

## **FAQ ABOUT THE IOC DIPLOMA IN SPORTS NUTRITION**

### **1. Who is eligible to register for the IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition?**

The IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition is a postgraduate program. It assumes a good basic knowledge of human nutrition and metabolism, and some understanding of sport and exercise. Successful applicants will normally have an undergraduate degree or equivalent learning experience in dietetics, nutrition, biological sciences, medicine, or a related subject area. Other qualifications may be recognised. All applications are reviewed by an Admissions Board drawn from the members of the Academic Advisory Board.

The language of instruction will be English, and students whose native language is not English, or whose first degree was not undertaken in English, should provide evidence of competence in English, eg TOEFL at 500 or above, ILET6 at 6 or above, GCSE or equivalent in English language.

### **2. Who certifies/accredits the IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition?**

The IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition is awarded by the International Olympic Committee ([www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org)), as part of the program of the IOC Medical Commission. The Diploma program is awarded under the Academic oversight of an international Academic Advisory Board. The members of this Advisory Board will advise on matters of the academic standards of the IOC Diploma, including suitability of applicants, quality assurance of course contents, and the moderation of student assessment. More details about the Board Members can be found on the “Advisory Board” webpage of the IOC Diploma website ([www.sportsoracle.com](http://www.sportsoracle.com)).

The IOC cannot award degrees, but the content and level of the Diploma program are set to be equivalent to about two thirds of the content of a University MSc Degree program. So far, seven Universities (three in the US, three in the UK and one in Australia) have agreed to give prior learning credits equivalent to this to students who wish to convert the IOC Diploma to an MSc Degree. You can find full details here: <http://www.sportsoracle.com/ioc/diploma-msc-conversion>. Several other leading Universities are in the process of recognising the program for this purpose.

### **3. Why has the IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition been established?**

The goal of the IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition is to make available an academic program to help the development of professionals who can support athletes by providing sound information about nutrition. The program is available at a global level, in conjunction with many of the premier organisations in sport, and has the benefit of input from an international group of experts in sports nutrition. The aim of the program is to work in harmony with academic institutions and professional bodies of nutrition and dietetics so that this opportunity can complement existing frameworks and help with the development of new opportunities in sports nutrition.

The terms “certify” and “accredit” have different meanings in different countries. In some countries, professional organisations have been formed to guide the training and practice of sports nutritionists and sports dietitians. These bodies often recognise courses that may be used by their members to gain or enhance their professional knowledge. Other bodies recognise individuals who have undertaken certain types of training or experience to reach a desired level of competency. Where these structures exist, we will approach these professional organisations to see how the IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition can be used to

complement or enhance the existing programs. We will also be happy to work with any organisations or groups that exist to promote the practice of sports nutrition.

#### **4. How much time should a student put aside to undertake the IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition?**

The workload for the whole Diploma program has a nominal teaching and learning load of 1200 hours, spread over the two years of study. This corresponds to about two thirds of the workload normally required for completion of a University MSc program. However, the time it takes to go through the e-lectures, to read the set literature, and to prepare assignments etc will vary greatly between individuals. It is obvious that some people can achieve a satisfactory performance with a considerably smaller investment of time, but others may need to – or may choose to - invest more. Although there are some key dates by which assignments must be submitted throughout the program, students have considerable flexibility as to how they choose to distribute the workload over the year.

#### **5. Modules, Assignments and Exams**

There are 10 modules for each year of study, with each module lasting one month, so the program runs from January-October each year. There are five assignments for each year, and these are due every second month. The kind of assignments varies, and includes Poster Presentations, Abstracts writing, Critique of a scientific paper, Practical Communication Exercises and Research Paper Analyses. Assignments are submitted in electronic format by uploading them via the student area of the website. Feedback is delivered by email and by posting of materials on the website.

There is one exam each year. This is emailed to students, who then have 24 hours to complete and return it. The exam is held in October.

#### **6. How are the lectures and other materials delivered?**

Lectures consist of computer-based presentations by leading international experts and consist of a PowerPoint presentation with associated video and audio track. Lecture material is supplemented by a program of directed study, including review papers, original research publications, textbooks and athlete-oriented guidebooks. In the first few years of the program, lectures were delivered on CD, but we have moved to a web-based delivery platform to allow greater flexibility. Additional materials are posted on the program website.

#### **7. Where does the residential course take place?**

The annual meeting can take place anywhere in the world. To date there has been one in Chicago, USA (in 2006), one in Adelaide, Australia (in 2007), one in Guangzhou, China (in 2008), one in Oslo Norway (2009) and two in Newcastle, UK (2010 and 2011) The Chicago workshop was held in conjunction with the Chicago Marathon Medical Conference, the Adelaide workshop in conjunction with the Sports Medicine Australia annual conference, and the Guangzhou workshop in association with the 2008 Pre-Olympic Scientific and Medical Congress. The Oslo meeting in 2009 was held in conjunction with ECSS. The 2010 and 2011 meetings were held in conjunction with the ISSSMC in Newcastle, UK. The 2012 meeting was held in conjunction with the ISENC in Newcastle, UK.

#### **8. Will I be a registered dietician once I have completed the course?**

On completion of the course you will have a Diploma in Sports Nutrition to add to your other qualifications. You would not be a dietician unless you already have a dietetics qualification.

### **9. Will I be a nutritionist once I have completed the course?**

In many countries, including the UK, anyone can call themselves a sports advisor or a sports nutritionist. Unlike the term "Dietitian", the profession of Nutrition, including Sports Nutrition, is not protected in any way. You will see many people in the media and in the health and fitness professions calling themselves Nutritionists, even though they have no qualifications. The regulations vary to some extent from country to country, and, in the UK at least, there are some moves to regulate the profession. There is a Nutrition Register and a Sport and Exercise Nutrition Register (SENR): registration is open only to those with appropriate qualifications and experience. The IOC Diploma in Sports Nutrition will contribute to the portfolio required for SENR registration.

In a wider sense, the content of the program has been designed to cover the key area of sports nutrition, including both the underlying science and the issues encountered in working with athletes. The curriculum should give you a sound basis for professional practice, but there is no substitute for experience, and you should also seek to gain practical experience of working with your intended target group.

### **10. Will I be eligible to work with athletes?**

Employers will look at your whole portfolio of qualifications and experience in deciding whether you are the best candidate for the job. It would be up to any potential employer as to whether they take you on to work with athletes. If you plan to be self-employed, you also need to consider whether you can get professional indemnity insurance and clients. Our students are all graduates, so have other qualifications and skills, which will again contribute to your overall portfolio. Several recent sports nutrition posts have identified the IOC Diploma as a preferred qualification.

### **11. Am I eligible to register with SENR upon completion of the course?**

There is more than one type of registration and there is no single paper qualification that allows SENR registration. You should look at the various types of registration on their website at <http://www.senr.org.uk/>. The IOC Diploma will certainly contribute towards meeting the requirements for registration.

### **12. Is the IOC Diploma accredited with the DAA (Dietitians Association of Australia)?**

No, the IOC Diploma is not accredited with the DAA as it is not a dietetics course and it is not taught in Australia. However, the IOC Diploma is recognised by Sports Dietitians Australia as a significant activity on its Career Development Pathway.

### **13. Is there any financial support available for students on the IOC Diploma program?**

The IOC has made available a small amount of funding to support students who have difficulty in meeting the full costs of the program. This is intended primarily to support students from developing countries or others who are financially disadvantaged. Anyone intending to apply for support should do so at the time of their application for admission to the program.

Some organisations have negotiated a discounted Tuition Fee for their members. Members of SDUK (Sports Dietitians UK), SDA (Sports Dietitians Australia), DCSNN (Dietitians of Canada Sports Nutrition Network) and SCAN (the Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutrition Practice Group of the American Dietetic Association) are eligible for a 10% discount on the Tuition Fee.