

Registered Dietitians

Promoting Health through Food & Nutrition

Eastern Health is the largest, integrated health authority in Newfoundland and Labrador employing approximately 13,000 dedicated employees and serving a population of more than 300,000 people. The authority offers the full continuum of health and community services including public health, long-term care, community services, hospital care and unique provincial programs and services.

Eastern Health aims to provide the highest quality care and service possible to the people within its communities, region, and the province. To do that, it employs qualified, competent and caring individuals who are dedicated to their professions and to the organizations vision of Healthy People, Healthy Communities. Eastern Health recognizes the importance of practicum training in the journey to become a qualified, competent and caring healthcare professional. As a teaching organization, Eastern Health has a long and successful history of supporting practicum placements for allied health (including dietetic interns), nursing, medical and non-health professional students and is committed to ensuring a future with continued opportunities to train the next generation of healthcare professionals.

About the Dietetic Internship Program

Eastern Health offers a nationally accredited Dietetic Internship Program recognized by the ***Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP)***. It began in 1982 (then known as the General Hospital Dietetic Internship) and has maintained its commitment to develop the competencies required of an entry level dietitian (ICDEP, 2020), prepares Dietetic Interns to write the ***Canadian Dietetic Registration Exam*** and become eligible for registration with a provincial ***dietetics regulatory body***.

The goal of the EHDIP is to provide practical learning experiences that enable a Dietetic Intern to develop the knowledge, attitude and skills to practice as a competent entry-level Dietitian. This is achieved through:

Eastern Health Dietetic Internship Program

- Engagement in supervised practical learning experiences in clinical, population health and food service management dietetic practice areas within the Eastern Regional Health Authority.
- Active participation in dietetic practice-based research and nutrition quality improvement projects that provides the opportunity for Dietetic Interns to enhance their problem solving and decision-making skills
- Encouragement, motivation and support from program preceptors, the program provides a foundation for Dietetic Interns to grow in their self-confidence, competence and commitment to successfully complete the program and continue their professional growth.

Upon completion of the program, Dietetic Interns will have integrated knowledge into practice in the areas of professionalism and ethics, communication and collaboration, management and leadership, nutrition care, population health promotion and food provision (ICDEP, 2020).

Internship Practicum Options

There are two practicum options within the EHDIP:

- 1) Post-Degree Internship Practicum – this is a 45-week practicum (starting in September of each year) offered to four post-degree interns. Applicants to this program must be enrolled in an accredited post-secondary program in nutrition-dietetics.
- 2) MUN Master of Public Health Practicum – this is 35-week practicum (starting in January of each year) offered to two students of the **Memorial University Masters of Public Health – Nutrition and Dietetics stream** program. Applicants should apply to the MUN program for consideration into the MUN-EH Dietetic Internship Program.



About our Registered Dietitian Preceptors

All Registered Dietitians (RD's) working within Eastern Health are required to contribute their professional expertise to the Internship Program and/or to preceptoring Dietetic Interns. RD's work as Clinical Dietitians, Regional Nutritionists, Food Service Managers and as Program Managers. Eastern Health RD's are passionate about food and the science behind it. They play an important role in helping people of all ages achieve their

best nutritional health. As important members of the healthcare team, Eastern Health's RD's provide nutrition counselling and expertise to help patients, clients and residents enjoy good health, prevent and manage chronic diseases, and recover from illness and surgery. RD's provide nutrition services in many settings, including acute care and rehabilitation hospitals, home care, supportive living and continuing care facilities, outpatient clinics, public health centres and communities.

All RD's working in Eastern Health have graduated from an accredited university and practicum training program and are members of the **Newfoundland and Labrador College of Dietitians**. To learn more about the role and professional training requirements of RD's, visit the **Dietitians of Canada** webpage.

Internship Rotations & Projects

The EHDIP provides practice experiences or 'rotations' supervised by RD's working in clinical, population health and food service practice areas. Rotations are designed to build on the interns existing foundation of dietetic knowledge and develop their skills and entry-level competencies. The goal of each supervised practice rotation is to gradually increase the Intern's level of responsibility, proficiency, independence and competence. Some rotations have two interns placed together and use a peer-reciprocal coaching model, while others integrate virtual care/practicum opportunities. In all rotations, Interns will have opportunities to enhance their cultural safety competencies as they engage with diverse cultural groups including French speaking, Indigenous and new Canadians.



Internship rotations are scheduled in programs that operate from **acute, community and long term care facilities** within the city of St. John's and rural areas within the Eastern Health region. Placement in a variety of practice and health care settings will help Interns develop the unique skills required to meet the evolving practice competencies of the dietetics profession. Although the majority of rotations will be scheduled within the city of St. John's health and community services facilities, based on available resources and the Interns interest, some rotations will be scheduled in rural locations. Travel and accommodation needs for rural placements should be discussed with the Internship Director.

The types of placements and projects of the EHDIP include:

- *Clinical Nutrition Placements* – which begin in outpatient areas and progress to inpatient areas and may take place with children, adult and/or geriatric populations. Clinical placement options include long term and acute care and with provincial and regional programs. Placement areas may include Cancer Care, Cardiac Care, Continuing and Long Term Care, Critical Care, Diabetes, General Medicine, Mental Health, Nephrology, Neurology, Pediatrics, Rehabilitation and Surgery.
- *Population Health Placements* – which take place with Regional Nutritionists of the Health Promotion Department in either an urban or rural location. Pending Government approval, MUN MPH Dietetic interns may have the opportunity engage in a placement with the **Department of Health and Community Services**. To learn more about how our Dietitians and Interns contribute to the organizations vision of *healthy people, healthy communities*, visit **Eastern Health's Health Information** webpage. Population health competencies are further enhanced through opportunities for Interns to plan and action nutrition month activities.
- *Food Service Placements* – which take place with Registered Dietitian-Food Service Managers and Food Service Supervisors with **Compass Group Canada**, Eastern Health's contracted food service company. Through innovative clinical and community partnerships, Dietetic Interns engaged in a food service placement are provided opportunities to engage in quantity food provision within acute and/or long- term care facilities and food skills development for those in need through community partner organizations.
- *Projects* - In addition to the practice area rotations, Interns engage in various projects designed to enable them to meet various dietetic practice competencies. These include a practice-based research project (post degree interns only), dietetic practice update, clinical case study and nutrition advocacy project. Projects may be completed independently or as a team of two interns.

Internship Schedule

Practice rotations are designed and scheduled considering the interns learning needs and to enable achievement of the **Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice** (ICDEP). The schedule is outlined below and may be subject to change (based on preceptor availability and/or unanticipated health system challenges).

	Post Degree Interns (45 week internship beginning in September)	MUN MPH Interns (35 week internship beginning in January)
Orientation	1 week (occurs in September for both Post Degree and MUN Interns)	
Class Days	1-2 days/month	
Food Service	10 weeks	8 weeks
Clinical Nutrition Care	20-25 weeks (includes 4 weeks IPP; weeks vary pending availability of placement locations and/or preceptors and intern learning needs)	
Independent Practice (IPP)	4 weeks (included in the above clinical nutrition care rotations)	
Population Health	6 weeks	8 weeks
Practice-Based Research Project	1 week	Prior learning credit through MUN MPH Program
Electives	2-4 weeks (pending Interns achievement of ICDEP competencies, availability of elective placement location and preceptor)	None. May be an option if rotations are impacted by prior learning credit.
Vacation	2 weeks (aligns with the Christmas holiday)	None

Upon discretion of the Internship Director, Interns may receive prior learning credit towards their competencies for previous work experience or study resulting in a shortened placement in a certain area. This must be requested, and evidence presented upon acceptance into the program.

Internship Application & Acceptance

Application Requirements

All applicants are required to have a Bachelors' Degree in Food/Nutrition from an **accredited academic program** and have proficiency in English. To find out if you are eligible for an internship visit the **Dietitians of Canada** website. The completed application package must be accompanied by a \$40.00 application fee, to be paid directly to Eastern Health. An EH Dietitian Selection Committee will screen and score application packages. The Committee will then offer an interview (in-person or virtually) to those who qualify based on their application package score. Successful applicants will be notified of their acceptance via email directly from the EHDIP.

Selection Criteria

The Selection Committee will screen applications based on the below criteria and considers the ideal Intern to be one who demonstrates evidence in being successful in the internship program and as a professional Dietitian:

- *Academic Preparation*
 - Applicants must have an overall standing of 70% or above (especially in the last two years of university). Strong academic performance for science and nutrition courses has been shown to help our Interns succeed. The relevancy of courses and the overall load (e.g. academic, work, volunteer, extra-curricular) carried during university is also considered.
- *Work and/or Volunteer Experience*
 - Nutrition or foodservice related experience is preferred. Valued experience is that which gives an applicant responsibility, dependability, time management, problem solving, and leadership skills and illustrates evidence of collaboration and cooperation. The relevancy and length of experiences and the level of responsibility held will be considered (e.g. supervisory/leadership).
- *Relevant Skills and Interests*
 - Applicants should illustrate how their academic, work and/or volunteer experiences have fostered development of their communication skills (written, oral, interpersonal); organizational and time management skills; and leadership skills, including the ability to set goals, show initiative, think critically, make informed decisions and adapt to changing situations are valued. The applicant should also illustrate an interest in and passion for food and nutrition.
- *References*
 - The EHDIP requires 3 reference letters to be submitted from: 1) a work or volunteer supervisor; 2) an academic reference (professor, academic advisor); and 3) either a supervisor or academic reference that knows the applicant from a professional, volunteer or student capacity. References should be those who know the applicant well and can comment on their strengths, achievements and qualities that will them a successful Dietetic Intern.

The above noted criteria should be obtained through experiences that are relevant and current. An applicant looking to gain experience in the dietetic area should consider volunteering with an EH Dietitian. Contact **EH Volunteer Resources** to inquire about dietetic or other healthcare volunteer opportunities.

Internship Acceptance

Upon acceptance into the EHDIP, the following documents must be received no later than 6 weeks prior to the start of the Internship (September for post degree Interns; January for MUN MPH Interns). All documents should be submitted via email or mail to the EHDIP (see below for contact information).

- Certificate of Conduct and Vulnerable Sector Check (issued within 6 months prior to start of internship)
- Official University Transcript
- Proof of Dietitians of Canada Membership
- Copy of Liability Insurance (must include your name and amount of coverage provided). This can be obtained from Dietitians of Canada (Not required for MUN MPH Interns).
- Signed Affiliation Agreement (not required for MUN MPH Interns)
- Completed Eastern Health Pre-Placement Health Screening Form
- Certificate of completion of Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) training
- Signed Eastern Health Privacy and Confidentiality Oath
- Request for prior learning credit

Contact Information

Eastern Health Dietetic Internship Program
Professional Practice Allied Health, Eastern Health
Rm. 710 Southcott Hall, 100 Forest Rd
St. John's, NL, A1A 1E5

Email: dietetic.internship@easternhealth.ca
Ph: (709) 777-7673 or (709) 727-9115