

Southwestern Dietetic Internship

Intern Handbook



2025 – 2026

(Updated November 2025)

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Accreditation Status	5
Becoming a RDN: Requirements and Steps	5
SWDI Goals and Objectives	6
Admission Requirements	6
Cost to the Intern.....	8
Preparing for the SWDI	9
Intern Expectations	10
SWDI Overview.....	11
Program Calendar	11
Orientation Overview.....	11
Practice Exams.....	11
Scope of Service	12
Clinical Nutrition Overview	12
Ambulatory and Urban Community Nutrition Overview	13
Rural Community Rotation.....	13
Food Service Rotation.....	14
Nutrition Services Management Rotation.....	14
How to Successfully Complete the SWDI.....	14
Productivity Benchmarks.....	14
Evaluations.....	14
Presentation Expectations	15
Projects and Assignments	15
Utilizing Library Resources	15
Reports/Document Submissions	16
Study Week, Close Out, and Graduation	16
References:.....	17
APPENDICES	18
Appendix A - Productivity Benchmarks.....	19

Introduction

The Southwestern Dietetic Internship (SWDI) was formed by the Phoenix Indian Medical Center (PIMC) and Kayenta Service Unit (KSU), two health care organizations within the Indian Health Service (IHS). The IHS is an agency within the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The SWDI accepted its first intern in 2006 and is a unique program focused on American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) nutrition and provides both urban and rural nutrition rotations at PIMC and the Pinon Health Center (PHC), respectively. The PHC is located in the heart of the Navajo Reservation in northern Arizona.

The IHS is responsible for providing health care services to members of federally-recognized tribes, mandated by the United States Constitution and several treaties and laws. The mission of the IHS is “to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level” (Indian Health Service, n.d.). The SWDI was developed in response to data revealing limited access to culturally-appropriate nutrition services provided by a qualified nutrition professional.

The mission of the SWDI is to prepare entry-level Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) to provide culturally-appropriate, comprehensive nutrition services in AI/AN communities. Often times, RDNs working within Indian health may be the sole RDN working in a service unit located in a remote and isolated location. The SWDI is a 34-week program which provides supervised practice in both urban and rural areas.

The SWDI is based at the PIMC, a 127-bed referral hospital, where interns complete the clinical, ambulatory care/urban community, food service, and management rotations. Interns then complete a 2-4 week rural community nutrition rotation in Pinon, Arizona. The rural rotation may include other rural sites for the purpose of enhancing the learning experience.

Rotation sites and addresses:

Phoenix Indian Medical Center
4212 N. 16th Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85016
Nutrition Services: 602-263-1532

Pinon Health Center
Navajo Route 4
Pinon, Arizona 86510
Phone: 928-725-9500

Southwestern Dietetic Internship Team

CDR Charisse Holiday, PhD, MPH, RDN, CDCES, BC-ADM, CPH
Internship Director & Supervisory Nutrition Management Preceptor
Chief of Professional Officer
(602) 581-6052
Charisse.Holiday@ihs.gov

CDR Thelma Elliott, MBA, RDN, CDCES, BC-ADM
Phoenix Indian Medical Center Internship Site Coordinator &
Chief of Nutrition Services
(602) 581-6038
Thelma.Elliott@ihs.gov

LCDR Samantha Smith, MPH, RDN
Pinon Health Center Site Coordinator & Supervising Rural Community Preceptor
Pinon Health Center Supervisory Dietitian
(928) 725-9500, extension 9676
Samantha.Smith@ihs.gov

Jeff Parrish, MBM, RDN
Supervising Food Service Rotation Preceptor
Food Service Director
(602) 581 – 6041
Jeff.Parrish@ihs.gov

LT Sandra McCabe, MHA, RDN
Supervisory Ambulatory Nutrition Preceptor
Public Health Nutritionist
(602) 581-6045
Sandra.McCabe@ihs.gov

CDR Stacey Gyenizse, MS, RDN, CDCES
Ambulatory Nutrition Preceptor
Nutritionist
(602) 581- 6046
Stacey.Gyenizse@ihs.gov

LT Rocio Marquez, MS, RDN
Ambulatory Nutrition Preceptor
Women's Clinic Dietitian
(602) 581-6993
Rocio.Marquez@ihs.gov

LCDR Jamie Morgan, MBA, MHA, RDN, CDCES
Acting Clinical Nutrition Manager &
Supervising Clinical Nutrition Preceptor
(602) 581-6407
Jamie.Morgan@ihs.gov

CDR Lisa Grierfer, MBA, RDN, CDCES
Pediatric Nutrition Preceptor
Pediatric Nutritionist
(602) 581-6612
Lisa.Grierfer@ihs.gov

Zoe Yeh, MS, RDN, CDCES
Ambulatory Nutrition Preceptor
Primary Care Dietitian
(602) 581- 6777
Zoe.Yeh@ihs.gov

LT Alyssa Katz, MS, RDN, CDCES
Ambulatory & Community Nutrition Preceptor
(602) 581-6048
Alyssa.Katz@ihs.gov

Accreditation Status

The SWDI is currently accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND). The contact information for ACEND is as follows:

Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2190
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995
Phone: 312/877-1600 (ext. 5400)
Email: ACEND@eatright.org
<http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/acend>

Becoming a RDN: Requirements and Steps

There are several pathways to becoming a RDN (see www.cdrnet.org/RDNeligibility for details on the pathways to becoming a RDN). For students interested in completing eligibility requirements by completing a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) with supervised practice through a dietetic internship program, the requirements and steps to become a RDN include the following:

1. Prospective Dietetic Interns must complete a DPD accredited by ACEND and obtain a DPD verification statement from the educational institution's nutrition program. The DPD verification statement is a prerequisite to applying to an accredited dietetic internship (DI). Students who have not yet graduated may obtain an Intent to Complete DPD Statement when applying for a DI, but must provide a final DPD verification statement prior to beginning the internship. A DPD grants at least a bachelor's degree (some grant a master's degree) and is ACEND-accredited for only the required dietetics coursework. A list of accredited programs is available on the ACEND website.
2. In addition to completing a DPD program, prospective interns must complete a graduate degree from a United States Department of Education recognized accredited institution. The graduate degree requirement can be met in any study area. Effective January 1, 2024, the CDR requires a Master's degree to be eligible for the RDN credentialing exam.
3. Prospective Dietetic Interns must then apply, be accepted into, and successfully complete an ACEND accredited DI program, and obtain a DI verification statement. The DI verification statement is a prerequisite to taking the Registration Examination for Dietitians by the Commission on Dietetic Registration. The DI is required supervised practice experience. The SWDI is an ACEND accredited DI program.

In summary, this pathway requires a DPD verification statement, a Master's Degree and a DI verification statement. Once all required steps have been completed and verified, students can register for the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) Examination. Please see the Registration Examination for Dietitians Handbook:

SWDI Goals and Objectives

The SWDI is focused on AI/AN nutrition, therefore, goals and objectives are based on the focus and purpose of the internship.

Goal 1: Prepare graduates to be competent entry-level RDNs.

Objectives:

1. At least 80 percent of program interns complete program requirements within 12 months (150% of the program length).
2. 80 percent of program graduates take the CDR credentialing exam for RDNs within 12 months of program completion.
3. The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for RDNs is at least 80%.
4. 90 percent of employers will evaluate graduates' entry-level skills as meeting overall competency requirements.
5. Each year the mean program score on the CDR credentialing exam for RDN will meet or exceed the national mean score.
6. Of graduates who seek employment, 70 percent are employed in nutrition and dietetics or related fields within 12 months of graduation.

Goal 2: Program graduates will improve access to nutrition care provided to AI/AN communities by qualified dietetics professionals.

Objective: At least 30% of employed graduates will be employed in programs serving AI/AN people.

Goal 3: To increase the number of AI/AN dietetic professionals.

Objective: At least 30% of graduates will be registered with a federally-recognized tribes.

The SWDI outcomes data are available upon request.

Admission Requirements

- Applicants must be a United States (U.S.) citizen.
- Complete applications must be submitted through the AND Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Service (DICAS). The SWDI participates in the spring computer match and the following items must be submitted and/or are required to be considered for the SWDI.
 - a. A completed application.
 - b. Official Transcripts from all colleges and universities attended.
 - c. A DPD grade point average of at least 3.0.

- d. All candidates must have a Master's degree. Students who have not yet graduated, but anticipate graduating before the start of the internship may apply. If selected, students must submit an updated, official transcript demonstrating a Master's degree prior to starting the SWDI.
- e. An original DPD verification statement that is dated within 5 years of the application deadline. If the applicant has not yet graduated from a DPD program, a current Declaration of Intent to Complete must be submitted. Application packets with outdated DPD Verification statements or Intent to Complete statements will not be considered.
- A current resume documenting work experience related to nutrition and dietetics. For full credit during applicant scoring, 1000 hours is required. Work experience examples include: dietetic technician, food service worker, dietary manager, nutrition educator, etc.
- Three academic and/or professional letters of reference. Letters should be from a professor and an employer/supervisor. No letters from relatives or friends will be considered.
- Supplemental documents which must be uploaded in DICAS.
 - a. *A single-spaced 1-page essay* with one-inch margins discussing 3 prevalent health-related problems among AI/AN communities (rural and/or urban) along with potential solutions. Responses demonstrate an applicant's professional writing capability and the student's interest in serving the AI/AN population. Citations and a reference page must be included. To allow for adequate essay space, the reference page must be placed on page 2 of the essay. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are not permitted when writing the essay; essays will be evaluated against AI demonstrated essay results.
 - b. *Personal statement* explaining why the applicant chose to apply to the SWDI and how the program aligns with professional and personal short and long-term goals. Statement should also discuss personal and professional strengths and weaknesses and expectations of a dietetic internship program.
- Physical Requirements:
 - a. Must be able to stand for extended periods of time.
 - b. Must be able to lift objects weighing 20 lbs. unassisted and 40 lbs. with assistance from one other person.
- Applicants must be able to read, write, and communicate effectively in English, and type on a computer daily for extended periods of time.
- Applicants must have a valid driver's license, their own transportation and valid auto insurance.

The SWDI does not grant credit for prior learning or for graduate work.

Important to take note:

- The Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Service (DICAS) fee for Spring 2026 will cost \$50.00 for the first designation and \$25.00 for each additional designation.
- Applicants can begin applying for the SWDI in December for admission for the following SWDI year (August).

Cost to the Intern

There are no tuition or application fees for the SWDI. However, interns should expect costs related to relocation (if required) and travel.

Costs to the intern may include:

- Relocation to Phoenix, Arizona (if required).
- Personal Vehicle and Travel Expenses for the rural community rotation:
 - a. Travel between PIMC and Pinon Health Center is approximately \$160 per round trip. Pinon, Arizona is about 275 miles from PIMC, requiring about 4.5 hours of travel time (one-way). Interns should expect 2 trips between the locations.
 - b. If rotations are coordinated with another rural location, travel from Pinon, Arizona to the next location will be required. Distance to the next rural location can range from 50-170 miles.
 - c. Note: During the internship, the intern will be permitted to ride in a government vehicle on official duty, but will not be permitted to operate the vehicle. Passengers in government vehicles are covered by the federal government in the event of an incident. Interns traveling in their personal vehicles will assume all safety and liability responsibilities.
- Housing in the Phoenix area: please check the many online resources for housing in the Phoenix area. Average monthly rent for apartments in Phoenix is \$1500.
- Books and other reference materials not available on-site.
- Medical exams and immunizations prior to arrival and health care during the internship.
- Student membership to the AND which is ~\$58 per year.
- Liability insurance which cost ~ \$24 per year for Student Members of the AND.

Please note: Financial aid is not available for the SWDI. Interns participating in the IHS Scholarship Program should contact their Scholarship Coordinator to see if financial aid is available.

Rural Community Rotation Housing

Housing is provided at no cost for the weeks that interns are completing the rural community rotation. The housing provided is what is provided to locum physicians and nurses. Therefore, it is possible SWDI interns may have a roommate for part of the stay. Housing is furnished with a bed and cooking appliances/equipment. Interns are welcome to bring their own dishes, utensils and cleaning supplies. Interns are welcome to subscribe to internet services through Frontier Communications.

Recommended Navajo Nation websites:

- Navajo Nation Tribal Government: www.navajo-nsn.gov
- Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Program: www.nnsdp.org
- Navajo Nation Newspaper: www.navajotimes.com
- Newspaper for both Hopi and the Navajo Tribe: www.navajohopiobserver.com

Preparing for the SWDI

Required Documents

Once intern(s) have been accepted into the SWDI and the intern has accepted the internship, the prospective intern must submit a number of required documents. The required documents allow interns to be onsite and gain supervised practice experience at the PIMC. Required documents and any deadlines will be communicated by the SWDI Director. The following must be submitted:

- **Transcripts and DPD Verification:** Interns who had not yet graduated from their DPD when applying for the SWDI must submit final transcripts, indicating that the degree has been conferred and a final DPD verification statement.
- **Proof of Liability Insurance:** The AND currently offers a member benefit with Mercer Consumer for liability insurance. You can access their application via the AND website.
- **Proof of Student Membership in the AND:** Membership provides intern access to the AND's publications, the Evidence Analysis Library, and other resources that will be required to complete assignments. Member benefits may be found at <http://www.eatrightpro.org/resources/membership/student-member-center>.
- **Completed Volunteer Application Packet:** The packet will be coordinated by the PIMC Staff Development Department. Interns will be in a Volunteer status during the internship. The Volunteer packet for PIMC, which includes immunization requirements, must be submitted prior to arrival. The Volunteer packet for the PHC and/or other designated sites will be provided to interns by the Rural Site Coordinator(s) and must be completed and submitted prior to the rotation.
- **Background Check and Fingerprints.** This step is coordinated by the PIMC Staff Development Department. Clearance must be received prior to the intern beginning the SWDI. The results of the background check and fingerprinting will be provided to rotation sites as needed. Two forms of identification are needed to initiate the background check. Background approval is required and necessary for the SWDI.

Selected interns are encouraged to complete the background check and complete fingerprinting as soon as possible to avoid delays in starting the SWDI.

Work Space

Interns can expect to share an office with the PIMC RDNs on the ground floor of the medical center. Each intern will have a desk with lockable drawers, a desk top computer and access to a network printer. Interns will share a desk phone. All interns will be issued an ID badge and office keys.

SWDI workspace at the PHC is space shared with the Supervising RDN. Activities in Pinon occur in a number of different locations that will require local travel with the preceptor. Additional information on Pinon will be given before that rotation.

Intern Expectations

Interns enrolled in the SWDI are expected to follow all policies and procedures and the expectations outlined below. Failure to meet expectations may result in disciplinary action and termination from the SWDI.

1. Interns are expected to be punctual throughout the internship.
2. Interns are expected to be prepared for each rotation by completing study guides prior to the rotation and communicating with the SWDI Director and/or Rotation Preceptors prior to each rotation to obtain the curriculum, schedule, and any other rotation expectations.
3. Interns are expected to complete all learning experiences, assignments, and/or projects by the due dates. No extensions will be given.
4. Interns are expected to prioritize work and assignment throughout the internship.
5. Interns are expected to be 100% engaged in the learning process, are expected to put quality time and effort into their work, and are expected to demonstrate a continual improvement in nutrition care competence.
6. Interns are expected to be available and onsite at all times.
7. Interns are expected to be familiar with applicable hospital and nutrition department policies and procedures.
8. Interns are expected to uphold the AND Code of Ethics at all times. The AND Code of Ethics can be found online at: <https://www.eatrightpro.org/-/media/eatrightpro-files/career/code-of-ethics/coeforthenutritionanddieteticsprofession.pdf?la=en&hash=0C9D1622C51782F12A0D6004A28CDAC0CE99A032>.
9. Interns are expected to have a positive attitude, to be proactive, and should take the initiative to research areas of nutrition they are not familiar with.
10. Interns are expected to communicate any conflicts, problems and/or challenges with assignments, projects, colleagues, etc. as early as possible in order to eliminate work, collegial and/or experience impact.

All interns must agree to and sign the expectations form.

SWDI Overview

Program Calendar

Duration	Rotation	Location
1 week	Hospital and SWDI Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PIMC: Staff Development; Aztec Building, 3rd Floor, Staff Development Office, 1616 E. Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ, 85016PIMC: Nutrition Department, 4212 N. 16th Street, Phoenix, AZ, 85016
3 weeks	Nutrition Management	PIMC Nutrition Department
2 weeks	*Rural Community Nutrition	Pinon Health Center
17 weeks	Clinical Nutrition	PIMC Intensive Care and Med/Surgical Units
6 weeks	Ambulatory & Urban Community Nutrition	PIMC Primary Care Medical Clinic, Pediatric Clinic, and Local Communities
3 weeks	Food Service	PIMC Nutrition Department
2 weeks	Enrichment	PIMC Nutrition Department
1 week	Closeout and GRADUATION!	PIMC Nutrition Department

**Rotation depends on the weather and availability of resources.*

The internship schedule begins in August and ends in March/April of the following year. The schedule is subject to change.

Orientation Overview

All interns will orientate to PIMC and the Nutrition Department. During this time, interns will obtain a hospital ID badge, a parking decal, complete all required hospital trainings and become familiar with policy and procedures. Computer access will be given which includes access to PIMC's Electronic Health Record (EHR) and Registry Patient Management System (RPMS). The EHR is an electronic patient medical record and the RPMS is a patient database that interfaces with the EHR. Access codes to EHR and RPMS must be safe guarded at all times.

Practice Exams

During orientation week and throughout the SWDI, all interns will be scheduled for RDN practice exams. Throughout the entire SWDI, interns will have access to RDN examination preparation resources. Interns are highly encouraged to review examination resources and begin studying. Practice exams serve as a self-evaluation tool and should help interns identify exam strengths and weaknesses.

Scope of Service

When working with patients hospitalized or in an ambulatory care setting, RDNs and SWDI interns must work within their scope of service. The following are commonly questioned situations that arise.

- **Recommendations for Diet Changes:** RDNs may make diet change recommendations, but may not prescribe diets. Supported by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), RDNs may accept verbal or telephone orders from the physician or licensed independent practitioner (i.e. PA, FNP, etc.) that are pertinent to the nutritional care of the patient, if the medical staff bylaws authorize it. Interns are NOT authorized to accept verbal or telephone orders and may not enter a physician's order. If an intern receives a verbal or telephone order from a physician, the intern is expected to immediately communicate this request to the supervising preceptor who will complete the required action to implement the order.
- **Adding Supplements:** Nutritional oral supplements are defined as nutritional drinks, shakes, increased portions, etc. Vitamin and mineral supplements are considered medications. Vitamin and mineral supplements can be recommended to the physician. RDNs and interns may add oral supplements to patient meals and/or snacks to enhance and/or meet the patient's nutritional needs. All nutritional oral supplement actions must be documented in the patient's medical record.
- **Modifying Meal Schedules:** Interns may modify a meal schedule to meet the nutritional needs of a patient. Interns are expected to communicate the schedule change with the Dietetic Technicians and document the change and purpose in the medical record.
- **Requesting Labs:** Interns may recommend laboratory studies and ask the physician to place orders for them. If a physician concurs with the recommendation and/or request, interns may inform/remind the physician of the intern's scope of capacity, or, interns may ask the supervising preceptor to place the order in EHR.
- **Implementing Enteral or Parenteral Orders:** Orders must be entered and implemented by a physician and/or a RDN who has received a telephone or verbal order from the physician. As a note, standardized order sets already exist in the EHR.
- **Recommendations for Medications:** Medication recommendations may be communicated to the physician, but must be pertinent to the nutritional care of the patient. Physicians and independent practitioners are the only providers who may write medication orders.

Clinical Nutrition Overview

The PIMC has 2 primary inpatient wards: Intensive Care and Medical/Surgical. Individuals eligible for health care in IHS facilities are members of federally recognized tribes. The inpatient

areas serve adult patients only. Pediatric patients who require hospitalization are transferred to other area hospitals.

The clinical program begins with a “Boot Camp” that is a review of skills and knowledge needed to successfully implement the nutrition care process. Boot Camp consists of one week of didactic sessions and a review of the study guide which must be completed prior to arrival. The second week is spent in the Diet Office working with Dietetic Technicians to learn the patient menu system, the nutrition screening system, and to develop a working relationship with the staff in all sections of the department. Dietetic Technicians screen all inpatients, ensure patients receive the correct meals, and serve as a liaison between inpatient and food service. Since interns will be working with inpatients, this week is critical in learning the system and in establishing rapport with the Dietetic Technicians and the Food Service Staff.

After interns have been orientated to inpatient nutrition processes, interns will begin providing supervised patient care for hospitalized patients and documenting nutritional care in PIMC’s EHR. The Assessment, Diagnosis, Intervention, Monitoring, and Evaluation (ADIME) process is utilized for all patient care. The patient care workload will increase weekly to a maximum of 6-8 patients per day. Interns will participate in interdisciplinary rounds and will collaborate with a multidisciplinary inpatient care team. Opportunities to observe surgery or other procedures may be available. Interns should expect an 8 hour daily work schedule and any additional time to complete patient care notes for the day.

In addition to the providing nutritional care to hospitalized patients, interns will be assigned several assignments and projects throughout the rotation to enhance the learning experience.

Ambulatory and Urban Community Nutrition Overview

The Ambulatory and Urban Community rotation is focused on providing nutrition services in an outpatient clinic. The rotation is three weeks and depending on scheduling, may include short rotations in the PIMC Pediatrics and the Women’s clinics. Interns will complete their supervised practice in the Primary Care Medical Clinic at PIMC. Activities include individualized nutrition care, conducting group nutrition classes, and interfacing with the PIMC Centers of Excellence, including Diabetes, HIV, and Oncology. Furthermore, interns will have opportunities to engage tribal partners of PIMC at health fairs, servicing tribal clinics and participating in community events.

In addition to the providing nutritional care to ambulatory care patients, interns will be assigned several assignments and projects throughout the rotation to enhance the learning experience.

Rural Community Rotation

The Rural Community rotation takes place in Pinon, Arizona on the Navajo Reservation. Other designated locations may be added to enhance the learning experience. This rotation offers numerous opportunities and a unique learning experience in providing community nutrition

programs in a remote area. Community nutrition activities include nutrition programing, individualized education and counseling, home visits, and school nutrition.

Food Service Rotation

The Food Service Rotation is completed at the PIMC and is focused on providing interns an overview and hands on experience with hospital food service management. The PIMC hospital kitchen provides inpatient meals and manages an employee meal program. Food service operations are guided by the nutritional needs of inpatients, CMS and Joint Commission standards, and the US Food and Drug Administration Food Code. Interns will have hands on experience managing hospital food services which includes direct hands on experience with sanitation, inventory, cost analysis, meal planning, recipe development, and equipment management and maintenance.

Nutrition Services Management Rotation

The Management rotation is designed to provide interns with an active and broad overview of hospital nutrition service management which includes leadership, planning, risk assessment, medical nutrition therapy billing and coding, quality assurance and performance improvement, human resources, accreditation, etc.

How to Successfully Complete the SWDI

Productivity Benchmarks

To ensure intern rotation success, productivity and performance benchmarks were developed for both the Clinical and Ambulatory Nutrition Rotations. Benchmarks focus on facility awareness and knowledge, clinical nutrition activities and performance, and grading expectations. See Appendix A for Clinical and Ambulatory Nutrition benchmarks. Benchmarks will be reviewed during the rotation's orientation session.

Evaluations

Intern performance is evaluated throughout the entire internship and is guided by competencies, the assignments, and the grading of each activity. Nutrition care is continually evaluated by the supervising RDN(s) on a daily basis. Interns are expected to demonstrate a continual improvement in documentation, knowledge and overall performance as the rotations progress. Interns are strongly encouraged to seek guidance, clarification, and communicate challenges as early as possible to ensure assignments are completed in a timely and acceptable manner.

For rotations longer than 4 weeks, preceptors will complete a rotation midpoint evaluation, provide continuous feedback, and will provide a final evaluation of your performance. Performance evaluation should not be a surprise. If an intern's midpoint evaluation is "not meeting expectations," the preceptor will implement a corrective action plan.

Interns are graded on all rotation activities and are evaluated on professional attributes. To successfully pass each rotation, interns must meet the minimum passing grade on all rotation assignments and must have zero 'Needs Improvement' in the professional attributes section. Interns are strongly encouraged to learn and understand the scoring of each rotation and all evaluation forms prior to beginning assignments.

If interns disagree with an evaluation, an appeal may be filed utilizing the appropriate grievance procedures. Interns will complete a rotation evaluation at the end of each rotation.

Presentation Expectations

Dietitians are often called upon to present at professional meetings and to the general public, therefore, interns should expect a number of evaluated presentations. Presentations are expected to be professional and 20-30 minutes in length. Interns are strongly encouraged to review the presentation evaluation form in preparation for a presentation.

Projects and Assignments

Throughout the internship and in addition to daily rotation duties, interns will be assigned a number of projects and/or assignments i.e. research projects, case studies, journal article reviews, etc. Interns are expected to prioritize work throughout the day and may spend after hours studying and completing assignments and/or projects. Assigned projects and assignments enhance the learning process and experience.

Utilizing Library Resources

While an intern of the SWDI, interns will have access to a number of resources. Interns are encouraged to become familiar with these resources.

- **Nutrition Services Library:** A number of textbooks related to nutrition are located in the RDN and the Clinical Nutrition Manager's office. Interns may borrow books by requesting it through the supervising preceptor, but must return the book prior to completing the rotation. In addition to textbooks, "RD in a Flash" flashcards, food models, and other teaching aids are available for use.
- **National Institutes of Health (NIH) Library:** This library is located on the PIMC campus and the PIMC badge is required to access the building. A link to the Library can be found on the PIMC homepage under the Departments, Programs and Initiatives heading. The contents on the Library internet page is extremely helpful. If interns need assistance, the Librarian can be contacted in person, over the phone or through email.
- **EHR:** The EHR houses access to a number of websites and helpful links which include UpToDate and Micromedix; both provide current medical information.

In any situation, interns should only use credible sources i.e. NIH, FDA, Mayo Clinic, PubMed, or the Journal of the AND.

Reports/Document Submissions

Interns are required to submit weekly reports to the SWDI Director and to the Supervising Preceptor of the intern's current rotation. Weekly reports are due weekly via email on Fridays at the close of business which is 4:30 PM. The weekly report documents the intern's time and attendance, work and progress, any lessons learned, and the status and progress of pending assignments/projects. The weekly report also serves as an evaluation tool for the preceptors. Interns must utilize the approved format which includes the following details:

- Name, week (e.g., 8/7-8/11) covered by report, and rotation (e.g., Clinical)
- Hours worked
- Productivity (e.g., number of patients seen, presentations done, etc.)
- Lessons learned
- Status/progress of research and other projects

All intern evaluations and copies of all assignments, projects and presentations are kept in the intern's file. Therefore, interns must submit final and original assignments, projects and presentations via email to the SWDI Director and the Supervising Preceptors.

Interns will have access to their own personnel file upon request. Paper personnel files are kept locked in the office of the Director or Site Coordinator and electronic information is kept secured by password-protected computer access for the privacy of intern information.

Study Week, Close Out, and Graduation

Once interns successfully complete the SWDI, interns will have a final week on site to prepare for the Registration Examination for RDNs, to prepare for PIMC departure, and to participate in the SWDI graduation. Interns must return keys, badges, and any borrowed books prior to being released by the SWDI. The SWDI Director will schedule a close out day to complete required documents i.e. RDE Misuse Statement and help the intern apply for the Registration Examination for RDNs.

Once interns have successfully completed and met all rotation requirements, interns may participate in the SWDI graduation. The DI Verification Statement will be presented to the successful intern during the graduation. The SWDI graduation ceremony is typically planned for the Thursday or Friday of Study Week from 2:00 to 3:00 PM. Graduation is a time to recognize the work and success of SWDI graduates.

References:

Indian Health Service. (n.d.-a). *Agency Overview*. About IHS. Retrieved November 13, 2025, from <https://www.ihs.gov/aboutihs/overview/>

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Productivity Benchmarks

Rotation	Timeframe	Benchmarks
All rotations	Specified Due Date	All study guides must be completed by the given deadlines.
Clinical Nutrition	Weeks 2 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how the diet office works/functions • Know all the supplements • Know the diets • Meet assignment expectations
	Weeks 4 – 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independently see patients without a RD shadowing • 3 patients per day • EHR notes done by 1 PM • Conduct NFPE • Meet assignment expectations • Peer review Grade >70%
	Weeks 7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independently see patients without a RD shadowing • 4 patients per day • EHR notes done by 1 PM • Meet assignment expectations • Peer Review Grade >85%
	Weeks 10 – 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tube Feeding Experience • Independently provide diabetes education (meter, medications, etc.) • 6 patients per day • EHR notes done by 2 PM • Meet assignment expectations • Peer Review Grade >90%
Ambulatory Nutrition Rotation	Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform 2 patient visits by the end of the week • EHR notes done by 4 PM • Peer Review Grade >80%
	Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 4 patients daily • EHR notes by 4 PM • Peer Review Grade >80%
	Weeks 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See 6 patients, independently • EHR notes by 4 PM • Peer Review Grade >90%