FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the focus of the PhD program in Food Systems?

A: The PhD in Food Systems combines a comprehensive investigation of food systems and a commitment to developing methods for solving the current problems of the food system through a cohort intensive experience. Every year, the food systems cohort will work together to address problems and devise potential solutions. Students then move towards disciplinary depth and mastery by designing a course of study with a dissertation committee and developing a research proposal. Students will also engage in independent research.

Q: What are the requirements for admission to the PhD program?

A: There are two ways for a potential PhD candidate to pursue this program. First, a student with a BA/BS can apply to the PhD program. Second, a student can apply to the PhD after completing an MA or MS in an allied field, either at the University of Vermont or at another institution.

Minimum requirements include:

• GPA of 3.00 or higher
• TOEFL or IELTS exam scores must be submitted if you are an international student.
• Completion of a college-level statistics course. If this information is not clearly listed on a college transcript, you will need to provide additional documentation as evidence that you have fulfilled this requirement.
• A letter of support from a Food Systems Faculty member who agrees to serve as primary advisor during enrollment in the PhD Program.

Q: What are the credit requirements for the PhD program?

A: The PhD program requires a minimum of 75 credits, including a minimum of 30 hours of graded coursework and 20 credits of supervised dissertation research.

Q: What is the comprehensive examination for the PhD program?

A: The comprehensive examination is a tool to evaluate the progress of each student and ensure that they are prepared to proceed toward the doctorate degree.

Phase 1 is an oral exam that tests the student’s ability to read, analyze and synthesize scholarly knowledge across disciplines as well as to design a research-based response to a specific food systems issue or problem.

Phase 2 includes two steps: a dissertation pre-proposal and proposal submission. The form, content and timeline will be explained to the student by their advisor and will follow guidelines set forth by the Student Development & Evaluation Committee, in collaboration with the student’s dissertation committee.

Q: How is the dissertation process managed?

A: The dissertation process is managed by a dissertation committee, which is comprised of a primary advisor, a second reader, and an expert from a different discipline. The committee will provide feedback and guidance throughout the dissertation process, and will review the final dissertation at the time of the oral defense.

Q: What are the requirements for advancement to candidacy in the PhD program?

A: Maintain a 3.00 GPA in designated first and second year courses and successful completion of the comprehensive exam.