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Cooking in health care – a new approach to a  
new profession

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One third of patients have malnutrition at hospital admittance  
Similar prevalence is found at discharge and also in geriatric care institutions





Meal dislike and refusal are potential determinants of malnutrition

Texture, palatability and presentation are very important to patients

Trinca V, Duizer L, Keller H. Putting quality food on the tray: Factors associated with patients' perceptions of the hospital food experience. *J Hum Nutr Diet.* 2022;35(1):81-93

Institutions struggle with a constant challenge to offer adapted, nutritionally balanced and sensory-rich meals



Valero Gaspar T, Ávila Torres JM, Varela-Moreiras G. Educación para una gastronomía saludable: retos y oportunidades en la alimentación institucional. Nutr Hosp. 2018 Jun 12;35(Spec No4):56-60



Improving food service at care institutions is cost-effective and consumer satisfaction improves well-being and willingness to accept meals

Greig S, Hekmat S, Garcia AC. Current Practices and Priority Issues Regarding Nutritional Assessment and Patient Satisfaction with Hospital Menus. *Can J Diet Pract Res.* 2018 Jun 1;79(2):48-54.

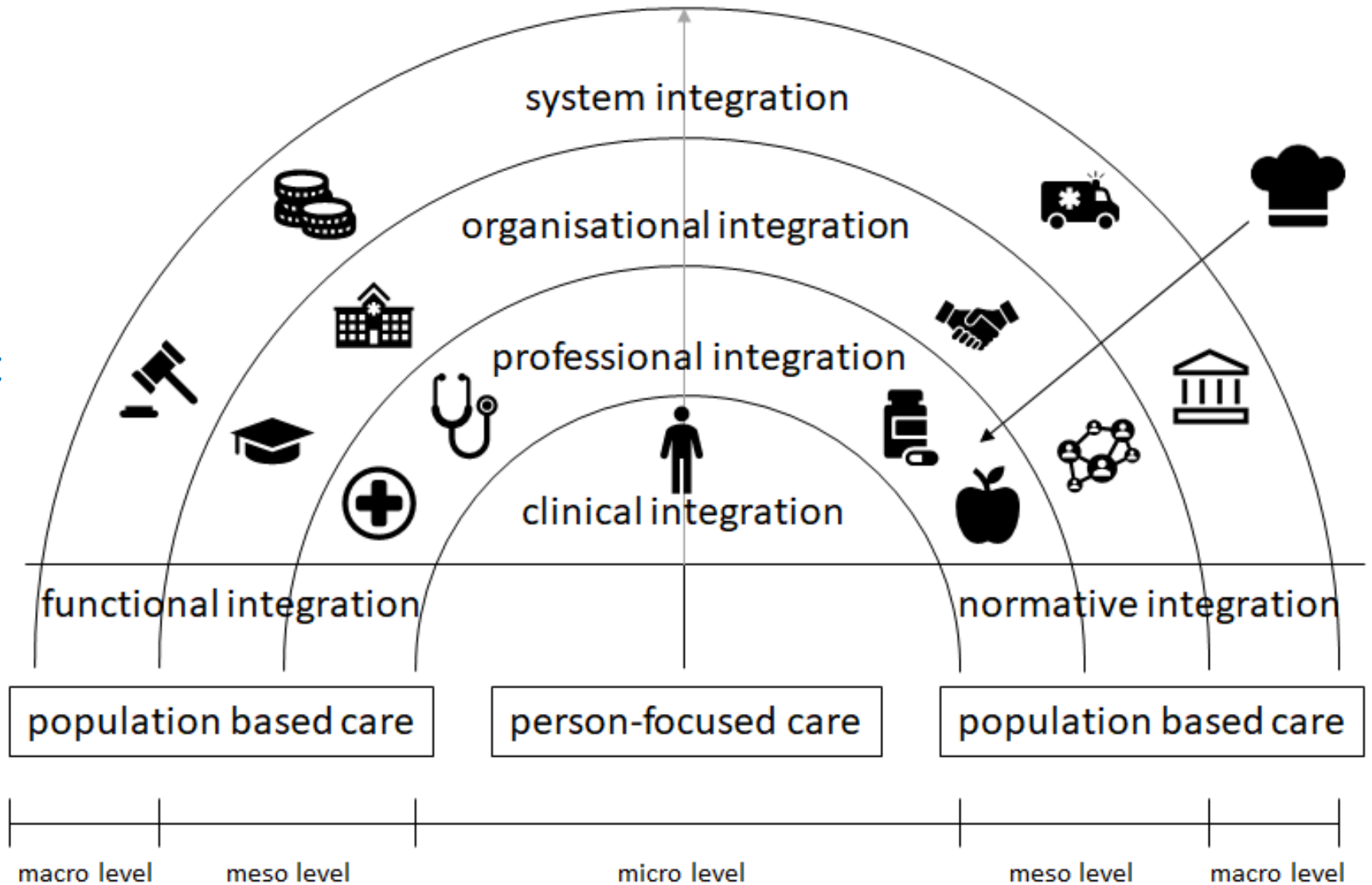
**Health professionals** doctors, nurses, therapists, dietitians/nutritionists must work together and articulate with kitchen and **foodservice professionals**



to

- ✓ Ensure food management and kitchen coordination
- ✓ Address end-users needs such as taste deteriorations/ alterations, swallowing and chewing problems
- ✓ Personalize recipes and cooking processes to attend to cultural backgrounds

Nectar project proposes an innovative professional profile, whose goal will be to produce healthy and tasty meals for consumers in great need of care



Valentijn PP, Schepman SM, Opheij W, Bruijnzeels MA. Understanding integrated care: a comprehensive conceptual framework based on the integrative functions of primary care. Int J Integr Care. 2013;13:e010

Working in a multidisciplinary team, the Gastro-engineer will contribute to:

- ✓ Improve the quality of life of clients of social support and health care institutions
- ✓ Tackle malnutrition caused by appetite loss due to patients' physical and and clinical condition but also due to lack of good taste and assistance during mealtimes



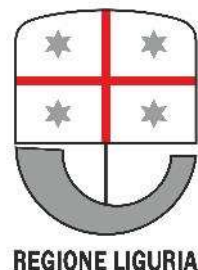


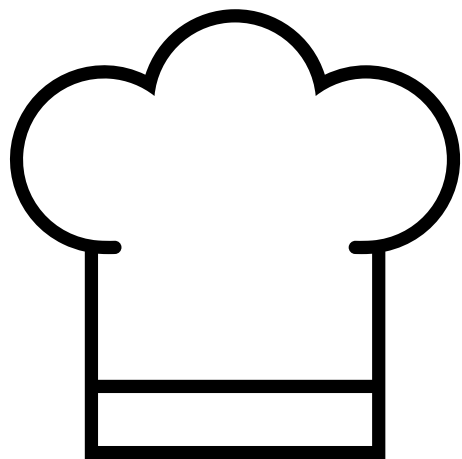
**Odisee**  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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Consortium members





The Portuguese translation of the proposed designation does not clearly indicate the skills of this new professional

We propose that in Portugal the designation should be

**Specialization in rehabilitation/therapeutic cooking**

The project is based on a co-creation design-approach for sustainable service innovation and value creation.

During the development of the Gastro-engineer profile and competences, all partners from different professional sectors in food and healthcare contributed for the content according to submission requirements

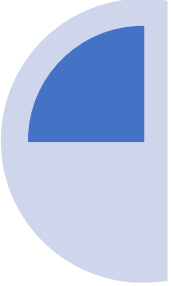
January 2021.....October 2023



Definition



Design



Materials and tools  
production



Pilots



Evaluation



Dissemination

## SKILLS

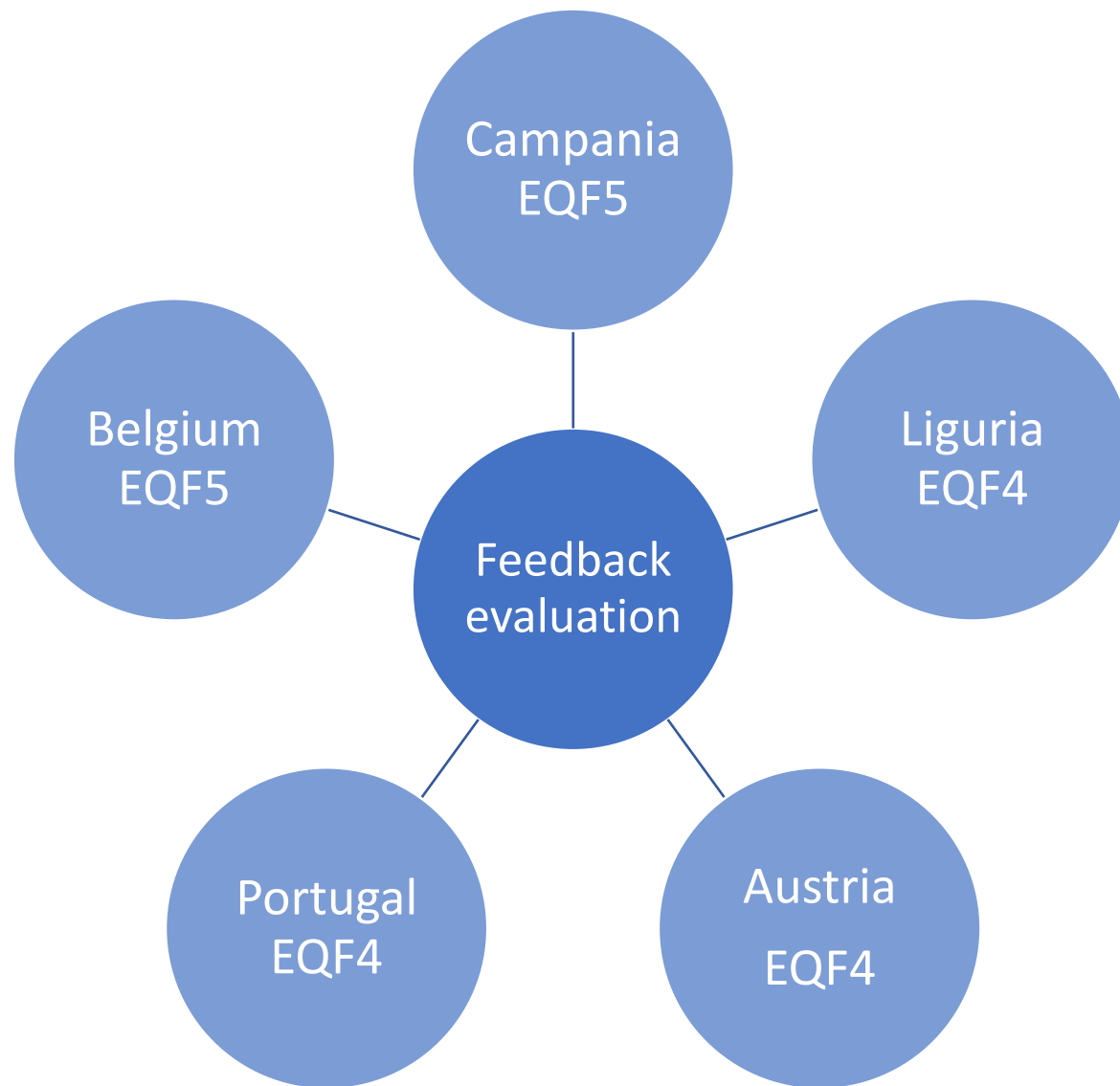
- ✓ Basics of Nutrition and Dietetics
- ✓ Food Chemistry and Biochemistry
- ✓ Taste and Sensory
- ✓ Taste and Health
- ✓ Menu engineering
- ✓ Cooking and Distribution Process Systems + Quality Assurance
- ✓ Technology of Cooking and Distribution Processes

Financial Analysis and Planning

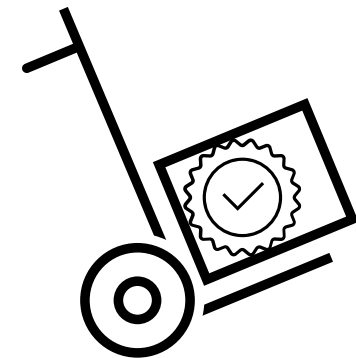
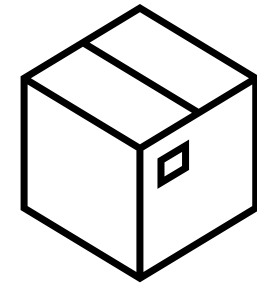
Applied Law

Ethics and Cultural Embeddedness

Five educational pilot courses will address the same European framework, offered from cooking school to university level in four different countries: Belgium, Austria, Portugal and Italy



Feedback evaluation from the pilots, gathered among students, trainers, institutions and external partners, together with the overall quality management documents, will provide information for curricula and methodology improvement, leading to a final “package” that can be delivered and applied in other institutions and countries, training new professionals for rehabilitation/therapeutic cooking



Thank you for your attention!

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