

Tips for a Successful DICAS Application

1. **Start early.** Even if you start by just putting the basics in, whatever you do, **do not** wait until the last minute to fill out your application. Start as soon as you can after DICAS opens so you have time to edit and add additional things you may have forgotten. To make your life easier, write down the different aspects of the application. Then, when you complete an area and SAVED it and REVISED it, cross it off your list. Trust me, you've probably done more than you think!
 - a. Go to: <http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=6442485425> and scroll down until you see the heading *Timelines* select the date in which you will apply to DICAS for an internship
 - b. View the DICAS tutorial at <http://link.videoplatform.limelight.com/media/?mediaId=231cab9211b341828ba1ce8edfa36b0d&width=1000&height=721&playerForm=845f85be3ed44f30a5c2b290f7871a6f>

2. **Personal Statement.** Get started on your personal statements ASAP and be prepared to tailor a general personal statement to each of your internship sites. Typically, personal statements include 4 major points: 1) Why do you want to be a dietitian? 2) What you're your short and long-term goals? 3) What are your strengths and weaknesses? and 4) Anything else to make you a better candidate than someone else. Please remember, though, that each DI site could ask for something different, so it is imperative that you review each DI site's website thoroughly.
 - a. Examples of personal statements: [Chelsea's personal statement](#) , [Student A personal statement](#) , [Student B personal statement](#)

3. **Get Involved.** Have a wide variety of experiences/ get involved in leadership activities, it is the leaders than can impact the field in a positive way. These experiences do not have to be in hospital, but volunteer, food service looks good, SDA!! Be proactive about gaining experiences. KEEP TRACK OF EVERYTHING

4. **Talk yourself up.** In relation to the above tip, don't leave out volunteer or work experiences that you've done. Include it all and word it in a way that's honest, to the point, and highlights the important skills you utilized during that experience. You want to show all the experiences you've done to let internship directors know you're a great candidate for their internship! Remember that your personal statement is an example of your writing ability as well!

5. **Don't wait to request transcripts.** Requesting your transcripts early saves you anxiety and ensures you have your necessary application materials in on time. Request the transcripts from community colleges and universities that you are no longer attending as soon as you begin the DICAS application process. After your last semester's grades are posted at your current university, request those transcripts.

6. **Be thorough when editing your application.** Before you're ready to hit submit, make sure you go back and look at everything you put into DICAS. Go through one time for grammar, one time for content, and one time for ensuring everything that needs to be there is there. You don't have to do it all in one go, just write yourself a list and check one of these off at a time. Re-read, re-read, and re-read all of your work. Don't be afraid to ask your friends and family to review items for you.

7. **Participate in DI Open Houses and/or Visit Internship Sites.** This is not directly for DICAS itself, but for the application process in general. If possible, visit the places you want to go to the most! You may find out it isn't what you expected or was better than you envisioned, Additionally, you will get to meet with the director of the program, so they can put a face to your name when they look at applications.
 - a. When visiting these sites, start a spreadsheet or document indicating the pros/cons of each program. Include the cost, main program emphasis, length of the program, if the program offers a graduate degree, GRE scores, etc
 - b. Include when applications are due not only for DICAS, but the larger graduate program. Many programs may offer a graduate degree, so you may need to apply to the graduate program well before you send off your DICAS application.
 - c. Indicate if the program requires GRE scores. If it does, you need to study for this exam and ensure the scores are submitted to the program in time.
 - d. A list of DI Open Houses can be found online at <https://iu.box.com/v/DIopenhouses>.
 - e. Most importantly, ask program directors for clarification on puzzling pieces! Don't be lost in this process, the directors are here to help you, so ask them. The worst is sending them something they don't need and you not getting into the program because you didn't clarify. However, do not ask them questions that could easily be found on the website. They will likely dismiss you because you are not researching on your own, which is not a good quality.
8. **Rank Strategically.** There are many theories on how to best rank programs. Although it's still somewhat unclear the algorithm for matching, be sure to rank programs that best fit your needs and past accomplishments. For example, if research is not your strength or a big interest of yours, then, you shouldn't apply to a DI with a strong research focus. That wouldn't be a good fit. Locations can sway your judgement on what is the best fit for you. Just remember you can always move after your internship, and your internship is temporary.
9. **Most Importantly.** Breathe, take breaks, and remain positive Just stay on top of this application process, and you will feel much more relaxed about the whole process.

10. Additional Resources:

- a. DICAS: <https://portal.dicas.org>
- b. D&D Digital: <https://dnddigital.com>
- c. DI sites: <http://www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/content.aspx?id=6442485424>
- d. ACEND: www.eatrightacend.org/ACEND/#.UCrxTqCxsXk
- e. DPD Coordinator: Dr. Burns mdburns@eiu.edu
- f. Graduate students and your peers!