

Dietitian/Nutritionist

What is a dietitian/nutritionist?

The “dietitian” and “nutritionist” job titles are oftentimes used interchangeably in error. The dietitian and nutritionist professions are not the same; however, the academic programs are similar.

A dietitian is considered a health professional and usually has attained a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree from an accredited dietetics/nutrition program, and, in most cases, a license or registration. Dietitians are primarily responsible for translating scientific nutrition principles into useful information that can be used by patients or clients to design dietary plans (and/or dietary restrictions) to help promote healthy lifestyles. The dietitian is especially supportive of patients with medical conditions that require individualized dietary plans. Dietitians are relied upon by government and non-profit agencies, medical facilities, and communities to help provide information about best dietary practices.

A nutritionist is considered an expert in the discipline of nutrition and food science and may work in a variety of settings. A nutritionist may have completed a short-term nutrition program or may have an associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, and/or master’s degree in food science or human nutrition. Nutritionists may work in food service, food manufacturing, nutrition research, health promotion, as food journalists, or as assistants to dietitians.

Doctoral programs also exist for dietetics and nutrition. In the U.S., most states have qualification standards for practicing dietitians and nutritionists, and some states require professionals to attain and maintain a state-approved license or registration.

More details? For more detailed information, including salaries and job prospects, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (www.eatright.org) or nutritionED.org (www.nutritioned.org).

Does UWW have a dietetics/nutrition program? While UWW does not have a program in dietetics or nutrition, we can and have prepared students for entry into accredited dietetics and nutrition graduate programs, while still helping them attain wider skills and a college degree that can act as a backup plan.

Can UWW help me prepare for a dietetics/nutrition graduate school/program? Yes! Many graduate programs require a bachelor’s degree from an accredited university, and in these cases, any degree program at UWW would be accepted. For the graduate programs that prefer or require prerequisite courses, we offer an array of courses to prepare students. In addition, UWW students are prepared with a broad background, so that they have a great skill set, in case they decide to pursue other careers after completing their undergraduate degree.

What do I need to apply for admission to an accredited dietetics/nutrition graduate school?

- 1. Undergraduate degree (BS or BA):** Most applicants will have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university before entering into a dietetics/nutrition graduate school. The specific type of degree does not matter in many cases. Some programs prefer or require applicants to complete certain courses in chemistry, biology, statistics, physiology, or nutrition prior to beginning their graduate program.

Courses that may be preferred or required	UWW courses that will fit the preferred/required course areas
General Chemistry	CHEM 102, CHEM 104
Organic Chemistry	CHEM 251
Biochemistry	BIO 456, CHEM 458
General Biology	BIO 141, BIO 142, PEPROF 271
Basic Statistics	BIO 303, PSYCH 215, MATH 230, MATH 231
Anatomy and Physiology	BIO 361 & BIO 362
Nutrition	HEALTHED 391

2. **Major and minor:** Many applicants will have majored and/or minored in areas such as Health and Human Performance, Biology, or Chemistry.
3. **Overall academic record:** An applicant needs to have a good overall GPA. Although different schools have different GPA requirements, most graduate programs in dietetics/nutrition require a minimum 3.0 GPA for the last two years of coursework.
4. **Entrance exam:** Most dietetics/nutrition schools require students to take a graduate school entrance exam, such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). International students may be asked to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
5. **Other jobs and experiences:** Although most dietetics/nutrition programs do not require prior experience in the field of nutrition, applicants who have had volunteer or paid experiences will be more highly sought after by graduate programs. Similarly, applicants who demonstrate that they are well-rounded and ambitious by engaging in community and extra-curricular activities will have a competitive edge in the application process.

What happens then? After completing a graduate education in dietetics/nutrition, you would receive a master's (M.S.) or doctoral (Ph.D.) degree. Depending on the state in which you wish to practice, you may need to apply for registration and/or licensure. The school you attend will help guide you in attaining any further credentials that are required.

Professional organization: Many dietitians and nutritionists are members of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (www.eatright.org) and/or a subsidiary of the Academy. Since many dietitians and nutritionists have specific interests or career paths, they typically also become members of professional organizations with a specific focus, such as the Collegiate & Professional Sports Dietitians Association (www.sportsrd.org) or American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org).

UWW Advisor: Dr. Daryle Waechter-Brulla, Biological Sciences
 Upham Hall (262) 472-5131 waechted@uww.edu

Graduate programs in this area (WI, MN, IL, IA):

WISCONSIN

Mount Mary University (Milwaukee)

Master of Science in Dietetics: <http://www.mtmary.edu/majors-programs/graduate/dietetics/>

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Master of Science or Doctor of Philosophy, Human Nutrition Emphasis:

<http://nutrisci.wisc.edu/graduate/m-s-ph-d/grad-sub-page2/>

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/HPHD/Pages/graduateDegrees/nsDegree/default.aspx>

University of Wisconsin-Stout

Master of Science in Food and Nutritional Sciences: <http://www.uwstout.edu/programs/msfns/>

MINNESOTA

University of Minnesota

Master of Science in Public Health Nutrition: <http://sph.umn.edu/programs/phn/>

ILLINOIS

Benedictine University (Lisle and online)

Master of Science in Nutrition and Wellness:

<http://www.ben.edu/college-of-education-and-health-services/nutrition/index.cfm>

Dominican University (River Forest)

Master of Business Administration/Registered Dietitian coordinated program:

<http://business.dom.edu/academics/dual-degrees/mba-coordinated-program-dietetics>

Eastern Illinois University (Charleston)

Master of Science in Nutrition & Dietetics: <http://www.eiu.edu/dieteticsgrad/>

Northern Illinois University (DeKalb)

Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics: <http://chhs.niu.edu/nutrition/graduate/index.shtml>

Rosalind Franklin University (Chicago and online)

Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition:

<http://www.rosalindfranklin.edu/Degreeprograms/Nutrition.aspx>

University of Illinois at Chicago

Master of Science in Nutrition: <http://www.ahs.uic.edu/kn/academics/msncp>

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Master of Science Degree in Food Science and Human Nutrition; Doctor of Philosophy Degree (Ph.D.)
in Food Science and Human Nutrition: <http://fshn.illinois.edu/graduate>

IOWA

Iowa State University (Great Plains IDEA online program)

Master of Science in Dietetics: <http://www.hsidea.org/programs/diet/>

Iowa State University (online)

Master of Family and Consumer Sciences-Dietetics:

<http://catalog.iastate.edu/interdisciplinaryprograms/graduate/dietetics/>