

# **NATUROPATHIC NUTRITION ASSOCIATION**

## **CORE ELEMENTS** of knowledge & understanding for **Naturopathic Nutritional Therapy Education**



**[www.nna-uk.com](http://www.nna-uk.com)**

**Categories and minimum SEEC equivalent levels for the Core Elements document** – details of the level descriptors can be found at:  
[www.seec.org.uk/docs/resources.htm](http://www.seec.org.uk/docs/resources.htm)

<b>Naturopathic Principles &amp; Philosophy</b>	
• Key Naturopathic Principles	Level 4
<b>Health Sciences</b>	
• Anatomy & Physiology	Level 4
• Biochemistry	Level 4
• Pathophysiology	Level 5
• Pharmacology	Level 5
• Food Chemistry & Safety	Levels 4 & 5
• Dietary Therapy & Physiology	Levels 4, 5 & 6
• Detoxification techniques	Level 5
<b>Nutritional Therapeutics</b>	
• Factors affecting health & wellbeing	Levels 5 & 6
• Assessment & Therapeutic Protocols	Levels 5 & 6
• Healthy Lifestyle Advice	Level 4
<b>Practice Management, Ethics &amp; Professional Development</b>	Level 5
<b>Research</b>	Levels 5 & 6
<b>Clinical Practice</b>	Levels 4, 5 & 6

## Study time

The minimum length of study time has been determined by the Naturopathic Nutrition Association as being in the region of 1500 hours. These hours must include appropriate clinical studies and assessment in a clinical environment. The minimum number of contact hours with tutors has been determined as 100, of which a minimum of 50 hours should be supervised clinical practice training.

In addition to Anatomy & Physiology, and Health Sciences appropriate to Naturopathic Nutrition, clinical studies are likely to include complex case scenarios, role play, presentations, observation of practitioners, production of information sheets and handouts, dietary analysis, menu programmes, the gathering of information and reflective practice

# NATUROPATHIC PRINCIPLES and PHILOSOPHY

Level 4

## Aims

- To understand the naturopathic principles and philosophy of health and disease.
- To describe the key concepts of conventional medicine and naturopathic nutrition.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of naturopathic philosophy, core principles and definitions.
2. Discuss key similarities and differences between conventional medicine and naturopathy.

# HEALTH SCIENCES

## ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY

Level 4

## Aims

- To provide knowledge and understanding of the relevant areas of anatomy and physiology that are essential to the understanding of health and disease as understood by conventional medicine and relevant to naturopathic practice.
- To understand the naturopathic concept of the web-like interaction of physiological processes.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Explain the basic physical terms used in relation to anatomy and physiology and locate key structures within the body.
2. Describe the structure and function of organelles, cells, tissues, and organs of the body.
3. Describe the structure and functioning of the major physiological systems of the body\* including their integration and interaction within the body.
4. Explain the key homeostatic mechanisms within the body.
5. Explain the cellular basis of genetics and the patterns of inheritance.

\* *skeletal, muscular, nervous, sensory, endocrine, respiratory, digestive, urinary, reproductive, circulatory, integumentary, lymphatic & immune.*

## BIOCHEMISTRY

Level 4

## Aims

- To understand the sources, structure and function of macronutrients, micronutrients, enzymes, nucleic acids and water, their metabolic processes and interactions, and their roles with regard to individual dietary requirements.
- To understand the anabolic and catabolic processes, including energy production within cells, and their control at molecular, cellular, tissue and whole body levels.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the structure and function of carbohydrates, lipids, proteins, enzymes and nucleic acids
2. Describe bonding and molecular interactions in the body.
3. Explain properties of water and the role of buffers in the body.
4. Describe the metabolism of carbohydrates, lipids and proteins and their control and integration and energy productions within cells.
5. Describe the metabolism of micronutrients, e.g. vitamins, minerals and trace elements.
6. Explain the interactions of micronutrients at the cellular level.
7. Explain the role of enzyme cofactors in key metabolic pathways.
8. Explain factors influencing individual dietary requirements for macro and micronutrients, and other orthomolecular compounds.
9. Suggest sources of macro and micronutrients, food supplements and other orthomolecular compounds.
10. Suggest typical signs and symptoms that could be associated with a deficiency, excess (toxicity) and imbalance of macro and micronutrients and other orthomolecular compounds.
11. Discuss factors that may affect nutrient bioavailability.
12. Discuss energy production in the context of food intake and expenditure.

## **PATHOPHYSIOLOGY and PHARMACOLOGY**

Level 5

### **Aims**

- To comprehend the aetiology, clinical features and evaluation of a broad range of common diseases in all bodily systems.
- To understand the pathways by which dysfunction may lead to disease processes and degeneration and the factors involved.
- To provide knowledge to engender a critical awareness of 'red flag' symptoms and develop an understanding of the limits of your own therapeutic capabilities and thereby enhance the skills for appropriate referral.
- To introduce the value and skill of researching information in practice.
- To understand the actions and side effects of the major classes of medications and how to access information about pharmaceuticals.
- To understand the interactions between drugs, food and food supplements.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Apply appropriate naturopathic assessment procedures.
2. Understand the differences between sub-clinical dysfunction and disease.
3. Explain human disease processes including cell mutations, neoplasia, tissue injury, inflammation and repair.
4. Discuss how normal cell and tissue structure and function can change to produce abnormal cell growths, tissue injury and inflammation.
5. Discuss factors that may cause pathology in all body systems.
6. Describe how the neurological and endocrine systems and metabolic processes respond to ageing, stress and tissue injury.

7. Demonstrate an understanding of common disease affecting the musculoskeletal, integumentary, nervous, endocrine, cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, reproductive and urinary systems.
8. Assess a wide range of disorders and explain their symptoms in both orthodox medical and naturopathic terms.
9. Recognise potential 'Red Flags' signs and symptoms and recognise when to recommend clients for conventional medical assessment.
10. Understand common conventional diagnostic procedures and their clinical applications. Demonstrate the research skills required to find, review and evaluate information on commonly encountered diseases.
11. Discuss the theories of infections and immunity in the disease process.
12. Identify information from standard reference sources about possible interactions between drugs, foods, food supplements and herbal medicines.
13. Discuss the major classes of medical and recreational drugs, their general actions and possible side effects.

## **FOOD CHEMISTRY and SAFETY**

Levels 4 & 5

### **Aims**

- To explore food chemistry
- To understand basic factors involved in food production and sale.
- To explore factors relating to the safety of food.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Discuss common sources of food toxins, contamination and genetically modified food.
2. Understand factors relating to food safety.
3. Discuss adverse reactions to foods.
4. Identify and discuss sources of information relating to the regulations governing food production and labelling in the UK.

## **NATUROPATHIC DIETARY THERAPY and PHYSIOLOGY**

Levels 4, 5 & 6

### **Aims**

- To provide the knowledge of traditional naturopathic nutritional approaches.
- To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the naturopathic context of nutrition as a means to maintaining good health and addressing disease.
- To develop the skills to advise on and modify diets appropriately in order to use food as a therapeutic tool.
- To provide knowledge and understanding of the impact of diet in relation to health and dysfunction.
- To understand the role of whole foods in the maintenance and restoration of health.
- To develop a naturopathic perspective on the scope of use of food supplements

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Explain common influences of soil health and food processing that may influence the nutritional content of food.
2. Understand whole food from a holistic and vitalistic perspective.
3. Explain the evolutionary aspects of human nutrition.
4. Incorporate traditional naturopathic knowledge with a science-based approach to nutrition.
5. Understand the appropriate application of a variety of naturopathic therapeutic diets\* for the maintenance of health and addressing disease, including the application of foods with specific functions within the overall diet.
6. Discuss factors affecting food choice.
7. Describe how dietary requirements can vary according to individual requirements and through the life cycle.
8. Discuss the influence of diet and food supplements on bodily function.
9. Analyse and evaluate food intake and construct dietary programmes that can help maintain and achieve optimal health, and aid in the prevention of disease.
10. Demonstrate an understanding of food allergies and sensitivities, laboratory testing techniques, and the management of allergies and sensitivities.

\* The following dietary approaches are possible examples of those to be studied: alkaline-forming; rotation; exclusion; vegan; low purine; macrobiotic; raw food; to correct labile blood glucose regulation; metabolic typing etc. etc.

## **DETOXIFICATION TECHNIQUES**

Level 5

### **Aims**

- To provide a comprehensive understanding of the physiology of eliminatory pathways and of their interrelationship.
- To promote the understanding of the concept of detoxification of the internal environment
- To explain how diet, lifestyle and environment may contribute to a toxic internal environment.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Explain the normal physiological processes involved in the elimination pathways of the skin, kidneys, lungs and bowels, and the detoxification pathways of the liver.
2. Explain how a toxic internal environment may result from the influence of diet, lifestyle and environment.
3. Understand potential detoxification reactions and their appropriate management.
4. Identify individual situations where detoxification may be appropriate or contra-indicated.

# NUTRITIONAL THERAPEUTICS

## FACTORS AFFECTING HEALTH STATUS & WELLBEING

Levels 5 & 6

### Aims

- To establish the relationship between the health of an individual and commonly encountered factors that may have a negative influence on health.
- To understand and identify the multiple causative factors that may create functional disturbance and disease processes.
- To understand the importance of exercise and sunlight on general well-being.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Understand the need for balance within bodily systems in order to maintain well-being and health.
2. Discuss factors that may disrupt balance within bodily systems, resulting in progression towards lack of well-being and disease.
3. Discuss factors affecting food choice and how they may impact on health and well-being: psychological, physiological, sociological, economical or environmental.
4. Understand how the impact of illness may extend beyond the presenting symptoms.
5. Explain the importance of exercise on general well-being and advise on exercise as appropriate for the individual.
6. Explain the importance of sunlight in the maintenance of health.

## ASSESSMENT AND THERAPEUTIC PROTOCOLS

Levels 5 & 6

### Aims

- To provide an understanding of the principles of naturopathic nutrition.
- To develop the skills that would enable the student to apply a naturopathic approach to nutrition in order to help effect optimal health and well-being in the client.
- To understand how naturopathic nutrition may be used to support other systems of healthcare, e.g. conventional medicine, herbal medicine, homeopathy etc.
- To competently apply, interpret and evaluate assessment and diagnostic methods.
- To understand and identify the multiple causative factors which are creating functional disturbance and disease processes.
- To recognise how structural, biochemical, mental/emotional, spiritual, genetic and environmental factors may all contribute to the client's condition.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Take a case history and interpret the client's signs and symptoms of dysfunction, including assessment of the vitality or 'potential for health' of the client, using such methods as constitutional evaluation.
2. Critically assess the limitations of conventional and naturopathic diagnostic methods.
3. Assess the 'organ function' and 'toxic encumbrance' of the client.
4. Recognise the cumulative effect of predisposing factors and a final excitatory trigger factor.

5. Determine the most appropriate research approach for a particular type of problem.
6. Investigate the aetiology of presenting symptoms, e.g. psychological, physiological, sociological, economical or environmental.
7. Interpret and evaluate assessment and diagnostic results in relation to the individual, including the impact of the client's lifestyle and environment on health.
8. Employ the use of functional assessments and tests.
9. Assess the appropriateness of the client's condition for a naturopathic nutrition approach.
10. Prioritise the significance of clinical findings, taking into account the client's needs and abilities.
11. Discuss the information provided by the client, explaining the purpose and benefits of naturopathic nutrition.
12. Explain the limitations of naturopathic nutrition and recognise when it may be inappropriate for an individual.
13. Explain circumstances where it may be appropriate to collaborate with and/or refer a client to another healthcare provider.
14. Discuss how to deal with situations where the advice given by a naturopathic therapist may conflict with that given by another practitioner.

## **HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ADVICE**

Level 4

### **Aims**

- To emphasise the importance of the basic lifestyle requirements for health.
- To provide an understanding of the impact of the environment on health and disease.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Describe the basic requirements for health such as good nutrition, sunlight, clean air and water, adequate rest and relaxation, and appropriate exercise and activity levels.
2. Identify the impact of social environment and lifestyle factors on health in order to personalise lifestyle advice.
3. Advise on healthier ways of living and products and services to assist this e.g. juicers, ionisers, water filters, environmentally friendly household products.
4. Discuss key public health issues.

## **PRACTICE MANAGEMENT, ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Level 5

### **Aims**

- To ensure a full understanding of, and the ability to apply, the ethical, legal and professional requirements of good practice.
- To promote student awareness of their limits of professional competence.
- To promote student self-development to ensure effective professional communication.
- To engender methods of reflection for the continual development of the student and the professional practitioner as a life-long learner.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Discuss moral and ethical values relevant to professional practice.
2. Discuss the legal and legislative obligations to clients, the public in general and the profession as a whole.
3. Practise in accordance with the Codes of Professional Conduct of the Naturopathic Nutrition Association.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the law concerning client confidentiality and the need for secure and confidential methods for storing client records.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of good time management skills to enhance the practitioner-client relationship.
6. Discuss the scope and limitations of communication in the context of the therapeutic setting and the needs of the client.
7. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of limits of personal competence and when and how to make referrals.
8. Discuss the meaning of informed and implied consent and its application.
9. Identify and access sources of advice, guidance and continuing professional education that will enable growth and development as a professional naturopathic nutritional therapist.
10. Evaluate knowledge and practical skills and use reflective practice as a means of personal and professional development.
11. Evaluate the complexities of the practitioner-client relationship.

## **RESEARCH**

Levels 5 & 6

### **Aims**

- To promote research-awareness within the context of naturopathic practice, reflecting and analysing in a systematic and critical way.
- To introduce principles and practice of research as a critical process of enquiry within the context of healthcare in general and naturopathic nutrition in particular.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Access evidence that is relevant to naturopathic nutrition practice.
2. Determine the most appropriate research approach for a particular problem or area of interest.
3. Distinguish between different methods of investigation and data analysis at a basic level of understanding.
4. Demonstrate the skills of reviewing and critically evaluating appropriate research material.
5. Cite, list and use reference material in a systematic way.
6. Understand the principles of evidence-based medicine and its possible relevance or limitations when used to inform clinical decision making in naturopathic nutrition practice.
7. Discuss the current status of research in relation to the complementary and natural healthcare professions and naturopathic nutrition in particular.

# CLINICAL PRACTICE

Levels 4, 5 and 6

## Aims

- To develop competently and practise the assessment, evaluation and therapeutic skills relevant to naturopathic nutrition within a supervised clinical environment.
- To develop naturopathic nutrition skills in order to competently educate each client.
- To develop the skills required to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic recommendations.
- To ensure practitioners meet First Aid, Health and Safety and professional ethical competencies within a clinical environment and to promote the importance of demonstrating such competencies as practitioners.
- To reflect on personal progress and seek advice as appropriate in order to enhance personal development, competence and confidence.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course the student will confidently be able to:

1. Demonstrate the application of naturopathic nutrition principles and applications within a clinical environment.
2. Demonstrate within a clinical environment the skills needed to plan, evaluate and apply an effective and appropriate naturopathic nutrition strategy, integrating lifestyle and environmental advice as appropriate.
3. Demonstrate the ability to agree the assessment and therapeutic strategy with each client.
4. Understand the safety of the therapeutic strategy appropriate for the individual.
5. Recognise and respond appropriately to varying body language signals, develop listening skills and use appropriately.
6. Use a variety of communication methods to give nutritional advice and to motivate the client.
7. Describe ways of ensuring client understanding of the individual therapeutic strategy in order to maximise client compliance and develop awareness of reasons for non-compliance.
8. Recognise and respond appropriately to varying client situations.
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic recommendations and the skills needed to make modifications to the recommended strategy as the client's condition changes.
10. Competently practise practitioner-client relationship skills by establishing good contact and building confidence and trust, demonstrating time management and the skills needed to provide clear information in order to educate the client.
11. Demonstrate the importance of accurate record-keeping.
12. Recognise circumstances where it may be appropriate for a client to cease naturopathic nutritional therapy.
13. Recognise concerns involving personal progress and demonstrate the willingness to seek guidance from others in order to enhance progress and development as a naturopathic nutrition practitioner.
14. Incorporate current Health and Safety requirements within a clinical environment.
15. Understand, and apply if necessary, basic First Aid in a clinical environment.
16. Understand the implication of disability legislation.
17. Reflect on progress in studies and within the client consultation process in order to develop with increased autonomy, and to acknowledge any areas where further studies may be appropriate.

The overall aim of clinical practice training is to prepare students to become effective Naturopathic Nutrition practitioners. Students are expected to act with increased autonomy throughout clinical practice training, demonstrating competence at the levels determined for each Core Element, as set out in this document, and in accordance with the National Occupational Standards for Naturopathy.

Assessment should take place in a clinical environment, with 'real' clients who are not known to the student being assessed. Assessments must be fully supervised by the training provider's Clinical Assessor. Training providers must be confident that their graduates have both the confidence and competence to practise safely and effectively as Naturopathic Nutrition practitioners in accordance with these Core Elements and with the National Occupational Standards for Naturopathy.