

Registered Dietitians

Promoting Health through Food & Nutrition

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services

(NLHS) provides a broad range of health and community programs and services based in acute care, long-term care and community settings to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). The delivery of services takes place through a large suite of facilities, clinics, and community services, overseen by the five zones: Central, Eastern-Rural, Eastern-Urban, Labrador-Grenfell, and Western.

NLHS 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 organization's vision of *health and well-being - every person, every community*. NLHS recognizes the importance of practicum training in the journey to become a qualified, competent and caring healthcare professional. As a teaching organization, NLHS 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

The **NLHS** Eastern Zone offers a nationally accredited Dietetic Internship Program (DIP) recognized by the ***Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP)***. It began in 1982 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 NLHS DIP 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:

- Engagement in collaborative, supervised practical learning experiences in clinical, population health and food service management dietetic practice areas within the NLHS Eastern Zones.



- Active participation in the design and delivery of dietetic practice-based quality improvement initiatives that enable dietetic interns to enhance their problem solving and decision-making skills.
- Setting a foundation for dietetic interns to grow in their self-confidence and competence and establish a commitment to continued professional development and 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 NLHS DIP:

- 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) MUNL 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 NLHS DIP.



The NLHS DIP has two practicum options!

About our Registered Dietitian Preceptors

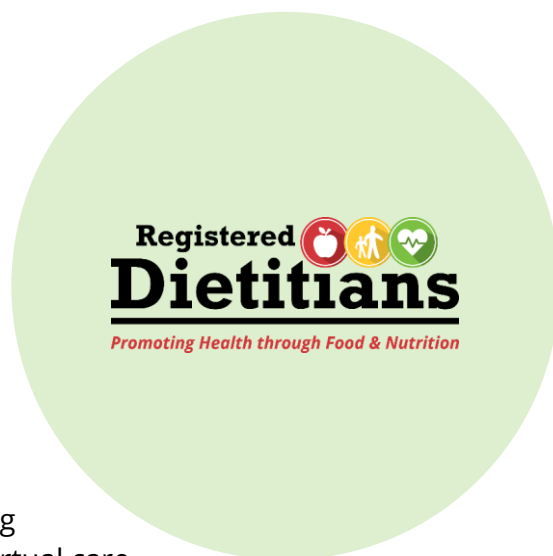
All Registered Dietitians (RD's) working within the NLHS Eastern Zones are required to contribute their professional expertise to the DIP and/or to preceptoring dietetic interns. RD's work as Clinical Dietitians, Regional Nutritionists, Food Service Managers and as Program Managers. NLHS Eastern Zone 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, the RD's provide nutrition 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 the NLHS Eastern Zones 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 NLHS DIP 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, independence and competence. Some rotations have two interns placed together and use a peer-reciprocal coaching model, while others are individual and integrate virtual care opportunities. In all rotations, interns 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 some rural areas within the Eastern Zone. 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 intern's interest, some rotations will be scheduled in rural locations. Travel and accommodation need for rural placements should be discussed with the DIP Director.

The types of placements and projects of the NLHS DIP include:

- *Clinical Nutrition Placements* – 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* – take place with Regional Nutritionists of the



Health Promotion Department in either an urban or rural location. Pending Government approval, MUNL 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 *health and wellbeing, every person, every community*, visit the **NLHS Health Information or HI** webpage. Population Health competencies are further enhanced through opportunities for interns to plan and action nutrition month activities.

- *Food Service Placements* – take place with Registered Dietitian-Food Service Managers and Food Service Supervisors with **Compass Group Canada**, NLHS Eastern Zones contracted food service company. Through innovative clinical and community partnerships, dietetic interns engaged in food service placements 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. The **Compass Group Teaching Kitchen** is a great example of how dietetic interns have engaged in creative and collaborative projects to meet dietetic practice competencies.
- *Projects* - interns engage in various projects designed to meet dietetic practice competencies. These include a practice-based quality improvement project (post-degree interns only), clinical case study and dietetic advocacy project. Projects may be completed independently or in collaboration with another intern.

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)	MUNL 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; varies pending availability of placement locations, preceptors and/or interns learning needs)	
Independent Practice (IPP)	4 weeks (included in the above clinical nutrition care rotations)	
Population Health	6 weeks	8 weeks
Practice-Based Quality Improvement Project	1 week	Prior learning credit through MUNL MPH Program



Electives	2-4 weeks (pending competency achievement, placement/ preceptor availability)	None. May be an option if rotations are impacted by prior learning credit.
Vacation	2 weeks during the Christmas holiday + 5 days*	5 days*

*5 days' vacation to be used throughout the internship

Upon discretion of the DIP 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 graduated (within the last 3 years) from a **PDEP accredited** undergraduate nutrition program (e.g., Bachelors' Degree in Food/Nutrition) 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 (found on the **internship webpage**) must be submitted along with a \$40.00 application fee, which is to be paid directly to NLHS. An NLHS DIP 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 NLHS DIP.

Selection Criteria

The Selection Committee screens applications based on the below criteria:

- *Academic Preparation*
 - Applicants must have a minimum average of 70% in the final two years of their nutrition degree. Strong academic performance for science and nutrition courses has been shown to help interns in the program 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 food service 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*
 - Three (3) reference letters are to be submitted from: 1) a work or volunteer supervisor; 2) an academic reference (e.g., 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 make 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 and/or job shadowing with a dietitian. Contact **NLHS Eastern Zone Volunteer Resources** to inquire about dietetic or other healthcare volunteer opportunities.

Internship Acceptance

Upon acceptance into the NLHS DIP, the following documents must be received no later than 6 weeks prior to the start of the internship (which is September for post-degree interns and January for MUNL MPH interns). All documents should be submitted via email or mail to the NLHS DIP (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
- Proof of liability Insurance (must include applicants name and amount of coverage provided). This can be obtained from Dietitians of Canada (not required for MUNL MPH interns).
- Signed affiliation agreement (not required for MUNL MPH Interns)
- Completed NLHS pre-placement health screening form
- Certificate of completion of Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) training



- Signed NLHS privacy and confidentiality oath
- Request for prior learning credit (if applicable)

Contact Information

Dietetic Internship Program
Professional Practice Nursing and Allied Health
NL Health Services, Eastern Urban & Rural Zones
Rm. 710 Southcott Hall, 100 Forest Rd
St. John's, NL, A1A 1E5

Email: dietetic.internship@easternhealth.ca

Ph: (709) 777-7673

Links

NLHS Dietetic Internship Information - <https://www.easternhealth.ca/careers/student-placements/>

NLHS Employment - <https://employment.easternhealth.ca/eRecruit/>

NLHS Volunteer Opportunities - volunteer.resources@easternhealth.ca

Partnership for Dietetic Education and Practice (PDEP) -

<https://www.pdep.ca/default.aspx>

MUN Master of Public Health - <https://www.mun.ca/medicine/chh/programs/master-of-public-health/>

Newfoundland & Labrador College of Dietitians (NLCD) - <http://www.nlcd.ca/>

Working and Living in NL - <https://workinhealthnl.ca/#regions>

NL Webpage - <https://www.newfoundlandlabrador.com>

