

## MS/PhD in Nutritional Sciences FAQ

### Program-Related:

#### **What kind of graduate degree programs does the Department of Nutritional Sciences offer?**

- The Department of Nutritional Sciences offers both a Master of Science and a Doctor of Philosophy in Nutritional Sciences, as well as a Master of Science in Personalized Nutrition. University of Connecticut undergraduates can also pursue a fast track pathway (4 + 1 program) that allows them to earn both a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Science in Nutritional Sciences or a Master of Science in Personalized Nutrition degree in 5 years. Students in the MS and PhD in Nutritional Sciences elect to emphasize one of four areas in human nutrition: Molecular Nutrition, Metabolism, Community/Public Health Nutrition, and Food Science/Nanotechnology. Each emphasis area is interdisciplinary in approach and is supported by a broad range of local, national, and international collaborations. In addition to coursework and graduate exams, the MS in Nutritional Sciences program usually requires a thesis and the Ph.D. program requires a dissertation. The MS in Personalized Nutrition is fully online and does not require a thesis. This specialized MS in Personalized Nutrition uniquely combines courses in nutrigenomics, clinical nutrition, and nutritional biochemistry to provide a foundation of knowledge and skills for Personalized Nutrition professionals.

#### **Are there any online resources that provide details of the NUSC graduate degree programs?**

- Yes, we have put together a comprehensive graduate student handbook, which outlines the Nutritional Sciences graduate degree requirements: <https://nusc.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3140/2022/08/Graduate-Handbook-Fall-2022.pdf>

#### **Do the different Nutritional Sciences degree concentration areas have the same degree requirements?**

- We have certain core requirements that all graduate students must fulfill, including required coursework. However, these do not fulfill the total credit requirements for the degrees, leaving room for more courses which fit the nutrition emphasis of each student. More information can be found here: <https://nusc.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3140/2022/08/Graduate-Handbook-Fall-2022.pdf>

#### **Do you offer an online graduate degree program?**

- Yes, we have a separate online graduate program - the MS in Personalized Nutrition (MSPN) program. The MSPN program is a fully online option starting Fall 2021. More information can be found here: <https://personalized-nutrition.online.uconn.edu/>. Some courses are shared between our MS/PhD in NUSC and MSPN programs and may be offered in the online format.

#### **What are the prerequisites for your NUSC graduate programs?**

- *MS/PhD in Nutritional Sciences:* Recommended Course Preparation: College-level nutrition, biochemistry, and human physiology. If a student is admitted without taking

one of these recommended courses, they would take the course the first semester they are in our grad program before taking the more advanced graduate courses. Thus, it is recommended that you take these kinds of courses prior to applying for our graduate program to maximize the likelihood of acceptance.

- *MS in Personalized Nutrition*: Requirement: College-level biochemistry or equivalent. Recommended Course Preparation: College-level physiology and nutrition

### **How long is the time to degree for each graduate degree?**

- The time to degree will vary depending on the pace that coursework is completed, research focus, lab or faculty advisor, previous background of student, and progress of the student in the program. For MS in Nutritional Sciences track, the time to degree is usually 2 years, but can be between 1-3 years depending on prior coursework and research thesis progress. For PhD in Nutritional Sciences track, the time to degree is usually between 3-6 years, depending on prior graduate degrees/prior coursework and doctoral dissertation progress.

### **Does your graduate program fulfill the didactic program requirements for the registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) credential?**

- Our graduate programs are not focused on fulfilling dietetics coursework requirements for the RDN credential. We have an undergraduate program for that, which Dr. Brownbill oversees. If you have questions about dietetics, you should contact our dietetic program coordinator, Dr. Rhonda Brownbill: [rhonda.brownbill@uconn.edu](mailto:rhonda.brownbill@uconn.edu)

### **Tuition/Fees and Graduate Student Support-Related:**

#### **What are the tuition and fees for this program?**

- Information on graduate tuition & fees for the UConn Graduate School can be found here: <https://bursar.uconn.edu/graduate-students-3/>. The tuition fees are a fixed amount per semester, but tuition depends on the # of credits taken. Contact the Bursar's office for additional questions about tuition/fees: <https://bursar.uconn.edu/>
- The MS in Personalized Nutrition Program is fee-based. A 3-credit course costs ~\$2,475.

#### **Are Graduate Fellowships or Graduate Assistantships available to financially support students?**

- There are graduate assistantships available for students accepted into MS or PhD in Nutritional Sciences program. We offer research assistantships (RA) and teaching assistantships (TA). However, these are competitive and are distributed at the discretion of the faculty advisor when accepting students into their lab. The RA and TA may be given at a 50%-100% coverage, which means they provide a stipend and it also waives tuition (although student fees are not waived). More information can be found here: <https://grad.uconn.edu/assistantships/> and here: <https://ovpr.uconn.edu/services/sps/proposals/proposal-preparation/general-cost-principles/budgeting-costing-guide/salaries/>. It is best practice for prospective students

to reach out to individual faculty and inquire about funding availability prior to applying to the program. However, it is not a requirement to do this before applying but can often save the time/effort of applying if no funding is available for new students in the lab of interest.

- If you are interested in applying for the UConn Graduate School Fellowships, you should select the fellowship that you would like to be considered for in the SLATE application system (<https://grad.uconn.edu/financing/fellowships/internal-awards/>).

### **Application-Related:**

#### **Can my application fee be waived?**

- Unfortunately, we do not waive application fees for prospective students at the department level. If you contact an individual faculty member who you wish to work with, they may themselves cover the application fee if they are willing to accept you as a student in their lab.

#### **How do I secure a major advisor/funding support for thesis/dissertation options?**

- It is the responsibility of the applicant to inquire with individual faculty regarding funding availability to take on a new graduate student. You can view our faculty's research profiles here: <https://nusc.uconn.edu/faculty/>. Typically, if applicants do not hear anything back from an individual faculty member within a few weeks about their interest in joining a lab, then the faculty member does not have any openings to take on new graduate students.

#### **Do I need an MS degree to apply to the PhD program?**

- We do accept some BS students directly into PhD program, so MS degree is not required. However, the amount of course credits required for the PhD degree will differ between incoming students with/without MS in a related field.

#### **I have submitted an application via the UConn Graduate School. What additional application materials are required for the NUSC graduate program?**

- We require 3 letters of recommendation, official transcripts, TOEFL (where required), and a personal statement for the application.
- Starting fall 2022 admissions cycle, GRE scores are not required for admission into our NUSC graduate programs.

#### **Are there guidelines for the personal statement?**

- The personal statement should describe your interest in pursuing the graduate degree in Nutritional Sciences, and in particular, your reason for applying to the NUSC graduate program at UConn (e.g., state your research interests and which specific faculty you are interested in working with). Usually a statement that is 2-3 pages will suffice.

#### **Is there a GPA requirement?**

- *MS/PhD in Nutritional Sciences*: We do consider GPA and academic program rigor during our evaluation. Competitive applications are above a 3.0 GPA. Additionally, the UConn Graduate School requires a min. 3.0 GPA to hold a graduate assistantship.
- *MS in Personalized Nutrition*: We require a 3.0 GPA for the MS in Personalized Nutrition online graduate program.

**When are the application deadlines?**

- *MS/PhD in Nutritional Sciences*: The application deadlines are February 15<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>, for fall and spring semesters, respectively.
- *MS in Personalized Nutrition*: The application deadlines are July 1<sup>st</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>, for fall and spring semesters, respectively.

**When are official transcripts required?**

- When you apply to our program, you may upload unofficial transcripts. The UConn Graduate School will not request official transcripts until after applicants are accepted at the program-level. They then will audit the admission and require official transcripts as part of that process.

**I would like to know if my undergraduate degree from an international institution meets the requirements of a Bachelor's degree at UConn. How do I find this out?**

- Please contact the UConn Graduate School. Special requirements of the UConn Graduate School that may apply to international students are found under "Education Requirements" on this webpage: <https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/requirements/>

**Is my IELTS/TOEFL score high enough to apply/do I qualify for English proficiency waiver?**

- For English proficiency, special requirements of the UConn Graduate School that may apply to international students are found under "Education Requirements" on this webpage: <https://grad.uconn.edu/admissions/requirements/>