

Master of Nutrition and Dietetics (leading to Registration as a Dietitian)

Frequently Asked Questions

We are often asked for further information about our course and on how to apply. In this leaflet we have tried to compile answers to the most common questions. If you cannot find the information you were looking for here, then do feel free to contact us again.

Mrs Amanda Avery, Admissions Tutor

1. Why is this a Masters course?

- The University of Nottingham is almost unique in that it runs certain courses as Integrated Masters degrees. These are awarded to all students who complete courses that are of longer duration than the typical 3 year BSc degrees offered by our School. Thus students in dietetics, nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy who study for the extra year and pick up crucial clinical skills in their course are awarded the title Masters in their degree.
- Beyond this the MNutr degree is a similar qualification to any degree in dietetics that you may study elsewhere. It includes all of the necessary clinical placements, as well as being a high level course in nutritional sciences. When you graduate you are eligible to apply to the Health and Care Professions Council (hcpc) for registration as a dietitian.

2. Where is the course taught?

- Most modules on this course are taught at the School of Biosciences, Sutton Bonington Campus www.nottingham.ac.uk/biosciences A small number of modules will be based in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science (Queens Medical Centre).
- Clinical placements can be anywhere within a region that covers the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

3. What A-level subjects would allow me to study MNutr?

- Students seeking entry to the course on the basis of A-levels should be studying chemistry to A2, along with a second science. We would prefer applicants to have biology or human biology as their second science but will also consider: physics, maths, geography, PE, IT, psychology, food technology, home economics. The third A-level offered by applicants is not critical and we will accept most subjects. However, while we appreciate the value of General Studies or Critical Thinking and the Extended Project, we will not make it a requirement of any offer.
- The typical offers we make to successful applicants are AAB-ABB.

4. I am a mature applicant without A levels, can I apply?

- We receive a large number of enquiries about this degree from mature students who are considering a change of career and this group of student always make up a significant proportion of the students on our course. Mature students will usually come to us with qualifications other than A levels. We accept the following as options.
 - Foundation Year: These foundation degrees are offered by some universities and FE colleges. They provide a useful route of entry to mature students who perhaps have A-levels, but either at low grades or in the wrong subjects to be considered for a Dietetics degree. If we made offers to students coming through this route, we would usually specify a particular pass grade (e.g. 65% overall). Suitable FY courses must include Chemistry at Level 3 and one other science subject (biology preferred).
 - Applicants undertaking The University of Nottingham Science Foundation year do not need to apply through UCAS. They must pass the foundation year with an overall mark of no less than 55%, with no less than 55% in both the chemistry and biology modules. Progression to the degree is also subject to a successful interview.
 - Access: These courses are offered by FE colleges and Adult Education centres. They are intended for mature students who have not studied since leaving school and who lack A-levels. They cover basic study skills, Maths and English, as well as specified subject areas. Suitable Access courses must include Chemistry at Level 3 and one other science subject (biology preferred). A typical offer would require passing 30 Level 3 credits at Distinction and a further 10 at Merit. At least 15 of these credits should be in Chemistry related subjects.
 - Open University Modules will not normally be considered sufficient for entry, but may be accepted as evidence of recent learning for applicants with appropriate A-levels (or other qualifications taken over 5 years ago).
 - In general, other qualifications will not be considered.

5. How do I apply and how will you process my application?

- Each year we receive a large number of applications for a limited number of places on this degree course (usually up to 8 applicants for every place).
- Initially you must apply through UCAS.
- In allocating our places, we score your UCAS form based on your personal statement and reference. We are looking for commitment to dietetics and understanding of dietetics as well as relevant transferable skills. You should definitely tell us if you have completed work experience or are planning to do so. Applicants who are selected for interview will be asked to visit the School of Biosciences on a Wednesday in January/February/March. If you are selected for interview we will try to ensure that you have at least 2 weeks notice ahead of your interview date.
- On your visit you will also have the chance to see our campus, find out more about the course and meet with some of our current students. You will complete a group activity with other applicants. Interviews are held in the afternoon and last for about 15 minutes. All interviews will normally involve a member of the teaching staff from the course and a practicing dietitian.

- Applicants are interviewed on their own (i.e. not in groups) and the interviews all follow a standard format. Questions within the interview will explore applicant's insight into the dietetics profession and key skills such as communication and professional values.

6. Do I need work experience?

- It is not an absolute requirement that you have experience of working with/or shadowing a dietitian. However, we strongly recommend that you arrange to visit a hospital and/or community Dietetics department. Not undertaking such a visit may damage your prospects of being offered a place on the course.
- Seeing dietitians at work gives applicants great insight into what the profession involves and this is immensely helpful in preparing answers in the applicant's questionnaire and at interview.
- To gain work experience we suggest contacting the local dietetics services in your area.

7. How are the clinical placements fitted into the programme?

Three practice based placements (A, B and C) are an integral part of the course and must be successfully completed by all students. Placement A (3 weeks) is usually undertaken in the vacation period between the first and second year and placement B (12 weeks minimum) is usually undertaken during the vacation period between the third and fourth year. Placement C (12 weeks minimum) is usually in the Spring semester of your final year. The placements do reduce your opportunity to undertake paid employment particularly during the vacation period between third and fourth year. You may have accommodation and travel costs associated with your placement.

8. I am an International student. Can I apply for this course?

- Overseas students are not currently eligible for this course but this may change in the near future.

9. Can I study this course part-time?

- Wherever possible we recommend that this degree is undertaken on a full time basis. The first year can only be studied full time.
- Applicants should note that Practice Placements are only offered on a full-time basis. You will be expected to be on site for the statutory hours of a fulltime dietitian in the National Health Service. Significant time lost through sickness must be recovered. You will also be expected to undertake some additional study each week in the evenings and at weekends.
- We DO NOT offer any form of distance learning.

10. Can I come and visit the School of Biosciences to find out more?

- The University holds University-wide Open Days in June and September each year. These are advertised on the university web pages www.nottingham.ac.uk several months in advance. These events give you a chance to see round the School of Biosciences www.nottingham.ac.uk/biosciences talk to some of our current students and discuss your particular interests with members of the teaching staff. Open Days also include information on accommodation, finance and all other aspects of university life.

- We also have Visit Days for any applicants who progress to the final interview stages of the applications process. Again, these give the chance to see our campus, chat to students and find out more about the course and what we do here at Nottingham.

11. What would be my career prospects when I graduate from MNutr?

- Most graduate dietitians will work in the NHS. At entry, new graduates are employed at Band 5, where the typical salary is around £21,176 - £27,625 per annum.
- Funding restraints within the organisation have impacted upon employment of all health professional graduates, reducing the availability of posts. However, to date dietetics has fared much better than some other professions. Given the dietary basis for most of the health problems faced by the UK population, we anticipate a continuing demand for dietitians.
- Dietitians are increasingly finding their way into other areas of employment. There is current demand for dietitians within major food companies, in sports nutrition and medical research. Some dietitians are establishing themselves in private practice.
- Jobs in the profession are advertised at <http://www.bdacareerchoices.com>

12. What is the workload for students on this course?

- Like all degree courses at Nottingham, MNutr is a modular course. In each of the four years of the programme, students study modules totalling 120 credits. A typical first year module would be 10 or 20 credits, but some higher level modules are worth 30, 40, or 60 credits.
- The amount of time spent in University studying these taught modules varies somewhat, but as a general rule of thumb a 10 credit module would require 100 hours of study over 11 weeks. This would usually comprise 30 hours taught time and the remainder as private study.
- Our first year students generally find they are in classes at University for 20-24 hours per week and this often declines slightly in years 2 and 3.
- The timetable varies each semester, but for most students there are 3-4 whole morning/afternoon sessions per week when they have no classes. Wednesday afternoons are always free from classes.
- The teaching day starts at 9a.m. with a break from 1:00-2:00 p.m. The afternoon session typically runs from 2:00-5:00 p.m. but some modules may run on until 6:00 p.m.
- On Clinical Placement students should expect to work a full day, 5 days per week. There is a lot less flexibility during this time and full attendance is mandatory.

13. I have heard that this course can be challenging for mature students. What do I need to know?

- As stated above (see question 4), we welcome applications from mature students and individuals over 21 years old make up a significant proportion of our intake each year. Over many years of running this course we have observed that the degree can be particularly demanding for students who may have a family or who live more than 20-30 miles away from the campus. Issues that you may need to note include:
 - Although taught hours can be flexible, the MNutr degree is intended to be a full-time course. With the potential for a teaching day running from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. plus the

demands of self-directed study and coursework, it can be a major challenge to juggle home life and the degree. We consider long commutes to University at the start and end of each day to be unwise and detrimental to students' prospects of success.

- It is often very difficult for Practice placements to offer flexibility in the hours that a student is required to be on site as their primary responsibility is to ensure that a student gains all the relevant experience. You should think carefully, if you have children, about how you would accommodate dropping off and collecting from childcare facilities or school.

14. Where will my Practice placements be?

- The majority of students are placed within the East Midlands area. However students should be prepared to be placed throughout the UK depending on Practice placement demand and availability. You will be given the opportunity to express four preferences for each of your placements but you will not necessarily be allocated to any of these. You will be expected to accept the placement to which you are allocated. The University of Nottingham is unable to guarantee that all students will be allocated as soon as they are eligible to progress to a Practice placement although every effort is made to obtain sufficient placements.
- Students may apply for '**priority allocation status**' if they are limited in terms of the locations that they could reasonably be expected to undertake a placement. They are then allocated to a placement before other students who do not qualify for this status. The following are examples of situations that may entitle them to 'priority allocation status':
 - Ill health (mental or physical) evidenced by, for example, a letter from the student's Family doctor or consultant. A student may be referred to the University's Occupational Health Unit for further guidance.
 - A disability not felt to be covered by the above.
 - Children (under 18 years on the day of submission of the Practice placement application). Should the child/ children not live at the student's home details should be given to justify why 'priority allocation status' is requested.
 - Caring responsibility for someone, other than a child, that it would be impossible for the student to fulfil if they are not given 'priority allocation status.'
 - Necessity to be close to a specialist training facility for an activity other than the student's university course (e.g. preparation for competing in sport at an international level).
 - Limited opportunities to carry out religious observance.
- Examples of situations that would NOT lead to 'Priority allocation':
 - Financial difficulty
 - Commitment to a housing rental agreement or mortgage
 - Long term relationship including marriage
 - Academic failure