

DIETITIAN

Entry Level: Bachelor's Degree

***Please Note:** BYU Life Sciences has a specific Dietetics program, separate from the Exercise Sciences and Exercise and Wellness:

<https://catalog.byu.edu/life-sciences/nutrition-dietetics-and-food-science/dietetics-bs>.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

What is the exact job title?

- Dietitian
- Nutritionist

*The biggest difference between dietitians and nutritionists lies in the legal restrictions that each title carries. Only nutritionists that become registered with Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) may legally declare themselves as dietitians or more precisely, registered dietitians (RDs).⁴

Unlike dietitians, the nutritionist profession is much less protected under the law. In fact, nutritionists that do not intend to use the titles of “dietitian” or “registered dietitian” are often free from government regulation. Some states may require nutritionists to obtain an occupational license from a Board of Nutrition, while other states allow individuals to practice as nutritionists without any previous education, training or work experience.⁴

The following information pertains to dietitians.

How do I become one?

- Obtain a Bachelor degree at a school accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE).³
- Complete 6-12 months of work in a CADE-accredited practice program.³
- Pass the CDR test.³
- Maintain certification through continuing education.³

What qualities do I need?

- Analytical skills: dietitians must keep up to date with the latest food and nutrition research. They should interpret scientific studies and translate nutrition science into practical eating advice.¹
- Compassion: dietitians must be caring and empathetic when helping clients address health and dietary issues and any related emotions.¹
- Listening skills: dietitians and nutritionists must listen carefully to understand clients' goals and concerns. They may work with other healthcare workers as part of a team to improve the health of a patient, and they need to listen to team members when constructing eating plans.¹
- Organizational skills: because there are many aspects to the work of dietitians and nutritionists, they should stay organized. Management dietitians, for example, must consider the nutritional needs of their clients, the costs of meals, and access to food. Self-employed dietitians and nutritionists may need to schedule appointments, manage employees, bill insurance companies, and maintain patient files.¹

1<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dietitians-and-nutritionists.htm>

2<https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Dietitian/Salary>

3<https://www.nutritioned.org/dietitian-vs-nutritionist.html>

4<https://www.nutritioned.org/dietitian-vs-nutritionist.html>

- **Problem-solving skills:** dietitians and nutritionists must evaluate the health status of patients and determine the most appropriate food choices for a client to improve his or her overall health or manage a disease.¹
- **Speaking skills:** dietitians and nutritionists must explain complicated topics in a way that people with less technical knowledge can understand. They must clearly explain eating plans to clients and to other healthcare professionals involved in a patient's care.¹

TYPICAL WORK DAY

What do they do?

- Assess patients' and clients' nutritional and health needs.¹
- Counsel patients on nutrition issues and healthy eating habits.¹
- Develop meal and nutrition plans, taking both clients' preferences and budgets into account.¹
- Evaluate the effects of meal plans and change the plans as needed.¹
- Promote better health by speaking to groups about diet, nutrition, and the relationship between good eating habits and preventing or managing specific diseases.¹
- Create educational materials about healthy food choices.¹
- Keep up with or contribute to the latest food and nutritional science research.¹
- Document patients' progress.¹

Where do they normally work?

- Dietitians may work in state, local, or private hospitals, government organizations, nursing and residential care facilities, outpatient care centers, or are self-employed workers.¹

What hours do they work?

- Most dietitians and nutritionists work full time. They may work evenings and weekends to meet with clients who are unavailable at other times.¹

BENEFITS

What is a typical salary in this field?

- BLS: In 2018, median pay was \$29.02/hour or \$60,370/year.¹
- Payscale: \$26.74/hour or \$51,762/year.²

Does this job come with any benefits? (vision, dental, 401k, PTO, etc.)

- Medical: 74%²
- Vision: 55%²
- Dental: 64%²
- None: 25%²

GROWTH

What is the projected job growth?

- Between 2018 - 2028, job growth is projected to be 11%.¹

Last Updated: October 2019

¹<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dietitians-and-nutritionists.htm>

²<https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Dietitian/Salary>

³<https://www.nutritioned.org/dietitian-vs-nutritionist.html>