Career Definition
Dietetic technicians are food and nutrition practitioners who promote optimal health through proper nutrition. They are an integral part of healthcare and food service management teams. They can work independently or in partnership with registered dietitians in a variety of settings.

Job responsibilities may include participation in the nutrition care process including screening, assessment data collection, nutrition education, monitoring and evaluation of care and medical record documentation. In addition, they may be involved in health promotion and disease prevention activities, menu development and supervisory and administrative tasks that relate to nutrition services and institutional food production.

Program Overview
The Dietetic Technician Program is based on a two-year curriculum. The coursework culminates in an associate of applied science degree (AAS). Graduates of the program receive a Verification Statement and are eligible and encouraged to sit for the national registration examination to obtain the title of Dietetic Technician, Registered (DTR) and are also eligible for membership in the American Dietetic Association (ADA). The curriculum reflects the coordination of theory and practice that is required for students to acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills necessary for competent practice in dietetics. Included in the program are 450 hours of supervised practice under the direction of registered dietitians, which creates real-world experience for students. Supervised practice settings include hospitals and long term care facilities, as well as community-based programs.

The Dietetic Technician Program is currently granted accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the American Dietetic Association, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, IL 60606-6995, 312.899.5400.

Program Mission
The mission of the Dietetic Technician Program is to prepare competent entry-level professionals able to serve the community, consumers and employers in the areas of food, nutrition and dietetics.

Program Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this program will be able to:

- apply basic managerial functions in the provision of nutrition related services.
- perform nutrition screening and components of the Nutrition Care Process for people and groups from diverse cultures and across the lifespan.
- demonstrate professional beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors for the dietetic technician level of practice.
- demonstrate basic research, problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- take the National Registration Examination for Dietetic Technicians.
- state they are well prepared for entry-level practice.
- qualify for employment in nutrition/dietetics related field or enrollment in higher education.
- rate as well prepared for employment by employers.
Dietetic Technician
Associate in Applied Science Degree, continued . . .

Opportunities for Employment
Many work environments employ dietetic technicians. These include:

• Hospitals, HMOs, clinics, nursing homes, retirement centers, hospices, home healthcare programs and research facilities, where dietetic technicians help to treat and prevent disease by conducting screens, gathering data and performing other tasks to assist the registered dietitian in providing medical nutrition therapy as an important part of healthcare.

• Schools, daycare centers, correctional facilities, restaurants, healthcare facilities, corporations and hospitals, managing employees, purchasing and preparing food and preparing budgets within food service operations.

• Women, infant, children (WIC) programs, public health agencies, Meals on Wheels and community health programs, developing and teaching nutrition classes for the public.

• Health clubs, weight management clinics and community wellness centers, helping to educate clients about the connection between food, fitness and health.

• Food companies, contract food management companies or food vending and distributing operations, developing menus, overseeing food service sanitation and food safety and preparing food labeling information and nutrient analysis.

For a complete overview to all related positions and job market and salary trends, please consult:


• Occupational Outlook Handbook: http://www.bls.gov/oco/

Helpful Academic Skills or Experiences

• High school chemistry, biology and algebra classes

• Communication classes

• Employment or volunteer experience in a healthcare setting

Professional Organization Web Sites

• American Dietetic Association: www.eatright.org

• Illinois Dietetic Association: www.eatrightillinois.org

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the difference between a dietitian and a nutritionist?

A: All dietitians can call themselves nutritionists; however, not all nutritionists can call themselves dietitians. To become a registered dietitian one must follow a prescribed course of study and graduate from an accredited dietetics program.

Q: How do I get started in the Dietetic Technician Program at Harper?

A: First, you submit an admission application to Harper. Then you can enroll in class. To begin, enrollment in HSC 105, Introduction to Health Care Today and DIT 101, Fundamentals of Nutrition, is recommended. The type of material covered in these classes is basic to what a dietetic technician will use on the job.

Q: What are the entrance requirements for the Dietetic Technician Program?

A: There are no entrance requirements for the program. However, many courses need to be taken in sequence. In addition, most of the DIT prefixed courses are only offered once a year and some of the 200 level classes may be offered every other year. Therefore, students are encouraged to talk with the program coordinator to schedule completion of the program coursework to prevent any delay in finishing. If students have taken courses at other colleges, they should have the transcripts sent to Harper and request that the transcripts be evaluated for the Dietetic Technician Program. Transcript evaluation helps avoid repeating courses already taken. Any questions regarding the transfer of classes not accepted should be discussed with the coordinator.

Q: How much does the program cost?

A: Current tuition rates are listed at http://www.harpercollege.edu/tuition. TUITION AND FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. Financial aid is available through the Harper College Office of Student Financial Assistance and from area hospitals and agencies. In addition to tuition, fees and books, there will be costs related to health requirements, health insurance, uniform and transportation to supervised practice facilities. Professional liability insurance is included as part of the clinical laboratory fees.

View estimated expenses for the Dietetic Technician Program: http://goforward.harpercollege.edu/page.cfm?p=4473
Dietetic Technician
Associate in Applied Science Degree, continued . . .

Q: How long does it take to complete the program? When are classes offered? Can I attend part time?
A: The Dietetic Technician Program culminates in a two-year associate in applied science degree. The degree requires a minimum of 62 college credit hours. Many students “stretch” completion of the courses to three or more years; however, it is recommended that the student complete the program in no more than five years or they risk the possibility of having to repeat courses taken earlier. Students should make every attempt to graduate within three years of completing DIT 200.

Classes are offered at a variety of times, days, nights, etc. The supervised practice courses are scheduled during the day. Therefore, at present, a student cannot complete the degree by enrolling in evening classes only. In addition, a student does not have to take a full credit load (12 credits or more) to be enrolled in the program.

Q: Is it possible to complete all the courses required at night or online?
A: No. At the present time, the only DIT prefixed class, DIT 101, Fundamentals of Nutrition, is offered in a non-traditional format. The remaining DIT classes are offered during the day and some are offered as evening classes. This scheduling allows the student some flexibility when selecting classes. However, in order to complete the degree, daytime availability will be required for the three clinical laboratory classes: DIT 150, 200 and 250 (supervised practice experience).

Q: Are the dietetic technician courses offered at Harper transferable to a four-year program in dietetics?
A: Only a few. Several of the Dietetic Technician Program classes will transfer to a four-year program. However, the four-year dietetic degree requires many more science courses than the dietetic technician curriculum and therefore, additional time will be needed to complete those classes. If a student is thinking of transferring within three to five years of completing the dietetic technician degree, he/she should meet with the program coordinator or an academic counselor to plan as many transferable courses as possible in their coursework schedule.

Q: What does the supervised practice experience cover?
A: The supervised practice experience places students in various healthcare settings in which they are provided the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to become competent entry-level practitioners. This experience is scheduled for one or two days per week depending on the semester. During this time, students interact with other healthcare professionals and perform tasks as part of providing total client care. When in the facility students must wear a uniform and follow outlined procedures.

Q: What is a Verification Statement?
A: The Verification Statement is an official document, provided by the program director, which verifies that the graduate has demonstrated the knowledge, skills and professional competencies required of an entry-level dietetic technician. Upon receipt of official documentation of completion of the AAS degree for dietetic technician, the student will receive the Verification Statement. The Verification Statement is required to take the Registration Examination for Dietetic Technicians.

Q: Are there specific health or other requirements for this program?
A: Yes. Before going to a supervised practice site, the student will be required to complete certain health requirements including a random urine drug screen, undergo a criminal background check, and have the American Heart Association Health Care Provider CPR certification. When the student enrolls in DIT 150, 200 or 250 he/she will be provided more detailed information regarding completion of these specific requirements.
Dietetic Technician
Associate in Applied Science Degree

FIRST YEAR

First Semester

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>BIO 135</td>
<td>Introduction to Human Anatomy and Physiology</td>
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<td>DIT 101</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Nutrition</td>
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<td>DIT 220</td>
<td>Food Systems Administration</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>FSM 114</td>
<td>Food Standards and Sanitation</td>
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<td>HSC 105</td>
<td>Introduction to Health Care Today</td>
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<td>HSC 112</td>
<td>Medical Terminology</td>
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Total Credits: 16

Second Semester

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<td>DIT 102</td>
<td>Medical Nutrition Therapy</td>
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<td>DIT 150</td>
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<td>ENG 101</td>
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Total Credits: 17

SECOND YEAR

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<td>Principles of Food Preparation</td>
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<td>DIT 200</td>
<td>Dietetic Clinical Laboratory II</td>
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<td>DIT 201</td>
<td>Community Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSM 212</td>
<td>Hospitality Supervision or</td>
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<td>MGT 160</td>
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Second Semester

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<td>DIT 203</td>
<td>Profession of Dietetics</td>
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<td>DIT 205</td>
<td>World Cultures and Food</td>
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<td>DIT 250</td>
<td>Dietetic Clinical Laboratory III</td>
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<td>PSY 101</td>
<td>Introduction to Psychology</td>
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<td>SPE 101</td>
<td>Fundamentals of Speech Communication</td>
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Total Credits: 15

1 A grade of C or better in all BIO, DIT, FSM, HSC and MGT courses is required for all students.
2 BIO 160 and BIO 161 may be substituted for BIO 135 and BIO 136.
3 A competency test, available in the Assessment and Testing Center, may be utilized to meet the mathematics requirement. Students who utilize the competency test to meet the mathematics requirement must complete a three credit-hour elective.
4 Upon presentation of a verification statement from a dietetics program, a baccalaureate graduate may take the three clinical laboratory courses, (DIT 150, DIT 200 and DIT 250) to receive a verification statement to establish eligibility and take the registration examination for Dietetic Technicians.
5 Course offered in odd calendar years only.
6 Course offered in even calendar years only.
* This course meets the World Cultures and Diversity graduation requirement.