

MASTER'S OF SCIENCE IN HUMAN NUTRITION AND FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE FAQs

PROGRAM FEATURES

What makes this program unique and different from other dietetics and nutrition programs?

The University of Western States' nutrition program is the only master of science program of that leads to a master's degree in human nutrition and functional medicine. It includes advanced instruction in nutrition, similar to other master's level nutrition programs, but goes far beyond by also presenting extensive educational content on functional medicine principles and practices derived from the Institute for Functional Medicine. These include important interdisciplinary and evidence-based perspectives, patient assessments and clinical interventions designed to enhance the function of the whole person. The functional medicine model is woven deeply into the fabric of the curriculum.

Are you accredited?

Yes, we are accredited regionally through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. This is the highest level for non-profits and it is recognized in all U.S. states.

What is the online format like?

[Read about the HNFM online learning platform here.](#)

How do instructors ensure a high-quality education experience for students?

Instructors ensure a high-quality education by reviewing current literature and selecting the most relevant, best-constructed examples, incorporating synthesis activities to create deeper interaction with the material, and opening multiple avenues of communication, including interactive forums, direct email discussion, recorded lectures, and/or live classroom meetings.

Does this program have a clinical focus?

The program is primarily a clinically focused degree, with emphasis on treating individual or multiple conditions and their risk factors using dietary and nutritional interventions. Every course contains elements of clinical assessment and diagnosis. There is also a strong focus on wellness promotion and general health in order to meet the clinician's primary goal of preventing disease and metabolic dysfunction before they occur.

What is the value of the degree for a doctor of chiropractic?

This program enables DCs to expand their role from support to direct management of chronic complex disease. It prepares DCs to skillfully prescribe

nutritional interventions to create a maximum therapeutic effect at minimum cost and risk to patients.

CURRICULUM

How long will it take to complete the program?

The track we recommend has the student taking 2-3 classes per term and is completed in seven quarters (under two years/21 months). It is possible to complete the program one class at a time, extending the duration. We recognize that the life situations of our students vary considerably in terms of their family, employment and community commitments, thus we are flexible with regard to speed and prefer that students take the time they need in order to learn the material well.

Additionally, it is possible to take “leaves” for a quarter or more if needed. As long as the intended schedule is communicated with the registrar it is possible to extend the program to better suit a student’s individual needs. The program must be completed in a maximum of five years.

When does the program start?

There are two start times for the program - one in the fall quarter that begins in early October and another in the spring quarter that begins in early April.

At what point in the MS program are students eligible to enroll in elective courses?

After completing the three foundational courses (Principles of Functional Medicine, Nutritional Biochemistry and Evidence-Based Nutrition), students are allowed to select electives based upon availability and individual preference.

Is it possible to take additional electives beyond the required number?

Students may pay for and take additional electives beyond those required for graduation. If receiving any kind of financial aid, they should check with the financial aid office for continued eligibility. Additional elective credits will not be used to satisfy core credit requirements.

What patient/client assessment tools are taught throughout the program?

In addition to clinical tests, the use of various health assessment questionnaires and other analytic tools is covered in depth.

Is course content on blood chemistry included in the curriculum?

Yes, laboratory investigations utilized in functional medicine practice are embedded in various courses, as are other blood, urine and saliva tests.

What business-related topics are included?

The program's main textbook, *Textbook of Functional Medicine*, includes information on ways to manage the care of patients (e.g., patient communication, motivation, case presentation, etc.). There are also opportunities to interact with faculty and other students through online discussions regarding marketing strategies. In addition, students have access to our career services department where all career and business development related topics can be addressed.

What is the final project and comprehensive exam that is required for graduation?

A Final Project and Comprehensive Examination course is taken in the student's final term. The central focus of the final or "capstone" project involves writing a case report about a patient treated by a cooperating doctor. This report includes a literature review, description of the patient's history, signs, symptoms and treatment, and a discussion of the educational value of the case.

A comprehensive examination covers material from all required classes. The exam includes both multiple-choice and essay questions. The exam is proctored at the student's own computer via a service called ProctorU.

How are exams proctored?

The program uses Proctor U, an online proctoring service that integrates with your computer's camera and allows proctors to monitor you during the exam. This service is available anywhere in the world, 24 hours every day.

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE

What is functional medicine?

Functional medicine is a science-based, patient-centered and systems-oriented approach to helping people achieve and maintain excellent health. This is accomplished primarily through natural methods, with diet and nutrition as a central focus. Functional medicine is a forefront model for health care practice that seeks to address the causes of disease and dysfunction rather than suppressing symptoms. Founded on a holistic view of health, functional medicine delves deep into the biochemical and genetic individuality of each patient. University of Western States has partnered with the Institute for Functional Medicine to develop a program that lives up to the highest ideals of the functional medicine movement.

How is functional medicine different than conventional medical treatment?

Many health issues and chronic conditions are related to longstanding imbalances and dysfunctions of bodily systems. In conventional medicine, disease and illness is typically treated symptomatically, without addressing the

underlying cause. While conventional medical treatment can be life-saving, in the long run it is much better to correct functional abnormalities through functional medicine so that disease can be prevented or reversed by helping the body heal itself. Functional medicine practitioners investigate each patient individually to assess whether they have imbalances and dysfunctions of bodily systems. Focuses of this practice include dietary recommendations emphasizing whole foods and nutritional supplementation, lifestyle changes and mind-body approaches.

Is the UWS master's in human nutrition and functional medicine affiliated with the Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM)?

Much of the course content was developed in conjunction with experts from the IFM. We are actively working to add to and revise content in our curriculum based on consultation with IFM.

When may students take courses delivered by IFM that can be applied for credit in the HNFM program?

IFM courses are electives that may be taken at a time chosen by the student after completing the three required foundational courses (Principles of Functional Medicine, Nutritional Biochemistry and Evidence-Based Nutrition). Seminars conducted by IFM are scheduled by IFM as listed on [their website](#). These courses are an additional cost to the HNFM program. Some of the material in the required courses will be provided by IFM in a distance-learning format.

If I have completed an IFM course previously, can it be used toward the elective requirement?

Yes, as long as the course has been taken within five years prior to entering the program.

Is the Institute for Functional Medicine's course, Applying Functional Medicine in Clinical Practice (AFMCP), included in the program? Are there other add-on educational opportunities?

AFMCP is not a required part of the HNFM program. However, students are able to receive two elective credits each for completing AFMCP or Advanced Practice Modules delivered by IFM. A maximum of four elective credits may be attained through these two IFM courses.

PROGRAM ADMISSION & COST

What are the admission requirements?

[Admission requirements are found here.](#)

When is the best time to apply?

Students are admitted on a case-by-case basis until the cohort is filled. Contact the office of admissions to determine if there are still spaces available for your desired entry term (April or October each year).

Can I apply without finishing the prerequisites?

Yes, but consult with the office of admissions first.

Can I begin the program without finishing the prerequisites?

If a student is only missing one prerequisite course, they are able to begin the program if they concurrently enroll in the undergraduate level class through UWS. Consult with an admissions advisor for further information.

What does the program cost?

The program is 50-quarter credits and it is currently \$417 per credit. This makes the total estimated cost for tuition \$20,850 USD. There is also a \$50 per quarter student services fee (there are four quarters per year).

Tuition is assessed on a quarterly basis so students only pay for the classes they are enrolled in. The entire cost of tuition is **not** due all at the same time; it is divided up based on how many quarter credits are taken. In the first term of the program, students have the option of taking five or seven total quarter credits. For additional information regarding cost, please contact the financial services office at financialservices@uws.edu.

What is the policy on transferring credits from other master's level nutrition programs to the UWS HNFM program?

[Find credit transfer information here.](#)

CERTIFICATIONS & CAREERS

Will this program qualify me for any professional certificates?

Licensed professional health care providers may sit for the American Clinical Board of Nutrition (ACBN) examination after successfully completing 300 hours of specialized postgraduate training in nutrition, which can be fulfilled by the UWS master's degree curriculum. In addition, ACBN certification requires writing a nutrition-oriented article or paper acceptable by the Board and at least two years of practice experience in nutrition.

Graduates of the MS in HNFM program can sit for the Certified Clinical Nutritionist (CCN) examination and for the Certified Nutrition Specialist (CNS) examination. Some certifications also require supervised clinical practice hours and students should contact these organizations to receive the most up-to-date information.

Chiropractic physicians who complete at least 300 hours of nutrition courses in the UWS HNFM program are eligible to sit for the diplomate exam of the Chiropractic Board of Clinical Nutrition (CBCN).

Upon program completion, will I be a registered dietician?

The HNFM program at UWS is not for people seeking to become a registered dietician. Completion of the MS HNFM program satisfies all or part of the educational requirements to sit for several important national certification exams in the field of nutrition.

What are the benefits of these additional certifications?

An accredited master's degree in nutrition adds significantly to the credibility of a practitioner and this may be further enhanced by additional certifications. However, at this time such certifications are not required by states that have laws regulating the practice of nutrition.

Where can I find nutrition scope of practice laws and licensures across states?

<http://www.nutritionadvocacy.org/>