This handout outlines some of the main career areas open to nutrition graduates with some starting points for research. The careers service is available to help you to think through your plans or discuss different options. With thanks to The Nutrition Society for providing this information.

General resources
- The Nutrition Society operates the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists and also has a vacancy database: www.nutritionsociety.org
- Careers Tagged: www.careerstagged.com
- Health Careers: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/

Public Health Nutrition
This will involve promotion of good health through nutrition and the prevention of nutrition-related illness in the population. Can also be known as ‘health improvement’ work.

You will probably be working with groups or communities to promote health, wellbeing and reduce inequalities.

You might be based in Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), government departments, work for a charity or in the food industry.

Getting in: Community Nutrition Assistant roles are useful to gain experience. Higher level roles include jobs such as Food & Health Coordinator.

Career progression: After gaining some experience working in a public health nutrition environment you could look to register with the UKVRN as a Registered Public Health Nutritionist.

Research Nutrition
You will need to have strong skills in applying your knowledge in practical situations with good analytical and laboratory skills and techniques.

To get a research training post that will lead to a higher research degree (MPhil/PhD) you will need a good BSc (first class or 2:1) or a good MSc.

You will need to have post-doctoral experience to go into an academic or research career. You might be based in a laboratory or a company, research institute or university.

A typical route would be to start as a Research Assistant and move up to Research Associate once you have attained your higher degree.

Research assistants usually work on a project supervised by one or more full-time academics responsible for the funds from which the assistant is being paid.

More information:
Research Councils UK: www.rcuk.ac.uk
Vitae: www.vitae.ac.uk

Industry Nutritionists
You might be at the forefront of new product development, making sure marketing and promotion comply with legislation. You might be based with a food & drink manufacturer, retailer, medical food company or food service provider.

It can be an advantage to have an MSc, and you should have good organisational, time management and IT skills with the ability to work to deadlines. You should also have a keen awareness of nutrition issues in the media.

More information:
Sector Skills Council: www.improveltd.co.uk

Working in Government/Policy
You can help develop, implement and communicate a range of nutrition related issues to increase public awareness of improved nutrition and healthy eating.

You should have excellent analytical skills, the ability to convey scientific information to a wide audience, plus outstanding communication and organisational skills.

Employers include the Food Standards Agency, the largest employer of nutritionists in the UK. Entry level roles are ‘Scientific Officer’ (SO) roles and there are regular recruitment rounds for these posts.

General information on policy on www.careers.lon.ac.uk/blog/ppp/
Clinical Nutrition

You might work in a dietetics department in the NHS; Dietetic Assistant posts are a useful way to gain experience and find out about dietetics and clinical work.

In an assistant role you will only be able to work with patients under the supervision of a dietitian or other regulated health professional.

To work with patients unsupervised, you must train as a dietitian and become state registered.

For more information about dietetics, you can contact the British Dietetic Association: www.bda.uk.com

Deciding which area is right for you

If you are unsure which area of nutrition you would like to work in, a useful starting point is to think about what your interests are and what you are good at doing. It is also important to identify what will be important to you in any job you might have. This sort of ‘self-audit’ of your interests, skills and values, can provide a platform from which to investigate which opportunities might suit you.

Another important part of the decision-making process is to investigate options through research, speaking to professionals, and testing out options through relevant work experience. Look out for any opportunities to talk to people working in a particular field of nutrition; they will be best placed to tell you what it is really like, and may have useful advice on how to get into that sector.

Make use of careers fairs or employer events, and be prepared to identify and contact people independently to ask them about their role.

Sports & Exercise Nutrition

Sports & exercise nutritionists work to promote good nutrition, exercise and fitness. They can be personal trainers or work in the Sports, Fitness, Health & Recreation Industries.

This is a very popular area of work, but is also very competitive, so it is difficult for graduates to find work without relevant work experience. It can also be an advantage to study for an MSc to stand out from the crowd.

More information:

FutureFit: www.futurefit.co.uk for info on vocational training required

Register of Exercise Professionals website: www.exerciseregister.org

SkillsActive website: www.skillsactive.com

International (Development) Nutrition

Not typically a graduate level role; Nutritionists with appropriate qualifications and, generally, previous experience of working abroad or previous work experience in public health with different communities can work in emergency relief or development projects in low-income countries.

More information: to find out more about international nutrition go to www.nutritionworks.org.uk

For volunteering opportunities, RedR (an international disaster relief charity) and VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) websites cover this area extensively:

www.redr.org.uk

www.vso.org.uk

The Careers Group has produced a dedicated website for development careers:

www.careers.lon.ac.uk/blog/development/

Animal Nutrition

Animal nutritionists work to improve the productivity and efficiency of animals used for meat, milk and eggs, or the health & wellbeing of pets and working animals. They can be consultants, work in research and development in Universities, or in industry such as feed manufacture companies.

This is a specialist area of nutrition and so does not have many ‘entry level’/graduate level roles.

Undertaking further study in animal science before you seek a role in this sector can be an advantage.

For more information, refer to the British Society of Animal Science: www.bsas.org.uk