

FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES

The Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences integrates the interdisciplinary study of nutritional sciences—rooted in biology, biochemistry, and the study of how diet influences health and disease—with the scientific and engineering principles that underpin food production, processing, and evaluation. Drawing from chemistry, physiology, microbiology, and engineering, the department examines how nutrients, foods, and food systems impact human health, sustainability, and global food challenges. Students benefit from extensive hands-on learning, faculty mentorship, research engagement, and industry connections that prepare them for careers across healthcare, food industries, public health, research, and regulatory environments.

FOOD SCIENCE OVERVIEW

Food science applies chemistry, physics, microbiology, and engineering to understand and improve the production, processing, safety, quality, and sustainability of foods. The program emphasizes technical competence, problem-solving, communication skills, and hands-on laboratory experiences using real food scenarios. Students have access to advanced facilities including the Food Application Lab and the Babcock Dairy Plant, and many enhance their learning through internships, undergraduate research, and participation in the Food Science Club. With nearly 100% job placement, graduates pursue careers in product development, quality assurance/control, processing and engineering, sensory science, technical sales, management, and food law and regulation across corporate, governmental, and nonprofit sectors.

NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES OVERVIEW

NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES, BS

The Nutritional Sciences, BS focuses on how the body utilizes food for growth and metabolism in both disease and non-disease states, providing a strong foundation in biology, chemistry, physiology, and biochemistry to help students understand the mechanisms through which dietary factors act and are metabolized; this curriculum supports preparation for health-related graduate programs—including medical, physician assistant, dental, and physical therapy programs—as well as careers in research, clinical settings, and the food and nutrition industry.

NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES, BS NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

In contrast, the Nutritional Sciences, BS Nutrition and Dietetics program integrates biochemical, physiological, social, and managerial concepts in the science of nutrition to prepare students for careers as registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), offering pathways into hospitals, public health agencies, the food industry, performance nutrition, and research environments, all supported by an ACEND-accredited Didactic Program in Dietetics.

DEGREES/MAJORS/CERTIFICATES

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- Fermented Foods and Beverages, Certificate (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/food-nutritional-sciences/fermented-foods-beverages-certificate/>)
- Food Science, BS (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/food-nutritional-sciences/food-science-bs/>)
- Nutritional Sciences, BS (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/food-nutritional-sciences/nutritional-sciences-bs/>)
- Nutritional Sciences, BS Nutrition and Dietetics (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/agricultural-life-sciences/food-nutritional-sciences/nutritional-sciences-bs-nutrition-dietetics/>)