

Careers for Nutritionists in Research and Tertiary Education

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I initially worked as a food chemist in ESR (a branch of NZ's equivalent to CSIRO), prior to undertaking my PhD in dietary folate and health. I then took on a post-doctoral position at Drexel University in Philadelphia, USA for several years before joining Deakin University.



What does a research nutritionist do?

Undertakes a variety of different types of research studies to answer questions relating to the link between nutrition, food and health. These studies often involve counselling study participants to make significant dietary changes.

What does a nutritionist do working in tertiary education?

It depends a great deal on their job within tertiary education but the main part of my job is designing relevant and authentic nutrition curriculum to ensure graduates from our programs have the necessary skill set to contribute to the nutrition profession.

Where does a research nutritionist work?

All around the world! This is an international job with people frequently working in several different countries across their careers. Many positions are within the university sector but many others are with government based research institutes or private research institutes.

What experience and qualifications do you need to work in research?

A PhD is generally regarded as an essential qualification. The experience required will differ depending on the position, sometimes it is evidence of teaching success, evidence of successfully attracting funding for research programs, evidence of particular statistical skills or some specific analytical experience you may have.

What experience and qualifications do you need to work in tertiary education?

Again, a PhD is generally considered essential. Many universities now are also asking for some level of training in education. Mostly however you need to enjoy the education process. Teaching, like research, is demanding and you need to have a commitment to furthering education in people to really get the most out of the profession.

What are the highlights of working in research and tertiary education?

Travelling and working internationally, seeing past students succeed in their careers, having a constantly changing and challenging job, being part of the advancement of nutrition knowledge, joining the scientific community dedicated to challenging ideas and learning more.

Advice for students who are interested in research and tertiary education?

Find something that you enjoy – look for the university/organisation that can match that area of interest and work to constantly up skill yourself. Build a strong professional support network, take advantage of professional development opportunities and realise that teaching really is about facilitation of the learning process not being the person who should know it all.