



## Admissions for MSc Dietetics

### Frequently Asked Questions for UK and EU Applicants

#### 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

First of all, 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 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 are able to 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.

##### 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 invited to a Selection / Information day to take part in the final part of the selection process which is an interview that involves a discussion based on the core values of the NHS Constitution. Following this, 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?

*Updated August 2018 (for Sept 2019 entry)*

Yes, competition for places on this course is high and we usually receive approximately 150 - 200 applications from candidates who meet our academic criteria. We offer approximately 20 – 25 places on the course.

### **Does the course lead to an MSc or PG Diploma ?**

Although we have previously offered both options, from Sept 2019 we are only offering the course leading to an MSc Dietetics. The difference between the 2 options is the number of credits.

**MSc Dietetics** - This course consists of 180 masters level credits 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 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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/](https://courses.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/dietetics_msc/)

**PG Diploma in Dietetics** - This course consisted of 120 credits and excluded the 2 modules contained in the MSc Dietetics - Research Methods in Health & Wellbeing (20 credits) in Year 1 / Semester 1 and Research & Practice Development including a dissertation (40 credits) started in Year 1 and completed in Year 2.

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

Dietitians who graduated with a PG Diploma in Dietetics 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. Direct admissions will advise on the process if required.

You would need to attend a weekly session at the University during Semester 1 (currently on Wednesday mornings) to undertake the Research Methods in Health & Wellbeing module (20 credits) and then attend for a briefing prior to the research dissertation (40 credits) as well as making regular arrangements with your supervisor. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to do both modules at a distance by individual arrangement.

### **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.

*Updated August 2018 (for Sept 2019 entry)*

## 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 subject in order to apply (at least 40 credits). You can study these additional modules at any University and you would need to submit the course transcripts so that we can confirm if suitable.

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 (S2)
- Lifestyle Disease & Social Context (S1)
- Nutrition Epidemiology (S2)

Depending on your previous background and experience there are some other modules that may be relevant, which can be completed with less attendance than the ones quoted above:

- Understanding and Evaluating the Evidence (is an on-line module on critical evaluation - run across the wider faculty).

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

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

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

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 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
- Health promotion

**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. At Leeds Beckett this is a 3 year course ([BSc \(Hons\) Dietetics](#)).

**If you have a science based degree but limited human physiology/biochemistry/biology, or you have already studied human physiology/biochemistry but only at level 4** you will need to study biology, biochemistry and human physiology as a minimum to level 5 (second year of undergraduate course). Some examples of study options are given below. You need to consider that you will be in competition with others who hold pure biochemistry and physiology undergraduate degrees:

- **Local universities** – these are a great starting point before undertaking level 5 subjects. They may offer enrolment on single modules in subject areas such as human physiology, biochemistry and biology. 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 biochemistry 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](mailto:directadmissions@leedsbeckett.ac.uk):

Module Title	Academic Level & Credit Value	Semester
Biochemistry	4/20	Semester 2 (Jan 2019)
Human Physiology	4/10	Semester 1 (Sept 2018)
Cell Biology	4/10	Semester 1 (Sept 2018)

Immunology & Haematology	4/10	Semester 1 (Sept 2018)
Medical Physiology	5/20	Semester 1 (Sept 2018)
Understanding Disease	5/20	Semester 2 (Jan 2019)
Molecular Biology & Medicine	5/20	Semester 2 (Jan 2019)

- **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:

[University of Chester distance learning modules](#) – offers some suitable modules which are part of the Foundation degree in Health Care Sciences:

**At Level 4:** Anatomy & Physiology (20 credits), Essential Biological Chemistry (20 credits) and Cell & Tissue Science (20 credits)

**At Level 5:** Applied Molecular Biology (20 credits), Applied Molecular Biology (20 credits) and Biology of Disease (20 credits)

[Open University](#)- you will need to study 60 credits to OU level 2 as a minimum (*OU Level 1 is equivalent to level 4 and OU level 2 is equivalent to level 5 at university*)

**At Level 4 equivalent:** Open University Exploring Science (S104), level 1 (60 credits) and Introduction to Health Science (SKD125), level 1 (30 credits)

**At Level 5 equivalent:** Human Biology (SK277), level 2 (30 credits) and Cell Biology (S294), level 2 (30 credits)

Please consult the Open University website for further details ([www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk))

- **Masters or Postgraduate Diplomas** - this is a good option if you can find one that has a substantial amount of the foundation subjects for Dietetics such as human physiology – usually human nutrition or public health nutrition are good options. 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?**

*Updated August 2018 (for Sept 2019 entry)*

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. Examples can come from personal, academic 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 or not you get shortlisted to attend the final stage of the selection process (Selection Day and interview). Most successful candidates have experience in health or social care or nutrition/food settings and some experience of working with vulnerable groups. 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. We are able to accept applications where the applicant has provided strong evidence of seeking to find out about the role of the dietitian, the scope and breadth of dietetic practice. You may gain an understanding of the role of a dietitian through vocational experiences mentioned earlier (volunteering, working in a care environment). The British Dietetic Association website is also a source of information. 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 very important. 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-PG Dietetics course is full-time over the course of two years. During the first year students will attend University 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 the second year students will be mainly on practice placements in an NHS Nutrition & Dietetic Department within the University regional cluster. This includes the 2<sup>nd</sup> practice placement (13 weeks) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 allocated on a regional basis linked specifically to the University. Our placements are located in; 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, Teesside, County Durham, Newcastle and Northumberland. During Year two 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.

### **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. Some year 2 students seek career development loans to support them in year two which are available to support PG study. 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.

## **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.*

**The funding arrangements which have applied to student entering the course in September 2018 are as follows:**

Postgraduate pre-registration students 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.

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

- a £1,000 Child Dependants Allowance
- up to £3,000 for exceptional hardship
- reimbursement of additional travel and accommodation costs over normal daily travel to clinical placements

International students are required to self-fund their place on the course.

## **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.