WORK EXPERIENCE VS. INTERNSHIP

There is often confusion in the use of “internship” as it relates to dietetics. To become a Registered Dietitian you must complete two courses of study, the didactic and the supervised practice portion. The didactic portion is completed when you receive your B.S. and verification statement. This allows you to then apply for a Dietetic Internship (DI). Many students participate in summer internships while working towards their B.S.; this is invaluable experience however does not qualify as DI. Keep in mind, not every healthcare setting or dietitian can provide a DI, only accredited programs qualify to provide the supervised practice experience necessary to become a R.D.

### Work Experience
- Can happen at anytime during your collegiate career, varies on the experience.
- Crucial in obtaining a dietetic internship.
- Is the beginning of your professional network!
- Helps assure you are in the right major.
- Relates academic material to actual practice.
- Provides future references for jobs and DI.

### Dietetic Internship (DI)
- Post-baccalaureate, by a supervised practice (experience) program to qualify you to take the RD exam
- 251 Accredited DI; for complete list [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)
- Min 1200 hours of supervised practice (6-24 months)
- Applications due mid-February of last semester in DPD, notification of acceptance mid-April.
- Need a min of 3.0 GPA, related work experience, leadership & volunteer experiences.

### Work Experience Facts/Tips
- More than 85% of successful applicants to DI have had more than 1 year work experience related to dietetics.
- Must be a priority if you plan to apply to dietetics experience programs.
- Try to secure a job closely related to traditional dietetics as possible (hospital setting, long-term care, a dietetics education setting (WIC), foodservice, etc).
- Volunteer experience is an excellent way to round out your application. It is not the best to only have volunteer experience, but is better than no experience at all! Treat the experience as if you were getting paid (on-time, professional, dependable)

### How do I obtain a Summer Work Experience?
- Start early! Begin making contacts with prospective employers by February!
- Be professional! Submit a cover letter and resume to potential employers. Resumes are important as they are a written picture of you. Have your advisor or the Center for Career Opportunities look it over. [www.cco.purdue.edu](http://www.cco.purdue.edu)
- Try to identify a specific person to contact. Make your initial contact with the Dietary Department or Nutrition Services rather than Personnel.
- Despite not having extensive course work in F&N, freshmen and sophomores can obtain jobs in foodservice and start their network with dietetics professionals. This network can lead to better opportunities as juniors and seniors.