

**NOT FOR USE FOR CURRICULAR COURSE CHANGES
REQUEST FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS**

NOTE: Changes to programs may require course changes, which must be processed electronically. Any questions should be directed to Associate Provost David Reinhold at 7-4564 or david.reinhold@wmich.edu

DEPARTMENT: Family and Consumer Sciences
PROPOSED EFFECTIVE FALL YEAR: 2021

COLLEGE: CEHD

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS: *Academic Program Proposed Improvements*

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New degree* | <input type="checkbox"/> New minor* | <input type="checkbox"/> Admission requirements |
| X <input type="checkbox"/> New major* | <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion* | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduation requirements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New curriculum* | <input type="checkbox"/> Revised major | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Title |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New concentration* | <input type="checkbox"/> Revised minor | <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New certificate* | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain**) ** Other: | | |

Title of degree, curriculum, major, minor, concentration, or certificate: Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics

NOTE TO REGISTRAR: RECOMMEND "NDDM" FOR COURSE CODE.

Chair, Department Curriculum Committee: Mary Beth Janssen

Date 10/11/2020

CHECKLIST FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS/DIRECTORS

- x ☐ For new programs and other changes that have resource implications, the dean has been consulted.
- x ☐ When appropriate, letters of support from department faculty are attached.
- x ☐ When appropriate, letters of support from other departments in the same college are attached.
- x ☐ When appropriate, letters of support from other college deans, whose programs/courses may be affected by the change, are attached.
- x ☐ The proposal has been reviewed by HIGE for possible implications for international student enrollment.
- x ☐ The proposal is consistent with the departmental assessment plan, and identifies measurable learning outcomes for assessment.
- x ☐ Detailed resource plan is attached where appropriate.
- x ☐ All questions attached have been completed and supporting documents are attached.
- x ☐ The proposal is written and complete as outlined in the Faculty Senate guidelines and the curriculum change guides.

Chair/Director:

Date

CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

- ☐ The academic quality of the proposal and the faculty involved has been reviewed.
- ☐ Detailed resource plan is attached where appropriate.
- ☐ Consistency between the proposal and the relevant catalog language has been confirmed.
- ☐ The proposal has been reviewed for effect on students transferring from Michigan community colleges. Detailed information on transfer articulation must be included with undergraduate proposals.
- ☐ Consistency between the proposal and the College and department assessment plans has been confirmed.
- ☐ Consistency between the proposal and the College and department strategic plans has been confirmed.
- ☐ All questions attached have been completed and supporting documents are attached.
- ☐ The proposal is written and complete as outlined in the Faculty Senate guidelines and the curriculum change guides.

Chair, College Curriculum Committee:

Date

**NOT FOR USE FOR CURRICULAR COURSE CHANGES
REQUEST FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS**

CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE DEANS

- ☐ For new programs and proposed program deletions, the provost has been consulted.
- ☐ For new programs, letter of support from University Libraries Dean indicating library resource requirements have been met.
- ☐ When appropriate, letters of support from other college faculty and/or chairs are attached.
- ☐ When appropriate, letters of support from other college deans, whose programs/courses may be affected by the change, are attached.
- ☐ The proposal has been reviewed for implications for accreditation, certification, or licensure.
- ☐ Detailed resource plan is attached where appropriate.
- ☐ All questions attached have been completed and supporting documents are attached.
- ☐ The proposal is written and complete as outlined in the Faculty Senate guidelines and the curriculum change guides.

Dean:	Date
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FOR PROPOSALS REQUIRING REVIEW BY:

GSC/USC; EPGC, GRADUATE COLLEGE, and/or FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE BOARD

<input type="checkbox"/> Return to Dean <input type="checkbox"/> Forward to:		
	Curriculum Manager:	Date:
	*needs review by	
<input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove	Chair, GSC/USC:	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove	Chair, EPGC:	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove	Graduate College Dean:	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove	Faculty Senate President:	Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Disapprove	*needs review by Provost:	Date

**NOT FOR USE FOR CURRICULAR COURSE CHANGES
REQUEST FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS**

1. Explain briefly and clearly the proposed improvement:

We propose to create a new Master of Science program in Nutrition and Dietetics to replace the emphasis area in dietetics that now exists in the Master of Arts in Family and Consumer Sciences.

2. Rationale. Give your reason(s) for the proposed improvement.

We propose (1) to change the current major from "Family and Consumer Sciences" to "Nutrition and Dietetics" because it most accurately represents the curricular content of the program; (2) that this master's becomes a Master of Science degree, the preferred degree in the field (see attachment from Carol Pratt, MS, RD, Dietetic Internship Advisory Board member). The rationale follows:

(a) A master's degree for dietetics professionals requires a strong foundation in science. In order to apply for the master's program, applicants must have completed coursework at the bachelor's level in physiology, four semesters of chemistry including organic and biochemistry, microbiology, food science, clinical nutrition, nutrient metabolism, and statistics. Students in our graduate program take an additional six credits in nutrient metabolism plus a proposed 3-credit course in functional foods which requires a strong chemistry and biology background. In addition, all applied nutrition courses (nine credits), including the dietetic internship, require a sound science foundation. A M.S. degree in Nutrition and Dietetics makes sense for this major.

(b) Credentialing requirements to become a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) are changing. As of January 1, 2024, a master's degree will be required as a prerequisite to take the registration examination to become an RDN. Although the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) will accept any master's degree, at least in the short term, for many, the M.S. in nutrition and/or dietetics is perceived as the professional terminal degree. There are five other academic programs in Michigan that combine a master's degree with dietetic internship: four confer M.S. degrees, one confers a Master of Public Health. A search for programs housed at other Family and Consumer Sciences departments around the country yielded: Sam Houston State U (M.S. in Dietetics with dietetic internship); North Carolina A&T State U (M.S. in Food and Nutritional Sciences); Cal State, Long Beach (M.S. in Nutritional Science with dietetic internship); U Wyoming (M.S. in FCS with Human Nutrition and Food Emphasis); South Carolina State U (M.S. in Nutritional Sciences); U Central Arkansas (M.S. in Nutrition w/internship).

(c) As a result of (b), the marketplace for masters' programs in dietetics is changing and becoming more competitive. Because of the 2024 changes in the RDN credentialing process, which will require a master's degree, many new M.S. in Nutrition programs have surfaced over the past five years including several in Michigan (Grand Valley State U, Michigan State U) and many online programs. Students who traditionally would have applied to our program now have more options and want the M.S. degree in Nutrition and Dietetics.

(d) Because of (b) and (c), there is an increasing need for PhD RDNs to teach in the growing number of masters-level programs. An M.S. degree in the field would benefit the graduate who decides to pursue a doctorate.

Before putting this proposal together, senior WMU administrators including the acting provost, the associate provost, and registrar, plus CEHD and FCS department policies, were consulted for guidance about distinguishing between "Master of Science" vs. "Master of Arts", but no official guidelines could be found. Meanwhile, there has been strong WMU student demand and alumni support for changing the current M.A. degree in FCS to a Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Nutrition & Dietetics. In a survey of the last 15 alumni classes, 91 percent of respondents favored the change. Based on this plus points (a) through (d), we have moved ahead with the proposal.

BACKGROUND. Route to the RDN.

To understand the demand for this proposal, it is helpful to understand the road to becoming a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) and major changes occurring in 2024. In order to become an RDN, current candidates must 1) complete academic work in core nutrition and dietetics areas including biochemistry, physiology, food science, clinical and metabolic nutrition, community nutrition, and foodservice management, 2) earn a bachelor's degree (usually dietetics), and 3) complete a minimum of 1200 hours of supervised practice (the equivalent of thirty 40-hour weeks, or approximately one academic year).

WMU's M.A. in FCS with emphasis in dietetics has been closely aligned with the department's dietetic internship program (DI) since the DI's inception more than 20 years ago. It combines meeting professional requirements with earning an academic degree. In WMU's current program, students earn six graduate credits for completion of this supervised practice which includes didactic and skill-building competencies in clinical nutrition, community/public health nutrition, and foodservice management. Students also take an academic course Fall and Spring semesters plus Summer I. At that point, students need an additional 15 graduate credits to complete the degree, but they are eligible to take the RDN exam since they have satisfied the three professional requirements: a B.S., knowledge of nutrition and dietetics, and completion of 1200+ hours of supervised practice. Completion of the M.A. can take anywhere from one to five years to complete, but this has worked well for students who usually seek a job as an RDN while finishing courses at their own pace.

By January 2024, those wanting to become RDNs must still complete core academic work and complete 1200+ hours of supervised practice, but they must also possess a master's degree in order to take the RDN exam. In order to continue attracting high-quality applicants to our program and allow them to complete the program in a timely fashion we have structured the program in a way that students can complete all requirements within 18-20 months. This will put the program's name on par with and grouped in name with similar programs, i.e., other programs offering a master's degree in nutrition and dietetics that includes the dietetic internship component. The latter is important as our accrediting body (ACEND)'s website includes a search engine that allows prospective students to look up dietetic internship and graduate programs based on degree offered.

3. Effect on other colleges, departments, or programs. If consultation with others is required, attach evidence of consultation and support. If objections have been raised, document the resolution. Demonstrate that the program you propose is not a duplication of an existing one.

This new M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics should have no negative effect on programs outside our own department. It does not duplicate any other existing programs. Support for one course to be included in the new major (Food, Nutrition and Climate Change) will likely be offered as an approved elective for the Climate Change Policy and Management Certificate. (See letter of support attached to FCS 5820 new course proposal.)

4. Effect on your department's programs. Show how the proposed change fits with other departmental offerings.

The current M.A. in FCS has four emphasis areas: Child Life, Dietetics, Family Life Education, and Textile and Apparel Studies. In discussion with the other emphasis areas, it does not appear that removing Dietetics from the M.A. major will make much difference to the viability of the M.A. in FCS program. For the future of our nutrition and dietetics graduate students, it makes the most sense from our vantage point to separate this academic area from the M.A. in FCS and to form a new master's program more in line with the content and direction of the profession and the wishes of alumni and applicants. The dietetics emphasis area in the M.A. in FCS would be eliminated once the new master's program is in place.

5. Alignment with college's and department's strategic plan, mission, and vision.

CEHD's 2017 Strategic Plan includes these objectives: 1.4 increase program adaptation to changing external trends; 1.7 achieve or maintain program accreditation where appropriate; 4.1 strengthen recruiting, enrollment and retention; and 5.4 improve monitoring of external trends to increase proactive adaptability. The new proposed M.S. degree program is in line with adapting to external trends, strengthening recruitment and enrollment, and maintaining program accreditation.

Creating a M.S. in nutrition and dietetics continues the vision for dietetics expressed in FCS's 2006 white paper *Family and Consumer Sciences at Western Michigan University: Preparing Students for the New Millennium*: "The dietetics program prepares students to work with individuals, families, and communities to improve nutritional status and health outcomes. ... The FCS perspective trains students to recognize that clients are influenced by family, cultural, social, economic, and built environments when making food choices." The M.S. curriculum will continue this perspective.

6. Effects on enrolled students: Are program conflicts avoided? Will your proposal make it easier or harder for students to meet graduation requirements? Can students complete the program in a reasonable time? Show that you have considered scheduling needs and demands on students' time.

Students, i.e., those who are currently completing or have completed at least 15 graduate credits in the past three years, are very much in favor of the program change. Program requirements will be essentially the same with the addition of two

more elective courses in the program area and potentially offering courses in a different sequence to enable students to complete the program more efficiently. Accommodating current and future students at the same time will not be a problem since the core Fall and Spring semester program that includes FCS 6230 supervised practice (partnered with community hospitals and agencies) will remain intact.

A recent survey of the past 15 WMU graduated classes of dietetic interns/master's students yielded 34 responses (26 percent). Of those responses, 31 (91 percent) encouraged the WMU master's program they participated in be changed to a Master of Science degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. No program graduate respondents indicated a desire to keep the current name or degree. Over 80 percent agreed that starting graduate coursework the summer prior to supervised practice was a good idea in order to better prepare them for working in the field. We had considered offering two graduate courses along with the 40 hour/week supervised practice during Fall and Spring semesters, but many answering the survey expressed that this could be too stressful even though it would expedite movement through the program. The program is still expedited since students are able to complete both an entire graduate program plus dietetic internship program in 18-20 months. A typical full-time graduate program requires 18-24 months to complete, and a stand-alone dietetic program 8-10 months for completion. Although it is not encouraged, many students do work part time during the program to support themselves, and some have other family obligations that require their time. Those students can finish at a slower pace, and this program can give them that flexibility as it has in the past.

7. Student or external market demand. What is your anticipated student audience? What evidence of student or market demand or need exists? What is the estimated enrollment? What other factors make your proposal beneficial to students?

As explained under #2, dietetics graduates will now need a master's degree in order to become registered dietitian nutritionists, and the degree of choice among students is an M.S. in nutrition and/or dietetics. We are confident that if this proposal is accepted, our graduate dietetic internship program will continue to attract quality applicants. This includes graduates of our own undergraduate dietetics program who want to continue their studies at WMU or have family commitments that tie them to southwest Michigan. Quality applicants are important for maintaining program accreditation since accreditation is based on a high pass rate of graduates on the RDN credentialing exam. (The pass rate of our program graduates on the registration exam for dietitians within one year of first attempt based on the past five years is 95 percent.) The competition for strong students has increased due to an increase in the number of dietetic internship programs that culminate in a M.S. in nutrition in Michigan and elsewhere in the U.S. (see Rationale above). Our program provides six credits (1200 hours) of supervised practice experience, and this depends on partnering with clinical and other sites in our geographic area. It would be unrealistic to expect the class to grow larger than ten per cohort in the near future without more sites. However, it is possible that the program will attract additional students wanting this degree who are already RDNs but do not have a graduate degree. Individual courses will likely continue to attract additional students from outside the program as they have been doing.

Market demand continues to be good. Graduates find jobs related to their field in SW Michigan and beyond for those looking outside the state. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that "employment of dietitians and nutritionists is projected to grow 8 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. The role of food in preventing and treating diseases, such as diabetes, is now well known. More dietitians and nutritionists will be needed to provide care for patients with various medical conditions and to advise people who want to improve their overall health."¹ RDNs are also needed for patients on life support (ventilators) in the ICU and for many of the co-morbidities related to high-risk factors for COVID-19.

8. Effects on resources. Explain how your proposal would affect department and University resources, including faculty, equipment, space, technology, and library holdings. If proposing a new program, include a letter and/or email of support from the university libraries affirming that the library resource issues have been reviewed. Tell how you will staff additions to the program. If more advising will be needed, how will you provide for it? What will be the initial one-time costs and the ongoing base-funding costs for the proposed program? (Attach additional pages, as necessary.)

Current situation: This master's program has been under discussion for several years. With the COVID-19 change and the WMU voluntary early retirement option, the area lost a tenured faculty member. As of Summer 2020, WMU has imposed a

¹ (Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Dept of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Dietitians and Nutritionists, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dietitians-and-nutritionists.htm> (visited Sept 9, 2020).)
Revised Sept. 2018. All previous forms are obsolete and should not be used.

hiring freeze. The program was based on the assumption that there would be three full-time dietetics faculty appointments as there have been for the past 10+ years. As of Fall 2020, the dietetics area (undergraduate and graduate) consists of two fulltime faculty + a part-time instructor/graduate internship program coordinator plus 10 part-time instructors. Courses in the proposed program are currently being taught so would not require additional/new staff. Additional resources are not needed to move from an M.A. to M.S. degree. Current resources provide five 6000-level courses that together meet the required 15 graduate credits of courses at the 6000+ level. The two proposed courses FCS 5820 and FCS 5860 are currently offered under the department's Topics course number FCS 5220 and so do not require additional resources. Students can also choose from other electives in the department and college to complement their major.

However, the optimal situation would be to fill the third tenure-track position lost in the Fall 2020 once WMU is able to lift it's hiring freeze. This will enable students to work more closely with faculty in their discipline when doing their master's project and increase research productivity in the dietetics/nutrition concentration area (collaboration between faculty and masters-level students). We would emphasize that while we recognize that WMU is not in a position to provide the optimal faculty now, it is important that the proposal not be delayed simply on those grounds. We can offer all courses in the proposed major with current staff and resources, although this is not ideal. From here on out, potential graduate students will be looking for programs offering both the supervised practice (internship) and academic coursework leading to a master's degree (M.S.) in order to take the RDN exam when registration requirements change January 1, 2024. To delay simply because we are temporarily operating at two full-time faculty will seriously affect our ability to continue to attract high quality applicants, especially WMU undergrads who will observe up close the College's commitment to this program and their wishes for a program offering an M.S. in nutrition and dietetics. A program with an M.S. in nutrition and dietetics could also serve to attract a new faculty member whenever the college is able to support the faculty position. There is the expectation that a third faculty member will be reinstated in the next couple of years.

Other resources: It is not anticipated that additional resources will be needed since the program's structure is essentially already in place. Additional resources not needed include library holdings and subscriptions to journals and professional websites. The master's program is very structured, so it is anticipated that minimal advising changes would need to be made, at least in the short run, and this can be done by current faculty. No additional space will be needed as courses are mostly offered online or off site (supervised practice). Lab space is not something FCS currently can offer and would not be expected as part of this program. One-time budget expenses could include marketing/PR, although many prospective students seek us out because of the SW Michigan location. Updating the website can be done by the College of Education and Human Development's current web resources.

9. List the learning outcomes for the revised or proposed major, minor, or concentration. The department will use these outcomes for future assessments of the program.

After completion of the M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics, students will

- Demonstrate proficiency in the 41 core competencies required by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) to become an RDN;
- demonstrate ability to do basic independent research skills by successfully completing FCS 7100 Independent Research or FCS 7000 Master's Thesis;
- pass the RD professional examination within the first year of attempting it following completion of the M.S.

10. Describe how this change is a response to assessment outcomes that are part of a department or college assessment plan or informal assessment activities.

This proposal is in keeping with long-term needs expressed in the graduate dietetic internship's May 2017 Program Assessment Report (PAR) for ACEND to integrate the DI fully into the master's framework and to align itself more closely with the profession's "Future Education Model." This model also calls for completion of a master's degree before taking the RDN exam.

Plans to create a separate M.S. in nutrition and dietetics are also discussed in the FCS: MA Academic Program Review conducted in Spring 2020.

Informal assessment activities such as the one described in Section 7 above indicate desire among both our recent alums and those who graduated up to 15 years ago and now dietetics professionals for this new major.

11. (Undergraduate proposals only) Describe in detail how this change affects transfer articulation for Michigan community colleges. For new majors or minors, describe transfer guidelines to be developed with Michigan community colleges. For revisions to majors or minors, describe necessary revisions to Michigan community college guidelines. Department chairs should seek assistance from college advising directors or from the admissions office in completing this section.

Not applicable.

12. Please offer both “Current Catalog Language” and “Proposed Catalog Language” if there is to be a change in the catalog description for a given program. For the “current” language, please copy and paste relevant language from the most current catalog and for the “proposed” language, please share the exact proposed new catalog language. As possible, bold or otherwise note the key changes in the new proposed catalog language.

Current Catalog Language = NA [new major]

Proposed Catalog Language

Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics

Advisor: Ping Ouyang

Room: 2506, Kohrman Hall

The M.S. in nutrition and dietetics is designed for current graduate dietetic interns preparing to become registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) as well as individuals who are already an RDN and desiring a master’s degree that complements existing professional skills. RDNs work in a variety of healthcare, community, food service management, industry, and research positions where an understanding of nutritional science and the ability to explain it to the public and specific populations are required.

Effective January 1, 2024, the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) will require a minimum of a master’s degree in addition to supervised practice to be eligible to take the credentialing exam to become an RDN. The WMU program enables students to combine supervised practice (also known as a dietetic internship) with 30 graduate credits to earn the Master’s degree within 20 months or less. The dietetic internship portion of the M.S. is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) and provides hands-on practicum experiences in clinical, food service management, and community nutrition. In order to receive a Verification of completion statement attesting that the candidate may take the CDR exam, students must successfully complete both the dietetic internship portion of the program and the 30-credit M.S. degree. It is expected that those finishing this program who have not yet taken the RD credentialing exam will take the exam within 12 months of completion of the M.S degree.

ADMISSIONS

Admission to the program requires one of the following:

- **Prior or current acceptance into the WMU Dietetic Internship Program.** The WMU Dietetic Internship Program uses Dietetic Internship Centralized Application Services (DICAS) for admissions. Using DICAS, applicants are admitted once per year on or near February 15. Go to Dietetic Internship Application Process <https://wmich.edu/familyconsumer/internships/dietetic-application> for more information.
- **Those with RDN status will need to demonstrate**
 - **Completion of a bachelor’s degree from an approved accredited school;**
 - **Statements verifying completion of a didactic program in dietetics, a coordinated program in dietetics, or a dietetic internship;**
 - **A minimum undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale of undergraduate work.**

And Provide:

- **A current resumé;**
- **Three letters of recommendation including at least one academic reference;**
- **A two-page essay that provides the following:**
 - **Describe experience(s) that influenced your career choice and your desire to return to graduate school.**
 - **Explain how having an M.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics will advance your career.**

The Program

The M.S. in nutrition and dietetics comprises 30 semester hours, half of which must be in courses at the 6000-level or higher, and at least one 3-credit hour of FCS 7100 Independent Research. Candidates may substitute FCS 7000 Master's Thesis (6 graduate credits) in place of FCS 7100. The dietetic internship (FCS 6230 x 2) is required if the student has not entered the program as an RDN. Other coursework is usually drawn from nutritional science, lifespan nutrition, public health/environmental nutrition.



Carol J. Pratt, M.S., R.D.
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September 28, 2020

TO Caroline Webber, Ph.D.

FROM Carol J. Pratt, M.S., R.D.
WMU Dietetic Internship Advisory Board Member

SUBJECT Reasoning for use of Master of Science degree versus Master of Arts degree
for Western Michigan's Graduate Program for Dietetics

There is sound reasoning for the degree of Western Michigan's Graduate Program for Nutrition and Dietetics to be a Master of Science.

I am a 1974 graduate of Cornell University's Master of Science degree program. Preceding that, I earned a Bachelor of Science degree with Honors in Human Nutrition and Food in 1972 from Cornell. The "science" degree denotes the heavy emphasis on science and basis for all studies in the major. For the WMU program to remain a Master of Art degree does a disservice to its graduates when they are looking for a job outside the Western Michigan University sphere.

In addition, outside Western Michigan University, a Master of Arts degree is usually not awarded for undergraduate or graduate work that is based on science. I, personally, do not know of a such a program which awards an M.A. degree under such circumstances. In fact, all other graduate programs in Nutrition and Dietetics in the state of Michigan (MSU, GVSU, WSU, etc.) and nearby states offer an M.S. degree.