



Mentorship Program

MENTOR AND MENTEE HANDBOOK 2026-2027

Welcome Mentors and Mentees,

We are glad you have joined this unique mentorship program. The RD Mentorship Program strives to create opportunities for undergraduate and graduate nutrition students and registered dietitians (RDs) to expand their network and enhance the profession. The program also aims to help increase diversity and preceptors in the field. The goal of the mentoring program is to provide students hands-on experience working one-on-one with an RD and enhance mentoring abilities and professional development for the RDs. We are pleased to have had a great response from both RDs and dietetic students who are excited to commit to the program and cannot wait to get started! This handbook will help guide you through your mentoring relationship; it includes an overview of the program and other information that will come in handy during your participation in the program. Do not hesitate to contact the mentorship program coordinators and/or principal investigators should you have any questions by emailing us at rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com. Once more, welcome and thank you for joining the program!

This program is launched nationwide and is currently only offered in a virtual format.

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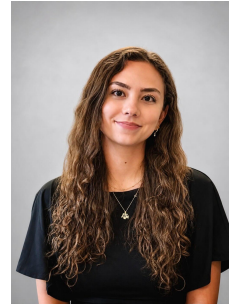
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Overview of the Program

What is this program about?

The RD Mentorship Program was created to help build bonds between registered dietitian (RD) professionals and nutrition students. Our main goal is to facilitate a professional experiential learning opportunity for nutrition students, while helping RDs on a project. The main role of the RD mentor is to provide their mentee with advice on project-specific duties and/or career path guidance and professionalism, provide motivation, and serve as a role model. The main role of the student mentee is to develop professional skills, create a relationship with their mentor to learn about the field of dietetics, and assist them with identified projects.

What are the benefits of this program?

For the mentor, this program is a great way to enhance your mentoring and precepting skills and gain valuable assistance on a project. Additionally, mentors can use this program to gain continuing education credits (CEU). View this link for information on how to obtain up to **15 CEU's** related to mentorship. <https://www.rdmentor.com/cpeus-for-mentors>. ([CDR's Activity Type Definitions](#)). For the mentee, this program provides the opportunity to gain experience working one-on-one with an RD. Ultimately, the mentor-mentee pair should work together to accomplish a project.

What are the expectations of program participants?

- Every commitment comes with responsibilities; mentors and mentees are expected to act professionally when engaging with each other.
- Communication is a requirement of any successful relationship. Mentors and mentees should respect each other by maintaining good communication and keeping your commitment to the mentor/mentee relationship agreement. Please reply to emails or other forms of communication within 24-48 hours and use professional etiquette. Be proactive!
- Mentors and mentees are required to complete the RD Mentorship Partner Agreement and RD Mentor Checklist (located in the Appendix of this handbook and on the RD Mentorship website) at the start of the program.
- Mentor-mentee virtual meetings are required at least once a month minimum and will be individually arranged by the mentor and mentee. The mentor pair can meet more frequently if they choose, depending on what is acceptable with both participants.
- If any issues arise between mentor and mentee, please contact the program coordinators immediately by emailing rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com, so we can assist in reconciliation of the situation. Issues may include, but are not limited to, lack of communication/responses from one party, disrespect, inappropriate language, failure to meet expectations of the program, etc.

Resources provided to help assist mentors and mentees

Virtual Welcome Orientation (September 2026)

RD Mentorship Partner Agreement

- This form is designed to help the mentee/mentor pair establish communication expectations, identify goals for this mentoring relationship, and outline skill areas to be enhanced or developed through this partnership.
- All mentor-mentee pairs are required to complete this form at their first meeting and submit it as your first mentorship log. <https://www.rdmentor.com/copy-of-participants>
- This form is located in the Appendix, towards the end of the handbook..

RD Mentor Checklist

- This form walks mentor-mentee pairs through the resources available in the RD Mentorship Program to ensure participants are aware of the resources provided.
- All mentor-mentee pairs are required to complete this form at their first meeting and submit it as your first mentorship log. <https://www.rdmentor.com/copy-of-participants>
- This form is located in the Appendix, towards the end of the handbook.

HIPAA Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement

- This form was requested by mentors and is designed to use in client interactions where confidentiality is essential to protect patients' rights to privacy
- This form is located in the Appendix, towards the end of the handbook.

Mentoring Log

- This form must be completed by the mentee each month and submitted at <https://www.rdmentor.com/copy-of-participants>
- It is designed to keep records of mentor/mentee monthly meetings, the topics discussed, and enhance communication and continuity by highlighting meeting content and projects.
- The mentee should fill out this form, but should discuss it with their mentor and give them the opportunity to comment on the document prior to submitting it..

Monthly Newsletters (Starting October 2026 - April 2027)

- See monthly newsletters for ongoing events and program updates. Newsletters will be sent at the first of each month.

RD Mentorship PRIVATE Facebook Page

- <https://www.facebook.com/share/g/1H4yFuvksF/>
- Designed to be a community to bounce ideas, connect and support each other through the program. **Not required**

Slack App

- https://join.slack.com/t/rd-mentorship-program/shared_invite/zt-44cn9e1o7-q3qd_sZUUTbKW7tAvhiU4Q
- Designed to enhance communication, connect and support each other throughout the program. The Slack app will provide a place to ask each other questions and bounce ideas.

Program Website: <https://www.rdmentor.com>

- Designed to enhance communication and provide digital resources and useful information throughout the mentor-mentee program.

A Virtual Closing Reception (April 2027)

The End of Program Evaluation (April 2027). We ask all mentors and mentees complete the end of program evaluation.

TIPS FOR MENTORS

How and where to get started with your mentee:

To begin, reach out to your mentee within 24-48 hours after being matched. We encourage all mentor-mentee pairs to complete the mentor-mentee agreement and RD Mentorship Checklist at the first meeting. Mentees will then submit these completed documents to the RD Mentorship program at <https://www.rdmentor.com/copy-of-participants> as their first monthly log.

It is important to rely on the RD Mentorship Partner Agreement throughout the program. These forms are located in the handbook Appendix as well as the website.

Questions and discussion points to start the conversation are:

1. When do you first plan to meet? How often do you want to meet? (Must be at least monthly!)
2. Do you plan to meet on the phone, web meetings (zoom, Skype, FaceTime), etc.?
3. Set out your expectations from the beginning! (i.e., communication, etiquette, HIPAA etc.)
4. Describe your area of dietetics and what project specifics you need help with.
5. What are their overarching or long-term goals in dietetics? (They may not know.)
6. What skills/background experiences might they have to help you? Learn about your mentee and how to maximize their success in your project together.
7. Set goals and expectations together by assisting the mentee in completion of the mentor-mentee agreement.

Other potential areas of discussion may be:

Dietetic Internship (DI) applications and the application process:*

1. If this is in your area of expertise, you might discuss the process of applying to DI programs and/or graduate degree programs and/or specialty certifications; provide guidance and professional tips for success.
2. How to research programs – What are characteristics of a program that will best meet this mentee's needs. (e.g., finances, reputability, location, etc.)?
3. Assist with application materials needed for your field (e.g., read and offer guidance on their personal statement, CV, letters of recommendation, etc.).
4. How to contact potential advisors and get letters of recommendation (perhaps you might consider writing a letter of recommendation for them after successful completion of the program).

*Please note there have been a lot of changes to the DI application process in the past few years. Please contact Karen Beathard (karen-beathard@tamu.edu) if you have questions or need assistance with this information.

Other suggestions:

1. Share your background, values, goals, and needs.
2. Talk about your very first job and other experiences that might enrich your mentee's insight on RD internships, research, and the professional field.
3. Talk about life as a dietetics student vs. dietetics professional.
4. Look at your mentee's resume and cover letter and offer constructive guidance. (Remember a resume to apply for an internship vs. a first job may be different!)
5. Consider giving mentees some type of title for their project so they can add it to their resumes.
6. Provide open communication with the mentee and ask what their needs/desires/goals are from this program and routinely check in to see if their needs/desires/goals are being met.
7. Recognize the mentees are students and have empathy and flexibility with them. Note that mentee class schedules change in January at the start of spring semester, so meeting time preferences may need to be adjusted. Meetings may also need to be adjusted during exam weeks.
8. Support the mentees where they are; ask about them personally and in their school progression and offer suggestions or encouragement as needed. Recognize them as students/people and not just someone to do a task/project for you.
9. Make sure project guidelines and expectations are clear to the mentee. Routinely offer clarification or guidance if needed. It is best to set project expectations and due dates together based on the mentee schedule.

Be an active listener, a cheerleader, a compassionate supporter, and a role model.

TIPS FOR MENTEES

What is your role as a mentee?

As a mentee participating in the RD Mentorship Program, you are expected to display professionalism and respect. As a mentee, you are also a representative of your university's nutrition department. You applied to be a part of this program and are expected to follow through with your commitment by engaging in communication, working with the RD you were matched with, accomplishing project goals, and completing the program.

How to handle your mentee position:

1. Be respectful, timely, flexible and use professional language.
2. Address your mentor by their preferred credentials. (PhD/DCN = Dr; Mrs.; Mr., etc.)
3. Communicate with your RD mentor using the preferred mode of communication.
4. Provide your mentor an updated resume so they can see your experience.
5. Complete the RD Mentorship Checklist and RD Mentorship Partner Agreement to set goals and expectations with your RD. Submit these completed documents as your September Mentor Log at: <https://www.rdmentor.com/copy-of-participants>
6. Discuss and understand the projects and assignments given to you by your RD. If something is unclear, ask your RD mentor for clarification.

7. Be clear about your time and effort commitments to the program and your ability to complete the tasks assigned.
8. If you have trouble understanding or agreeing with the given tasks, speak with your RD first. If you are still unclear or have concerns, contact the program coordinators through email (rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com).
9. Communicate your class schedule and realistic time you will be able to devote to this mentoring program, especially around exam times.

How to gain the most from your experience:

1. Complete assigned tasks by the identified deadline and ask your RD mentor for feedback. If you are unable to complete the assigned task by the deadline, communicate this with your mentor and discuss opportunities for an extension.
2. Get to know your RD! Prepare and ask relevant questions and listen. Use questions below for ideas.
 - a. What is the dietetic internship like? What does a typical workday look like for the RD? What advice can the RD offer about the process?
 - b. What are some challenges the RD faces in the professional field and how can future RDs prepare for them?
 - c. What skills are necessary for becoming a successful professional?
 - d. Depending on the area of focus that the RD has, what are some resources for specialized RDs?
 - e. What are some good ways to manage finances through the dietetic internship and as a working professional?
 - f. Where can the student seek advice while completing the dietetics program and dietetic internship?
3. Most importantly, think of this program as a growing experience for both involved.

Be eager to learn, actively listen, show willingness to work as a team player, be a strong communicator, display a positive attitude, and show gratitude to your mentor for mentoring you.

Program FAQs

What are the objectives of this program?

The objective of the study is to examine the outcomes from participating in a mentorship program. We would like to determine the benefits and perceptions on being a member of a mentoring partnership. We will be collecting qualitative and quantitative data to measure this.

Please visit our website: <https://www.rdmentor.com>.

What will I gain from being a part of this program?

The direct benefits to you by participating in this program will vary based on your role of mentor or mentee. Both will be gaining experience in the field of dietetics and/or being part of a mentorship program. The project that the mentor and mentee work on will be a hands-on experience to offer a look into life as an RD.

Will any personal information from participating in this program be used after its completion?

No, the team is only using data collected from the surveys and program evaluation. There will be no direct ties to personal names and/or workplaces that are involved.

Is this a new program?

No, this program has been undergoing pilot testing and evaluation since 2016. Since then, it has been launched on a broader nationwide scale. The following are manuscripts based on study outcomes.

1. Hicks-Roof K, Beathard KM. A Mentoring Program Builds the Bridge with Nutrition Students and Healthcare Professionals. *J Allied Health* 2022; 51(1):31-37. PMID: 35239758.
2. Hicks-Roof KK. Growing the Dietetics Profession via a Mentorship Program between Dietitians and Dietetics Students. *Nutr Today* 2018; 32(2): 89-91
3. Hicks-Roof KK, Beathard K. Development of a Sustainable Mentorship Program: Registered Dietitian Nutritionists Mentoring Undergraduate Dietetics Students. *J Allied Health* 2018; 47(2): e49-51

How would I include this experience on my resume?

An example of the RD Mentorship being included in the mentee or mentor resume is included below. Generally, one would want 3-5 bullets explaining the skills/knowledge they developed. An idea for the mentor entry is as follows:

RD Mentorship Program, City, State

August 2026-April 2027

RD Program Mentee

- *Bullet tasks/projects you completed and skills gained leading with an action verb (see examples below)*
 - Expanded technical knowledge by developing of a nutrition education pamphlet on healthy food choices for pediatric patients
 - Enhanced critical thinking by creating a SWOT Analysis over mentor's social media platforms
 - Developed professional social media skills by posting marketing prompts weekly to generate new clients for mentor
 - Strengthened networking and communication skills by attending professional meetings with mentor

An idea for the mentor entry is as follows:

RD Mentorship Program, City, State

August 2026 -April 2027

RD Program Mentor

- *Bullet tasks/projects you completed and skills gained leading with an action verb (see examples below)*
 - Guided mentee in developing professional skills required for successful private practice
 - Supported mentee in completion of a high quality a nutrition education pamphlet on healthy food choices for pediatric patients
 - Coached mentee on counseling practices to facilitate behavior change in diverse individuals
 - Demonstrated professional ethics and behavior in monthly meetings and discussions with mentee

What if I have questions about the program?

We have posted additional FAQ on our website (<https://www.rdmentor.com/faq-s>). If the answer is not located on the website, please reach out [via email](#) so we can help. Thank you!

Appendix

RD Mentorship Partner Agreement

Purpose

This Mentoring Agreement was created to help the mentee/mentor pair establish communication expectations, identify goals for this mentoring relationship, and outline skill areas to be enhanced or developed through this partnership.

Goals for participation in the Mentor/Mentee Program

- Mentee
My goal(s) for this program is/are to:

At the end of this program, my desired outcome(s) is/are:

- Mentor
My goal(s) for this program is/are to:

At the end of this program, my desired outcome(s) is/are:

Ground rules

- Meeting Frequency: We will meet _____ (minimum of once monthly, e.g. every two weeks)
- Meeting Length: Our meetings will last _____ (amount of time, e.g. one hour minimum))
- Meeting Platform: Our virtual meetings will occur via _____ (e.g. videoconference, phone and/or email; a variety of formats is acceptable)
- If either the mentor or the mentee has to postpone or cancel a scheduled meeting, we agree to _____ (method of communication - example: email the other person at least _____ hours prior to the scheduled meeting time)
- If I have questions about a project, I will contact the other person via _____ (method of communication) within _____ (specified time period)

Team Agreement

As a mentee, I agree to do the following:

- Dedicate myself to learning and practicing new skills
- Seek to learn, improve, and grow by asking questions and being open to honest feedback from my mentor.
- Clearly identify my goals in participating in this mentor/mentee program and come prepared to meetings.
- Prepare in advance of our mentor/mentee sessions by creating and bringing questions and ideas to the session.
- Accomplish agreed upon tasks by the identified timeline.
- Learn to use constructive criticism and feedback to further my professional development.
- Respect my mentor by showing up to meetings on time and understanding when things may come up.
- Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.
- To participate in professional development sessions provided by the research team.
- Honor ground rules established in this agreement.

As a mentor, I agree to do the following:

- Serve as a mentor and provide guidance, oversight, and encouragement.
- Provide constructive feedback regarding their progress and experience.
- Meet virtually or in person and communicate regularly with my mentee to review their progress and help them work toward identified goals.
- Respect my mentee by showing up to meetings on time and understanding when things may come up.
- Maintain confidentiality of our relationship.
- To participate in professional development sessions provided by the research team.
- Honor ground rules established in this agreement.

This agreement outlines the goals and expectations agreed upon by the mentor and mentee listed below. Although the thoughtful completion of this form was used, it is understood that items will change and adjust naturally to fit the needs of both parties as the mentoring relationship grows. Current plans are to revisit this document at the beginning of the Spring 2027 Term to adjust goals and dates given current accomplishments. If at any time during the duration of the mentoring contract one member of the mentoring pair does not feel like the other is able or willing to fulfill the items agreed to above, please contact the Mentor/Mentee Research Team at rdmentorshipprogram@gmail.com.

Name of Mentee: _____

Mentee's Signature: _____ Date: _____ (may be electronic)

Name of Mentor: _____

Mentor's Signature: _____ Date: _____ (may be electronic)

Mentor Name: _____

Mentee Name: _____ Date: _____

RD Mentorship Checklist *(To be Completed Together)*

Get to Know Each Other

- ☐ Review and sign the Mentor/Mentee Agreement.
 - ☐ Share your educational and professional backgrounds.
-

Establish Communication Expectations

- ☐ Exchange preferred contact information.
 - ☐ Confirm the communication expectations outlined in the Mentor/Mentee Agreement
 - ☐ Schedule your next 2–3 meetings (or as many as possible).
-

Review Program Resources Together

- ☐ Visit the RD Mentorship Program website together.
Review where to find:
 - Mentor and Mentee Resources
 - Previous project examples for inspiration and guidance
 - RD Mentorship Program Handbook
 - Important dates and deadlines
 - ☐ Join slack communication:
https://rd-mentorship-program.slack.com/join/shared_invite/zt-44cn9e1o7-q3gd_sZUUTbKW7tAyhiU4Q
 - ☐ Review and sign the RD Mentorship Partner Agreement: Be sure to submit it to your first mentoring log.
-

Discuss Your Mentorship Plan

- ☐ Discuss what each of you considers a successful mentoring relationship to look like.
- ☐ Discuss individual goals for the year.
- ☐ Decide how the project aligns with these goals and interests.

☐ Clarify expectations for the project and include details of the below items in the RD Mentorship Partner Agreement.

Discuss:

- Project timeline
 - Checkpoints
 - Deadlines
 - Feedback process
 - Level of independence expected
 - Responsibilities of both mentor and mentee
 - If your project involves KRDNs, please check off which are included on the next page.
-

Plan Your Next Steps

- ☐ Decide on goals to accomplish before your next meeting.
 - ☐ Determine one action item for each person.
 - ☐ Ask any remaining questions.
-

Which of the following ACEND Knowledge Requirements for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (KRDN) competencies will be met in your proposed project? (Mark all that apply.)

- ☐ Demonstrate how to locate, interpret, evaluate, and use professional literature to make ethical, practice-based decisions (KRDN 1.1)
- ☐ Select and use appropriate current information technologies to locate and apply evidence-based guidelines and protocols (KRDN 1.2)
- ☐ Apply critical thinking (KRDN 1.3)
- ☐ Demonstrate effective and professional oral and written communication and documentation. (KRDN 2.1)
- ☐ Describe the governance of nutrition and dietetics practice, such as the Scope of Nutrition and Dietetics Practice and the Code of Ethics for the Profession of Nutrition and Dietetics; and describe interprofessional relationships in various practice settings (KRDN 2.2)
- ☐ Discuss the impact of health care policy and different health care delivery systems on food and nutrition services. (KRDN 2.4)

- ☐ Identify and describe the work of interprofessional teams and the roles of others with whom the registered dietitian nutritionist collaborates in the delivery of food and nutrition services. (KRDN 2.5)
 - ☐ Demonstrate cultural humility, awareness of personal biases and an understanding of cultural differences as they contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion. (KRDN 2.6)
 - ☐ Perform self-assessment that includes awareness in terms of learning and leadership styles and cultural orientation and develop goals for self-improvement. (KRDN 5.1)
 - ☐ Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals. (KRDN 5.5)
 - ☐ Demonstrate an understanding of the importance and expectations of a professional in mentoring and precepting others. (KRDN 5.6)
 - ☐ Apply current information technologies to develop, manage and disseminate nutrition information and data.
 - ☐ Identify and explore career options.
 - ☐ None of the above
-

Before Ending Your First Meeting

- ☐ Confirm the date and time of your next meeting.
- ☐ Mentee: Fill out the mentoring log to record your first meeting.
- ☐ Submit the RD Mentor Partner Agreement & RD Mentor Checklist to the mentoring log as your first Mentor Log. This is a requirement!

HIPAA CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

Mentees involved in this program may be granted access to confidential patient information in the course of their responsibilities provided by the mentor. This agreement is to ensure the protection of patients' rights to privacy.

This non-disclosure agreement is effective upon signing and throughout the entirety of the mentorship. It is entered into by and between _____ (“Mentor”) and _____ (“Mentee”).

By signing below, the mentee shows they will adhere to the mentor’s privacy policies, as well as the following policies in compliance with HIPAA Privacy Law:

- Protected health information (PHI) should only be accessed on a need be basis as it pertains to mentee responsibilities.
- PHI should only be disclosed with the participant, unless in a private setting with individuals who have approved access, and only on a need be basis.
- “Confidential information” refers to any data and/or information that is related to the disclosing party “e.g. Mentor”, in any form, including, but not limited to, oral or written. Such confidential information, but not limited to, any information related to the business or industry of the mentor, such as discoveries, processes, techniques, programs, knowledge base, customer lists, potential customers, business parties, affiliated partners, leads, know-how, or any other services related to the Mentor.

Failure to uphold this agreement may lead to disciplinary actions based on the nature of the violation as deemed necessary by the mentor.

Mentee Signature Date

Mentor Signature Date

Disclaimer: This agreement is between mentor and mentee. The RD Mentorship Program will not be held liable for any miscommunications or discrepancies listed in this agreement.

See www.rdmentor.com