

A GUIDE TO THE TYPES OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF NUTRITION

Nutritional Therapists and Dietitians are experts in the use of food and nutrition to promote health and manage disease. They advise people on what to eat in order to support a healthy lifestyle or achieve a specific health-related goal. One distinct difference is that Nutritional Therapists don't work in hospital settings and are not trained in critical care nutrition management.

	NUTRITIONAL THERAPISTS Nutritional Therapy is a systems biology-based model that empowers both patients and practitioners to work together to achieve the highest expression of health by addressing the underlying causes of disease. Nutritional Therapy utilises a unique system and personalised therapeutic interventions to support individuals in achieving optimal wellness. Nutritional Therapists are practitioners who are comprehensively trained using Nutritional Therapy in clinical practice. The title 'Nutritional Therapist' is currently not protected by law. Many Nutritional Therapists call themselves Nutritionists. A Nutritional Therapist who is a member of NTOI must meet and adhere to Code of Practice as set out by the organisation.	DIETITIANS A dietitian uses the science of nutrition to devise eating plans for patients to treat medical conditions. They promote good health by helping to facilitate a positive change in food choice. The title 'dietitian' is protected by statute. Only individuals registered with CORU may describe themselves as a dietitian. Many Dietitians also call themselves Nutritionists.	NUTRITIONISTS Nutritionist is currently not a protected term therefore, currently anyone can call themselves "a nutritionist". A variety of people give advice on food including individuals who are qualified in related professions e.g. fitness trainers. However, when taking advice, it is wise to speak with either an NTOI registered NT or a dietitian as both of these professions are regulated and comply with ongoing training (CPD) requirements.	HEALTH OR WELLNESS COACHES Health coaching is currently not a protected term therefore, currently anyone can call themselves "a coach". Coaches are trained to give general nutrition advice only. A variety of people give advice on food including individuals who are qualified in related professions e.g. fitness trainers, food bloggers etc. However, when taking advice, it is wise to speak with either an NT or a dietitian as both of these professions are regulated and comply with ongoing training (CPD) requirements.
Regulation	Self-regulated via NTOI	Statutorily regulated	None	Unknown
Education	3.5 year diploma (minimum 0 in Nutritional Therapy* plus a minimum of 200 hours of supervised clinical practice.	Bachelor of Science	No defined criteria. Can vary from online courses to MSc.	Often online training; anything from 3 days to 9 months. Coaches are limited in the supplements they can prescribe.
Strict Code of Conduct	✓	✓	✗	✗
Offer Fad Diets as a Programme	✗	✗	✓	✓
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	30 CPD per year	30 CPD per year	✗	✗
CPD Audit	✓ - Annual	✗	✗	✗
Place of Work	Private sector	Primarily within the HSE or private sector	Private sector	Private sector
Professional Membership	Nutritional Therapists of Ireland (NTOI)	Irish Nutrition and Dietetics Institute (INDI)	✗	✗
Evidence-Based	✓	✓	✗	✗
Innovative Approach to Nutritional Science	✓	✗	✗	✗
Full Professional Indemnity Insurance	✓	✓	✗	✗
Recommends Functional Nutrition Testing	✓	Sometimes	Possible	✗