

Program Strengths and Limitations

UCSF Medical Center Dietetic Internship

STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

1. A dietetic internship with a **Nutrition Therapy emphasis** in a university medical center that values cultural diversity and provides a positive environment for learning.
2. Interns are treated as **members of the professional staff**.
3. The opportunity to work with a **progressive staff** representing a variety of academic and clinical experiences. There are more than 30 Registered Dietitians in our Department who work in clinical specialties, outpatient counseling, food service and clinical management, and research. Interns are exposed to a variety of careers in dietetics.
4. Both clinical nutrition and management areas have **strong support personnel**. Interns work with Dietetic Technicians, Nutrition Assistants, Food Service Supervisors and Food Service Managers.
5. Interns are expected to think and problem-solve, not just apply facts. Emphasis is placed on **evidence-based clinical practice**.
6. A wide variety of experiences in **medical nutrition therapy for patients with complex medical and nutritional diagnoses**. Interns are supervised by Registered Dietitians with advanced degrees and specialized certification and knowledge of nutrition problems associated with renal disease, cardiovascular disease, organ transplants, diabetes mellitus, cancer, diseases of children, and enteral and parenteral nutrition support.
7. **Interaction with other health care professionals who are receiving clinical training**. UCSF has a medical school and residency program, schools of dentistry, pharmacy, physical therapy, and graduate nursing.
8. **Experiences in large volume patient and public food service**. Interns work with Registered Dietitians who are in management positions and other food service managers. Food service activities are scheduled in the large production kitchen at UCSF Medical Center.
9. Interns have opportunities to **develop and implement solutions** to actual problems encountered in management areas.
10. **Opportunities to develop public speaking**. Interns do formal and informal presentations of patients, justifying care that is provided. Interns formally present results of a management project. Interns also provide nutrition education for an assigned target group in the San Francisco Bay Area, including public schools, worksite wellness groups and community health fairs.
11. **Staff experience**. After demonstration of competence, interns complete staff experience in inpatient clinical nutrition. Staff experiences solidify interns' knowledge, provide an opportunity to function independently and reinforce expected practices for an entry-level dietitian. Interns are required to complete a minimum of two weeks staff experience. Generally, most interns complete 4 to 6 weeks of staff experience.

LIMITATIONS

Limited off-site community and public health nutrition experience.

Because our internship program has a Nutrition Therapy emphasis, the majority of the internship year is spent in inpatient clinical nutrition (50% of scheduled hours). The majority of learning experiences are scheduled on the UCSF Medical Center campus, so off-site experiences in the San Francisco Bay Area community are limited. During Nutrition Counseling and Education, Interns do schedule two weeks off-site at a community nutrition program or agency of the intern's choice (4% of scheduled hours). Additionally, interns work with patients at the UCSF Ambulatory Care practices that are transitioning from acute to ambulatory and community care settings. Through selection of electives, an individual intern may obtain additional experience in community nutrition programs, nutrition research programs, work with dietitians in private practice, commercial companies, and others (off-site electives vary each year).