

A dark blue background image showing several people's hands and arms around a table. One person is using a laptop, another is holding a pen over a document, and another is pointing at the laptop screen. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text.

**Master of Science in Applied  
Nutrition-Dietetics  
Application Process &  
Supervised Experiential Learning**

**An Initial Guide**

The mission of the UNE Master of Science in Applied Nutrition (MSAN) program is to prepare individuals for leadership roles in the field of nutrition, to advance knowledge and expand skills that promote excellence and innovation in all areas of nutrition practice, and to emphasize evidence-based best practices to support the well-being and health outcomes of individuals, families, and communities through education, research, and scholarship.

Upon successful completion of the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) accredited MSAN-Dietetics program courses and SEL hours, a verification statement will be issued to allow graduates to sit for the RDN exam.

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# Application Process

Steps to apply to the Master of Science in Applied Nutrition, (MSAN) Pre-Dietetics program at UNE.

- 1. Speak with an enrollment and retention counselor:** Prospective students should reach out to (855) 751-4447 or nutrition@une.edu to confirm that they meet the admission requirements.
- 2. Determine your start date:** The enrollment and retention counselor (ERC) will help prospective students determine their anticipated start date (spring, summer, or fall) based on their Pre-Dietetics course needs and other relevant student information. The anticipated start date is subject to change based on securing SEL site and affiliation agreements.
- 3. Begin your online application:** After the start date has been decided, prospective students can then begin their online application and start to compile their required essays, references, a current resume, and an official transcript confirming completion of their bachelor's degree or documentation that their degree will be completed before program matriculation.
- 4. Prepare for your meeting with the Program:** Once the applicant has been accepted, the ERC will connect applicants to the Program for a live SEL Info Session to discuss locating preceptors and sites, and to review a tentative plan of study. For this meeting, applicants should review the required Dietetics webinars and prepare a list of potential preceptor sites they are considering in their local community for the three different types of SEL hours (Clinical, Community, and Food Service Management). Students are not expected to reach out to sites at this point.



**PRO TIP:** To apply for the Master of Science in Applied Nutrition, Pre-Dietetics at the University of New England, students should first speak with an enrollment and retention counselor at (855) 751-4447 or nutrition@une.edu to confirm that you meet the requirements for admission.

**A note on Pre-Dietetics courses:** If prospective students need to take Pre-Dietetics courses, they can do so either prior to finishing their application (as non-matriculated student) or after they complete their application and are accepted (in which case they will be a provisionally accepted student until their Pre-Dietetics courses and SEL planning are complete). Due to the length of time the SEL planning process takes (typically six to nine months, or longer, depending on location), prospective students may be taking their Pre-Dietetics courses either before or in the same months that they conduct their SEL discussions, preparation, and outreach. All Pre-Dietetics courses and all first year SEL preparation must be complete before a student can officially start their core MSAN-Dietetics curriculum.


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# Introduction to Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL)

A distinctive feature of all Graduate programs accredited by ACEND under the Future Education Model Graduate Program (FEM-GP) standards is the “Supervised Experiential Learning (SEL)” requirement. Supervised Experiential Learning gives the students the opportunity to actively apply their knowledge of nutrition and dietetics in nutrition practice settings under the guidance of professional preceptors.

At UNE, students will complete 690 SEL hours in the first year and 360 in the second year, as well as in-class SEL experiences, for a total of 1214 hours of Supervised Experiential Learning. Prior to admission into the program, students are required to secure at least 540 hours of SEL, equivalent of the first year in-person SEL requirements. Through the SEL hours, students gain valuable hands-on experience that can be directly connected to concepts in the graduate courses they are taking during the program and preparing them for professional practice as an RDN.

 **PRO TIP:** It may take 6-9 months, or longer, depending on location, to secure your SEL sites for year one. This process includes outreach to sites, scheduling meetings with the preceptors, and finalizing the affiliation agreements with the support of the student’s Dietetics Field Coordinator. These SEL sites must be approved and secured, and all onboarding requirements completed, prior to enrolling in your first Dietetics course.

As a part of ACEND accreditation requirements for FEM-GP programs, SEL hours are done concurrently with the graduate coursework. This supports active learning in clinical, community and food service management sites while enrolled in MSAN-Dietetics courses.



SEL sites and hours are pre-approved by the Dietetics Field Coordinator and site preceptor, and must align with the plan of study which is generated based on the expected date of matriculation. Students typically work on locating their SEL hours while completing the Pre-Dietetics courses.

The MSAN-Dietetics is a 48-credit hour full-time program, with 12 required three-credit courses offered with a co-requisite one-credit SEL lab course. In each lab, students complete 90-120 hours of SEL (an estimated 15 hours per week). The total time estimate for participation in Dietetics course work and SEL hours is close to 40 hours per week. UNE is one of only a few institutions to offer the didactic program courses for dietetics students completely online.

# SEL Sites

An SEL site is the location where the preceptor oversees students engaging in Supervised Experiential Learning hours. Students gain hands-on experience and work with their preceptors to attain the ACEND required competencies for successful completion of the program.

A distinctive benefit of the MSAN-Dietetics program at UNE is the student's ability to complete their SEL at sites most convenient to them with no relocation required.

Depending on the type of SEL, the site may be a hospital, food bank, school, treatment center, or private practice setting. A limited number of Community SEL hours may be completed through telehealth or virtual alternatives only as allowed by ACEND and approved by the program. All SEL sites must be approved by the Dietetics Field Coordinator to ensure that the required competencies will be offered and supported by the preceptor. The Dietetics Field Coordinator will determine with the preceptor if the site may be used for multiple courses.

There are three primary types of SEL sites, these include but are not limited to:



## **CLINICAL**

Hospitals or medical centers with in-patient facilities as well as outpatient facilities and private clinical settings where Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is practiced



## **COMMUNITY**

Organizations that work with food systems, food access, nutrition communication and education such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Dairy or Beef Council



## **FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT (FSM)**

For profit or non-profit institutions that offer meal planning programs such as K-12 public schools, college or university dining, hospitals, or care facilities

The Master of Science in Applied Nutrition, Dietetics program is accredited by ACEND and is a graduate-level, competency-based program that integrates coursework and at least 1,200 hours of supervised experiential learning. Upon successful completion of the program, a verification statement is awarded that allows graduates to sit for the RDN exam. More information on ACEND accreditation standards for Graduate Programs can be found [here](#).



**PRO TIP:** The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has a list of potential preceptors that students may access via the Academy website found [here](#).

## Preceptors

A preceptor is a credentialed nutrition professional or an expert in a related field who provides instruction, training, and evaluation of students during their Supervised Experiential Learning hours.

Examples of professionals that may serve as preceptors include—but are not limited to—registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN), licensed dietitians (LD), nutrition and diet technicians (NDTR), food service directors, nutrition educators, and social workers. Other health professionals with extensive nutrition experience may be considered in consultation with the Dietetics Field Coordinator.

It is the student's responsibility to locate Supervised Experiential Learning sites and preceptors in the geographic location in which they desire to complete the SEL. While the student is responsible for finding and securing their own SEL sites, the program will provide suggestions to support all students as they work to locate acceptable sites to achieve their SEL requirements. The program does not require students to move temporarily to accept a site. The program does not require travel at any point to Maine for SEL sites.

In all cases the student will be supported to the extent possible by the Dietetics Field Coordinator to identify potential SEL sites and negotiate successful affiliation agreements with these sites, however it remains the student's responsibility to locate appropriate sites. Being organized and clear when reaching out to preceptors is imperative to successfully securing sites.

**Students are responsible for finding and securing their own SEL sites and preceptors.** It is important that the students are very clear on the specifics of the MSAN-Dietetics program and what they need from the preceptors. If an approved SEL site becomes unavailable for any reason, UNE will work with students to find an acceptable alternative site.



**PRO TIP:** You will need to search for and prepare a list of multiple types of SEL sites to meet the competencies over the course of the program. Although prospective students should prepare a list of potential preceptors, they should not reach out to those potential preceptors until after attending the SEL Info with the program.

There are certain geographical areas that are more saturated with dietetic internships, and finding SEL in these locations can take perseverance—you may need to consider dividing up your hours between a few facilities. You might also offer to complete your SEL hours during weekends or evenings if the facility can accommodate this option.

# Scheduling

Once students have found potential SEL sites and preceptors, they need to plan out their expected weekly schedule for the first year SEL hours. The amount and type of SEL aligns with the student's plan of study (see sample below) and coordinates with the preceptor's schedule.



**PRO TIP:** Preceptors are working professionals that offer their time and expertise to work with prospective students. Being respectful, organized, and clear when reaching out to potential preceptors is imperative to successfully securing sites.

## Master of Science in Applied Nutrition, Dietetics

First Year Plan of Study to guide selection of SEL for students seeking admission

Year 1 Spring		Year 1 Summer		Year 1 Fall	
<b>Didactic Courses</b>					
Spring A	Spring B	Summer A	Summer B	Fall A	Fall B
<b>APN 604 (1 Cr)</b> Nutrition Across the Lifespan	<b>APN 780 (3 Cr)</b> Food and Nutrition Op Mgmt	<b>APN 620 (3 Cr)</b> Nutrition Education & Health Behav Chg	<b>APN 730 (3 Cr)</b> Medical Nutrition Therapy	<b>APN 785 (3 Cr)</b> Nutrition Assessment & App in a Clinical Setting	<b>APN 760 (3 Cr)</b> Micronutrients
<b>Lab Courses &amp; Required SEL</b>					
<b>APN 606 (1 Cr)</b> Nutrition Across the Lifespan Lab	<b>APN 781 (1 Cr)</b> Food and Nutrition Op Mgmt Lab	<b>APN 621 (1 Cr)</b> Nutrition Education & Health Behav Chg Lab	<b>APN 731 (1 Cr)</b> Medical Nutrition Therapy Lab	<b>APN 786 (1 Cr)</b> Nutrition Assessment & App in a Clinical Setting Lab	<b>APN 761 (1 Cr)</b> Micronutrients Lab
SEL	Required Hours				
<b>Clinical</b>			120 hours	120 hours	120 hours
<b>Comm.</b>		90 hours** Provided by UNE			
<b>F.S.M.</b>	60 hours on site 60 hours** provided by UNE	120 hours			
<b>Total</b>	<b>540 Professional Setting Hours plus 180 alternate SEL hours, total 690 SEL hours</b>				

\*\*Students do not need to find these hours, UNE provides the hours in the lab course



**SPEAK TO AN ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION  
COUNSELOR TODAY!**

Our enrollment and retention counselors are available to discuss the best path for your education. Contact us today!

**(855) 751-4447**

**nutrition@une.edu**

**online.une.edu/applied-nutrition**

