

Messiah College Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Guidelines for Observation in Medical Nutrition

Purpose

This required observation will familiarize the student with clinical dietetics practice to provide background for NUTR 412 Medical Nutrition Therapy II.

Effective Dates

Required observations must be completed by students taking NUTR 412 Medical Nutrition Therapy II beginning in Spring 2004.

Guidelines

1. Three (3) hours of observation are to be done in a clinical setting. These observations and the observation reports must be completed prior to the beginning of NUTR 412 Medical Nutrition Therapy II.
 - a. The student is responsible for arranging the observation. Observations may be done in the student's home area or in the Messiah College area.
 - b. Discuss plans and ideas for observations with your advisor as early as possible.
 - c. Contact the organization or organizations where you would like to do each of your observations and obtain approval for you to spend time there. This should be done as far in advance of the actual observation as possible.
 - d. Obtain your advisor's approval when you have confirmed your observation sites. For each observation, provide your advisor with the name, title and address of your observation host or hostess. Your advisor will send a confirmation letter to this person.
 - e. Prepare observation reports as described below. Observation reports will be considered as part of your grade for NUTR 412 Medical Nutrition Therapy II.

2. Clinical Setting
 - a. The clinical dietetics observation should be done under the direction of a registered dietitian (RD) or a dietetic technician (DTR or Bachelor's degree in Nutrition/Dietetics).
 - b. Clinical settings may include hospitals or long-term care facilities. Other options also are possible, such as outpatient clinics or renal dialysis facilities where medical nutrition therapy is provided.
 - c. Complete the Clinical Dietetics Observation Report (instructions attached) and give it to your advisor.

3. Professional Expectations
 - a. Arrive at your observation site on time.
 - b. Before you arrive, know the name and title of the person who will be your observation host or hostess and where you are to meet them.
 - c. Dress appropriately. When you make arrangements for your observation, check with your host or hostess about what you should wear.
 - d. Within two days after the observation, write a note of thanks to your host or hostess. Be sure to use the correct spelling of the person's name and correct job title.

**Messiah College Nutrition and Dietetics Program
Medical Nutrition Observation Report**

Student name: _____

Observation host or hostess Name: _____

Professional credentials: _____

Job title: _____

Institution: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone: _____

Date of observation: _____

Number of hours: _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Host/Hostess signature: _____ Date: _____

After the observation is completed students should complete a typewritten report answering the following questions. Attach the report to this form and give it to the course instructor on your first day of class.

- A. Document your activities during the visit: What did you observe, discuss, do, and for how long?
- B. What is the administrative structure of the clinical nutrition department at the institution you visited?
- C. Are food services and clinical nutrition in the same department? Why or why not?
- D. Who is primarily responsible for each of the following tasks?
 - Identifying patients who need nutritional assessment
 - Performing nutritional assessments
 - Teaching modified diets.
 - Recommending tube feedings/total parenteral nutrition (TPN)
- E. By what methods (oral and written) is nutrition information communicated by the staff involved in nutrition care?
- F. What are the main responsibilities of the person you observed? How does he or she spend their time during a typical workday?
- G. What are the most common medical conditions your host or hostess works with?
- H. What does the person you observed consider to be her or his biggest challenge?
- I. What else did you learn from your visit and observation?