NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES

Graduate Programs

The Department of Nutritional Sciences (NSCI) offers graduate study leading to a Graduate Certificate in Dietetics, Master of Science degree in Nutritional Sciences and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Nutritional Sciences. Graduate study in NSCI emphasizes the conduct and application of research to the field of human nutrition. Graduate students work with an advisor and advisory committee to develop flexible, yet rigorous programs of study and research that meet the degree requirements and each student's professional goals within an area of specialization in the field.

The Graduate Certificate in Dietetics

The Graduate Certificate in Dietetics builds competencies in the area of Dietetics and provides a path for eligibility to sit for the Registered Dietitian Nutritionist credential examination. The Graduate Certificate in Dietetics is designed for students who are concurrently enrolled in a Master of Public Health (MPH) or related graduate program. Applicants must have completed an Accreditation Council for Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics and have a verification statement. The Plan of Study (POS) includes 18 credit hours, including the dietetic internship practicum courses. The practicum courses fulfill the supervised practice requirements of ACEND.

The Master of Science Degree

The MS degree program is designed to develop research skills, stimulate independent thought and critical thinking, and provide up-to-date knowledge in a variety of areas of human nutrition. Admission to the MS graduate program is selective and is based on a variety of factors including the student's grade-point average (overall and science GPA), letters of recommendation and goal statement; Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are optional. The prerequisite for the MS program is a BS in nutritional sciences. Students with a BS degree in a subject area other than nutrition are required to have a minimum of 30 credit hours of undergraduate/graduate coursework related to nutritional sciences, including at least one course in biochemistry, one course in physiology and one upper-level nutrition course prior to full admission. Applicants who do not meet these requirements may be considered for conditional acceptance and required to take prerequisite courses and/or demonstrate academic ability.

Students in the MS NSCI program may select from three options: Dietetics Research, Dietetics Practice, or Nutrition. Choosing an option should be guided by the student's academic and career goals. In all three options, the student's plan of study and area of research, if applicable, are determined in consultation with his/her advisor and advisory committee. The Dietetics Research and Dietetics Practice options are designed for students who aim to earn a MS degree and complete the accredited Dietetic Internship program. Respectively, the two options require a minimum of 36 or 32 credit hours. Students applying for these options must have completed an ACEND accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics and have a verification statement. The Nutrition option is designed for students who aim to enhance their career with a graduate degree or to prepare for a doctoral program. Students desiring to conduct research should select either the Dietetics Research or Nutrition option; both have a thesis and non-thesis plan. In both plans, thesis research is conducted within the advisor's area of expertise and is approved by an advisory committee. The non-thesis MS degree plan requires three credit hours of NSCI 5843 Non-thesis Graduate Capstone including a written research paper and an oral presentation.

An online Master of Science degree in Nutritional Sciences with an option in Dietetics is also offered to Registered Dietitians (RD), individuals who are RD eligible, or have completed a Didactic Program in Dietetics. OSU offers this degree program as a member of the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (Great Plains IDEA) which provides the opportunity for eligible individuals to study with faculty from eight universities in the Alliance via Internet-based courses. The MS in Dietetics requires completion of 36 credit hours, including nine core credits, six OSU Nutritional Sciences Core credits, 18 elective credits and NSCI 5843 Non-thesis Graduate Capstone. A faculty advisor and the graduate committee from the Nutritional Sciences department must approve a student's program of study. More detailed information can be found at: gpidea.okstate.edu (http://gpidea.okstate.edu).

The Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The PhD degree is awarded in Nutritional Sciences. Two programs are available: a 60-hour program for MS graduates and an 80-hour program for BS graduates. The focus of the program is to prepare individuals for careers in a variety of areas including higher education, industry, healthcare and governmental programs. Admission to the program is competitive and applicants are expected to provide evidence of exceptional academic ability and preparation, a statement of goals and letters of recommendation. Grade-point average in previous undergraduate, professional school and graduate coursework are considered in the evaluation of the applicant; Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are optional. If a thesis was not required as a component of the applicant's MS program, the student's advisory committee reserves the right to determine if a thesis or thesis-equivalent project must be completed.

Students accepted into the 60-credit hour PhD option must have completed 30 hours of graduate coursework in nutrition or an area of specialization such as biochemistry, biology, dietetics, public health, exercise science, food science, hospitality/restaurant management, or other major field related to the desired area of study. A master's degree is highly preferred but not required. If a thesis was not completed as a part of the graduate coursework, the student's advisory committee reserves the right to determine if a thesis or thesis-equivalent project must be completed. Students with a degree or graduate coursework in a subject area other than nutrition may be considered for provisional admission with courses completed in the first year of admission to assure a basic nutrition foundation and earning a 3.0 or higher GPA. The graduate faculty committee will determine which courses must be completed within the first year of admission; the courses will be indicated in the applicant's admission letter.

Students accepted into the 80-credit hour PhD option must hold a Bachelor of Science (BS) in nutrition or an area of specialization such as biochemistry, biology, dietetics, public health, exercise science, food science, hospitality/restaurant management, or other major field related to the desired area of study. Students with a degree in a subject area other than nutrition may be considered for provisional admission with completion of courses in the first year of admission to assure a basic nutrition foundation and the student earns a 3.0 or higher GPA. The graduate faculty committee will determine which courses must be completed within the first year of admission and will be indicated in the applicant's admission letter.

The PhD program includes a strong emphasis on research in areas ranging from basic molecular and cellular sciences to clinical and community applications. Students also gain experience in resource generation, knowledge sharing and community engagement. Each program of study is designed by the student under direction of his/her faculty advisor and advisory committee to develop the student's competence in an area of specialization and research methodologies. Doctoral training includes 15-30 hours of dissertation research, a qualifying examination covering core nutrition knowledge, a comprehensive examination focused on the area of specialization and participation in research throughout the program.

More detailed information on graduate study in the Department of Nutritional Sciences can be obtained by writing the graduate coordinator, or accessing the website at Department of Nutritional Sciences, Graduate Programs (https://education.okstate.edu/departments-programs/nutritional-sciences/graduate.html).