

III. Becoming a Registered Dietitian (RD)/Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)

Registered Dietitians (RD) and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) are food and nutrition experts. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recognizes these two credentials synonymously. Professionals who have met the criteria outlined below earn the RD/RDN credential.

Pathways to Becoming a Registered Dietitian (RD)

1. Completed a minimum of a Baccalaureate degree granted by a U.S. regionally accredited university or college and course work accredited or approved by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).
 - *Effective January 1, 2024, the Commission on Dietetic Registration, the organization that administers the exam, will require a minimum of a master's degree to be eligible to take the exam. More information is available on the [CDR website](#).*
2. Completed an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program (dietetic internship) at a health care facility, state or community agency, foodservice establishment, or a university. Typically, a supervised practice program is about 9-24 months in length. Supervised practice also may be available through a university-based coordinated program, in which supervised practice is combined with undergraduate or graduate studies; or through an Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) (available on a limited basis).
3. Passed the Registration Examination for Dietitians administered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR). Eligibility to take this examination is established through the Commission on Dietetic Registration, the credentialing agency for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Information regarding the examination may be obtained from www.cdrnet.org.
4. Continued life-long learning by completing continuing professional educational requirements to maintain registration.

Advanced Practice Certifications – Some RDs hold additional advanced practice certifications in specialized areas of practice such as pediatric or renal nutrition, obesity management, nutrition support, sports nutrition, and diabetes education. These certifications are awarded through the Commission on Dietetic Registration and/or other medical and nutrition organizations. Such specialty certifications are recognized within the profession and may be required only for advanced-level positions.

In addition to RDN credentialing, many states have regulatory laws for dietitians and nutrition practitioners. Frequently these state requirements are met through the same education and training required to become an RDN. Information on licensure in the state of Alabama can be found: <https://www.boed.alabama.gov/>

Dietetic Internships and Supervised Practice

Auburn's DPD provides the academic requirements to become a dietitian. Graduates of the DPD, after completing the Baccalaureate degree, receive a *Verification Statement* and then MUST be accepted into an ACEND accredited supervised practice program to complete the next step in the process to become a Registered Dietitian (RD). Supervised practice programs, such as dietetic internships, provide a minimum of 1000 hours of practical experience. Some programs are combined with additional academic studies at the graduate or undergraduate level. Most practice programs charge tuition and fees, and most fulltime programs take about 9 to 24 months to complete depending on whether or not graduate coursework accompanies the practice component. Auburn DPD program graduates MUST complete an ACEND-accredited supervised practice program and graduate degree (after January 2024) to be eligible to sit for the Registration Exam for Dietitians.