

Supporting Student Dietitians – A  
fantastic opportunity for all!

Have you considered supporting a  
student dietitian on placement?

Does your team need an enthusiastic  
student dietitian who can support your  
team with key projects, for example the  
provision of nutritional advice, research or  
patient information materials?



## The role of the dietitian

Dietitians are the only qualified and statutorily regulated health professionals that assess, diagnose and treat diet and nutrition problems at an individual and wider public health level. Uniquely, dietitians use the most up-to-date public health and scientific research on food, health and disease, which they translate into practical guidance to enable people to make appropriate lifestyle and food choices.

Dietitians work across a multitude of sectors with representation in almost all nutrition related fields, including social care, public health, industry (medical nutrition, food manufacture), research, community education and sport to name just some of many.

The practice placement is an integral part of the pre-registration dietetic training. Practice placement sites reflect the breadth and diversity of the working environments of entry-level dietitians.

**Student Dietitians**

What can they do for you?

# Could you offer a 'Complementary Placement?'

A complementary placement is designed to build and strengthen core practical skills that dietetic students are required to develop outside of the classroom. These transferable, 'hands-on' skills enable students to become flexible competent practitioners fit for practice in an ever changing work environment.

In particular, these placements allow students to develop their communication self-confidence and professionalism skills and extend their knowledge and skill base.

## What skills do dietetic students have?

Dietetic students work within a strict code of professional practice and are regulated by Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This provides a code of professional practise. In addition student dietitians have a range of skills to offer, are excellent communicators, and can work independently, with guidance or in teams. They have a good working knowledge of nutrition and are able to access and critique the evidence base around nutritional advice.



Student Dietitians  
What can they do for you?

# Social Care

## What can dietetic students do for you?

We would like you to consider taking dietetic students for 2-3 days a week over a 12 week period. The local University can let you know the exact timing of these placements. Student dietitians can:

- Care homes
- Day centres
- Home visits (integrated car teams) carfares
- by providing support, guidance or developing nutritional guidance and awareness around
- Catering
- Communication
- Monitoring food and fluid charts and residents intake
- Conducting audits on nutritional intake - to ensure individuals are meeting their needs
- Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) - exploring screening to improve nutritional care
- Inter-professional learning opportunities
- Dementia
- Carers support group - providing education
- Community meals - audit
- Developing educational material
- Group education of staff
- Vanguard (nutritional projects)
- STP's sustainable transformation plans (STP's)
- Training community pharmacists
- developing nutritional tools



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# How will it work?

## Placement structure

This is flexible, for example over a 12 week placement students could spend 2-3 days a week in a complementary setting the remaining days being completed in an acute Trust or community placement. In some areas such as clinical specialities these skills could be delivered over 6 weeks or as a full 12 week placement.

## What about supervision?

For short, complementary placements, supervision can be 'long-arm'. This means that there does not necessarily need to be a Registered Dietitian on site. Rather both the University and the main supervisor (Registered Dietitian) will work closely with the host site to ensure that the student is exposed to the relevant experiences whilst on placement, can evidence their learning can develop transferable skills. It is likely the student will be visited on placement so that their progress can be discussed.

You will need to identify a nominated site supervisor. This person does not need to be a nutritionist or dietitian, but an individual who will take responsibility for the students during the placement. This supervisor will meet regularly with the student(s), to give guidance and support to complete the project and other tasks assigned during the placement.

## Paperwork

In order to ensure quality assurance and health and safety requirements are met there will be some paperwork to complete before the student(s). However, rest assured that your local University team will guide you through any administration that needs to be done.



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**If you are interested...**

where you will find contact details for your local University Dietetic Programme Team who can discuss opportunities with you.