College of Human Ecology

Dietetics

Overview
Registered dietitian nutritionists, or RDNs, translate the science of food and nutrition to enhance the well-being of individuals and groups. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that there will be a 21 percent increase in jobs for dietitians between 2012 and 2022, which is a larger increase than the average for all occupations.

The 2015 compensation and benefit study conducted by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics found that the median income for RDN professionals is $60,000. Entry-level incomes for recent graduates from Kansas State University average $45,000 annually.

Professional options

Careers
Graduates of the K-State dietetics program can choose from a broad array of career options.

- **Clinical nutrition practice:** Provide nutrition assessment and counseling for individuals with diseases requiring nutrition interventions in acute long-term care and outpatient settings.
- **Community nutrition:** Provide nutrition assessment and counseling for community populations and individuals.
- **School nutrition services:** Direct food service operations and provide nutrition education in schools.
- **Management of food production and service systems:** Apply nutrition and business skills in the management of food services in medical centers, corporate dining or other settings.
- **Industry positions:** Participate in research and development, evaluation or marketing of food products; work in sales for pharmaceutical companies; or advise on nutritional content and labeling of food products.

Points of pride

Kansas State University's dietetics programs are recognized in the dietetics profession as among the top programs in the nation. The programs prepare students for careers as credentialed dietitian nutritionists who provide leadership in the delivery of food and nutrition services.

- **Education and research:** Conduct research in nutrition, foods or food service management, or teach at universities, medical, dental and nursing schools.
- **Private practice:** Provide consultation services in nutrition and food service management, serve as educational consultants providing lectures and developing educational materials, do freelance writing and consult in sports nutrition.
- **Mass communications:** Write columns or articles on nutrition for magazines or newspapers, or appear on TV and radio to discuss nutrition issues.

Employers

- **Medical centers**
- **Extended-care facilities**
- **Managed service companies**
- **Community settings such as Women, Infants, and Children clinics or feeding programs for the elderly**
- **Consulting firms**
- **Schools and child care**
- **Industry**
- **Self-employment**
- **Retail grocery**
- **Corporate wellness**

Job experience

Students are expected to obtain dietetic-related work experience, either volunteer or paid. A 1,200-hour supervised practice experience, which can be completed in a coordinated program or dietetic internship, is required to be eligible to take the Registration Examination for Dietitian Nutritionists. Admission to these programs is highly competitive, requiring a high grade point average, evidence of leadership skills and documentation of dietetics-related work experience.

Academics

Degree options
K-State offers two professional programs in dietetics.

- **Didactic program in dietetics**
  This program meets only the academic requirements established by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics, or ACEND, of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Completion of this Bachelor of Science qualifies the graduate to apply for the required postbaccalaureate dietetic internship. Upon completion of the dietetic internship, the graduate is eligible to take the national Registration Examination for Dietitian Nutritionist.
  The didactic program in dietetics may be completed on campus or online. K-State is the leading distance dietetic program in the country and is a popular option for students around the world. K-State's Global Campus administers online course delivery.

Find more information at global.k-state.edu or contact the distance dietetic program at dtonline@k-state.edu or 785-532-5664.

- **Coordinated program in dietetics**
  This program provides both the academic and supervised practice experience requirements outlined by the ACEND of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to be eligible to take the national credentialing examination to become a registered dietitian nutritionist.

  The program combines a Bachelor of Science in dietetics with 1,200 hours of supervised practice experience in food service management, community nutrition and clinical nutrition. Graduates of the coordinated program are immediately eligible to take the national Registration Examination for Dietitians upon graduation.

Accreditation

Both the didactic program in dietetics and the coordinated program in dietetics at K-State are accredited by the ACEND. The accrediting agency may be contacted at acend@eatright.org or 800-977-1600 ext. 5400.

Advising

Each student is assigned an advisor who is available for academic and career advising. Students visit with their advisor frequently to discuss their classes and academic and professional progress.

Preparation

Students who desire to major in dietetics are encouraged to take two years of high school algebra and three years of science, including chemistry. If high school chemistry is not taken, the student must complete General Chemistry at K-State prior to enrolling in subsequent required chemistry courses.
Activities
Clubs
The Student Dietetic Association provides opportunities to learn more about dietetics, develop leadership skills and provide service to the community. Students are encouraged to attend local, state and national conferences.

Research
Faculty members in the program are engaged in research and have external funding to conduct research. This provides opportunities for undergraduate students to become actively involved in research related to their major. Students can apply for a paid undergraduate research assistantship.

Admissions
Incoming students interested in the on-campus dietetics degree program apply to K-State through the general university admissions process. Students may apply online to the university at k-state.edu/admissions/apply.

Application for admission to the didactic program in dietetics is made three semesters prior to the anticipated date of graduation. Application for admission to the coordinated program in dietetics is made during the junior year. Students must meet specific academic and work experience requirements. See the program director for details.

Dietetics is a selective admission program. Students will choose either the didactic or coordinated program midway through their curriculum.

Admission to the coordinated or didactic programs requires a B or better in all natural science and professional courses and a C or better in all other courses. If a student receives a lower grade than required, the course will have to be retaken.

Students interested in the distance dietetics degree program should refer to the Global Campus website for information on the application process. Learn more at global.k-state.edu or by contacting dtonline@k-state.edu or 785-532-5664.

Financial assistance
Each year, the department awards multiple scholarships to students in the dietetics program. Criteria for the scholarships vary depending on donor guidelines, but may include specific requirements such as minimum grade point average, work experience in the field or involvement in student activities.

Students must apply for scholarships annually through the K-State Office of Student Financial Assistance. Scholarship information and deadlines are announced to students using multiple methods.

Several scholarships from professional associations or dietetics-related industries are available to students. Students are encouraged to apply and are notified about availability and deadlines.

Suggested coursework
The recommended freshman curriculum includes:

First semester
- ENGL 100: Expository Writing I
- CHM 210: Chemistry I
- MATH 100: College Algebra
- FNDH 132: Basic Nutrition
- FNDH 130: Careers in Nutrition and Dietetics

Second semester
- CHM 230: Chemistry II
- PSYCH 110: General Psychology
- ECON 110: Principles of Macroeconomics
- Humanities
- BIOL 198: Principles of Biology

Professional courses include:
- Foods and human nutrition courses
- Basic Nutrition
- Science of Food
- Human Nutrition
- Clinical Nutrition I and II
- Life Span Nutrition
- Nutritional Assessment
- Nutrient Metabolism
- Public Health Nutrition

Dietetics courses
- Principles of Food Production Management
- Food Production Management
- Careers in Nutrition and Dietetics
- Financial Management in Dietetics
- Counseling Strategies in Dietetics Practice
- Management in Dietetics
- Communication Competencies in Dietetics
- Introduction to Research in Nutrition and Dietetics
- Practice
- Food and Health

Minors or secondary majors
Dietetics students may elect to pursue a minor or secondary major along with the dietetics degree. Popular choices include minors in business, Spanish, kinesiology and leadership studies, while secondary majors include gerontology.

For more information about Dietetics, contact:
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