

UVM Food Systems Research Center 2025-2026 PhD Research Assistantships Call

The Food Systems Research Center (is excited to request applications for our 2025-2026 PhD Research Assistantships. Our call is open to existing UVM PhD Candidates. **PhD Candidates** can request **12-24 months** of funding to assist in the writing of their dissertations. Recipients will receive a 12-month stipend of **\$33,280** or the pro-rated equivalent for a longer term. Other benefits for FSRC fellows include travel funding for workshops and/or conferences associated with their research, access to funding to cover open access publication costs, and participation in the FSRC Enrichment Series.

Students who have already advanced to candidacy (i.e., successfully defended their dissertation proposals), as well as those who anticipate being candidates by September 1, 2025, are eligible to apply. Note that individuals must advance to candidacy by September 1, 2025, in order for the funding to be awarded. The FSRC anticipates funding up to **seven (7)** existing PhD candidates in the 2025-2026 academic year. Faculty may apply to sponsor up to three (3) PhD candidates. Please note, by sponsoring an applicant, faculty agree to serve as part of the review committee and review one application after the submission deadline.

FSRC funded graduate students who receive additional funding while funded on an FSRC award may, upon written request and approval, be able to extend their FSRC appointment for up to one (1) year at the discretion of the FSRC leadership team. Please read more on this policy here: <https://www.uvm.edu/cals/food-systems-research/resources>

Tuition and Fees

The FSRC PhD Research Assistantship does NOT fund tuition for course credits, research credits or continuing registration credits; nor does it fund comprehensive fees for PhD candidates. The requisite GRA **tuition scholarship** of 9 credits per semester and 5 credits in the summer is charged to the **Responsibility Center housing the applicant's graduate program. Comprehensive fees cannot be charged to the student, consistent with Graduate College policy.** The Dean of the Responsibility Center may require tuition contribution from the **applicant's faculty advisor.** The Dean of the Responsibility Center housing the applicant's graduate program and the applicant's faculty advisor are required to fill out the **acknowledgement of tuition and fees coverage form** and include it with their letter of support. The arrangement to cover tuition and fees must be clarified prior to the review of any application.

Application Process

Applications should be in a standard font, 11 point or larger. Margins should be at least 0.5".

Students interested should include the following materials in their applications:

1) A 2-page (max) statement of interest to include:

- A description of their current PhD research with specific emphasis on relevance to food systems.
- The connection of their work to local and/or regional food systems in Vermont and/or the Northeast.
- The student's plan for completing their PhD.
- The progress and successes made in their PhD to this point.
- A clear request for the duration of funding needed to complete their PhD (12-24 months). Please note, there will be a check-in at the 12-month mark where the student will be asked to provide an update on progress towards the PhD.

2) A CV and/or resume not to exceed 5 pages.

3) A one-page (max) statement about how their food system project relates or contributes to issues of equity, inclusivity, and diversity.

Applicants should place their materials into a single PDF document and upload it to InfoReady. Applicants should also include the name and email of their faculty advisors when submitting their application.

Faculty advisors will be notified via an email requesting the following materials, which will be blind to the student:

1) A one-page (max) letter of support from their advisor to address:

- The potential for the candidate's research to contribute to the goals of the FSRC and Vermont/Northeast food systems.
- A research and training plan for the success of the applicant.
- A plan for how tuition and fees for the student will be covered.
- Plans for helping the student complete their PhD.

2) Letter of acknowledgement that the Dean's Office of the College/School housing the student's graduate program will cover tuition for the student, or that the tuition will be covered by the Faculty Advisor, Department, or another means specified. The source of payment for comprehensive fees must also be specified. Please note that comprehensive fees cannot be charged to the student. Note that the stipend includes a fringe rate to provide the premium for UVM single student health insurance coverage.

Applications are due through InfoReady by **January 15, 2025**. Please email Food Systems Graduate Education & Research Programs Coordinator Allison Spain (Allison.spain@uvm.edu) if you have any questions. All applications will be thoroughly reviewed by a panel of reviewers from across UVM. Final decisions will be made by the FSRC team.

FSRC Research Assistantship Scoring Rubric

Applicants will be evaluated based on the rubric below. Reviewers will also provide comments and/or a narrative assessment of each candidate with specific emphasis on the criteria below.

Category	4 (Exceptional)	3 (Good)	2 (Needs Improvement)	1 (Not Appropriate or Absent)
Alignment	<p>Uses a food systems approach.</p> <p>Has strong relevance to Vermont/ Northeast and is conducted in the region.</p>	<p>Does not have food systems focus; disciplinary in nature.</p> <p>Relevant to Vermont/ Northeast but not conducted in the region.</p>	<p>No focus on Vermont/ Northeast.</p> <p>No focus on food systems.</p>	<p>No relevance to Vermont/Northeast.</p> <p>No focus on food systems or any food area.</p>
Research	<p>Articulate a clear trajectory for completion of their PhD.; Detail the progress they have made up to this point; Demonstrated success of scholarship evidenced through publications, presentations, grant applications, outreach, etc.</p>	<p>Articulate trajectory for completion and progress; Minimal demonstrated success of scholarship.</p>	<p>Do not articulate a clear trajectory for completion and/or progress; Limited or no success of scholarship.</p>	<p>Do not detail trajectory to completion or progress; No evidence of success of scholarship.</p>
Education	<p>Detail the relevant progress they have made in their PhD and how their progress is on a trajectory for success in their desired career.</p>	<p>Detail progress, but do not discuss a trajectory for success in their desired career.</p>	<p>Do not adequately detail progress but do discuss a trajectory for success in their desired career.</p>	<p>Applicants do not detail progress or a trajectory for success in their desired field.</p>
DEI	<p>Thoughtful response on how their food systems research will address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion with actionable items.</p>	<p>Thoughtful response but does not include actionable items to how their project will address issues of DEI.</p>	<p>Response is severely lacking in detail and actionable items.</p>	<p>Response does not address how they will improve or address issues of DEI.</p>
Faculty Support	<p>Clear plan for the student to complete their doctoral degree</p>	<p>Plan for completion is</p>	<p>Plan is not clear or not mentioned.</p>	<p>Faculty support letter is incomplete or not present.</p>

	<p>in a timely fashion with funding.</p> <p>Strong alignment between the faculty and student interests.</p>	<p>lacking in some clarity.</p> <p>Good alignment between the faculty and student interests.</p>	<p>Limited alignment between the faculty and student interests.</p>	
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