

**Dietetic Technology**  
**Survey of Dietetic Technician Employers**

*Prepared by the Office of Research*  
*Teaming to Serve Research Needs of the College*  
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## Introduction

As a part of its program review process, the Dietetic Technician Program at Harper wanted feedback from the employers of graduates of the dietetic technician program. In spring 2008, surveys were sent to eleven employers identified by graduates of the DIT program between FY05 and FY07, and six completed surveys were received for a response rate of 55 percent.

This report is organized into an Introduction, a Results and Discussion section that presents the survey responses in tabular format, and a Summary section that highlights key findings. The Appendix contains verbatim responses to open-ended questions as well as a copy of the survey instrument.

## Results and Discussion

Respondents were asked questions regarding the level of preparation of DIT graduates from Harper's DIT program, and they were also asked for their suggestions on how the program may be improved.

**Table 1: Dietetic Technician Certification**

<b>Has the employee received DTR certification status? (N=6)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	4	66.7
No	2	33.3
<b>Do you encourage/motivate employees to take and pass the DTR exam? (N=6)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	6	100.0
No	0	0.0

A clear majority of respondents (67%) indicated that their employees received DTR certification, and all of the employers reported that they encourage their employees to take and pass the DTR exam. The employers were also asked to state the length of the graduate's employment at the time of the survey. The average length of employment for the DIT graduates was two years and six months; the shortest employment period was eight months, whereas the longest employment period was six years and four months.

**Table 2: Preparation of DIT Graduates**

<b>Overall, how prepared is the employee to work as an entry-level Dietetic Technician? (N=6)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Very prepared	3	50.0
Somewhat prepared	3	50.0
Not very prepared	0	0.0
Not prepared at all	0	0.0

All of the employers indicated that their employees were prepared to work as an entry-level dietetic technician after graduating from Harper's DIT program.

**Table 3: Satisfaction with Aspects of Overall Work Performance**

Please mark the rating that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.	Strongly Agree		Generally Agree		Neutral		Generally Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Communicates effectively in the work setting (N=6)	3	50	3	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conducts himself/herself in an ethical and professional manner (N=6)	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accepts supervision and works effectively with supervisory personnel (N=6)	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Is self-directed and responsible for his/her actions (N=6)	5	87	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arrives at work prepared and on time (N=6)	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contributes to a positive work environment (N=6)	5	87	1	13	0	0	0	0	0	0

Employers were very satisfied with every aspect involving work performance of the DIT graduates, especially with how employees conducted themselves in an ethical and professional manner, accepted supervision and worked effectively with supervisory personnel, and arrived at work prepared and on-time (100% strongly agreed).

**Table 4: Satisfaction with Aspects of DIT Graduate Preparation**

Please rate how well the Dietetic Technician Program at Harper has prepared the employee in each of the following areas.	Very Prepared		Adequately Prepared		Somewhat Prepared		Very Unprepared	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Food and nutrition law/regulations/policies (N=5)	2	40	2	40	1	20	0	0
The Code of Ethics for the profession of Dietetics/Standards of Practice (N=5)	1	20	4	80	0	0	0	0
Fundamentals of nutrition (N=5)	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
Nutrition care for people of diverse ages, cultures, and religions (N=5)	2	40	0	0	3	60	0	0
Nutrition care process including dietary interventions (N=5)	2	40	0	0	2	40	1	20
Interviewing skills and education methods (N=5)	1	20	1	20	3	60	0	0
Application of the scientific basis of dietetics practice to technical practice (N=5)	1	20	1	20	3	60	0	0
Documentation methods (N=5)	2	40	0	0	3	60	0	0
Food production and delivery systems (N=5)	1	20	4	80	0	0	0	0
Food safety (N=5)	4	80	1	20	0	0	0	0

For the most part, employers indicated that DIT graduates were prepared for the job after graduating from Harper's DIT program, though there was some variation between graduates being "very" prepared to "somewhat" prepared. Employers indicated that graduates were more prepared in food safety, the Code of Ethics, and food production and delivery systems, though not as prepared in the nutrition care process. These responses suggest some areas that may merit more in-depth coverage in the curriculum; however, the responses should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size.

## **Summary**

As a part of its program review and ongoing accreditation, the Dietetic Technician Program at Harper wanted feedback from the employers of graduates of the DIT program. Surveys were sent to eleven employers identified by graduates in the spring of 2008, and six completed surveys were received for a response rate of 55 percent.

A majority of employees (67%) were DTR certified according to their employers, and all of the employers indicated that they encouraged their employees to take and pass the DTR exam. The average length of employment of the DIT graduates, according to the employers, was 2.5 years.

All of the employers reported that their employees were prepared to work as an entry-level dietetic technician. Employers were very satisfied with every aspect of the DIT graduates' overall work performance, especially with how employees conducted themselves in an ethical and professional manner, accepted supervision and worked effectively with supervisory personnel, and arrived at work prepared and on-time. The employers reported that their employees were prepared in their job after graduating from Harper's DIT program.

Employees were rated as adequately prepared in Code of Ethics, fundamentals of nutrition, food production and delivery systems, and food safety. Based on employer ratings, the DIT program may consider improving preparation in the areas of food and nutrition law, nutrition care for diverse clients, the nutrition care process, interviewing skills, documentation methods, and applying the science of dietetics to technical practice. The sample size was quite small, however, so these findings should be interpreted with caution.

**Appendix**  
**Open-Ended Responses**  
**Survey Instrument**

## Open Ended Responses

***What areas would you suggest that Harper College improve or emphasize regarding their Dietetic Technician Program?***

### ***Survey ID Q7***

- 2 Practical things--application of knowledge. 1. Practice diet restrictions (like learning multiplication tables from repetition.) What is allowed or not allowed on diet types. Low cholesterol/Low salt, Low K+, Cardiac, Low Residue, Diabetic, Gluten free. 2. Teaching techniques--effective teaching, know your audience! Effectively initiate change at any level. An 80 year-old or a 45 year-old. 3. Know calorie and protein amounts enough to do a calorie count!
- 3 Nothing to improve if [she] is your typical graduate. She is excellent--well loved by all residents and appreciated by administration, dietary, all levels of staff.
- 10 More practice in assessment--NCP in general. Perhaps work on more case studies in school. Above may change or not be relevant if ADA changes their standards of practice for DTRs.

### ***Comments:***

### ***Survey ID Q7***

- 3 [She] does not know this yet, but she is going to be recognized by LSN at their annual convention at Navy Pier. She was chosen to be a "Shining Star". This will be in April. This is a big deal in elder care, and she was selected out of 150 people. If you would like more info to use as an example of your DIT program, give me a call at XXXXXXXXXXXX. We will be doing a video of [her] at work, which will be shown at the convention. We are going to surprise [her] on Friday 2/1 and tell her about her award. Please keep this a secret until after Feb. 1.
- 10 The students need more assistance than we can give. We never want to short change the students, but it can be difficult to help them when our workload is heavy. Also, [she] is a great employee. The marks given reflect that she needed additional training.

## Survey Instrument



### SURVEY OF DIETETIC TECHNICIAN EMPLOYERS

The primary goal of a Dietetic Technician program is to prepare each graduate to function as a competent entry-level Dietetic Technician. This survey is designed to help program faculty determine the program's strengths and those areas that need improvement. All data will be kept confidential and will be used for program evaluation purposes only. We request that this survey be completed by the graduate's immediate supervisor, and please return the completed survey in the enclosed reply envelope.

Name of graduate (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Length of employment at time of survey: \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months

Place of employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of evaluator completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the employee received DTR certification status?

Yes

No

Do you encourage/motivate employees to take and pass the DTR exam?

Yes

No

If you answered NO above, please explain why.

Overall, how prepared is the employee to work as an entry-level Dietetic Technician?

Very prepared

Somewhat prepared

Not very prepared

Not prepared at all

**Please mark the rating that indicates the extent to which you agree with each statement.**

<b>The employee:</b>	Strongly Agree	Generally Agree	Neutral	Generally Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Communicates effectively in the work setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conducts himself/herself in an ethical and professional manner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accepts supervision and works effectively with supervisory personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is self-directed and responsible for his/her actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arrives at work prepared and on time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contributes to a positive work environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please rate how well the Dietetic Technician program at Harper has prepared the employee in each of the following areas.**

	Very Prepared	Adequately Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Very Unprepared
Food and nutrition law/regulations/policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Code of Ethics for the profession of Dietetics/Standards or Practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundamentals of nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition care for people of diverse ages, cultures, and religions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition care process including dietary interventions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interviewing skills and education methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application of the scientific basis of dietetics practice to technical practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation methods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food production and delivery systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



What areas would you suggest that Harper College improve or emphasize regarding their Dietetic Technician Program?

Comments:

**Thank you for completing the survey.**