

# Dietitian

Dietitians translate the science of nutrition into everyday information about food and advise people on their food and nutrition choices.

## Working life

You'll assess, diagnose and treat dietary and nutritional problems. Your aim is to promote good health and prevent disease in individuals and communities.

Can't see the video? You'll need to accept all [cookies](#) <sup>[1]</sup>. Alternatively, visit our YouTube Channel to view our [videos](#) <sup>[2]</sup>

You'll be skilled at translating scientific and medical research related to food and health into practical guidance for the general public. You'll also teach health professionals about diet and nutrition.

You'll work in hospitals or in the community and with individuals and communities with both healthy and sick people. You could, for example, work with people who:

- have digestive problems
- want to lose weight
- need to put on weight after an illness
- have HIV
- have an eating disorder
- want to improve their sports performance
- have an allergy.

As well as working with other health professionals and nutritionists, you may supervise the work of dietetic assistants. <sup>[3]</sup> Dietitians and nutritionists have different roles and training and are regulated by different bodies.

## Ashley Smith

Senior dietitian

There is nothing better than seeing patients leave the critical care unit and working with them on their journey to recovery.

[Read Ashley's story](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

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## Entry requirements

You must first successfully complete an approved degree in dietetics, usually at undergraduate level. You'll need

- two or three A levels, including chemistry, maths or biology, along with five GCSEs (grades A-C <sup>[5]</sup> or 4-9), including English language and maths

or equivalent qualifications

Apprenticeships logo

- BTEC, HND or HNC which includes science subjects
- relevant T level
- relevant NVQ
- science-based access course
- equivalent level Scottish or Irish qualifications

To get onto a postgraduate course you will normally be expected to hold an honours degree which contains an acceptable level of human physiology and biochemistry. The other option is to apply for an [apprenticeship degree](#).

## Annual payments

If you're eligible, you'll receive at least £5,000 a year towards your studies while at university. Your personal circumstances may mean you could receive more. And the good news? You'll never have to pay it back. [Find out more.](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

## Degree apprenticeship

A degree apprenticeship is another way to become a dietitian. Apprenticeships give you the chance to earn a living while gaining your qualification. Your employer and the government will pay the tuition fees, so apprenticeships aren't eligible for student grants.

## Must have skills

Don't forget – academic qualifications aren't everything. You'll need to be interested in science and food and people's lifestyles. You'll need excellent communication skills and be able to explain complex things simply.

## Training and career development

Once qualified, dietitians often join the British Dietetic Association. Registered dietitians have to keep their skills and knowledge up to date with annual CPD (continuing professional development). BDA runs courses, conferences and seminars where dietitians can exchange ideas and update their skills.

You could specialise in a clinical area, such as cancer or diabetes or work with particular groups, such as elderly people or those with learning difficulties. Teaching and health education are also options. You could take on a management role where you would supervise the work of a team of dietitians. Eventually, you could be responsible for controlling a budget and planning and marketing a dietetic service.

You could work in sports nutrition or the food industry. Some dietitians move into marketing roles such as publishing, sales and public relations.

## Pay and benefits

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours with the need to work flexibly over a seven day period. As a dietitian, you'll be paid on the Agenda for Change (AFC <sup>[7]</sup>) pay system, typically starting on band 5.

You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

### • Find your course to become a dietitian

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## Dietetics (pre-registration) MSc or PGDip

Oxford Brookes University

[View course](#) <sup>[8]</sup> Opens in a new window

- Qualification
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  - Dietetics / nutrition
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  - UK

## • Live vacancies

### Find a vacancy

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### Other roles that may interest you

- [Nutritionist](#) <sup>[10]</sup>
- [Dietetic assistant](#) <sup>[3]</sup>
- [Occupational therapist](#) <sup>[11]</sup>
- [Health trainer](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

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