

DIETICIAN

What do you do in this career?

A dietician is a scientist who specialises in food and nutrition. They study the impact that food has on the human body and how to make optimum use of the foods that are available to us. A dietician will use a healthy balanced diet to combat illness and malnutrition and advise people on what is healthy and unhealthy behaviour regarding food.

What are the necessary personality traits?

- ✎ An excellent communicator
- ✎ Reliable and responsible
- ✎ Organised
- ✎ Detail-orientated and meticulous
- ✎ Enjoy working with people
- ✎ A good problem solver
- ✎ Patient and friendly
- ✎ Service-orientated

Where do I train?

Several of the Universities in South Africa offer this course.

What school subjects do I need?

- ✎ Mathematics (not Mathematical Literacy)
- ✎ Physical Science
- ✎ Life Science

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The dietician is not involved in preparing food (like a chef) but focuses more on the nutritional value and content of the food. They will consult with clients and design menus that are tailor-made for their clients' specific needs. Dietitians work with healthy people who want to eat a more balanced diet, they work with people who need to lose weight, who have specific allergies, pregnant women and even with sick people who need specific dietary requirements.

A dietician works within the health profession and therefore he or she must have a good knowledge of chemistry, microbiology, medication, anatomy, psychology and on how the human body functions.

Where will I work?

Dietitians are found in a wide variety of settings. They can work as consultants and start their own practices and many work in conjunction with medical doctors. Some dietitians even go into the catering field. Here, they make sure that the quality of food produced is of a good standard. Many dietitians are also involved in community work where they educate people on what a healthy diet is. Dietitians also work in education and research laboratories.

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