

BSc (Hons) NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES PROGRAMME
School of Food and Nutritional Sciences
College of Science, Engineering and Food Science

FITNESS TO PRACTISE STATEMENT

Fitness to Practise means having the skills, knowledge, health, and character necessary to undertake and complete a programme with work placement and experiential learning safely and effectively, fulfilling the responsibilities within the scope of practise in a chosen field.

The purpose of the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Fitness to Practise Statement is to:

- Endeavour to ensure the safety of the public whereby students of UCC engage with them either in a professional or an educational capacity.
- Outline and instil in students the core competencies and qualities required to participate in the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Programme.
- Ensure students are supported and given appropriate guidance when they experience challenges and issues that may affect their ability to engage with an educational programme within UCC.
- Outline the procedures in relation to the disclosure of a health and/or criminal matter (convictions and/or prosecutions pending) and signpost students to the relevant policy frameworks and guidelines for the management of self-declarations under the Fitness to Practise policy.

The BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Fitness to Practise Statement has been developed with reference to the Association for Nutrition Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance (2021), the Association for Nutrition Core Competencies (2023) and the UCC Student Fitness to Practise Policy (2022).

The aim of the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Fitness to Practise Statement is to:

- Ensure students on the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme have a clear understanding of professional standards and the level of professional attitudes and behaviour required of them throughout their programme of study.
- Safeguard members of the public, placement providers or others that the students have contact with during their programme, such as during research projects, placements or whilst engaging in other learning experiences.
- Meet the requirements of the UCC Fitness to Practise Policy.

BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Fitness to Practise

The BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme will be subject to the University's Fitness to Practise Policy. It is vital that students are deemed 'Fit to Practise' throughout the programme and while on placement as it is of over-riding importance to protect

members of the public from harm and to maintain the trust and confidence of the public in the nutrition profession and the University. **Graduates of the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Programme who are fit to practise are eligible to join the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) as Associate Registered Nutritionists (ANutr) upon graduation via the direct entry application pathway.**

For the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme, confirming students are fit to practise helps to ensure the standard, *Public and Population Safety*, as set out by the Association for Nutrition (AfN), the independent regulator for Registered Nutritionists, is upheld.

Criteria for upholding this standard includes:

- The implementation of effective policies and systems to ensure students do not jeopardise public and population safety.
- Provision of comprehensive support for students regarding health, conduct, and academic issues.
- Requirement for students to possess a clear understanding and ability to discern professional behavior, demonstrating familiarity with the AfN's Standards for Ethics, Conduct, and Performance.
- Establishment of effective and robust policies and systems, ensuring students deemed unfit to practise are aware that they are ineligible for direct entry to the Association for Nutrition (AfN) register.

This Statement, in addition to the UCC Fitness to Practise Policy provides a context-specific Policy which ensures that students who are not fit to practise understand that they will not be eligible for direct entry to the AfN register.

Examples of concerns or circumstances which might render a student unfit to practise (these are not exclusive)

- A criminal conviction, charge or caution of a serious nature that arises just prior to or during the course of study.
- Unprofessional behaviour that could jeopardise public and population safety.
- Aggressive, violent, or threatening behaviour.
- Unprofessional behaviour or attitude such as a breach of confidentiality, harassment, bullying or unlawful discrimination.
- Any other issue which would place the public or colleagues at risk.

Fitness to Practise issues can arise at any stage during a student's time on a course of study within the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Programme. It is important to note that such issues may be temporary and/or satisfactorily dealt with during the programme of study. However, Fitness to Practise matters may affect the ability of students to complete the programme or gain the final qualification. Where such an issue or issues arise, the UCC Student Fitness to Practise Procedures and Guidelines will be adhered to in resolving the situation. It is important to note that **students who**

are declared not fit to practise will not be eligible for direct entry to the Association for Nutrition register.

Core Competencies BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences

In addition to the Professional Standards, students must meet the Association for Nutrition Core Competencies which is the expected knowledge and understanding in nutrition at graduate level for an Associate Nutritionist.

These Core Competencies must be read in conjunction with the UCC Fitness to Practise Policy, the AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance (2021), the AfN Core Competencies (2023) and the Programme Handbook.

Students must be capable of achieving the following competencies and outcomes by graduation:

1. Professional Conduct and Practice

- 1.1 Demonstrate ethical and professional practice through upholding the AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance.
- 1.2 Communicate appropriately and effectively at all times with peers, staff, the general public and all other stakeholders using spoken, written and electronic methods.
- 1.3 Demonstrate development of professional practice and competence, by taking responsibility for learning, own limitations and development.

2. Science and Research Skills

- 2.1 Critically analyse, evaluate and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the science of nutrition in humans (and animals), including the metabolic demands of the human body through the life cycle and in different disease states and conditions.
- 2.2 Interpret and translate nutritional science meaningfully and communicate the science effectively.
- 2.3 Understand the general principles underpinning, the strengths and limitations of common methods of assessment of nutritional status.
- 2.4 Discuss and apply appropriate methods for dietary and anthropometric assessments.
- 2.5 Understand basic principles of good research practice; practically apply research methods in nutrition and report nutrition data using appropriate methods.

3. Food Systems

- 3.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the food or feed chain and its impact on food or feed choice.
- 3.2 Use practical skills and appropriate resources to analyse food.

4. Social and Behaviour

- 4.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of food or feed in a social or behavioural context, at all stages of the life course.

4.2 Apply knowledge of food using a context specific approach to develop nutritional interventions.

5. Health and Wellbeing

5.1 Understand how to apply the scientific principles of nutrition for the promotion of health and wellbeing of individuals, groups, and populations.

5.2 Critique and apply learning from measures of health and wellbeing.

All students, at all stages of the programme (Years 1-4), will be required to comply with the Fitness to Practise Policy and meet the relevant Fitness to Practise standards in order to progress to the next year of their programme. Students are required to read and accept the Fitness to Practise requirements and complete a self-disclosure form at registration and annually at re-registration.

Student Declaration

All students entering the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Programme as well as relevant academic and administrative staff will be fully briefed on the Fitness to Practise Policy, regulations and guidelines and related procedures through the Programme Handbook, this Statement and reference to Association for Nutrition Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance (2021) and AfN Programme Core Competencies. Students are required to read this Policy and acknowledge in writing that they have read and understood the Programme's Fitness to Practise Policy and procedures.

The University shall require all students subject to this Policy to make a declaration as to any concerns the student may have in relation to their own Fitness to Practise that arises from a health and/or a criminal matter (including prosecutions pending prior to or during your enrolment at UCC) as per the UCC Fitness to Practise Policy.

If the student indicates a concern, the self-declaration at registration will trigger an email which will take them through the next step, and they will be asked to complete an online self-disclosure form. This email will be a system generated email from ITS.iEnabler.System@mail3.ucc.ie (a no-reply address). Students will make this declaration at first registration and annually at registration thereafter and between these intervals in the event that a health/conviction matter arises during the course of an academic year.

If the student has made a self-declaration at registration and has not received the email or they wish to make a declaration at any time during their studies, the student should contact the UCC School who will be able to assist with the query.

Many people with health conditions or disabilities or specific learning difficulties are able to practise with or without adjustments to support their practise and are legally supported in this. Declarations of a criminal matter will be addressed through Garda Vetting. Please see UCC's Garda Vetting Policy at www.ucc.ie/studentvetting. Within

the framework of the Fitness to Practice Policy, UCC will endeavour to support to you to enable you to participate in your studies.

Additionally, concerns about a student's Fitness to Practise may be raised from members of staff and other stakeholders which may be addressed through informal/local supports/actions or may require further action, as outlined in the Fitness to Practise Policy.

Please read the Fitness to Practise Policy which details how self-declared and reported concerns are managed and please contact the Head of School or Programme Director if you have any queries.

Fitness to Practise Standards

The following positive attitudes and behaviours are expected of students registered to the UCC BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences Programme.

Personal Behaviour

Students registered on the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme should demonstrate their Fitness to Practise in all aspects of their personal behaviour throughout their period of registration by behaving in a manner appropriate to their position as a student at the University studying for a qualification, the successful completion of which leads to eligibility for entry to the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN). Students are required to consistently maintain high standards of personal conduct and to behave with integrity and honesty at all times. Students are required to follow and obey the laws of the land and to refrain from unlawful activity at all times.

Behaviour Towards Others

Students registered on the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme should demonstrate their Fitness to Practise continually during their course of studies in all aspects of their behaviour towards others: members of the public, their families, classmates and other students, research participants, University staff, other staff on placement, colleagues, and employers. Students are required to treat others with due respect, courtesy, honesty, accountability, humility, fairness and impartiality and to recognise, respect and tolerate individual differences in others including gender, religious values, sexual preferences, age, disability, and cultural beliefs and values. This requires the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences student to be open and positive towards new learning experiences and to demonstrate the ability to receive and respond to feedback in a constructive and non-defensive manner at all times.

Learning

A substantial content of the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme of study is designed to meet the Competency Requirements for Registered Associate Nutritionists

(ANutr) of the Association for Nutrition (AfN), who are the independent regulator for Registered Nutritionists and hold the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN). Curriculum content may be amended if required by the AfN. Students registered on the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme should demonstrate their Fitness to Practise by pursuing their studies with due diligence ensuring they avail of the range of educational opportunities made available in order to acquire the skills, knowledge and competency identified in the relevant professional guidance. Students are required to take responsibility for their own learning by fulfilling the attendance, learning and assessment requirements of the academic and placement aspects of their education. Students are required to demonstrate good time management and regular attendance.

Further information on the UCC Fitness to Practice policy and procedures:

Core competencies, disclosure forms and an FAQ can all be located at this link and should be consulted by candidates as part of their application process to the BSc (Hons) Nutritional Sciences programme.

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicsecretariat/fitnesstopractise/>

Association for Nutrition (AfN) UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN)
Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance:

<https://www.associationfornutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-AfN-Standards-of-Ethics-Conduct-and-Performance.pdf>

Association for Nutrition (AfN) UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN)
Competency Requirements for Registered Associate Nutritionists (ANutr)

<https://www.associationfornutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ANutr-Competencies-Apr-23-final.pdf>