



The Interim Professional Body for Nutrition answers your FAQs about

Changing Careers to Nutrition and Vocational Training

Who this is leaflet for?

Maybe you have studied and worked in an unrelated field and want to change careers to work in nutrition. Or maybe you are in or have completed a non-degree course, already. You may get one of many non-degree qualifications called a *diploma*, *certificate* or *foundation degree*.

Similarly, if you already have experience and training in nutrition and you want to update your knowledge or acquire a specialist skill. Either way vocational short/distance course could suit you.

How do I know which vocational courses/study are recognised?

Some private sector courses lead to certificates or diplomas that vary in standard or level. *Before you pay to enrol on a course*, find out the *level* of the qualification in terms of nationally recognised credit points.

Increasingly, courses in the private sector award credit points that are recognised for further education and training within the government's *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF). The NQF covers the whole range of qualifications, from school to college, certificates, diplomas and degrees. Choose courses that have been approved by the Qualification and Curriculum Agency or validated by a university. Universities increasingly recognise a range of qualifications for entry to study for a BSc degree with honours in nutrition or public health nutrition. The *Open & Distance Learning Quality Council* (ODLQC) is the UK guardian of quality in open

and distance learning. They identify and enhance quality in education and training, and protect the interest of learners. You should refer to ODLQC for tips on choosing open and distance learning courses. You can find out more about ODLQC at www.odlqc.org.uk.

LearnDirect can tell you more about studying including sources of funding if you are returning to study while you work. It also provides advice on matters such as working in the UK and returning to work after extended periods of absence in the Help and Advice section

Are there short courses for training in nutrition?

A variety of short courses are available. Some last a few days; others weeks or months. Short, very focused courses can be a useful way to fill a skills gap developing very specific professional competencies that will help get a job first or better, progress your career and your employability. They can refresh your knowledge after a break, help with your initial and continuing professional development. The Society's website holds lists of a selection of short courses in nutrition.

Are there distance or open learning courses available in nutrition?

Distance learning means that you do not have to attend classes. Instead, you study at home from prepared learning materials with some tutorial support. Some flexible learning may involve periodic workshops or tutorials. It must be noted that many distance learning courses are internet based. The Society's website holds a list of a selection of distance learning courses in nutrition.

The Open University offer distance learning courses, giving you the chance to obtain a qualification that can help you develop or change your career. For further information, please refer to their website at www.open.ac.uk

Once I have achieved a vocational qualification, can I become a nutritionist?

Though there are many courses in nutrition mainly in the private sector, they usually lead to diplomas or NVQs that are below the level of BSc with honours. There are very few vocational courses at the level or with the right volume of credits in the UK to lead to the award of a BSc degree with honours.

A vocational qualification alone is not enough to join the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) because you will not have enough underpinning scientific knowledge to meet our competencies. However, it is a good starting point and can help you progress towards undertaking higher level study such as a BSc.

What job prospects are there with my vocational qualification?

Your vocational qualifications can help you get started in a career, for example, in the food industry (hospitality, catering and retail). To find out more about careers in this sector, try the website for the new sector skills organisation, Improve, www.improveltd.co.uk.

To find out about work in a fitness or sports club, look at www.skillsactive.com/careers website of the Sport, Recreation and Allied Occupations Sector Skills Organisation, *SkillsActive*.

To find out more about careers and work in health and care, contact the Sector Skills Organisation *Skills for Health* at www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

For more information contact:

Learndirect
PO Box 900
Manchester M60 3LE
Website: www.learndirect.co.uk
Tel: 0800 100 900

Improve
Ground Floor
Providence House
2 Innovation Close
Heslington
York
YO10 5ZF
Website: www.improveltd.co.uk
Tel: 0845 644 0448

Skills Active
Castlewood House
77-91 New Oxford Street
London
WC1A 1XP
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7632 2000
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7632 2001
www.skillsactive.com

Skills for Health
2nd Floor
Goldsmiths House
Broad Plain
Bristol BS2 OJP
Tel: 0117 922 1155
Fax: 0117 925 1800
www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

Open & Distance Learning Quality Council
info@odlqc.org.uk
Tel: 020 7612 7090
Fax: 020 7612 7092
www.odlqc.org.uk

The Open University
PO BOX 197
Milton Keynes
MK7 6BJ
United Kingdom
Tel: 0845 300 60 90
www.open.ac.uk