

Every Registered Dietitian is a Nutritionist, but Not Every Nutritionist is a Registered Dietitian™!

RDN™ Credential: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the optional RDN credential?

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Board of Directors and the Commission on Dietetic Registration have approved the optional use of the credential "registered dietitian nutritionist™" (RDN™) by registered dietitians™ (RD™).

Will the optional RDN credential have an effect on state licensure of RDs?

No. Legal counsel determined that adding the optional RDN credential will **not** affect licensure or other regulations. Many state licensure/certification laws already reference the term nutritionist (e.g., LDN or CDN).

Why is the Academy offering the optional Registered Dietitian Nutritionist credential?

The option was established to further enhance the RD brand and more accurately reflect to consumers who registered dietitians are and what they do. This will differentiate the rigorous credential requirements and highlight that **all registered dietitians are nutritionists but not all nutritionists are registered dietitians.**

Inclusion of the word "nutritionist" in the credential communicates a broader concept of wellness (including prevention of health conditions beyond medical nutrition therapy) as well as treatment of conditions.

This option is also consistent with the inclusion of the word "nutrition" in the Academy's new name.

There is an increased awareness of the Academy's role as a key organization in food and nutrition by media, government agencies, allied health organizations and consumers. This provides additional rationale for the incorporation of the word "nutrition" into the RD credential resulting in the optional RDN credential.

What member input was considered?

In 2010, the Academy began exploring the option of offering the registered dietitian nutritionist credential. It was supported by participants in the 2011 Future Connections Summit and most recently by the Council on Future Practice in its 2012 Visioning Report. The recommendation was shared and discussed in the House of Delegates at the Fall 2012 meeting. The 2013 joint meeting of the major organizational units (Commission on Dietetic Registration, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, Council on Future Practice, Education Committee, and Nutrition and Dietetics Educators and Preceptors DPG) supported moving forward.

Must RDs use the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist credential?

No. The RDN credential is offered as an option to RDs who want to emphasize the nutrition aspect of their credential to the public and to other health practitioners.

Does the optional RDN have a different meaning than the RD credential?

No. The RD and RDN credential have identical meanings and legal trademark definitions.

When can RDs begin to use the RDN credential?

RDs can start using the RDN credential effective immediately.

How should RDs use the new credential for signatures and materials such as business cards?

"Jane Doe, RDN" or "Jane Doe, RD"

How should the RDN credential be listed after a practitioner's name with other licensure or certification designations?

The new RDN should be listed in the same way as RD. The Commission on Dietetic Registration's recommended order of listed credentials is:

- Graduate academic degree
- RDN (or RD)
- Specialty certifications with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (e.g., CSG™, CSO™, CSP™, CSSD™, CSR™)
- Licensure designation, other certifications (e.g., CDE, CNS). Do **not** modify your current licensure designation.

For example:

Jane Doe, RDN, LD
Jane Doe, RDN, LDN
Jane Doe, MS, RDN, LD, CDE

Will CDR registration ID cards include both the RD and RDN credentials?

Yes, your new CDR registration identification card reflects both the RD and RDN credentials.

Will there be an additional cost?

No. There is no additional cost for using the RDN credential.

Will RDs be required to meet separate recertification requirements if they choose to use the optional RDN credential?

No. The current RD recertification requirements apply to the RDN credentials.

How does the new optional RDN credential fit into the Academy's ongoing branding and marketing efforts?

The Academy's brand plan prepares RDNs to compete in the marketplace by providing training and resources. In addition, efforts are in place to strengthen alliances with other health care professionals and to continue to promote the RDN brand with consumers and the media.

Guidelines for Credential Placement for Registered Dietitian Nutritionist™ (RDN™) and Registered Dietitian™ (RD™)

Professional Credential

When using your credential you must follow the guidelines.

The recommended order of listed credentials for **Registered Dietitian Nutritionist™ (RDN™) or Registered Dietitian™ (RD™)** is:

- Graduate academic degree, RDN, or RD specialty certifications with the Commission on Dietetic Registration (e.g. CSG™, CSO™, CSP™, CSSD™, CSR™)
- Licensure designation
- Other certifications (e.g. CDE, CNS, etc)
- Fellow of the American Dietetic Association (FADA)

Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (FAND) designation is placed after the FADA credential.

Examples of proper and improper use:

PROPER USE:

K. Bolek, MS, RD, CSP, LD, CDE, FADA, FAND
J. Jones, RDN, CSG
S. Smith, MS, RD, CSO
A. Allen, RDN, CSSD, LD, CDE
J. Johnson, RD, CSR, FADA
R. French, MS, RDN, CSP, LDN, FADA
E. Jacob, MS, RD, CSG, LDN

IMPROPER USE :

K. Bolek, MS, RD, LD, CSP, FADA, CDE
J. Jones, CSG, RDN
S. Smith, RD, MS, CSO
A. Allen, RDN, LD, CSSD, CDE
J. Johnson, RD, FADA, CSR
R. French, RDN, MS, CSP, FADA, LDN
E. Jacob, MS, RD, LDN, CSG

Verbal or Written Text

When referring to your certification status in written text or verbally, the phrase to be used is **Registered Dietitian Nutritionist or Registered Dietitian**.

For example, an introduction of a speaker might read:

Ann Apple is a registered dietitian nutritionist.

Ann Apple is a registered dietitian.

When referring to your CDR specialty certification status in written text or verbally, the phrase to be used is **Board Certified as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition, Board Certified as a Specialist in Oncology Nutrition, Board Certified as a Specialist in Pediatric Nutrition, Board Certified as a Specialist in Renal Nutrition and Board Certified as a Specialist in Sports Dietetics**.

For example, an introduction of a speaker might read:

Ann Apple is a registered dietitian nutritionist who is Board Certified as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition.

Ann Apple is a registered dietitian who is Board Certified as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition.

When referring to your Fellow status in written text or verbally, the phrase to be used is **Fellow of the American Dietetic Association**.

For example, an introduction of a speaker might read:

Ann Apple is a registered dietitian nutritionist who is a Fellow of the American Dietetic Association.

Ann Apple is a registered dietitian who is a Fellow of the American Dietetic Association.

A resume might include (Special Qualifications):

- Registered Dietitian Nutritionist
- Registered Dietitian
- Board Certified as a Specialist in Gerontological Nutrition

Questions regarding the use of the certifications should be directed to CDR at **800/877-1600, ext. 5500** or **cdr@eatright.org**.
