical examination, a specific academic record, class rank information, or a copy of the DPD requirements signed by the DPD Director, etc.   Read the application instructions on each DI program website *very carefully* to identify any supplemental application requirements because DI programs vary. Be sure to honor all requirements including deadlines for additional forms; overlooking a small detail can make a big difference on match day. Submit any additional forms that need to be signed by the DPD Director to Karen Beathard.

Computer Matching Procedures

Most DI Programs select applicants through a computer matching process. Computer matching is coordinated by D&D Digital Systems and follows the ACEND spring and fall DI application timelines. Note that the D&D Digital Systems is different from the Dietetic Internship Centralized Application System (DICAS) online applicant portal and each has specific procedures. It is important that DI applicants follow the procedures for both and submit all required components **by the DI application deadline**.

Computer matching simulates the steps of the traditional recruitment process using the rank order lists completed by applicants and programs. As a result, applicants receive one position with their highest ranked program that offers the applicant a position. Computer matching program information is obtainable from the D&D Digital website at http://www.dnddigital.com.

Applicants who participate in the computer matching process may select any **one** of the following options to apply:

- Register online by paying the standard $50 registration fee by credit card. You will receive a username and password after payment is completed that will allow online access for you to enter, verify and change, if necessary, your contact information, release information, and DI choices. **OR**

- Click *Download Application Form*. A registration form with personal contact information, DI choices, and release option can be printed out and mailed to D&D Digital with the $50 Registration Fee. The registration form and check should be sent to D&D Digital via certified mail; this will provide a receipt to document the date that it was mailed. Request to be notified of receipt of the form. The D&D Digital match form must be postmarked by the application deadline (mid-February for spring applications or mid-September for fall applications). Applicants should check with D&D Digital if certified mail receipt is not returned within three weeks.

Complete the D&D Digital match form with your choices carefully! Be sure to mark the box allowing your name to be released if you don't receive an appointment. This will enable DI programs with openings to contact you after the appointment date if you do not match during the first round. Even if your DI application is perfect, a mistake on the computer matching, like accidentally marking the wrong school or completing the D&D Digital form after the time deadline, can completely eliminate your DI program application.

D&D Digital ranking priorities are confidential, and the DI Program Directors will not know how you ranked their programs. It is important to rank programs according to individual preferences. **Do not** list any DI program you are unwilling to attend. As a participant in the computer matching process, it is expected that applicants who receive a match will adhere to the results and accept that match. It is professionally unethical to decline a match in order to pursue appointment to another DI program; it is also inconsiderate to the DI Director, other DI applicants and future Texas A&M University DI applicants. If for any reason you decide that you are unable to accept an appointment from a computer match after submitting the D&D Digital match information, you should withdraw from the match by the identified deadlines. Deadlines for withdrawal from the computer match are included on the ACEND website at http://www.eatright.org/acend or on the D&D Digital web site at http://www.dnddigital.com and are expected to be honored.