



Nutritional Sciences [NTSC]

Cycles included in this report:

Jun 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025

Program Name: Nutritional Sciences [NTSC]

Reporting Cycle: Jun 1, 2024 to May 31, 2025

1 Is this program offered via Distance Learning?

100% Traditional or less than 50% Distance/Traditional

2 Is this program offered at an off-site location?

No

2.1 If yes to previous, provide addresses for each location where 50% or more of program credits may be earned.

3 Example of Program Improvement

2024-2025:

AGRI 604 (Research Methods) and AGRI 606 (Data Analysis and Research Methods in Agriculture) will be removed from the curriculum, with implementation beginning for the graduating class of Fall 2026. This revision reduces the total program credit hours from 39 to 33, while remaining in compliance with the minimum requirement of 30 graduate credit hours for a master's degree. The Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences at McNeese State University is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). In alignment with accreditation standards, the program maintains a comprehensive plan for the ongoing assessment of student and intern attainment of required core competencies. AGRI 604 and AGRI 606 do not include assignments or applied learning activities that align with the program's student learning objectives or support the achievement and assessment of core competencies in dietetics and nutrition, and therefore have been removed from the curriculum.

2024-2025

In Spring 2025, Jacqueline Richard, PhD, was hired as a visiting lecturer to teach NFSC 606: Food Systems Management. Serving as School Nutrition Program Director for the Calcasieu Parish School Board since 2017, Dr. Richard oversees operations across 58 school cafeterias and leads a workforce of nearly 300 employees. Her program serves approximately 1.5 million breakfasts and 3 million lunches annually, manages a \$16 million budget, and maintains compliance with state, local, and federal regulations, including administration of the NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SSO programs. This extensive, hands-on leadership experience directly enhances the course's emphasis on large-scale foodservice systems management.

4 Program Highlights from the Reporting Year

2024-2025:

An Endowed Professorship was awarded in Fall 2025 in the amount of approximately \$6,500. These funds will support collaborative research initiatives with Kinesiology and Athletics, with a primary focus on hydration monitoring in athletes. The project will provide graduate students with hands-on experience in data collection, analysis, and the application of evidence-based practices within a performance setting.

5 Program Mission

The mission of the McNeese combined MS/DI Program is to provide a progressive and effective program that integrates graduate education, research, service, and supervised practice to develop competent, entry-level registered nutritionist dietitians.

The mission of the MSU Dietetic Internship Program reflects a competency-based educational framework designed to prepare students and interns for entry-level practice as registered dietitian nutritionists. Through the intentional integration of graduate education, research, service, and supervised practice, the program ensures that students acquire the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors required to meet established program learning outcomes and professional practice expectations. This mission supports the program's intent to prepare graduates who are capable of applying evidence-based nutrition principles, engaging in critical thinking, and functioning effectively in diverse practice settings.

6 Institutional Mission Reference

The mission of the MSU Dietetic Program is fully compatible with the mission and vision of McNeese State University. Both emphasize excellence in teaching and learning, student success, scholarship, and community engagement. The program advances the University's commitment to workforce development by preparing competent nutrition and dietetics professionals who are responsive to regional and community needs in Louisiana and Southeast Texas. Additionally, the program's focus on applied learning, supervised experiential education, and service-oriented practice aligns with the University's goal of providing a transformative, student-centered educational experience supported by institutional resources, qualified faculty, and community partnerships.

7 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 80% of students will score at least 85% on the final project.

7.1 Data Nutrition Policy Assignment NFSC 607 Community Nutrition

Academic Year	Students scoring 85% or higher	
	#	%
2024-2025	7	100

7.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) play a critical role in shaping public policy related to nutrition, health, and food systems. The *NFSC 607 Community Nutrition Public Policy Assignment* provides students with the opportunity to engage in current nutrition-related policy issues while developing professional communication skills essential for advocacy practice.

This assignment is aligned with **CRDN 2.2: Demonstrate professional writing skills in preparing professional communication**. It serves as a direct measure of student achievement of this competency by requiring students to produce professional written communication tailored to both public health and legislative audiences. Through this assignment, students demonstrate competency in structured writing, integration of evidence-based information, and the use of audience-appropriate, professional messaging.

Student Learning Outcome:

Students will demonstrate professional writing skills through the development of clear, concise, and evidence-based communication appropriate for public health and policy audiences.

Measurement of Student Learning:

Student performance is evaluated using a standardized grading rubric. For both 2024 and 2025, 100% of dietetic graduate students achieved a score of 85% or higher on this assignment, indicating successful attainment of the competency benchmark.

Plans for Continuous Improvement:

While student performance outcomes indicate strong achievement, continuous improvement efforts will focus on enhancing the objectivity and specificity of assessment. Planned revisions include strengthening the grading rubric to more clearly define expectations for professional writing. Specific improvements will include more explicit evaluation criteria for organization and structure, clarity and conciseness, integration of evidence, professional tone, and writing mechanics (grammar and spelling). These revisions are intended to improve consistency in evaluation and further support students' ability to meet and demonstrate competency in professional communication.

This project includes two primary components:

1. State Nutrition Data and Action Guide Summary
2. Legislative Policy Analysis and Advocacy Letter

8 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: The program's one-year pass rate (graduates who pass the registration exam within one year of the first attempt) on the CDR credentialing exam for dietian nutritionists is at least 80%.

8.1 Data

Academic Year	80% of Graduates will Pass the RD Exam within the first year of graduating	
	#	%
2024-2025 **Still collecting 2025	5/7	100

8.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2024-2025:

The program benchmark, as established by Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, requires that at least 80% of graduates pass the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) credentialing exam within one year of their first attempt.

For 2024, the program achieved a 100% one-year pass rate (3/3 graduates), exceeding the benchmark. For 2025, two graduates have successfully passed the exam, while three additional graduates have scheduled their exam within the one-year testing window. Although final outcomes for 2025 are still pending, current data indicate positive progression toward meeting the benchmark.

Given that 2025 data collection is incomplete, a definitive conclusion regarding benchmark attainment for this cohort cannot yet be made. However, early indicators suggest that the program is on track to meet or exceed the required 80% one-year pass rate.

Plan for Continuous Improvement:

While the program has demonstrated strong outcomes, continuous improvement efforts will focus on ensuring consistent achievement of the benchmark across all cohorts and strengthening timely exam completion. The following actions will be implemented:

- **Structured Exam Timeline Reinforcement:** Provide graduates with a clear post-graduation testing timeline, strongly encouraging exam completion within the first 3–6 months after graduation to improve first-year pass rate outcomes.
- **Enhanced RD Exam Preparation Support:** Continue integrating exam preparation into coursework (e.g., NFSC 605) and expand structured review sessions, practice exams, and guided study plans during the final semester.
- **Individualized Graduate Follow-Up:** Maintain regular communication with graduates post-completion to monitor exam scheduling, provide encouragement, and offer targeted support for those who delay testing.
- **Data Monitoring and Early Intervention:** Track graduate testing status more proactively to identify trends in delayed exam scheduling and implement early intervention strategies.
- **Benchmark Evaluation (Future Consideration):** If the program continues to consistently exceed the 80% benchmark over multiple reporting cycles, consideration will be given to revising internal targets (e.g., increasing the benchmark or adding a time-to-test metric) to better reflect program performance and promote continued excellence.