Graduate Programs in Clinical Nutrition
FAQ’s

1. Where do I send my application for admission?

You may apply online through the SHRP Office of Enrollment Services at:
http://shrp.umdnj.edu/admissions/online_app.htm

Application materials can be sent to the following address:

Office of Enrollment Services
65 Bergen Street, Room 149
Newark, NJ 07101-1709

Phone number - 973-972-5454
Fax number - 973-972-7463
shrpadm@umdnj.edu

2. What are the admission requirements for the DCN and MSCN programs?

For more information on admission requirements please refer to our web site:
http://shrp.umdnj.edu/nutr/index.html

Requirements for Admission for the MSCN Program:

- Prospective students must be Registered Dietitians (RDs).
- An official copy of the transcript for the highest nutrition degree earned, a copy of RD card, a resume, and a letter stating short and long term goals for completing the MSCN program.
- A minimum GPA of 3.2 is required for admission, however, applicants with a lower GPA may be considered on an individual basis.
- Applicants that meet the admission criteria will be scheduled for an interview with select faculty in the UMDNJ Graduate Programs in Clinical Nutrition.

Admission Requirements for the DCN Program:

- Prospective students must be Registered Dietitians (RDs).
- A master's degree, preferably in nutrition or a health related field (with a minimum GPA of 3.4)
- Must have at least three years of professional experience as a clinical RD.
- A letter stating personal short and long term goals for completing the DCN, a copy of RD card, a resume or CV, one letter of recommendation, and official transcripts from the highest degree earned.
- Applicants that meet the admission criteria will be scheduled for an interview with select faculty from the UMDNJ Graduate Programs in Clinical Nutrition.
3. Can I apply to any of the GPCN programs if I am not a Registered Dietitian?

The MSCN, DCN and PhD in Health Sciences-Nutrition Track programs all require applicants to have their RD credential to be considered for admission.

4. How can I get more information on how to become a registered dietitian?

To obtain information on how to become a Registered Dietitian, view the American Dietetic Association’s website at: [http://www.eatright.org/Healthprofessionals/content.aspx?id=6857](http://www.eatright.org/Healthprofessionals/content.aspx?id=6857)

5. Is a master’s degree a requirement for the DCN program?

Yes. A master’s degree, preferably in nutrition or in a health-related field is an admission requirement for the DCN program. Each applicant is evaluated individually based on their breadth and depth of experience, one letter of recommendation, educational background, prior academic degrees, and letter stating their personal and professional goals.

6. Is there a minimum GPA requirement- for the MSCN or DCN programs?

The GPA is one part of the application process. The MSCN requires a minimum GPA of 3.2 from the highest degree achieved at the time of application. The DCN requires a minimum GPA of 3.4 from a Master’s degree.

7. Do you require GREs for admission to your programs?

The GREs are only required for the PhD in Health Sciences -Nutrition specialization track.

8. If I am a graduate of the UMDNJ Dietetic Internship Program or Coordinated Program in Dietetics am I automatically enrolled into the MSCN program?

All students must apply to the program, meet the application requirements, and successfully complete the interview process.

9. Are interviews required for admission to the GPCN degree programs?

Yes, interviews are required. They may be conducted in-person or via the phone.

10. Can I take a course as a non-matriculated student before deciding to apply to the program?

Yes, you may take up to 12 credits as a non-matriculated student in the GPCN program before matriculating into a specific program. Most elective courses are available for non-matriculated students. A list of elective courses can be found at: [http://shrp.umdnj.edu/nutr/mscn/mscn_electives.htm](http://shrp.umdnj.edu/nutr/mscn/mscn_electives.htm)

To apply as a non-matriculated student please refer to: [http://shrp.umdnj.edu/admissions/admissions9_non_matric.html](http://shrp.umdnj.edu/admissions/admissions9_non_matric.html)

11. When are your application deadlines?
Admission is offered twice per year for the MSCN and DCN programs. The application deadline is April 1st for fall admission and October 15th for spring admission.

12. Does the Department of Nutritional Sciences offer any scholarships or financial aid?

The Graduate Programs in Clinical Nutrition offer 1 Nutritional Sciences Scholarship annually through the SHRP scholarship committee. We also encourage students to apply to scholarships offered by the American Dietetic Association (http://www.eatright.org/foundation/). To review the SHRP’s financial aid information please refer to the following link: http://www.umdnj.edu/studentfinancialaid/app_process/major_programs.htm

Scholarship applications can be found at: http://shrp.umdnj.edu/admissions/admissions10_scholarships.html

13. Does UMDNJ-SHRP offer student health insurance?

SHRP offers students health insurance at the beginning of each semester. Visit SHRP’s Insurance Information web page for details regarding student insurance.

14. How can I find out if graduate courses that I previously completed at a different university can be transferred to your program?

You must first apply to the program. If you are admitted, you will be assigned an academic advisor with whom you can review the requirements and course materials of the courses completed. These will be compared to the GPCN program course requirements and syllabi.

15. How many credits must be taken per semester to be considered full-time student

A student who takes nine credits per semester is considered full-time.

16. How many credits per semester do part-time students typically take?

Part-time students typically take 3-6 credits per semester. Most courses are 3 credits.

17. What is the cost per credit including student fees?

The UMDNJ Board of Trustees approves tuition and fees on an annual basis. The current tuition and student fees can be found at: http://shrp.umdnj.edu/registrar/regist_04_tuition_fee.html

18. Can you explain the difference between the PhD and DCN programs?

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Health Sciences Program –Nutrition Specialization track has a research emphasis while the Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition (DCN) program is an advanced clinical practice doctorate program with emphasis on advanced clinical nutrition practice and outcomes research.
The Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition (DCN) is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence through a clinically focused dietetics practice doctorate program. It prepares graduates with expert-knowledge and skills, critical thinking proficiency, and aptitude in scientific inquiry to foster the development of innovative, autonomous advanced dietetics practitioners and researchers. The program emphasizes interprofessional collaboration through coursework and a student-focused clinical residency. The curriculum integrates evidence-based practice in nutrition and dietetics which provides the foundation for graduates to complete an outcomes research project.

The PhD – nutrition specialization track program prepares practicing health care professionals to assume leadership roles in research, academic, and or clinical settings. The program emphasizes the application of research and scholarship to identify and address the needs of our complex healthcare delivery and education systems.

For more information about the PhD in Health Sciences Program Specialized in Nutrition Track refer to:  [http://shrp.umdnj.edu/nutr/documents/phd_flyer.pdf](http://shrp.umdnj.edu/nutr/documents/phd_flyer.pdf)

19. How long does it typically take to finish the MSCN/DCN programs?

This will vary depending on the number of credits taken each semester. It takes usually 3-5 years to complete the 31 credit MSCN program on a part-time basis. The DCN program typically takes 4-5 years to complete the 51 credit program on a part-time basis.

20. Can you describe your program’s areas of research?

Each faculty member has their own specialized areas of research and scholarship. Please see the faculty Locator link: [http://profiles.umdnj.edu/shrp/index.cfm](http://profiles.umdnj.edu/shrp/index.cfm) to review faculty biographical sketches, contact information, publications, honors, awards, research interests, and research grants. To locate faculty members in the GPCN programs, select Nutritional Sciences under department when connected to the faculty Locator link.

21. What are some outcomes of the programs and career options after graduating from the MSCN/DCN degrees?

Graduates of both the MSCN and the DCN have more career options and opportunities available after completing the programs. They are also better prepared to assume leadership roles and receive recognition for their excellence in clinical practice or leadership.

The MSCN prepares students to be expert RDs in practice. Alumni have obtained positions in: clinical management, academia, industry, dietetic internships and specialty practice.

The DCN degree prepares graduates for expert-level RD positions. Past graduates have obtained positions as tenured faculty members, advanced clinical practice RDs, research dietitians, and in upper-level industry positions.

Alumni in both programs publish in peer-reviewed journals, write grants, conduct research and hold leadership positions in professional organizations and occupation related committees.

22. Do the program faculty typically require textbooks for online courses?
Each course faculty decides whether textbooks are a useful resource for the specific class. Many classes utilize a combination of references such as research articles, online texts through the UMDNJ Library, web sites and other assigned readings.

23. **Can students maintain a full-time job while enrolled as a student?**

Many students balance their work and personal life while completing their course work. You will have the opportunity to discuss course enrollment with your academic advisor prior to registration in each semester. This is a good time to speak about work and family commitments and decide which courses best fit with your responsibilities.

24. **What is unique about the GPCN Programs?**

- The programs utilize a web-based platform to educate a diverse group of RD professionals to service the state, nation and communities abroad.
- Graduates are prepared with critical thinking and scientific skills needed for advanced-level clinical practice, management, research, and leadership roles to respond to the challenges of the 21st century.
- The programs instill an appreciation for interdisciplinary collaboration and education; provide "up skilling" opportunities to achieve expanded roles in health promotion, disease prevention, and intervention for a multi-cultural society.

**MSCN Program**

- MSCN students complete a research thesis.
- The MSCN program includes a 120-hour mentored Subspecialty Practice experience which allows for the opportunity to advance skills in an individually tailored area of interest. Past students have gained experience in clinical rotations in: wellness, trauma and critical care, AIDS, cancer, geriatrics, pediatrics, women's health, diabetes, weight management, and complementary and alternative medicine, developed continuing education programs, and gained experiences as a teaching assistant or web-master assistant.

**DCN Program**

- The DCN program is the first Advanced Practice Clinical Doctorate Program in existence exclusively for RDs.
- DCN students conduct a pilot research project and an outcomes research study.
- The DCN includes a 350-hour Clinical Practice Residency designed individually based on the student’s interests, goals and geographic resources. The Clinical Practice Residency experiences includes practical experience as an advanced dietetics practitioner for individuals, communities, and/or clinical populations with expert-level competency in assessment, diagnosis, implementation, evaluation of clinical nutrition care plans using the Nutrition Care Process model, standardized language, and evidence-based practice guidelines. The Clinical Practice Residency may be completed on a full-time or part-time basis.

25. **How many times are students required to come to campus for classes?**
MSCN students are required to travel to either the Newark or Stratford New Jersey campus a minimum of twice during the program. The first in-person requirement is for a 3-day workshop which is part of the Applied Clinical Research course and held on the Newark campus. The second in-person requirement is for your thesis defense on either the Newark or Stratford campuses.

DCN students are required to travel to the Newark or Stratford New Jersey campuses a minimum of three times. The first in-person requirement includes completion of a core course, Applied Physiology that has three day in person component on the Newark campus. You are required to attend the three day in-person research workshop on the Newark campus prior to starting the research coursework. You must defend your final outcomes research in-person on either the Newark or Stratford campuses.

26. How much time can I expect to spend per week for each class?

Classes may vary in the time required to dedicate each week to successfully pass the course. Generally each 3 credit course takes between 15-20 hours of work weekly including completing assignments, participating in discussion, and readings.

27. Where can I find a list of student research projects? - Our abstract database includes all of our student abstracts from their research projects and can be found at:

28. What technology is required for online courses?

All online classes utilize the Angel course management system. Students will be provided access once the student is enrolled as a matriculated or non-matriculated student. Angel technology requirements can be located at the following link:
   http://www.umdnj.edu/istweb/online_courseware/eLearning/Portal/content.htm

Elluminate Live™ is a Web conferencing program used in most courses. The application provides students and faculty with the capability to speak to each other via the Internet in real-time. Some faculty may use Elluminate Live™ to enhance the learning experience in their courses. Use of Elluminate Live™ requires the purchase of a headset with microphone.

29. Is it possible to meet with a GPCN faculty member to discuss the programs? Yes, the faculty would be happy to meet with you to discuss your specific questions. Please email us at ms.cn@umdnj.edu for the MSCN program, den@umdnj.edu for DCN program and MS-PhD-HS@umdnj.edu for the PhD in Health Sciences Nutrition Specialization Track.