

Assessment Plan

The Nutrition Science Program within the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Sciences (NDFS) uses the following self-assessment process and resulting decisions to improve the Nutrition Science program is based on data generated by the following methods.

Student Evaluations

The standardized USU IDEA course evaluation form is provided to all students in all courses taught by Nutrition faculty to allow the students an opportunity to evaluate both the course and the instructor. Nutrition faculty are encouraged to map course objectives to the IDEA survey. Nutrition Science courses have historically been highly rated for instructor effectiveness and contributed towards NDFS receiving the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences teaching award for 2014.

Yearly Focus Group for Graduating Students

- Input from students to help make data based decisions for the program
- Student assessment of our program is vital and offers a unique perspective
- Student input has guided curriculum changes to increase the overall effectiveness of the program

The discussions with our outgoing undergraduates have been vital in making sure we are meeting the needs of students, shaping our curriculum, and giving our future alumni a stake in the program.

Assessment of Course Specific Learning Objectives

Students are asked questions about core concepts at the beginning and end of the semester. Results of the pre and post tests are then compared to get assess concepts learned or improved over the semester. This has now been implemented in some of our core courses and the data will be used to objectively assess student learning.

Nutrition Science Overall Learning Objectives and Course Map

- Creation of a master document that includes course objectives/maps for all classes included in the nutrition science degree.
- This document allows the faculty to identify deficiencies and redundancies in the curriculum.
- This information coupled with the graduating senior exit interviews, allows for data based decisions to improve the overall program.

Faculty Program Assessment

Assessment information from these various sources is discussed and reviewed by Nutrition Science faculty and used to improve and modernize program objectives, course content and degree requirements. The single most important department activity for reviewing assessment as well as all other aspects of the program is the yearly faculty retreat. This meeting provides a period of reflection on the past year; an opportunity to make changes and/or modifications to requirements, policies and procedures; and a forum for planning the coming academic year.

Recent Data Based Decisions

Initiative 1. Assessment of the Nutrition Science program

Unlike food science and dietetics there is not an official sanctioning organization for nutrition science curriculum at US universities. Therefore, nutrition science programs rely primarily on traditions and anecdotal evidence from faculty members to inform program decisions. Moreover, there are currently no data based tools in place to assess program success. As a result of this deficiency, the Nutrition Science program will be reviewed by both outside and internal reviewers. We are also developing a new set of program competencies and will use data from Nutrition Science courses, specific to each competency, to assess effectiveness.

Initiative 2. Rearrangement of Nutrition Science Curriculum

Our annual focus group of graduating seniors has consistently remarked that they wished their Nutrition Science classes were spread out through their college career instead of being weighted towards their senior year. We have been working with the Nutrition Science advisor to create course maps that help ensure that students are taking more Nutrition Science classes in their sophomore and junior years. We believe this will help with student retention and increase student satisfaction.

NUTRITION SCIENCE PROGRAM OVERALL LEARNING OBJECTIVES	LOWER DIVISION NDFS CLASSES	UPPER DIVISION NDFS CLASSES
Describe the digestion and metabolism of the energy nutrients (carbohydrates, lipids, protein).	1020, 4200	5410
Describe the digestion and metabolism of the non-energy nutrients (vitamins/minerals).	1020, 4200	5410
Identify the nutrients needed to maintain health and body function. Be familiar with symptoms of nutrient deficiencies and toxicities. Recognize food sources for each nutrient.	1020, 4200	5410
Learn the role of nutrition in relation to health and the prevention of chronic disease.	1020, 4020	5410, 5230
Differentiate between credible, science-based sources of nutrition information and unreliable sources.	3020, 4020	5230, 5410
Evaluate food quality based on food labeling, nutrition labeling, and food safety practices	3020, 4020	
Determine nutrient needs and recommendations associated with different life cycle stages.	2020	
Understand what constitutes a sustainable food system and understand the effects of food policy and production on consumers.	1020	5230
Learn appropriate techniques used to manage body weight.	3020, 1020, 4020	
Understand the principles of exercise physiology as related to energy requirements and nutrient requirements during exercise.	3020, 4020	
Understand the effects of dietary supplements on health or athletic performance	3020	5410
Learn the impact of biological, socioeconomic, cultural, and psychological factors on eating behavior.	1020	5230
Identify major concepts in nutrition assessment, community needs assessment, designing interventions, motivating consumers and the marketing and evaluation of nutrition-related programs.		5230
Describe the role of nutrition in public health.	1020, 4020	5230
Understand epidemiologic concepts of illness and disease, with a focus on nutrition-related conditions.		
Understand the effects of micro and macronutrients on gene regulation.	4020	5410
Learn the effects of non-nutritive dietary compounds on health and disease.	1020	5410
Understand the relationship between nutrition, the microbiome, and health and disease.	4020	5410
Understand how nutrition science studies are designed, analyzed and interpreted.	4020	5230, 5410
Effectively communicate nutrition research findings to both the academic community and the lay public.		5230, 7800
Understand nutrition science research: experimental design, ethics, dissemination of results, and communicating results.		5310