

## Frequently Asked Questions regarding the PG Diploma in Nutritional Sciences

How many places are available on this course and how long does it take?

We can take 15 students into this course every September. This is a 9-month course (Sept–May)

What level is this award?

This course is an NFQ (National Framework for Qualifications) Level 9 course.

Is there a taught MSc in nutrition available in UCC?

No, we no longer offer a taught MSc in Nutrition (NFQ Level 9) at UCC. It was replaced by the Post Graduate Diploma in Nutritional Sciences (also NFQ Level 9) in 2014. The taught content is exactly the same as the former taught MSc but the only difference is UCC removed the research project (which created a constraint in terms of numbers of students we could take onto the course) so it is now a Diploma with up to 15 places available.

If I do the PG Diploma in nutritional sciences at UCC is there an option to submit a thesis so I can get an MSc qualification?

No, this course is a Postgraduate Diploma with no option to transfer to a MSc in Nutrition.

I don't have a BSc degree can I get into this course?

Candidates must be holders of an honours BSc degree, or equivalent qualification, in a Human Biology-related discipline including a significant element of biochemistry and/or physiology and a minimum of a Second Class Honours Grade 1 or equivalent. Graduates with a Second Class Honours Grade 2 degree will be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to the approval of the Director of the PG Dip in Nutritional Sciences. We are unable to accept students with degrees other than a BSc in a human biology-related discipline as they would not have the core scientific knowledge to be able to understand the advanced nutrition modules taught on this postgraduate course.

I have a BA degree in marketing/journalism/business studies and have a huge interest in nutrition and would really love to do this course so I can change careers. Can I apply for this course?

Unfortunately, we cannot accept students with degrees other than a BSc in a human biology-related discipline as they would not have the core scientific knowledge to be able to understand the advanced nutrition modules taught on this postgraduate course. The best option would be to retrain and take a BSc course in nutritional sciences/human nutrition or dietetics if this is really the career path you wish to follow.

I am currently an undergraduate on a BSc course but there is not much physiology, biology or biochemistry taught on my programme (e.g. psychology, food science, food marketing etc.). What can I do to enhance my chances of getting into a nutrition postgraduate programme like this?

If you are an undergraduate on a BSc course where you do not have sufficient modules in physiology, biochemistry or human biology you can enquire with your university if you can take additional modules (1-2) in cell biology, biochemistry or basic physiology in addition to the modules you are taking as part of your degree. There is often a small/modest fee per module to do this, depending on the university.

I have just graduated from an honours BSc undergraduate course but I did not do a lot of physiology, biology or biochemistry. Are there any modules I can pay to take to increase my chances of being accepted into this postgrad diploma?

Many universities offer online courses in cell biology, physiology and biochemistry. These are also useful refresher courses to take if it is a few years since you have graduated. An example of one such course is an access course called 'Understanding the Body' offered online by the University of Aberdeen. This consists of 3 small courses each lasting 3 weeks and covers organ systems, DNA, protein synthesis, molecular signalling, pathways in energy production, endocrinology, immunology, homeostasis, etc. There are others available at other universities also. It is important to complete the assessment on these courses and include your transcript with your application to our Diploma.

I want to be a dietitian is this the course for me?

Dietetics is a completely separate qualification and to do this you would have to apply to one of 9 colleges in the UK or currently two colleges in Ireland. These courses typically only take 10-14 students per class and are highly competitive to get into. This postgraduate diploma course in nutritional sciences in UCC may help candidates to gain a solid foundation in nutrition that may help your application to dietetics programmes and several of our graduates have completed this course for that reason, although it by no means guarantees you will be accepted to any of these programmes.

What nutrition knowledge will I have at the end of this course?

This diploma course involves 50 credits of taught modules (and 10 credits of a library project in nutrition) which are the advanced nutrition modules we offer at 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year level to our honours BSc nutritional sciences students. At the end of the 9-month course, having passed all examinations it would be expected that your nutrition knowledge would be very similar to those at 4<sup>th</sup> year within the BSc nutritional sciences course.

What are the career opportunities after graduation?

This course is designed for individuals with a strong biology background wishing to gain a postgraduate qualification in nutrition. It will help to 'up skill' students in the rapidly advancing field of nutritional science, while also providing a conversion pathway for science graduates who wish to enter the nutrition field. There is no preordained career path stemming from this programme, and it is up to each graduate to fit the qualification in with their own educational background as they shape their individual careers.

Graduates of the PG Diploma and its predecessor course (MSc Nutritional Sciences) have gone on to work in:

- Research – some have gone on to complete research MSc (nutrition) or PhD in nutrition following graduation.
- The food industry, e.g. food and drink manufacturers (private industry), retailers/supermarkets, medical food companies (baby food and clinical products), food service providers, food ingredients suppliers, public relations agencies handling food accounts, research and development, product development, consumer information, health promotion, quality assurance, public relations, regulatory affairs, etc.
- Nutritionists work as researchers in universities and in specialist institutions (e.g. Teagasc, Agriculture and Food Development Authority, Bord Bia, etc.). Nutritionists can work in emergency relief or development projects in low-income countries (<http://www.nutritionworks.org.uk>).

Other graduates have used the qualification:

- To enhance their current qualifications, e.g. public health graduates (with an interest in public health nutrition; food science graduates (to allow them to apply for jobs in food industry on the product development and regulatory side); health care professionals such as nurses (who wish to further their nutrition knowledge and apply it to their practice); secondary school science teachers (biology).
- We are increasingly finding that applicants and graduates are using this course as a stepping stone to other careers like Dietetics. This is particularly the case for individuals with a BSc in other fields (biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, nursing, exercise physiology) who want to train as dietitians but are not able to get into graduate dietetics programmes due to the highly competitive nature and small class sizes of dietetics courses.

Graduates can apply for individual membership of the Nutrition Society.

### Can I work as a nutritionist after this course?

Graduates can apply for individual membership of the Nutrition Society. They can work as nutritionists for food and drinks manufacturers (private industry), retailers, medical food companies, food service providers, food ingredients suppliers, public relations agencies handling food accounts, research and development, product development, consumer information, health promotion, quality assurance, public relations, regulatory affairs, etc. However, graduates would not have the training or clinical experience to be able to work as a private practice nutritionist seeing clients aside from healthy eating advice and weight reduction in a straightforward setting. For those candidates wishing to work with members of the public giving detailed dietary advice on a range of conditions they should consider completing a postgraduate qualification in dietetics. Completing the Diploma in Nutritional Sciences at UCC may help with an application to a postgrad dietetics programme, especially for those with minimal background in nutrition.

### How late can I apply?

It is advisable to apply as soon as you can but we continue to accept students until the quota of 15 is filled. This often means we will accept students up until mid-August.

### Will this course help me get into a dietetics postgrad programme?

Many of the postgraduate programmes in dietetics offered in the UK and Ireland look for an undergraduate qualification in nutrition or in a related discipline. Due to the competitive nature of dietetics programmes, completion of a postgrad diploma in nutritional sciences may increase your chance of success in gaining entry into these programmes, but this is not guaranteed.

### If I send my information over email to the programme coordinator can you assess if I am suitable or not?

Due to the high volume of enquiries it is not possible for us to assess suitability over email (review transcripts, CVs, etc.). It is advised to read the entry requirements carefully on the website and if you think you are a suitable candidate please apply through PAC. This way the course coordinator and the admissions office can fully assess your application and review all your documentation to make an informed decision.

### Can the course be taken part time as I have a job?

This PG Dip programme is a challenging course and is intended to be full time. Students are expected to attend lectures or be engaged in their research from 9am to 5pm each working day from September to May.

### What skills will I have on completion of this Diploma?

On successful completion of this programme, students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between nutrition and the development of disease and disorders; demonstrate the importance of nutrition to facilitate optimum physical and mental development and maintenance of health throughout life; apply critical thinking skills to solve problems in nutrition; communicate effectively on nutrition-related issues with different stakeholders; demonstrate the capacity to undertake lifelong learning.

### What are the requirements for this course?

- Candidates must be holders of an honours BSc degree, or equivalent qualification, in a Human Biology-related discipline including a significant element of biochemistry and/ or physiology and a minimum of a Second Class Honours Grade 1 or equivalent. Graduates with a Second Class Honours Grade 2 degree will be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to the approval of the Director of the PG Dip in Nutritional Sciences.
- Candidates with a BSc in Nutritional Sciences or closely related programmes are not eligible for admission.
- The English Language Requirements is IELTS 6.5 with no individual section lower than 6.0 or TOEFL equivalent.

If you are applying with Qualifications obtained outside Ireland and you wish to verify if you meet the minimum academic and English language requirements for this programme please click [here](#) to view the grades comparison table by country and for details of recognised English language tests.

[View the grades comparison table](#)

### Do you accept international students?

Non-EU candidates are expected to have educational qualifications of a standard equivalent to Irish university primary degree level. In addition, where such candidates are non-native speakers of the English language they must satisfy the University of their competency in the English language. To verify if you meet the minimum academic requirements for this programme please visit our [qualification comparison](#) pages.

For more detailed entry requirement information please refer to the [International website](#) .

### What are the fees for this course?

The fee for this course for EU students is €6,000 plus an additional approximate cost for course manuals of €100.

EU student fee payment: Fees for EU students are payable in two equal instalments. First payment at registration in August and the second in January.

International student fee payment: Fees for Non-EU Students are payable in one instalment in August. The fee is €18,000 plus an additional approximate cost for course manuals of €100.

### Are there any scholarships available for this Diploma course?

No, unfortunately there are no scholarship opportunities for this course. All candidates must pay the tuition fees.