



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF CLINICAL &
APPLIED SCIENCES

Admissions for MSc Dietetics

Frequently Asked Questions for Applicants

When is the closing date for applications?

The closing date for all applications for entry onto the course in September 2022 is **4pm Wednesday 12 January 2022**. The application process will be in 2 stages: applications received by **Wednesday 17 November 2021** will be considered for interviews in December 2021. Applications received by the final deadline of **Wednesday 12 January 2022** will be considered for interview in January / February / March 2022. As the selection process starts immediately after the closing date we are unable to accept any applications after this date. Decisions about offers for places on the course will be notified in April 2022, as detailed in the Applicant guidance document.

What are the eligibility criteria for being offered a place on the MSc Dietetics course at Leeds Beckett University?

We receive a high number of applications for this course and there are 3 stages to our selection process:

Academic Requirements

We advise that you check this with us as soon as possible and preferably before the closing date if your degree course is not listed on our previously approved degree list. You need to have a science degree with at least a 2:1 classification which contains sufficient level and depth of biochemistry and human physiology as well as research skills and methodology. It is possible for you to undertake “top up” modules if you have a 2:2 classification or if your degree does not meet the depth of study we require for biochemistry and human physiology, although your degree does need to include an element of these subjects in order to make a “top up” course viable. We check all applicants’ qualifications to ensure they meet our academic criteria prior to progressing with an application and can advise individuals prior to submitting an application, if required. It may be that by asking for advice from us at an early stage, applicants are able to register for and progress with any “top up” required before making their application.

Qualities and skills

A very important part of the selection process for the course is a 1000 word (maximum) Supporting Statement that you are required to submit as part of your application. This is to enable you to give evidence of your awareness of the role of a dietitian and the skills you have gained in relevant work, educational, leisure or volunteering experiences. You are strongly advised to use the full 1000 word count but not to exceed this. You are advised to

attach your supporting statement to your application as a separate document rather than to include it in your application form which would restrict the word count.

Selection Day, including an interview

A number of applicants who meet our academic criteria may then be short listed based on the quality of evidence and reflection on this in their Supporting Statement and to take part in the final part of the selection process which is an interview which involves a discussion based on the core values of the NHS Constitution. The interview is likely to be a virtual interview. There will also be information available in a digital / online format about the course, the University and Leeds. Postgraduate Open Events are also held by the University and are advertised on the website where potential candidates can communicate directly with members of the course team. Following this, decisions will be made and some applicants will be offered a place on the course and others will be placed on a waiting list.

Are there many applicants for the course?

Yes, competition for places on this course is high and we usually receive a high number of applications from candidates who meet our academic criteria. Over the last 2 - 3 years we have increased our numbers of places offered on the course due to collaboration with our NHS colleagues and an increase in the number of placements available. For the Sept 2021 intake we have offered 48 places on the course which includes 10 places for international candidates.

Does the course lead to an MSc or PG Diploma?

Although we have previously offered both options, since Sept 2019 we only offer the course leading to an MSc Dietetics. The difference between the 2 options is the number of credits, in that the MSc course contains an additional 60 credits.

MSc Dietetics - This course consists of 180 masters level credits (level 7) which includes 2 research modules equating to 60 credits (including a dissertation) and which are in addition to all the modules and placements for the PG Dip award. You would be due to complete the course in the September / October of the 2nd year with an MSc Dietetics. On completion you can apply to the HCPC for registration as a dietitian and once you have received this you can work in this capacity.

For further information on course fees please access the Leeds Beckett university website using the following link:

https://courses.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/dietetics_msc/

Can I “top up” my PG Diploma to an MSc Dietetics in the future?

Dietitians who graduated with a PG Diploma in Dietetics at this University (120 credits) in the past 5 years can apply to take the additional 60 credits / 2 modules. In order to do this you should apply for the MSc Dietetics making it clear on your on-line application in the box marked “Other Relevant Information” that you graduated with a PG Diploma in Dietetics from Leeds in (date) and wish to apply to undertake the additional 60 credits to top up to an

MSc Dietetics (for Sept 2022 entry)

MSc Dietetics. The Admissions Team or the Admissions Tutor will advise on the process if required.

You would need to complete a module during Semester 1 to undertake the Research Methods in Health & Wellbeing module (20 credits) which can be accessed on-line and then attend for a briefing prior to the research dissertation (40 credits) as well as making regular arrangements for contact with your supervisor. It may be possible to do both modules at a distance by individual arrangement. The additional modules would normally be studied over 2 years.

Can I apply for Recognised Prior Learning?

We do have a University procedure for applying for Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) and applicants will be directed to this if they request it. However we would advise that applicants wait until they have a successful offer of a place on the course before applying. The procedure requires that the applicant maps out their previous learning against the learning outcomes for the MSc Dietetics. It is also important to note that the MSc Dietetics is a professional masters course and aims to support previous learning and to apply this to dietetic practice, which may be different from previous courses.

Can I still apply if I have a 2:2?

Yes, you can, but you will need to evidence your ability to undertake work at level 7 (Masters level). Your first degree must also contain a research project. Therefore, if your first degree was below 2:1 then we would like you to have undertaken a higher qualification such as a Master's degree or some appropriate Masters level modules or a relevant post graduate certificate before application. As a minimum you would need to have passed masters level modules in a health related or clinical science subjects in order to apply (at least 40 credits). You can study these additional modules at any University and we advise that you submit the course transcripts to us prior to registering for them so that we can confirm if suitable to meet the entry requirements.

Examples of Masters level modules at this University that would be suitable include some of the modules offered as part of the [MSc Nutrition in Practice](#). The following modules (20 credits each) run throughout semesters 1 and 2 and require weekly release or travel:

- Food Systems and Policy (Semester 2)
- Lifestyle Disease & Social Context (Semester 1)
- Nutritional Epidemiology (Semester 2)

Other examples include the University of Chester who offer some nutrition specific modules as part of their MSc Nutrition programme. Attendance may be required over 3-4 days per module.

<http://www.chester.ac.uk/postgraduate/nutrition>

Other options will be available and we would be happy to advise on suitability on an individual basis.

How much human physiology and biochemistry do I need to apply?

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The MSc Dietetics course requires you to be competent to at least academic level 5 (studied in second year undergraduate) in the following subject areas (listed below) in order to for your application to be accepted. It is acceptable to study the essential content in module(s) at level 4 but we would require you to also demonstrate application and integration of this learning in a clinical science related module at level 5:

Essential:

- Biochemistry (structures and properties and roles of amino-acids, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, enzymes; effects of temperature, energy change, reaction rates)
- Biomolecules/cells (structures, membranes, control, communication & functions of molecules, viruses & cells/cell organelles)
- Human physiology & anatomy (homeostasis and feedback; neural and endocrine systems; muscles and movement; immune system; endocrine system; cardiovascular physiology; Central Nervous System; respiratory physiology; renal physiology; gastrointestinal system; hepatic physiology; reproductive system)
- Genetics and biochemistry (DNA/RNA, inheritance, gene activity and regulation, mutation)

Desirable:

- Immunology
- Pharmacology
- Microbiology
- Nutrition
- Research methods and statistics
- Ageing / disease
- Health & disease
- Public Health

How can I “top up” my degree to obtain the level of human physiology and biochemistry I need for entry?

The entry requirements are that you need a science-based degree which includes a research project. Typical subjects for acceptable degrees include: Human Nutrition, Human Biology, Biomedical Science, Biochemistry, Physiology, some Public Health Nutrition and some Sports Science degree courses.

If you have a degree that is not science-based, then a more suitable option for you to consider would be to apply for the Undergraduate course in Dietetics, although you may need to do an science based access course to meet the entry requirements for this. At Leeds Beckett this is a 3 year course ([BSc \(Hons\) Dietetics](#)).

If you have a science based degree but limited human physiology and / or biochemistry, or you have already studied human physiology/biochemistry but only at level 4 you will need to study biochemistry and human physiology as a minimum to level 5 (second year of undergraduate course). We require a good science background as opposed to necessarily a background in nutrition. Some examples of "top up" study options are given below:

If it is identified that you need some top up modules to meet the entry requirements, do check with us that the modules you intend to take will be suitable and adequate for this before you register for them.

- **Local universities** – these are a great starting point before undertaking level 4 and 5 subjects. They may offer enrolment on single modules in subject areas such as human physiology, biochemistry and biology. Modules offered as part of Biomedical Science degrees usually contain some very suitable modules. You could approach the University where you studied for your undergraduate degree or the local University where you currently are living.

Leeds Beckett University offers some stand-alone CPD Biomedical Science modules that potential applicants can access and which cover the essential subjects (see table below).

Enquiries should be made to Direct Admissions who will forward to the Admissions Tutor who will be able to advise on your individual top up needs

directadmissions@leedsbeckett.ac.uk:

Module Title	Academic Level & Credit Value	Semester
Biochemistry (15305)	4/20	Semester 2
Human Physiology (17381)	4/10	Semester 1
Cell Biology (15306)	4/10	Semester 1
Immunology & Hematology (17380)	4/10	Semester 1
Medical Pathophysiology (15322)	5/20	Semester 1
Physiology and Metabolism (15323)	5/10	Semester 1
Biochemistry of Common Diseases (15803)	5/20	Semester 1
Metabolic Biochemistry ((15320)	5/20	Semester 2

- **Distance or Online Learning** – again local Universities may be able to offer a suitable option and it is worth approaching them to enquire. Other examples of what is available as Distance or Online Learning modules includes:

Human Physiology modules – there are a number of Human Physiology modules which can be studied at level 4.

Open University - OU Level 1 is equivalent to level 4 and OU level 2 is equivalent to level 5 at university. The following modules are offered as part of the [BSc \(Hons\) Health Sciences](#) and can be accessed as stand-alone modules:

At Level 4 equivalent:

Science & Health: an evidence based approach (SDK100), level 1 (60 credits)

Science: Concepts and Practice (S112), level 1 (60 credits)

At Level 5 equivalent:

Practical Science: Biology and Health (SKHL288), level 2 (30 credits)

Human Biology (SK299), level 2 (30 credits)

Cell Biology (S294), level 2 (30 credits)

Please consult the Open University website for further details (www.open.ac.uk)

- **London Metropolitan University** - offer some Masters modules as a distance learning option which are part of their MSc Biomedical Science. You will need to check if you meet the entry requirements for accessing these modules at masters level. Further information can be accessed at: <https://www.londonmet.ac.uk/courses/short/biomed-online/>
- **Masters or Postgraduate Diplomas** - this is a good option if you can find one that has a substantial amount of the required subjects for Dietetics such as human physiology – usually some human nutrition or public health nutrition courses are good options providing they contain the clinical science subjects required. We would be happy to advise on suitability if you send us the course content and module descriptors.

What is required for the research project in the first degree?

For the Research project we would expect applicants to be able to demonstrate and apply research skills to address a problem or area of study. This may include primary research, a systematic type review or service evaluation appropriate to undergraduate study at level 6 or equivalent.

This would usually incorporate the following aspects of research design: a literature review, setting research aims and objectives, employing appropriate methodologies to explore the problem, presenting results and analysis of these, critical discussion of research findings and synthesis of these to inform conclusions and further recommendations.

Is it advantageous to get Masters before applying?

Demonstrating that you are capable of level 7 (Masters level) work is very useful, but a whole Masters is not necessary and some modules at this level would be sufficient. However, we also consider other evidence from other areas as very relevant and therefore important to add to your application in your supporting statement. For example, how you have overcome challenges, worked to high standards, worked to tight deadlines and in demanding circumstances as well as some vocational or volunteering experiences. Examples can come from personal, academic, volunteering or occupational areas.

What sort of work experiences would help?

As previously mentioned, the evidence given by applicants in the Supporting Statement is of utmost importance and will dictate whether you get shortlisted to take part in the final stage of the selection process (interview). Most successful candidates have experience in a volunteering or vocational role in health or social care or nutrition/food settings and some experience of working with vulnerable groups and therefore an understanding of the rewards and challenges this can offer. All will have strong communication and interpersonal

skills and will be aware of the importance of team working evidenced by reflection on these experiences as part of their Supporting Statement. These could include work experience or observation in health and social care settings, volunteering in hospitals or care homes, meals on wheels and working with children or older adults. Some applicants spend a year after completing their undergraduate course to gain this experience and examples of suitable employment opportunities may be advertised on the NHS Jobs website or in the local press. Appropriate job roles may include such things as working as a Healthcare or Social Care assistant, Ward Clerk, Ward Housekeeper, Dietetic or Nutrition Assistant, Community Food worker. Alternatively, volunteering with local community groups or as a hospital volunteer / mealtime volunteer would provide valuable experience.

Do I need to shadow a Dietitian before applying?

Ideally yes, but we understand this can sometimes be difficult. However, we would expect applicants to be able to provide strong evidence of finding out about the role of a dietitian and the scope and breadth of dietetic practice in various settings with a range of patient / client groups. You also need to do this to ensure that this is the correct career choice for you. You may gain an understanding of the role of a dietitian through vocational experiences mentioned earlier (volunteering, working in a care environment) where you have come across a dietitian. The British Dietetic Association website is also a good source of information as well as various webinars and journals in which dietitians talk about their role. You must ensure that you have critically reflected on your learning from these experiences as well as your own skills and qualities in your supporting statement.

Do I need to have an interest in food and health?

This is definitely a requirement as Dietitians talk about food a lot! An interest in food and health is therefore essential. However, it is also important to have an interest and enjoyment of food in your life, which may include cooking skills, enjoyment of eating and socialising with food, shopping for food, a curiosity and awareness of the different eating habits of a range of different populations and cultural groups.

What is the timetable like?

The MSc Dietetics course is full-time over the course of two years (24 months). During Year 1 students need to be available for University sessions on at least 4 days a week and often on 5 days. The first practice placement in the NHS takes place at the beginning of the second semester during this year. Our University has an attendance monitoring policy to ensure that all students are fully engaged with their studies – this is also a requirement for the joint commitment from the NHS in the delivery of this course. This is a very intensive course and postgraduate learning requires students to do a lot of reading prior to sessions so that they can contribute to the discussions and debate. During Year 2 students will be mainly on practice placements in an NHS Nutrition & Dietetic Department within the University regional cluster. This includes the 2nd practice placement (13 weeks) and the 3rd practice placement (12 weeks), with reflective blocks back at University in between. While on placements students will work a full 7½ hour day 5 days a week.

Can I do my practice placement near to where I live?

It depends where you live. All practice placements are within the University cluster. For all Dietetic courses in the UK, placements are arranged on a regional basis linked specifically to the University. Our placements are located in the following areas: West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, East Yorkshire & the Humber, Teesside, Durham, Newcastle and Northumberland. This includes placements in Leeds, Mid-Yorkshire (Dewsbury & Wakefield), Calderdale (Halifax & Huddersfield), Hull, York, Scarborough, Harrogate, Airedale, Teesside, County Durham, Newcastle and Northumberland. During Year 2 you are mainly on placement and this is likely to be away from Leeds. However, we do have a system to ensure the needs of priority students are met. Placements in other parts of the country are linked to other Universities and so if you would prefer a placement elsewhere you are advised to apply to another University offering this course in that area. For example, placements in the North West of England are linked to the University of Chester so there is no possibility of you undertaking a placement there.

Language Skills

As you will be undertaking your practice placements attached to NHS Nutrition and Dietetic Departments and will be working directly with patients, it is very important that you have good English language skills. We require an average of 7.0 with a minimum of 6.5 in each component of the IELTS test which is a Statutory Regulatory Body requirement and it is on this basis that our Course is HCPC approved.

You will be doing your placements in one of the NHS departments in our cluster (see above). This covers Yorkshire and the North East of England where local people can have strong local accents and dialects and may also use local terms to name and describe food items. If you have not lived or worked in the UK, you are advised to prepare yourself prior to joining the course by searching on You Tube for accents associated with Yorkshire and the North East of England in order to familiarise yourself with this.

Will I be able to commute?

As already indicated this is an intensive course and you are required to attend the University in Leeds on 4 or 5 days a week during Year 1 and will be on placement for a large part of Year 2. We therefore advise against commuting from places which are not in the vicinity of Leeds.

Will I be able to work at the same time?

Several students do work regularly at weekends and in the holiday period during the first year of this course. However, the emphasis on postgraduate study means that there is considerable independent learning to do to prepare for teaching sessions and to follow up/extend learning after the sessions. Critical reading around topics, key guidelines and standards is fundamental.

During the second year of the course students are mainly on practice placements within an NHS Nutrition & Dietetic Department. This may be away from Leeds and you will be expected to work full days 5 days a week so working during the second year may be difficult as working throughout placement is not practical as you will be very focused on practice learning and related activities. Students on placement may have second accommodation

costs and travel expenses and you need to consider this in your funding arrangements. Hospital accommodation may be available on placement and at a competitive cost. However, you may wish to consider working for a year before coming on the course so that you have some resources behind you. Employment prospects for the postgraduate students who complete this course remain good.

International students (Student Visa)

During term time you can work for a maximum of

- 20 hours a week if you are studying at degree level or above at a higher education institution

Always check what the sticker in your passport or your biometric residence permit (BRP) says and make sure that you do not work more hours a week than it allows. It should specify whether you are allowed to work 10 hours or 20 hours a week in term time. It will say if you are not allowed to work.

If you have permission to work, you should not work more than the maximum number of hours (10 or 20) in any one week in term time, even if you sometimes work under the maximum number of hours a week in other weeks.

If you have permission to work, you can work full time during vacation periods, before your course starts and after your course has ended.

If you have further questions on this you may want to contact the International Office on internationalofficePG@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Will I receive an NHS Bursary or have access to a Student Loan for this course?

As the funding situation has changed significantly over recent years you are advised to check your entitlement with Student Finance England – or the relevant home country.

Student Loan

The funding arrangements which have applied to students in England entering the course since September 2018 are as follows:

Postgraduate pre-registration healthcare students in England will be able to access loans to cover tuition fees of up to £9,250 per year and to support living costs. These loans will be the same as those available to undergraduate students.

These changes applied to eligible new students starting courses in the 2018/19 academic year from 1 August 2018 onwards. The changes extend to both Masters and postgraduate diploma courses leading to inclusion in the HCPC or NMC register.

Students who are obliged to incur essential additional expenditure while undertaking a course of higher education as a result of a disability will qualify for disabled students' allowances.

Students who are already registered in nursing, midwifery, or an allied health profession will not be eligible for support for a second full-time or part-time pre- registration course or a second full-time postgraduate preregistration course leading to registration in the same profession.

Learning Support Fund

Postgraduate pre-registration students will also be eligible for additional support through the Learning Support Fund administered through the NHS Business Services Authority:

NHS LSF offers support for:

- a Training Grant for all eligible students of £5,000 per academic year
- Parental Support of £2,000 for students with at least one dependent child under 15 years, or under 17 years if registered with special educational needs (this used to be called Child Dependants Allowance)
- reimbursement of excess costs incurred on practice placement for travel and temporary accommodation costs (Travel and Dual Accommodation Expenses)
- students experiencing financial hardship (Exceptional Support Fund)

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-learning-support-fund>

The annual fees for the course are listed on the University website.

Funding for International students

International students are required to self- fund their place on the course. Additional expenses (for accommodation and travel) are not available to international students while on placement and you would need to approach your home country or funding source about this if available.

Does this course lead to becoming a Registered Dietitian?

On successful completion of this 2 year course students are awarded a Masters in Dietetics and are eligible to apply for registration with the Health & Care Professions Council and employment as a Registered Dietitian in the UK.

Will I be able to work in the UK on completion of the course?

International students who are registered dietitians with the HCPC can apply for suitable professional vacancies to work in the UK. However, this would depend on the ability to obtain a work visa which would be dependent on the individual circumstances and so we recommend that you gain independent advice on this from appropriate agencies as the situation is constantly changing.