Graduate School and the Dietetic Internship

Possible options:
1. Combined master's degree and dietetic internship
2. Some graduate credits
3. Dietetic internship only

Questions to ask:
- Is a graduate degree one of my professional goals?
- Do I know what area of dietetics I am most interested in?
- Can I handle the time and financial commitment that comes along with the combined program?
- Am I hoping that the internship will help me find my niche?
- Can I afford it?

There has been much debate over choosing a combined internship with graduate school or just the internship. A combined program will allow you to obtain your Masters degree while simultaneously meeting the requirements to fulfill a DI program. These programs are usually longer than a DI program by itself, but you leave with a Masters degree. A combined program is a nice option to consider for advancing your education while completing your internship.

In my opinion, it all comes down to what your career goals are. You don’t want to enter a combined Master's in Clinical Nutrition program, only to discover that you have no interest in practicing clinical nutrition. There are also many types of Masters programs applicable to the RD, such as public health, business administration, entrepreneurship, or nutrition communications.

Of course, it is not the end of the world and a Master’s credential will still provide you with a competitive advantage for career opportunities in any area of dietetics, but it’s to your advantage to think carefully about your decision and get the most out of your advanced study.