



**Topic:** *Becoming a nutritionist*

Many people who contact us are interested in becoming a professional nutritionist or dietitian. The following information has been developed to provide you with information of possible study-path options if you want to become a professional nutritionist or dietitian.

While in theory anyone can become a 'nutritionist' as this is not a registered professional (it is, therefore always prudent to check that nutritionists have relevant tertiary qualifications in the science of nutrition), being an accredited (approved) and insured nutritionist is something quite different. Accreditation and insurance are an integral aspect of ensuring that clients get the best advice and that you as a practitioner offer quality services that are backed by a governing agency.

**Dietitian or nutritionist?**

Firstly it may be worth differentiating between a nutritionist and a dietitian. A dietitian most commonly have completed an undergraduate degree such as sports exercise, biochemistry, biology etc and gone on to a master's degree in dietetics. Increasingly now, many countries are offering undergraduate degrees in dietetics. Such courses always involve a great deal of medical nutrition for example; many dietetics students have undergone extensive clinical hours in hospitals. Hence dietitians are able to assist with the feeding of hospitalized individuals as well as the general public.

A nutritionist may have a diploma and/or a degree but rarely has hospital experience.

**Study requirements:**

There has been an explosion in the numbers of people interested in nutrition which has seen an expansion in the number of ways to become a nutritionist. The minimum would be a two-year diploma of nutrition, offered at many private colleges.

Some private colleges and universities offer courses that either include nutrition studies or are specifically nutrition based. For example, you may study to become a naturopath (a four year full-time course) and qualify as a nutritionist also (given the diploma of nutrition is covered in this course). Alternatively you may choose to study only nutrition and complete a diploma of nutrition (two years full-time).

Some universities offer undergraduate degrees in health science; again you could qualify as a naturopath and/or a nutritionist.

The minimum study via a university is a three-year degree, qualifying you either as a nutritionist or a dietitian.

Many of these courses can be taken by classroom mode or distance learning.

**Course content:**

Professional training in nutrition normally involves a comprehensive program of tertiary studies and commonly takes a number of years to complete. In addition to this, considerable supervised clinical hours are undertaken.

Most courses will require students to complete and pass components of:

- Biology, anatomy and physiology
- Chemistry and biochemistry
- Pathophysiology, symptomology and diagnosis
- Physical examination
- Extensive nutrition and disease management with nutrients
- Supplementation regimes
- Dietary evaluation systems

**Cadence Health**

**Nutrition courses fresh to your door**

✉ po box 313 manly nsw 1655 australia ☎ 02 9949 5712 📠 02 9949 5712  
📧 info@cadencehealth.com.au 🌐 www.cadencehealth.com.au

- Electives in specialised nutrition topics including weight loss and sports nutrition
- Clinical studies (undertaking patients via supervision)
- First aid
- Running a clinic
- Counseling

**Setting up a practice:**

Once a student has completed and graduated from their course their next step is to register with a governing body. Basically such bodies represent the professional interests of groups such as nutritionists, naturopaths, massage therapists, doctors, pharmacist etc.

Peak bodies do many things; they are responsible for lobbying government, assisting with insurance, keeping members up-to-date with industry changes and requirements (including insurance, taxation, professional development and legalities).

An example is the Australian Traditional Medicine Society; it is one of the peak bodies for naturopaths and nutritionists. They assist naturopaths and nutritionists with such activities as continuing education, insurance, promotion, tax information, industry events and news and lobbying. Another is the Dietitians Association of Australia.

**Insurance**

While being a member of a peak body is in essence not essential, insurance (public liability) most definitely is! Generally, most insurers require you to be a member of a peak body. Practicing without insurance or without being under the insurance of an employer is very dangerous.

**Continuing education**

Most health practitioners are now required by law to show proof of undertaking ongoing education each year in order to continue their registration (Cadence Health courses are commonly used for this purpose). The number of hours required varies depending on the peak body and specific health industry.

**Offering nutrition advice:**

Fitness professionals commonly ask us if they can legally offer nutrition advice to their clients. This question applies to herbalists, massage therapists, coaches, personal trainers and gym assistants, basically anyone who works in health. The accredited training programs for all of these professions include nutrition; but it extends only to dietary advice. Prescribing a treatment regime, supplements or treating someone specifically with nutrition is in most cases not accepted.

**Where to study:**

**Institutions**

Currently in Australia you can study nutrition either through a university or a private college. For individuals wishing to study nutrition at a vocational (career path) level, we have compiled a list of courses and study paths available at Australian Universities and Private Colleges.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and includes both undergraduate and postgraduate study options. For further information on any of these courses please contact the university or institution directly.

**Private colleges**

Offering diplomas, degrees and post-graduate degrees in health science, naturopathy and nutrition.

- Australasian College of Natural Therapies
- Nature Care College

**Australian Universities**

Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales  
Bachelor of Health Science (Nutrition and Dietetics) - Four years (from 2004)

Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia  
BSc (Nutrition and Food Science - Dietetics) (Honours)  
One year post Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Food Science (bridging course required for

**Cadence Health**

**Nutrition courses fresh to your door**

✉ po box 313 manly nsw 1655 australia    ☎ 02 9949 5712    ☎ 02 9949 5712  
 📧 info@cadencehealth.com.au    🌐 www.cadencehealth.com.au

entrants with related degrees)

Deakin University, Victoria  
Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics (four years)  
Graduate Certificate of Human Nutrition  
Graduate Diploma of Human Nutrition

Flinders University of South Australia  
Master of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Two years post Bachelor of Science  
Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics (four years)

Griffith University, Queensland  
Master of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Three semesters, (18 months) post Bachelor of Science

Monash University, Victoria  
Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics (four years)

Queensland University of Technology, Queensland  
Bachelor of Health Science (Nutrition and Dietetics) - Four years

RMIT University  
Master in Nutrition Medicine

University of Canberra  
Graduate Certificate in Sports Nutrition  
Graduate Diploma in Dietetics  
Graduate Diploma in Human Nutrition  
Graduate Diploma in Nutrition and Marketing  
Master of Nutrition (by coursework)  
Master of Nutrition and Dietetics (by coursework)

The University of Newcastle, New South Wales  
Bachelor of Health Science (Nutrition and Dietetics) - Four years  
Master of Medical Science (Nutrition and Dietetics) - Research

The University of Sydney, New South Wales  
Bachelor of Science (Nutrition) Honours in Clinical  
Nutrition and Dietetics (four years)

Graduate Certificate in Applied Science (Nutrition and Dietetics)  
Master of Applied Science (Nutrition and Dietetics)  
Master of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Two years post Bachelor of Science  
Master of Nutritional Science

University of Western Sydney  
Graduate Diploma of Applied Science (Nutrition Science)  
Master of Applied Science (Nutrition Science)

University of Wollongong, New South Wales  
Master of Science (Nutrition and Dietetics)  
Two years post Bachelor of Science  
Master of Nutrition, Dietetics and Exercise Science  
Two years post Bachelor of Science  
Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics (four years)

**What to look for:**

- a. Academic qualifications of the faculty (lecturing staff) - ensure that members of academic staff have suitable tertiary qualifications in the science of nutrition and/or dietetics.
- b. Cost - ensure you are fully informed about all costs: including all fees, GST, examination

**Cadence Health**

**Nutrition courses fresh to your door**

✉ po box 313 manly nsw 1655 australia

☎ 02 9949 5712

☎ 02 9949 5712

✉ info@cadencehealth.com.au

🌐 www.cadencehealth.com.au

fees, clinical and laboratory fees and request some indication of the costs of texts. Private colleges tend to be more expensive than universities in the sense that they charge up-front fees whereas HECS options are available for public university courses.

c. Student support and service level - ask about what support services are offered to students undertaking a course (e.g. what sort of contact occurs during a distance course).

Cadence Health courses are:

- Designed to provide a comprehensive introduction to nutrition and detail a large range of common nutritional principles and issues. For example our Certificate of Diet and Nutrition course is designed to be completed in approximately 28 hours of study (2hrs per week for 14 weeks) whereas a comparable introductory nutrition subject at an Australian university requires more than 100 study hours (and generally cost in the vicinity of \$1500-\$2000).'
- Our courses do not qualify individuals to practice as a nutritionist in some circumstance such as personal trainers with appropriate levels of training who undertake our nutrition courses (which are accredited by Fitness NSW) may be able to provide dietary advice.
- Ideal for health professionals for professional registration points and broadening of your current services.

### Where to go to find out more

1. UAC book (Universities Admission Calendar) – from book shops and stationers
2. Internet search.
3. Post-graduate Admissions Calendar book – from book shops and stationers

Created by Leanne Cooper

At the time of creation the information given was correct, the author holds no interest in any institution mentioned and takes no responsibility for the use of this information.



**Cadence Health**

**Nutrition courses fresh to your door**

✉ po box 313 manly nsw 1655 australia    ☎ 02 9949 5712    ☎ 02 9949 5712  
📧 info@cadencehealth.com.au    🌐 www.cadencehealth.com.au