

Your Degree in Nutrition....What Next?

Nutrition is a branch of science devoted to the study of nutrients. The study of nutrition draws on a range of subjects including the basic sciences, biochemistry, cell and molecular biology, immunology, microbiology and physiology, communications and public health.

Nutrition is the study of nutrients in food, the role of nutrients in the body and the relationship between diet, health and disease Human Nutrition focuses on food as it affects our health and is concerned with the provision of food and nutrients to the body to facilitate optimum physical and mental development and maintenance of health throughout our lives.

Nutritional scientists have an increasingly important role in advancing our knowledge of the relationship of diet to health through research, and applying that knowledge to the provision of nutritional advice to the public as well as providing safe, wholesome and nutritious food to the consumer.

The BSc (Honours) in Nutrition & Health Science prepares you to progress into nutrition related roles in many organisations within both the public and private sector. These include Local Authorities, charitable organisations, the Health Service Executive, health promotion, the leisure industry and the private sector. You may wish to progress onto postgraduate study to further develop your nutrition knowledge.

A degree Nutrition will establish a strong foundation for understanding the science of nutrition and its applications to human health and wellbeing both at the individual and community level. It will also establish a strong foundation for understanding public health, A Nutritional Sciences degree can be the foundation for career opportunities in areas such as;

- Clinical Nutrition
- Public Health Nutrition
- Sports Nutrition
- Nutrition Industry (product development, marketing, consumer information)
- Education (second or third level)
- Research (public or private sector)

Note: Graduates of the degree also have the opportunity to work in the area of Animal Nutrition in companies involved in animal food and supplement production.

What skills have I gained from my Nutrition & Health Science degree?

| Technical Skills | Non-technical 'Soft' Skills |
|--|---|
| Knowledge of the factors affecting human health and well being | Excellent organisational and planning skills |
| Basic Sciences | Attention to Detail |
| Public health Policy and its implication | Time Management |
| Food production | Skills of enquiry |
| Decision-making | Responsibility |
| Report-writing (Ability to communicate complex information) | Communication & Interpersonal (Ability to get on with people of all levels) |
| Strategic-thinking | Analytic skills |
| | Identify and propose solutions to problems |

Characteristics required for employment in Nutrition related roles:

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Foresight & Initiative
- Presentation Skills

Note: It is vital that you recognise and differentiate between your technical skills and your non-technical or 'soft' skills in preparation for pursuing employment or further study.

Work as a Nutritionist

Graduates of the BSc (Honours) in Nutrition & Health Science from CIT can apply to become an Associate Nutritionist through the Association for Nutrition (a professional body that holds the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists – UKVRN) and work in the field.

CIT graduates can apply for Associate Nutritionist status with the UKVRN via the 'without direct entry' process. The following link has full details on the application process;

<http://www.associationfornutrition.org/Default.aspx?tabid=123>

To then become a Registered Nutritionist, an Associate Nutritionist must have gained at least three years professional experience (within the five years prior to applying for registration).

See www.associationfornutrition.org for more information on the organisation.

Nutritionists work in a variety of organisations, including food companies, retailers, sports and leisure and Health. As "**Nutritionist**" is **not a protected job title** (unlike dietician). In theory anyone can call themselves a nutritionist. Further information can be obtained from the following;

- The **Nutrition Society** www.nutrition society.org site includes a careers leaflet and a listing of postgraduate courses in nutrition.
- **British Nutrition Foundation** www.nutrition.org.uk site includes information on career paths in nutrition & dietetics and the differences between these two areas.
- **Nutritionists in Industry** www.nii.org.uk

Nutritional therapists work with clients to relieve the symptoms of illness (or maintain health) through diet and **nutritional** support. Their work is usually within private practice and nutritional therapists are often self-employed. While there are a number of courses available in nutritional therapy there is currently no legal regulation or accreditation of these courses, although the **Nutritional Therapy Council** www.nutritionaltherapycouncil.org.uk can provide details of courses that meet certain agreed standards. Other sources of information include:

- The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (www.indi.ie) – Contact the INDI to find out about becoming a member.
- The Nutrition Society (www.nutrition society.org)
- **Prospects Occupational Profile** Nutritional therapist
www.prospects.ac.uk/nutritional_therapist.htm
- **British Association for Nutritional Therapy** www.bant.org.uk
- Our **Food & Drink industry** pages www.kent.ac.uk/careers/workin/food.htm may also be of interest.

Can I work as a Dietician?

The title “dietician” is protected and in order to work as a dietician in the public health services you need to have an accredited qualification.

Dietitians provide clinical or medical nutritional intervention, involving advice on dietary modification (natural and/or artificial) and nutritional education to address medical issues in patients.

While Dietitians cover all aspects of health and nutrition, they may also have specialist knowledge on particular medical conditions or in specific areas such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, osteoporosis, pediatrics, etc... where patients are unable to consume food normally or have specific medical dietary requirements.

Most dietitians work in hospitals or community health services, informing and teaching the public and health professionals about diet and nutrition. Further information may be obtained from;

- The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute www.indi.ie
- **British Dietetic Association** www.bda.uk.com
- **Prospects Occupational Profile** www.prospects.ac.uk/dietitian_job_description.htm

There are a number of 2 year conversion courses for graduates – see www.bda.uk.com/edpostgrad.html for a list. Normally, applicants for these courses need a degree in a related subject, which contains biochemistry and human physiology.

For details of the **financial support** that may be available for these courses, see www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/details/Default.aspx?Id=1923

Graduate Employment

Careers in the Food & Healthcare Industries

While some graduates may work as a Nutritionist after completing the degree programme, the course is predominantly geared towards careers in the Food and Healthcare industries, in such areas as new product development, quality control, quality assurance, production, ingredients or testing.

Graduates from the course will be qualified to work in the following sectors; food, human and animal nutrition, medical devices, cosmetic, pharmaceutical, and veterinary.

If you are interested in working in industry, the following websites will provide lists of companies in Ireland.

Enterprise Ireland has lists of Irish employers across all industry sectors, including up-to-date sector profiles. Business Management plays a vital role for these companies. Check out; www.enterpriseireland.com. Click on 'Source a Product or Service from Ireland' and 'Sector and Company Directories'.

Tip: The Industrial Development Agency (IDA) has a comprehensive list of all multi-national companies in Ireland. Companies who employ Nutrition/Food Science graduates are listed. Check out; www.idaireland.com. Click on 'Business in Ireland', select from the list of sectors and then click on 'Search Company Database' for a full list of companies.

- Register with gradireland to get email alerts on employment opportunities as well as job search advice; www.gradireland.com
- Pick up free copies of the **Gradireland Directory** for Ireland (north and south) and, '**Ireland's 100 Leading Graduate Employers**', which is available at CIT's Careers Service, 2nd Floor, Student Centre.

Postgraduate Study

Gaining a postgraduate qualification brings with it many benefits. It enables you to gain further, more specialized knowledge in your field of study. It can give you a specific technical, vocational or professional qualification and facilitate you in developing a range of key skills including; research, analysis, evaluation and written communication.

For further information, go to the 'Further/Postgraduate Study' link on the Students page of our website; <http://www.mycit.ie/careers>

Other websites include; www.postgradireland.com and www.prospects.ac.uk

For further information please contact the Careers Service on 021 4335772.

Further Resources

Gradireland publications – Available at the Careers Service or download a copy of the relevant sector publications from www.gradireland.com

For career opportunities in Nutrition\Dietetics in the UK see www.targetjobs.co.uk

Tip: If you are unsure about what direction to take after your degree, the gradireland Careers Report is a useful tool for matching your personal information and preferences to potential careers. Log on and register at www.gradireland.com to use the report.

Tip: If you want to find out more information about what is involved in any of the job titles listed in this document, check out the *A to Z Occupation List* on www.careersportal.ie