

# 17 Ways to Get the Most out of Your Dietetic Internship: *it starts with YOU!*

## 1. Be early and be prepared.

- Before the rotation, read the practice and position papers in the area that you will be working in.
- Know where you're going and be on time. If you're running late give a courtesy call or email.
- Dress appropriately. If you are not sure what that means...ask.
- Look awake. Don't appear bored or like you would rather be someplace else.
- Bring questions. Do not be afraid to offer ideas when asked.
- Stay the length of time agreed upon.

## 2. Make a good first impression and never burn bridges. You never know when that person will weave their way back into your life.

## 3. Ask the preceptor—what can I do for you? Don't lead with "this is what I need." Be grateful, gracious & professional.

## 4. Create briefs throughout your internship experience with an outline like this:

- Big Picture: What you hope to accomplish during this rotation or placement.
- Strategy: Your strategy for achieving this overall goal.
- Learning objectives: What you will have learned upon completion of the rotation.
- Tactics or plan of action: Complete this part with your preceptor.
- After the rotation or placement, write up a debrief on what you accomplished. This will serve as a helpful summary of the new skills you gained.

## 5. Learn how to communicate, in all forms, effectively.

**6.** Be confident. Do not answer a direct question with "I don't know." Instead, respond "I'll look into it and get back to you" (make sure you do)... develop your ability to think on your feet and respond with an intelligent or thoughtful answer.

## 7. Do not be afraid to ask for help if you need it. It is better to ask than to waste time creating a mediocre project.

## 8. Do not be afraid to state that you are uncomfortable doing something. That is normal and part of learning.

**9.** Take notice of what is going on around you, and feel confident to make a comment about your observations.

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**11.** Be flexible. Realize that each preceptor is different and has different expectations. Some preceptors may be okay with students just shadowing while others will assign major projects.

## 12. Do not act put off if you are asked to do something that isn't directly related to dietetics. There is usually a reason behind every task - and if not, you can always learn from it.

## 13. Use good time management skills to meet deadlines that are set for you.

**14.** Make personal phone calls, emails, text messaging, etc. during breaks.

## 15. Treat your internship like a job that you are getting paid \$100,000 to do.

**16.** After you finish each rotation, send your preceptor a handwritten thank-you card. Ask if you can stay in touch with your preceptor and send an e-mail every now and then. You never know what opportunities may come your way.

**17.** Lastly...but most importantly... always be hungry to learn.

