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At John F. Kennedy University

Holistic Health Education — MA

Holistic Nutrition Specialization — Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Holistic Nutrition Specialization within the Holistic Health Education MA degree offer?

Holistic Nutrition Specialization is based on a whole foods model of eating within a holistic model of wellness centered on whole food nutrition. Students evaluate multiple nutritional approaches and dietary theories, analyzing the benefits and deficits of each approach as applied to the individual. Food as a healing modality is a theme throughout the holistic nutrition specialization. The spectrum of application of food as a healing modality ranges from addressing imbalances that occur throughout an individual's lifetime to developing nutritional and herbal approaches to common disease states including heart disease, diabetes and dysglycemia, cancer, and autoimmune conditions. Additionally, the concepts of nourishment and creating health within imbalance and disease states are also explored.

The holistic nutrition specialization curriculum reaches beyond holism as applied to the individual (body, mind and spirit) to implications of holistic nutrition applied to global systems through the study of the history and foundation of food systems and the impact of environmental influences on the health of the individual and community, both local and global.

As a result of completing the Holistic Nutrition Specialization, graduates are able to:

- Choose nutritional approaches and demonstrate understanding of theory, issues, health information, research, and applications in the field of nutrition.
- Explain in clear language basic philosophies of holistic nutrition and application of nutritional therapies.
- Practice professionally as a nutrition educator, instructor, and consultant as well as an integrative/holistic health educator.
- Embody a healthy approach to nutrition and nourishment, and model health through food and nutrition in one's own community.

How is eligibility for practice in the field of nutrition determined?

Each state has its own requirements for professionals in the field of nutrition. Most states (including the state of California) allow individuals with various types of educational training to practice. However, restrictions apply to using some titles, such as Registered Dietitian (also spelled dietician).

What is a Registered Dietitian?

The credential Registered Dietitian or R.D. is awarded to candidates who pass an exam after completing academic coursework and a supervised internship approved by the American Dietetic Association's Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE). Required education includes at least a bachelor's degree in dietetics, foods and nutrition, food service systems management, or a related area. Students in these majors take courses in foods, nutrition, institution management, chemistry, biochemistry, biology, microbiology, and physiology.

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Of the 48 states and jurisdictions with laws governing dietetics, 35 require licensure, 12 require statutory certification and one requires registration. Requirements vary by State. In states that require licensure, only people who are licensed can work as dietitians. In most states, one must be licensed to use the title Registered Dietitian. Registered Dietitians often work in hospital environments translating the principles of nutrition into a particular diet, such as a low salt diet for a hypertensive patient or a low fat diet for an overweight patient. The model used as the basis for practice is the USDA Food Pyramid.

Can I become a Registered Dietitian with my MA degree in Holistic Health Education and Holistic Nutrition Specialization?

No. The theoretical framework used in the Holistic Health Education MA program is different than the theoretical framework offered in a CADE approved program.

What is a Nutritionist?

The terms dietician and nutritionist are often used interchangeably. However, the education and training of a dietician and a nutritionist can be quite different. The term nutritionist does not necessarily require licensure. Nutritionists hold various levels of education ranging from a certification program to a Ph.D. in Nutrition. Nutritionists often do work that is similar to the work of dietitians, including counseling individual clients and developing dietary plans. Models used as a basis for practice vary by practitioner.

What is a Nutritional Consultant or a Certified Nutritional Consultant?

A consultant provides advice in a particular area, such as nutrition, in this case. Training and education vary widely among individuals using the title Nutritional Consultant/Certified Nutritional Consultant. It's advisable to inquire about a Nutritional Consultant's training and education. Individuals are not required to be licensed to practice as Nutritional Consultants in the state of California. Nutritional Consultants provide dietary and nutrition advice, recommend appropriate nutritional supplements and develop dietary plans. Models used as a basis for practice vary by practitioner.

Are Graduates of the Holistic Health Education MA Program with the Holistic Nutrition Specialization eligible for membership in a professional organization?

Yes. Graduates of the Holistic Health Education MA Program with the Holistic Nutrition Specialization are eligible to become professional members of the National Association of Nutrition Professionals (NANP).

Is the Holistic Nutrition Specialization of the Holistic Health Education MA Program at John F. Kennedy University an NANP-approved program?

Yes. The Holistic Nutrition Specialization of the Holistic Health Education MA Program at John F. Kennedy University meets and exceeds the requirements to be an NANP-approved program and is a recommended program. Educational standards for this recognition include covering the following requirements: Anatomy and Physiology, Fundamentals of Nutrition (macro and micronutrients), Nutrition & Pathophysiology, Nutritional Support of Body Systems (Digestive, Immune, Cardiovascular, Musculoskeletal, Nervous, Lymphatic, and Integumentary), Environmental Influences on Health and Disease, Symptomology of Insufficiency, Excess and Impaired Metabolism, Nutrition Throughout the Life cycle, Comparative Dietary Systems, Nutritional Supplementation, Nutritional Assessment, Nutritional Counseling, Introductory Herbology, Business Management, and Nutrition & Research Applications.

Can Graduates of the Holistic Health Education MA Program with the Holistic Nutrition Specialization become Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition?

Yes, the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board, the credentialing arm of the National Association of Nutrition Professionals offers graduates the opportunity to sit for the Board Exam in Holistic Nutrition in order to become Board Certified in



in Holistic Nutrition®. Students are eligible to take the exam within the first 12 months after graduation. Graduates who choose to wait longer than 12 months to take the exam are required to provide proof of 500 hours of practice. New graduates must provide proof of 500 hours of practice within two years of taking the exam. They may use the phrase “Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition (candidate)” until completing 500 hours of practice and submitting appropriate documentation. Visit the NANP website at www.nanp.org for more information.

What does “Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition®” mean?

“Becoming “Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition®” means you have earned professional recognition and validation of your knowledge and experience within the realm of holistic nutrition. To earn such an important designation, you must document and demonstrate an exceptional level of knowledge and understanding of holistic nutrition, as well as how to apply it in a credible and responsible manner to help others.”

“Board certification in holistic nutrition means you understand the therapeutic value of whole foods, a clean and natural food supply, environmental influences on health, and the importance of education and empowerment in helping people make informed choices along their unique path toward optimal health and healing. Holistic nutrition also recognizes the impact a person’s mindset has on their general health and ability to nourish and care for them self” (www.nanp.org).

Must I become Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition® in order to practice as a Nutritional Consultant?

No. In the state of California, practitioners are not required to be licensed or board certified to practice as Nutritional Consultants. Check the state requirements for the state in which you’d like to practice to determine requirements for professional practice in the field of nutrition. hours of practice and submitting appropriate documentation. Visit the NANP website at www.nanp.org for more information.

