

Research Doctorate in
Clinical Nutrition
University of North Florida

51.3102

Board of Governors
Staff Analysis

July 17, 2023





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Summary

The University of North Florida (UNF) proposes reclassifying the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition to a Research Doctorate. The Board of Governors approved the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition at its March 19, 2015, meeting. The program was implemented fall 2016. The program's curriculum originally began with advanced practice project courses, but the curriculum has evolved to include research core requirements and dissertation credit hours. Graduates of the program will continue to be prepared for employment in the clinical setting. Additionally, they will be trained to conduct research to improve the practice of nutrition and dietetics and teach in both research-based and practice-based nutrition and dietetics postsecondary programs. The University of North Florida's Board of Trustees approved the program on July 10, 2023. If approved by the Board of Governors, the proposed Research Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition will be the third research doctorate in dietetics and nutritional sciences in the System and the only program in CIP 51.3102.

Program Description

The Research Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition will be offered by UNF's Brooks College of Health and replace the current Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition. The program's curriculum will include advanced research methods, advanced practice residency, and dissertation credit hours.

Once admitted, students will complete 54 credit hours. These credit hours include 33 hours of nutrition and research courses, six hours of residency work, and 15 credit hours of dissertation work. Students are considered doctoral candidates when they successfully complete the Pre-Doctoral Dissertation course. Once students have completed their doctoral dissertation, they must successfully defend their dissertation and meet all graduate school graduation requirements to be awarded the Doctorate of Clinical Nutrition.

The proposed reclassification from the professional doctorate to a research doctorate is based on the shift in curriculum and is the only change to the existing program. There would be no required changes in the program budget, faculty, or resources.

If approved by the Board of Governors, UNF will implement the program in spring 2024 at the currently approved differentiated graduate-level tuition rate of \$750.00 per credit hour for Florida resident students and non-resident students.

Need for Graduates in the Labor Market

The proposed doctoral program will continue to prepare students for employment in the clinical setting and will also prepare future scholars in nutrition and dietetics. Graduates will be able to teach in both research-based and practice-based nutrition and dietetics postsecondary programs.

According to the Commission on Dietetic Registration, beginning January 1, 2024, the minimum degree requirement for eligibility to take the registration examination for

dietitians will change from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree. As such, there is an increased need for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists with a terminal degree. Practitioners with a terminal degree are essential to not only prepare future practitioners but also to advance leadership, research, and evidence-based practice within the profession.

The institution provided employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, and the Commission on Dietetic Registration to demonstrate workforce demand.

National and Florida Workforce Demand

Table 1 highlights the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, reflecting the need for dietitians, nutritionists, and postsecondary health specialties educators. In Florida, job growth for dietitians and nutritionists is anticipated to increase by about 10% over the next eight years and a projected increase of 7% nationally over the next ten years. The job growth in Florida for postsecondary health specialty teachers is anticipated to increase by about 26%. Similar job growth is expected nationally, with a projected increase of 24% over the next ten years.

Table 1: Labor Market Demand, CIP Code 51.3102

Occupations	Percent Change in Job Openings		Annual Average Job Openings		Total # of New Jobs		Education Level Needed for Entry
	FL 2022-30	U.S. 2021-31	FL 2022-30	U.S. 2021-31	FL 2022-30	U.S. 2021-31	
Dietitians & Nutritionists	9.8%	7.0%	320	5,600	381	5,100	Bachelor's Degree *Effective 01/01/24, will be a Master's Degree
Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	25.9%	24.1%	1,575	28,900	3,003	59,400	Doctoral Degree

Sources:

Date Retrieved: 07/15/2023

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics - <https://data.bls.gov/projections/occupationProj>

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity - <http://www.floridajobs.org/labor-market-information/data-center/statistical-programs/employment-projections>

Both occupations show positive growth in job openings, with health specialties teachers in the postsecondary field having a higher percentage of change and a more significant number of job openings than dietitians and nutritionists. Postsecondary health specialties teachers require a higher level of education, typically a doctoral degree, while dietitians and nutritionists need a bachelor's degree to enter the field. As previously noted, beginning January 1, 2024, the educational requirement for eligibility

to take the registration examination for dietitians will change from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree.

Student Enrollment and Degrees Awarded

The University of North Florida's program would be the third research doctorate in the System. Their program is the only one offered under CIP 51.3102. Florida International University (FIU) offers a research doctorate under CIP 51.3101. The University of Florida (UF) offers a research doctorate under CIP 30.1901 and reported that UNF's proposed program is not equivalent to the one offered at UF. Both UF and FIU responded positively to UNF's proposed reclassification, indicated the proposed program would not negatively impact enrollment in their programs, and expressed interest in exploring opportunities for collaboration.

Historical Student Enrollment in UNF's Professional Clinical Doctorate

Student enrollment in the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition at UNF has increased since the program was implemented in fall 2016. The student enrollment in the program over the past five academic years is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Student Enrollment

Institution	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023
UNF	38	51	48	42	47

Source: Board ODA Analysis of Degrees Awarded by CIP, retrieved 07/15/2023.

Degrees in Research Doctorates Awarded By Institution

The University of North Florida's program would be the third research doctorate in nutrition and dietetics in the System. As shown in Table 3, the programs, including the professional doctorate at UNF, awarded 18 doctoral degrees in the 2021-22 Academic Year.

Table 3: Degrees Awarded in CIP 51.3102, 51.3101, & 30.1901

Institution	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022
FIU	3	4	7	3	3
UF	8	3	4	6	6
UNF	-	-	4	5	9
Total	11	7	15	14	18

Source: Board ODA Analysis of Degrees Awarded by CIP, retrieved 07/15/2023.

Conclusion and Board Staff Comments

The University of North Florida provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate the reclassification of the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition to the Research Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition will help support the workforce need for individuals to

teach in both research-based and practice-based nutrition and dietetics postsecondary programs. Board staff have no concerns regarding the proposed reclassification of the program.

Check "yes" or "no" for each box in Appendix A and include comments beneath the criterion, as needed.

Appendix A

Assessment of the University Review Process in accordance with Board of Governors Regulation 8.011

Prior to submitting a program proposal to the Board of Governors' office, the institution and its Board of trustees are required to ensure that all programs meet the requirements of Board of Governors Regulation 8.011. Section C is an assessment of the university's review process to ensure that all criteria have been considered.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Check either the "yes" or "no" box and make comments beneath the criterion as appropriate.

1. **Overall** – *The proposal is in the correct format, includes all necessary signatures, and contains the complete and accurate table for faculty effort.*

YES NO

- The proposal has been approved by the university board of trustees and includes all required signatures.**

The Board of Governors approved the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition at its March 19, 2015, meeting. The UNF Board of Trustees approved the program proposal for reclassification of the professional doctorate to a research doctorate at their July 10, 2023, meeting.

- The university has provided a proposal written in the standard State University System format, which addresses new academic program approval criteria outlined in Board of Governors Regulation 8.011.**

The University of North Florida submitted the proposed reclassification of the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition in an abbreviated format, as this request is for the reclassification of an already Board approved program. All proposed changes address the criteria outlined in Board of Governors Regulation 8.011.

- The university has provided data that supports the need for an additional program in the State University System as well as letters of support or concern from the provosts of other state universities with substantially similar programs.**

If approved, the proposed Research Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition will be the third program in the System but will be the only program in the System under CIP 51.3102. The University of North Florida contacted representatives from the other two System institutions that offer a research doctorate. Florida International University and the University of Florida responded positively and indicated the proposed program would not negatively impact enrollments. The representative from UF reported the proposed program is not equivalent to the one they offer.

2. Budget

Reclassifying the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition to the Research Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition will not impact the budget.

READINESS

Check either the "yes" or "no" box and make comments beneath the criterion as appropriate.

1. Program Quality

The Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition has not been through the program review process to date. However, the Master's and Dietetic Internship Program and the Didactic Program in Dietetics have recently been through an accreditation site visit. The reviewers made minor recommendations. All recommendations provided have been implemented, such as revising syllabi for language about accreditation standards and creating additional documentation to facilitate tracking of competencies. The Master's and Dietetic Internship Program and the Didactic Program in Dietetics were granted continued accreditation through December 31, 2029.

2. Curriculum - *The proposal provides evidence that the university has evaluated the proposed curriculum and found that it describes an appropriate and sequenced course of study, and that the university has evaluated the appropriateness of specialized accreditation for the program.*

YES NO

- The university has reviewed the curriculum and found that the course of study presented is appropriate to meet specific learning outcomes and industry-driven competencies discussed in the proposal.**

The University of North Florida provided the curricular framework for the proposed program. It included the total number of semester credit hours for the degree and each course, listed the required courses and electives, and provided a sequenced course of study for the program. The program has a total of 54 credit hours, including 15 credit hours of dissertation requirements.

- The university anticipates seeking accreditation for the proposed doctoral program or provides a reasonable explanation as to why accreditation is not being sought.**

At present, the field of nutrition and dietetics lacks formal accreditation for doctoral programs. However, the UNF faculty have been collaborating with the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) to develop comprehensive standards for doctoral programs. ACEND accredits the UNF undergraduate and master's programs in nutrition and dietetics.

3. Faculty – *The proposal provides evidence that the university is prepared to ensure a critical mass of faculty will be available to initiate the program based on estimated enrollments and that faculty, in the aggregate, have the necessary experience and research activity to sustain a doctoral program.*

YES NO

- The university has reviewed the evidence provided and found that there is a critical mass of faculty available to initiate the program based on enrollments.**

The University of North Florida identified five existing faculty members who will participate in the proposed program. The department is recruiting two new faculty members for the department, with the qualifications for teaching the research doctorate and engaging in dissertation committees.

- The university has reviewed the evidence provided and found that the faculty, in aggregate, has the necessary experience and research activity to sustain the program.**

The University of North Florida reviewed the credentials of all faculty members participating in the program. The institution provided biographical sketches for all faculty participating in the program in Appendix E of the proposal.

- The university has reviewed the evidence provided and found the academic unit(s) associated with this new degree to be productive in teaching, research, and service.**

The University of North Florida provided multiple examples showing that the Brooks College of Health faculty are productive in teaching, research, and service. Evidence included student headcount, awarded degrees, total funding acquired in the past two years, publications, and current faculty research agendas.

- If appropriate, the university has committed to hiring additional faculty in later years, based on estimated enrollments.**

The University of North Florida has committed to hiring two new faculty members for the department, with the qualifications to teach in the research doctorate and engage in dissertation committees.

4. Resources

Reclassifying the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition to the Research Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition will not impact the current resources.



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