

COMMISSION ON DIETETIC REGISTRATION

Computer-based testing: A new experience in 4 easy steps



With the implementation of computer-based testing in July 1999 for the entry-level registration examinations for dietitians and dietetic technicians, the testing experience for dietetic registration will change dramatically. The following describes the changes in examination administration steps ranging from eligibility to testing.

Step 1: Registration Eligibility

Examination applicants will establish eligibility by either:

- following directions from their program director as they submit the required information on a specially designed software program to the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR); or

- completing and submitting the traditional paper-pencil registration eligibility application with required documentation directly to CDR. Once registration eligibility is established, applicants are notified by CDR, who will notify its testing agency, ACT, Inc, Iowa City, Iowa, of applicant eligibility.

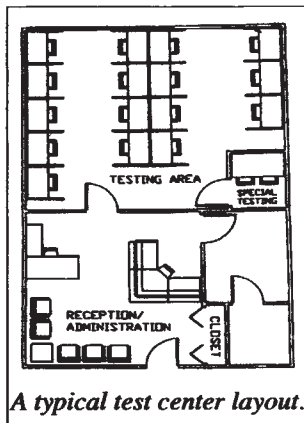
Step 2: Examination Application and Fee

Within 48 hours, ACT will send all eligible candidates a 1-page examination application form, a candidate handbook, and instructions for completing the application and submitting the application fee (\$125 for dietitians, \$80 for dietetic technicians).

Step 3: Scheduling the Examination

After ACT processes the application and fee, candidates are sent an Authorization to Test letter via first-class mail. The authorization letter expires 1 year from its

date of issue and includes a toll-free telephone number to contact any 1 of more than 200 Sylvan Test Centers approved by the National Association of Security Dealers for a testing appointment; and a list of test centers located throughout the United States, Canada, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Test center appointment availability and scheduling policies may vary by test center.



A typical test center layout.

The 3-hour testing appointment includes time to complete a tutorial designed to orient examinees to the computer-based testing process, the examination, and a short postexamination survey.

Step 4: The Test Center

Upon arrival to the test center, examinees will be required to check in with the receptionist, provide a government-issued photo identification (eg, drivers license, state photo ID, or passport), and secure any personal belongings in a storage area.

Each examinee will be escorted to a computer workstation in the testing area. Each workstation includes a computer monitor, processing unit, and keyboard and a simple calculator. Examinees will not be allowed to bring any personal belongings, reference

materials, calculator/hand-held computer, or scratch paper to the testing area. Once examinees are seated, the proctor will provide instructions and scratch paper, which will be collected at the end of the examination.

Although test centers may vary in design and size, the Figure illustrates a typical layout. Many test centers include a testing area to serve examinees who require special testing accommodations in a private room, according to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

After completion of the examination and brief survey regarding the testing experience, score reports will be provided both on screen and in hard copy to all examinees as they leave the test center. Unsuccessful examinees must contact CDR to be reauthorized to test. The retesting appointment must be scheduled a minimum of 45 days after the last test date.

What Now?

After successful completion of the examination, examinees are awarded their desired credentials. CDR sends all newly credentialed practitioners an orientation packet describing the requirements for recertification and highlights of new and ongoing CDR initiatives, an invoice for the annual registration maintenance fee (currently \$25 per year), and a registration identification card.

CDR values input as it begins this new chapter in its entry-level certification programs. Any comments may be sent to: The Commission on Dietetic Registration, 216 W Jackson Blvd, 8th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-6995; 312/899-0040, ext 5500; fax, 312/899-4772; E-mail: cdr@eatright.org

March

Team Management of Diabetes

March 1-5, Minneapolis, Minn. Contact: Institute for Research and Education, International Diabetes Center, 3800 Park Nicollet Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55416-2699; 612/993-3393; fax, 612/993-1302.

Neonatal Nutrition Conference

March 7-10, Charleston, SC. Contact: Diane Anderson, PhD, RD, CSP, FADA, Medical University of South Carolina Children's Hospital, Pediatrics, 165 Ashley Ave, PO Box 250917, Charleston, SC 29425; 843/792-2112; E-mail: anderson@muscedu

Best Practices in Home Care: Clinical and Policy Issues

March 10-11, Little Rock, Ark. Contact: Kay Guthrie, Veterans Affairs Medical Center (182), 4300 W 7th St, Little Rock, AR 72205; 501/257-5542; E-mail: guthriekayb@exchange.uams.edu

Cultivating Opportunities for Your Nutrition Practice

March 12, Atlanta, Ga. Contact: Nutrition Solutions, 4360 Georgetown Sq II, Suite 812, Atlanta, GA 30338; 770/457-1457; fax, 770/457-3080; E-mail: nutrsol@mindspring.com

Public Voice 22nd National Food Policy Conference

March 15-16, Washington, DC. Contact: 22nd Annual National Food Policy Conference, Public Voice for Food & Health Policy, 1012 14th St NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005; 202/347-6200; fax, 202/347-6261.

Nutrition Support in Critical Care

An audio-teleconference. March 18, multiple sites. Contact: American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutri-