

UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN)

Guidance notes for applications for Registered Nutritionist (RNutr) via Portfolio

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(updated May 2021 to provide online application details)

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Introduction

This guide explains how to apply to join the UKVRN as a **Registered Nutritionist (RNutr)** in a specialist area of competence **via Portfolio**.

If you are already on the UKVRN as a Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr) and wish to transfer category, please read 'Guidance notes for transfer from Registered Associate Nutritionist (ANutr) to Registered Nutritionist (RNutr)'.

How to Apply

To apply for **Registered Nutritionist** in a specialist area of competence **via Portfolio** you will normally have graduated from a BSc or MSc programme in nutrition science (either in the UK or overseas) or equivalent and will typically have at least three years peer-recognised work experience in nutrition at graduate level post-qualifying from your nutrition degree.

You will need to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of nutrition science, plus your experience in evidence based nutrition. You will need to show the assessor that you meet competence and eligibility requirements for registration as a Registered Nutritionist (RNutr) in your chosen specialist area of competence, with a portfolio of evidence. We will also require details of two referees who must be able to attest to your professional knowledge in evidence based nutrition and your competence for registration as a Registered Nutritionist (RNutr) in your chosen specialist area.

Please ensure that you

- Read 'Competency Requirements for Registered Nutritionist' in full and select the specialist area of competence you wish to apply for
- Read this document in full
- Complete all sections of the online application form and upload all items described in the section 'What do I need to send?'
- Make the assessment payment when submitting your application (without payment your application will not be transferred from the website to the registration team for processing)

Choosing the right Specialist Category

1.1 All Registered Nutritionists (RNutr) choose to demonstrate they meet one or more of the following specialist areas of competence:

- a. Animal
- b. Food
- c. Nutrition Science
- d. Public Health
- e. Sports & Exercise
- f. Healthcare - Medical

1.2 The first step is to establish which of these areas you most readily identify yourself as falling within (i.e. which best covers the *majority* of your professional work). Read the definitions provided in the 'Competency Requirements for Registered Nutritionist'.

1.3 If, after reading the definitions, you remain unsure which specialism to apply for, please use the detailed specialty examples of relevant areas of knowledge, skills and application required which are listed against core competencies 1-4 to help you reach a decision.

1.4 If you consider that you are able to meet two specialist areas equally, you will need to show that you are able to meet the competency requirements in both areas. The additional paperwork that you will need to send is stated in section 5.1 of this document 'What do I need to send'.

General information for completing the application form

2.1 Preparing your application can seem daunting, but having applied for a job you should already be familiar with how to demonstrate that your skills and experience meet certain required criteria. If you have made a sensible effort at completing the application, the assessor is unlikely to reject it outright. If anything in your application is unclear, the assessor will ask the AfN registration Office to obtain more information.

2.2 Once you have gathered your evidence, we estimate that it will be less than a day to prepare your Competency Mapping Form and write your Supporting Statement. If you are taking longer than this seek advice from the Registration Office.

How is my application assessed?

3.1 After preliminary checks by our Registration Office, applications are assessed by an assessor. In accordance with AfN 'Registration Rules for the Competence, Eligibility and Procedures for UKVRN Registration', it may be necessary to send your application to a second assessor, and in some circumstances to a third assessor. You will be kept informed at each stage.

3.2 Our assessors are experienced Registered Nutritionists across all specialist areas of competence. They assess applications as part of their commitment to raising standards within the profession. All assessors are trained and have access to guidance documents to assist their decision making.

How long will it take to assess my application?

4.1 Applications take between 8 to 12 weeks to assess. The exact timeframe will depend on the clarity of the application you make, the speed with which your references are received and whether more than one assessment is required (please note applications cannot be sent to an assessor until references have been received).

What do I need to send?

5.1 Applicants need to submit:

- Completed 'Application for Registered Nutritionist (RNutr) via Portfolio' (all tabs) including uploads of:
 - o **A certified copy of identification** - photo page of passport or driving licence signed by an independent professional (e.g. notary, doctor, lawyer, police officer, teacher, line manager) stating "I certify this is a true copy" together with their name, job title, signature and date.
 - o Supporting Statement
 - o Curriculum Vitae (CV)
 - o Portfolio of evidence (no more than 100 digital pages) and map this on the Competency Mapping tabs of the application form (Tabs 7 & 8)
 - o **Certified copies of your degree transcript, or of your degree certificate(s)** with an outline syllabus objectives/module descriptors. Photocopies can be certified by an independent professional (e.g. notary, doctor, lawyer, police officer, teacher, line manager) or authorised administrator at your university or college, and should include the statement

“I certify this is a true copy” together with their name, job title, signature and date. It must not be countersigned by a relative or close personal friend.

- A Statement of Comparability from UK ENIC (formerly NARIC) if using a qualification from overseas as part of your evidence.
- If you are applying for the specialism of (Healthcare – Medical) you are also required to send a copy of your GMC registration, current licence to practice and certificate of good standing.

5.2 In addition to the above, applicants for two specialisms need to submit:

- A Supporting Statement which covers both specialisms, or two Supporting Statements
- Evidence for **each** specialism

How do I pay?

6.1 The relevant fee can be found on the website. The initial application fee is comprised of an administration charge covering the costs of the assessment and the first year's registration fee.

6.2 The administration charge is non-refundable. In the event that your application is not successful, the first year's registration fee will be refunded to you.

6.3 Payment:

- When you submit your application you will automatically be taken to a payment page, where payment can be made by credit/debit card or via a PayPal account. (N.B. we do not currently accept Diners or American Express).
- Please note applications without a payment do not get sent from the website to the Registration Team for processing.

Qualifications

7.1 Please provide details of all qualifications relevant to registration and your evidence submission, with ENIC statement(s) if not obtained in the UK.

What is Fitness to Practice?

8.1 As part of the application, you are asked to make declarations regarding Fitness to Practice. More information can be found on the AfN website in our [Fitness to Practice Rules](#).

Completing the Competency Mapping Tabs (Part A and Part B)

9.1 The competency mapping tabs have been designed as a tool to assist you with identifying where your knowledge and understanding came from, plus how you have gained the experience, building on your knowledge and understanding, to meet the core competencies for registration in your specialist area. They can also help you to structure your application. It is important to demonstrate your experience as well as both the source of your knowledge and how you have maintained this when applying to become a Registered Nutritionist.

9.2 The competency mapping tabs can be thought of as a 'person specification' that you might see in a job description. You will cover all the core competency areas in your professional daily life but may simply never have thought about your activities and skills in the terms described by the examples listed.

9.3 Approach the form systematically, the way you would apply for a job, thinking of each competency as a bullet point in a person or role specification. Try not to overanalyse each competency; they are not there to trick you! There is a template on the website that you can use to gather the information before pasting this into the online application form (Tab 7/8)

9.4 A minimum of one example of the source of knowledge must be provided for each of the sub-competencies on Mapping Form A (Tab 7). On Mapping Form B (Tab 8), applicants must be able to provide at least one example of practical experience for each of the Core Competencies 1-4 (Science, Food Chain, Social/Behaviour, Health and Wellbeing), although you may find it helpful to demonstrate to the assessor your consistent and independent application of evidence-based practice by providing at least 3 or 4 examples.

9.5 All sub-competencies listed under Core Competency 5 (PC1-13) must be addressed (this can be done through a combination of evidence examples and the Supporting Statement). Individuals applying for the specialism of (Healthcare – Medical) must also address sub-competencies PC14-PC16.

9.6 Make it obvious to the assessor which pieces of evidence relate to which competency by clearly labelling your evidence and filling in the evidence column on the Competency Mapping tabs. Provide a sentence in the comments column if you need to explain which part of the evidence the assessor should look at or to provide clarity as to how the evidence relates to you (e.g. I wrote this report as part of my role at x)

Do I need to be an expert in everything?

10.1 No. You must be able to evidence your knowledge and understanding of all the ANutr sub-competencies as this is the baseline standard for registration on the UKVRN. You must be able to also evidence how you have applied your knowledge & understanding within your practical experience covering all five core competencies. However, you do not need to be an expert in all of the sub-competencies listed in the specialism examples. The exception is Core Competency 5 – Professional Conduct – where all the sub competencies must be fully evidenced

10.2 Your application will be assessed as a whole and the assessors will come to a balanced conclusion about your knowledge, understanding and professional experience. In your application it is important to demonstrate that you are aware of the limits of your own knowledge and of your strengths and weaknesses rather than attempting to prove you are an expert in everything.

10.3 You may want to draw on knowledge and/or skills gained on your university course(s) and it is acceptable to reference your university modules and transcript even if this was completed some time ago. However, it is important to show how you have developed as a professional since graduation. For this reason you must also include examples of your continuing professional development, and how you apply them in your current or previous role(s) in order to put your knowledge of the competencies into practice. Your examples of your practical experience must all be post your first degree in nutrition.

Writing the Supporting Statement

11.1 This Supporting Statement is your covering letter and a vital part of the application. It introduces you to the assessor and allows you a space to showcase your experience and ‘make your case’ for registration. As in a covering letter for a job it should summarise your skills and experience and explain how you meet each Core Competency in your chosen specialism & where you have gained/advanced your knowledge of the sub-competencies. It is highly recommended to cross-reference the information in your supporting statement with the relevant core competencies and submitted evidence using brackets. For example *member of local research ethics committee (CC5c)* or *produced catering standards for local authority (Evidence 2)*.

11.2 To keep the assessment process fair, assessors only judge your application on what has been explicitly presented or explained to them. Do not assume that the assessor knows you or can interpret your experience, knowledge or understanding.

11.3 There is no set length for the Supporting Statement. It would typically be approximately three pages of A4 long.

11.4 Your statement will be made stronger if you keep in mind the principles of reflective practice when describing examples of your experience. Reflective practice is thinking about the things you have done, what you have learned, what you might change or do differently in future. An example is the STAR technique:

Situation - provide a brief outline of the situation or setting

Task - outline what you did

Action - outline how you did it, and

Result - describe the outcomes

This is something you are likely to have used in interviews and job applications, even if you were not aware of it. Reflective practice can be useful for your CPD and professional life in general. Aim to use this approach in your statement for each piece of evidence, linking them to the relevant core competencies.

How to demonstrate competency – what counts as evidence?

12.1 Effective evidence should demonstrate that work is clearly your own, or, if collaborative work, your input should be clear. The evidence should show how your knowledge has been applied in practice.

12.2 It may not be possible to find documentary evidence for everything (for example if your work is of a confidential nature, or the document in question does not clearly demonstrate your input). In these cases you may find it useful to use the statement to expand on what is missing or unclear and why, or to use other forms of indirect evidence such as a testimonial from a client or colleague. This can then be used alongside evidence of other activities you have undertaken in this competency area.

12.3 Assembling the evidence is likely to be the most time-consuming part of the application process. You may have kept a record of CPD and useful documents. However, even if not, you should be able to find appropriate evidence. While it is important to present the best evidence you can, if an assessor needs to know more they will ask you for more information or evidence; although this will extend the time period for processing your assessment and application.

Examples of acceptable types of evidence

13.1 Nutrition is an extremely varied profession and registrants have a wide range of backgrounds. For this reason it is difficult for AfN to provide a definitive list of evidence that can be provided by individuals to show how their level of professional knowledge, skills and experience meets each of the required core competencies.

13.2 The following table provides an indication (not an exhaustive list) of suitable evidence that could be used to support an application for registration.

- Current job description
- Copy of work appraisal and objectives
- Scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals (abstract only required)
- Internal reports or copies of reports in public domain
- Technical reports provided (company/product name can be redacted if required)
- Product development reports (company/product name can be redacted if required)
- Lecture or presentation notes or slides
- Lesson plans or lecture outlines
- Educational material or training aids prepared, produced, developed or delivered
- Marketing materials produced
- Copy of research bid/grant application

- Summary of client reports (personal details that could identify the client must be redacted)
- Published list of editorial board membership for relevant journal
- Front cover and contents page(s) of authored/edited book
- Published webpages (hard copy or links) with evidence of authorship, input or contribution (e.g. email submissions, testimonials etc)
- Certificate of attendance at relevant conference, with conference programme or content details, relevant conference papers
- Input into consultation documents
- Involvement with research process (i.e. copy of final report)
- Strategy or policy development reports (including evidence base)
- Advice documents on the delivery of nutrition or dietary policy issues
- Participation in policy development groups
- Involvement with programme committees, contribution to government, scientific committee, ad hoc groups or other working and guidance development groups (reports or minutes containing name and/or contribution)
- Conduct and analysis of research (publication or/report)
- Membership of advisory bodies
- Commissioning of research
- Reports to NGOs or other stakeholders
- Organising and contributing to stakeholder events
- Responding to media enquiries

Important points about evidence

- 14.1 It must be clear that the evidence relates to **YOUR** knowledge and skills.
- 14.2 You can use one piece of evidence to support more than one competency sub point, if appropriate.
- 14.3 You should state whether lectures and presentations are ones you have attended or given. If attended proof of attendance will be required.
- 14.4 Often abstracts and/or title pages and contents are sufficient. Do not send entire or large documents. **Remember your portfolio should be no more than 100 digital pages.**
- 14.5 Your CV and Supporting Statement are **not** included within the portfolio page limit.

How to present your evidence

- 15.1 It is important to present your evidence correctly so that your application can be properly assessed. Poorly presented evidence can weaken or delay your application, and make it harder for assessors to come to a decision. Provide PDF rather than Word documents where possible.
- 15.2 Evidence must be given for each of the required core competencies of the specialist area you are applying for.

How to submit your evidence

- 16.1 Applications must be submitted via the website.
- 16.2 You must number or label your evidence and link it to the Competency Mapping (tabs 7&8) and Supporting Statement.
- 16.3 Aim to present your evidence in the order you have listed it on the Competency Mapping Tabs.

- 16.4 **Do not** merge all your evidence into a single PDF/Document – keep each piece of evidence as a separate file. .
- 16.5 Each specialism applied for must be accompanied by evidence of **no more than 100 digital pages**.

For more information

Please contact registration@associationfornutrition.org

We run monthly Zoom Clinics to provide support for applications. These can be booked via:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/479113339897>