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OBJECTIVES

The Food Science Academic Knowledge Base is designed to broadly inform the food science community on the state of food science education. The research is designed to be collected biennially to understand trends in enrollment, education, and attitudes. The first round of Academic Knowledge Base Research was published in 2018 with 16 domestic institutions participating. There was a break in research due to COVID-19, and research resumed in 2023 with 33 institutions participating. This round of 2025 research has 42 domestic and international institutions participating.

The research combines quantitative and aggregated institutional data from food science programs with survey data given by food science students about their motivations and perspectives in their pursuit of food science degrees. The data collected is meant to inform programs and decisions to help recruit the best and brightest minds to education and careers in the important field of food science.

BACKGROUND

This year's study of higher education institutions with food science programs provides a more global survey than in the past. The proportion of responding programs based in the United States is 57% of total participants in 2025,decreasing sharply from 73% in 2023.

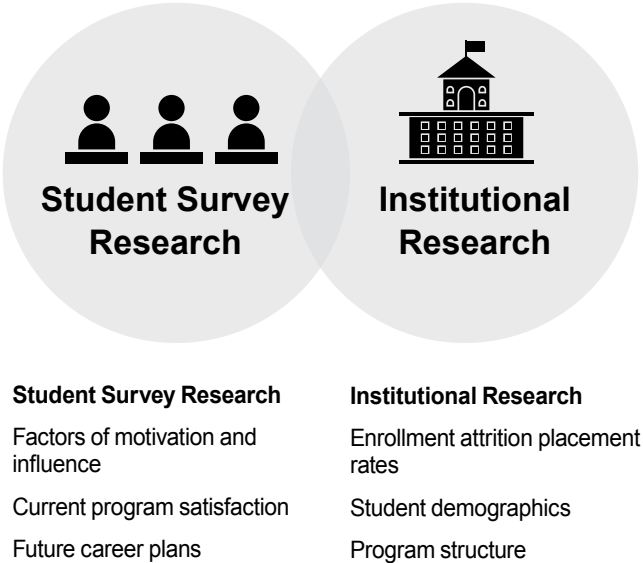
Although the report includes input from a much larger geographic sample, the results are largely categorized separately for U.S.-based and international institutions. Both domestic and international institutions reported an increased number of graduate school applications but a decrease in enrollment since 2023.

Student respondents also represent a more globally diverse group than in the 2023 report. Overall, 2025 respondents reflect a -7 point reduction in U.S. citizens and a -8 point reduction in permanent residents since 2023. This year, 33% of undergraduate respondents are U.S. citizens and 28% are

U.S. permanent residents, compared to 40% and 36% in 2023. Non-residents in U.S. undergraduate programs increased +15 points from 24% in 2023 to 39% in 2025. Among students, another significant change since the 2023 survey is a decreasing confidence in the job market. Optimism about the job market dropped sharply from two years ago. Respondents are 13% less confident that the job market will remain strong enough for them to grow into the level of responsibility they want long-term than they were in 2023. Also, they are 6% less confident that the job market will be strong enough for them to find an entry-level position they want.

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

The research conducted included both students and institutions. Here are some key topics that were investigated in those surveys.

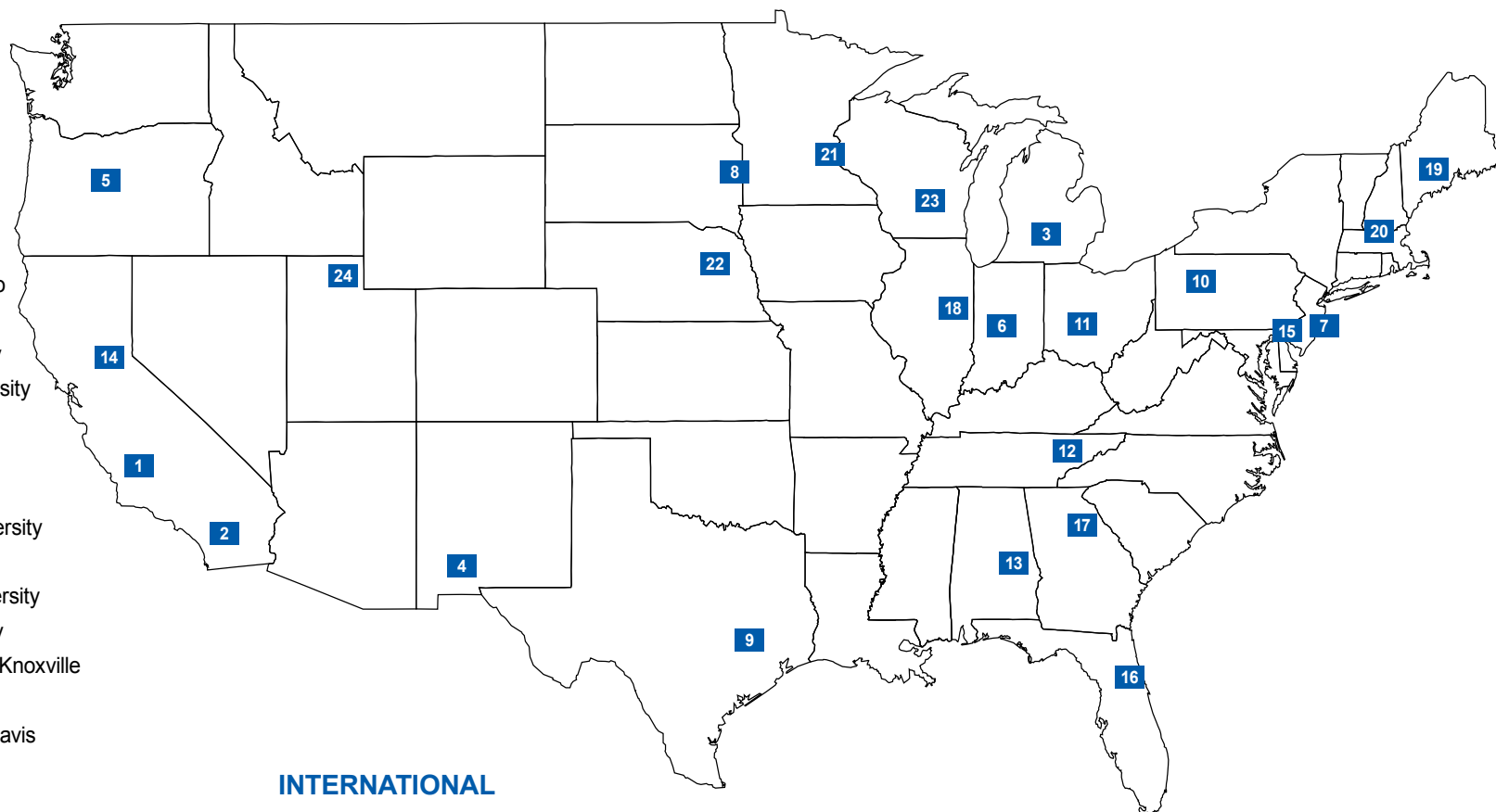


PARTICIPATION

42 domestic and international institutions participated in this third round of research.

DOMESTIC

1. Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
2. Chapman University
3. Michigan State University
4. New Mexico State University
5. Oregon State University
6. Purdue University
7. Rutgers University
8. South Dakota State University
9. Texas A&M University
10. Pennsylvania State University
11. The Ohio State University
12. University of Tennessee, Knoxville
13. Tuskegee University
14. University of California, Davis
15. University of Delaware
16. University of Florida
17. University of Georgia
18. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
19. University of Maine
20. University of Massachusetts, Amherst
21. University of Minnesota
22. University of Nebraska, Lincoln
23. University of Wisconsin, Madison
24. Utah State University



INTERNATIONAL

Canada:

McGill University
University of Alberta
University of Guelph

China

Beijing Technology and Business University
Shanghai Ocean University
Tianjin University of Science and Technology

Ecuador

Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral

Honduras

Escuela Agrícola Panamericana Zamorano

Indonesia

Bogor Agricultural University (IPB University)
Brawijaya University

Malaysia

Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia

Mexico

Universidad de las Américas Puebla

Pakistan

University of Management and Technology Lahore

South Africa

University of Johannesburg

Thailand

Kasetsart University

United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates University (UAEU)

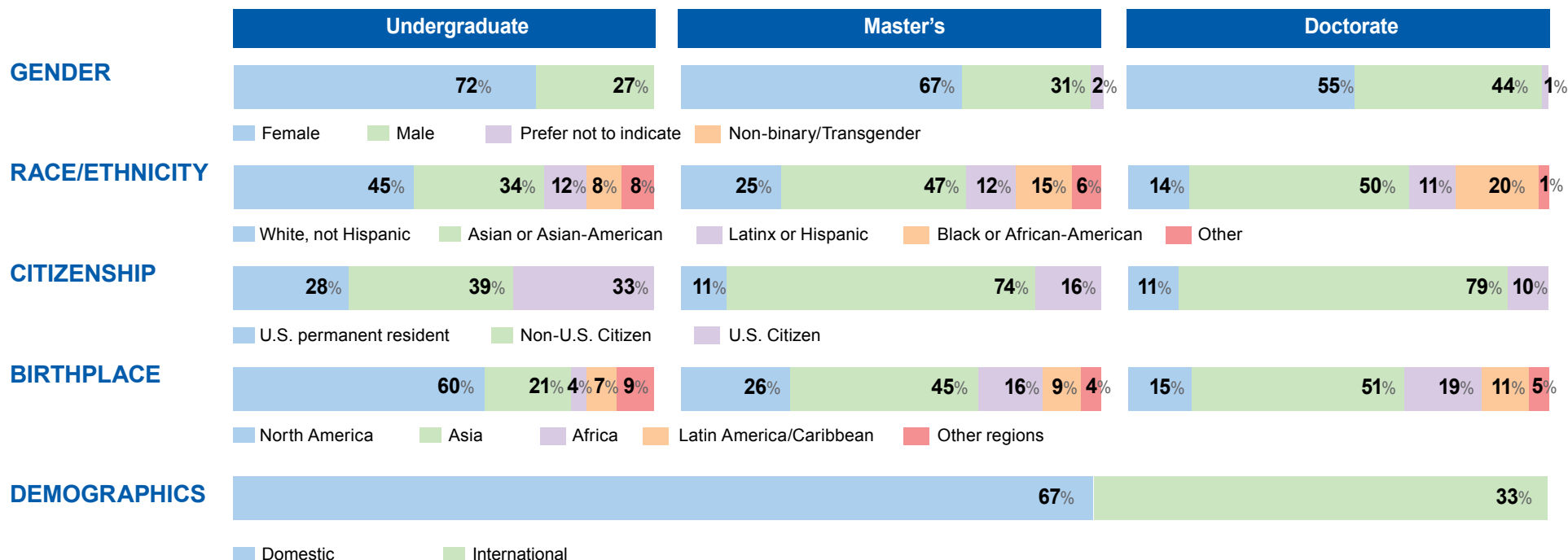
Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade
Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology

STUDENT FINDINGS

Survey research of current students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in food science is designed to focus on what has motivated those students to pursue a

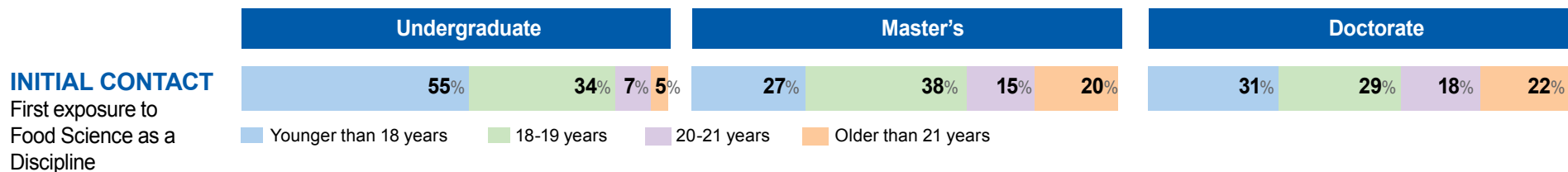
food science degree, their level of satisfaction, and what expectations they have for their careers when they complete their formal education.



WHEN FIRST EXPOSED TO THE FOOD SCIENCE DISCIPLINE

The survey administered by programs directly to their students was more granular; 6% indicated learning younger than age 10, while 8% did so at ages 10-13, and 37% at ages 14-17. They generally were more likely to learn younger, as 50% of direct

responses within programs learned younger than 18 compared to only 38% of IFT student members; IFT student members were more likely to learn at 20 or older (28%) than students answering directly through their program did (16%).



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student Findings

	Undergraduates			Graduates - Master's and PhDs		
MOTIVATION Top 3 reasons mentioned by undergraduate and graduate students on what motivated them to declare a major or pursue a degree in food science.	1. I am a “foodie” – enjoy cooking shows, experimenting with food 75%	2. A desire to work specifically in the food and beverage industry 70%	3. I have always liked science 67%	1. A desire to work specifically in the food/beverage field 64%	2. Interest in conducting fundamental research 59%	3. My undergraduate degree made me very interested in learning more in-depth 43.5%
INFLUENCE (INDIVIDUALS) 	1. Family Members or Family Friends 73%	2. Faculty member(s) in the Food Science program 61%	3. Media (social media/news items) or specific chefs 54%	1. My own work experience and colleagues 80%	2. Faculty member(s) in the Food Science program 74%	3. Exposure during intern-ships or part time work experiencee 71%
HOW INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED ME 	1. They gave me a good sense for the careers I could pursue with a Food Science Degree. 73%	2. They got me excited about how much fun this major would be. 69%	3. They told me about the specific types of jobs in the food industry 64%	1. They helped guide my research interests in Food Science 71%	2. They gave me a good sense for the careers I could pursue with an advanced degree 63.5%	3. They got me excited about the research they were doing 62%
INFLUENCE (RESOURCES) 	1. The university's Food Science program website 34%	2. Websites that describe possible careers 31%	3. Career fair/visits/ tours to colleges and universities 30%	1. Research on job prospects for advanced degrees 47%	2. Undergraduate research projects 44%	3. Casual interactions/ conversations with faculty 40%
PROGRAM SATISFACTION 	1. Interactions with students, faculty, and staff 63%	2. Practicality/applied nature of courses 54%	3. Level of interactivity of classroom instruction 50%	1. Quality of interaction with students, faculty, and staff 61%	2. Environment to conduct research in lab, pilot plant, sensory, or other facilities as appropriate 58%	3. Quality of classroom instruction/teaching & Availability of mentors to guide academic/ career decisions 57%

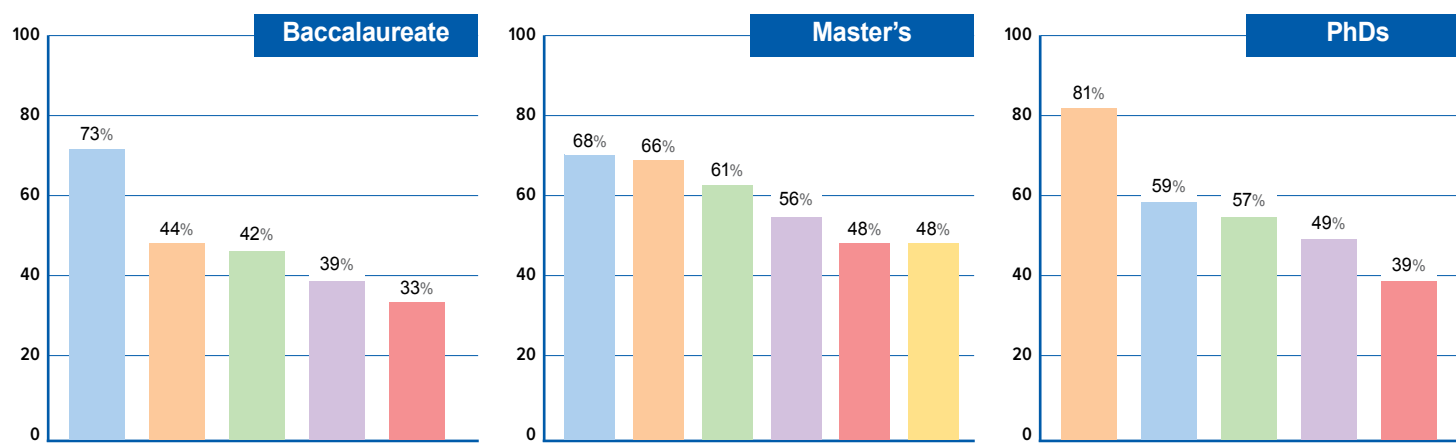
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student Findings

AREAS OF INTEREST

How appealing are the following fields to you, following undergraduate and perhaps graduate training?" These are the top factors that students rated as being "very appealing"

- Product Development
- Laboratory Work
- Food Safety
- Research
- Production/Processing/Operations
- Quality Assurance



PLANS AFTER GRADUATION



	Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctorate
Pursue a higher-level/executive management position in industry	66%	60%	57%
Remain focused on analytical/technical work	57%	51%	52%
Start my own business	35%	26%	24%
Teach Food Science	20%	25%	46%
Pursue a career in government or a nonprofit institution	30%	23%	36%
Go into sales and/or marketing	19%	10%	4%
Other plans	8%	2%	2%

AVERAGE GPA

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctorate
3.74	3.53	3.20
	3.67	3.30

AVERAGE YEARS to Completion

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctorate
4.0	2.3	4.2
4.0	2.0	4.0

CREDIT HOURS Graduate (Mean)

Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctorate
124.1	32.3	64.1
154.5	47.7	89.5

CREDIT HOURS Graduate (Median)

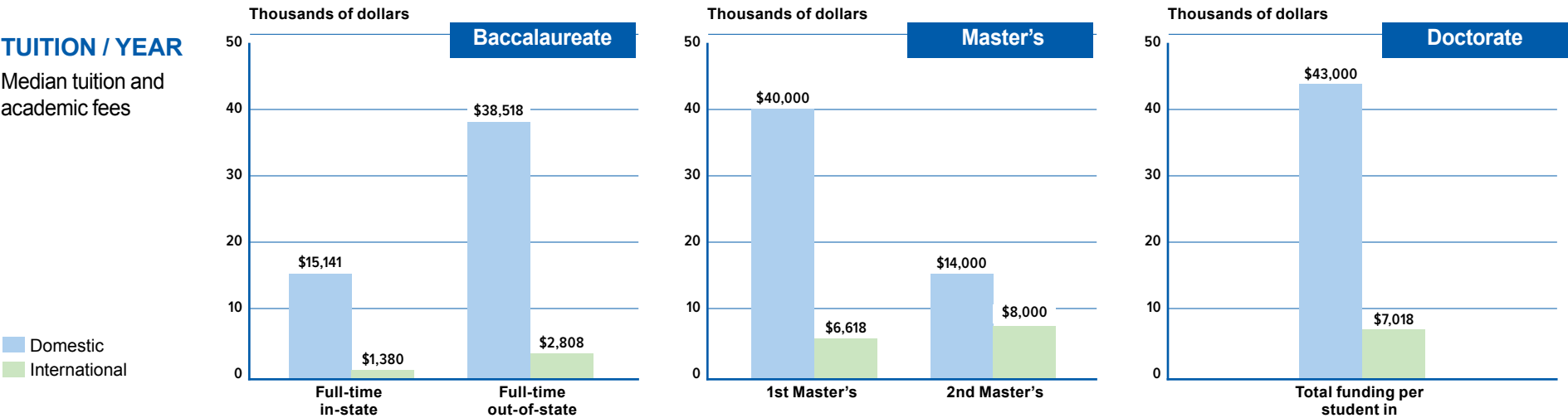
Baccalaureate	Master's	Doctorate
120.0	30.0	60.0
144.0	36.0	46.5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student Findings

TUITION / YEAR

Median tuition and academic fees



Dollars per hour

TUITION / HOUR

In-State (Mean)

TUITION / HOUR

Out-of-State (Mean)

TUITION / HOUR

In-State (Median)

TUITION / HOUR

Out-of-State (Median)

Domestic

International

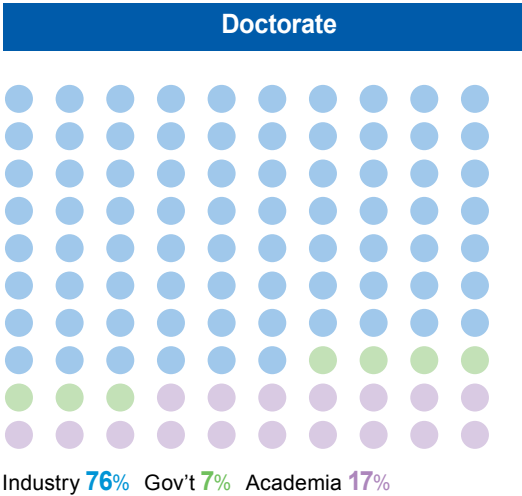
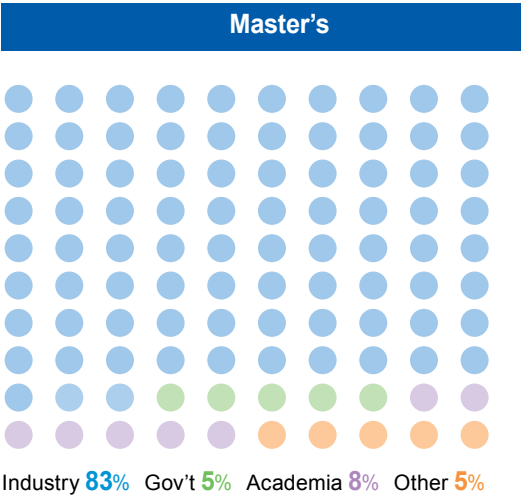
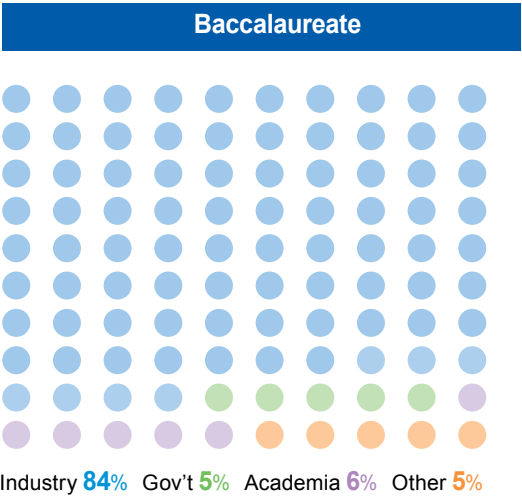
Category	Domestic (Dollars per hour)	International (Dollars per hour)
TUITION / HOUR In-State (Mean)	\$588	\$83
TUITION / HOUR Out-of-State (Mean)	\$1,290	\$202
TUITION / HOUR In-State (Median)	\$524	\$38
TUITION / HOUR Out-of-State (Median)	\$1,096	\$56

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student Findings

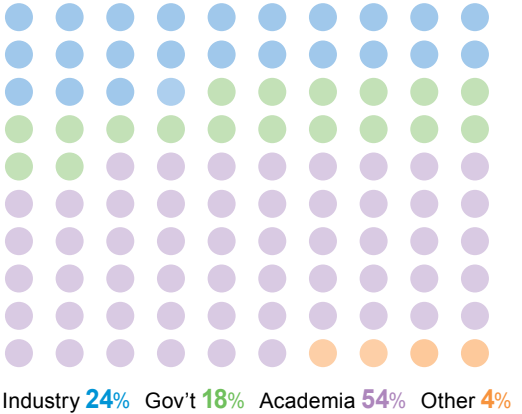
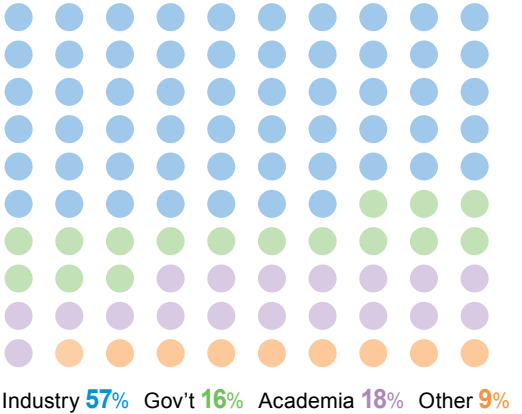
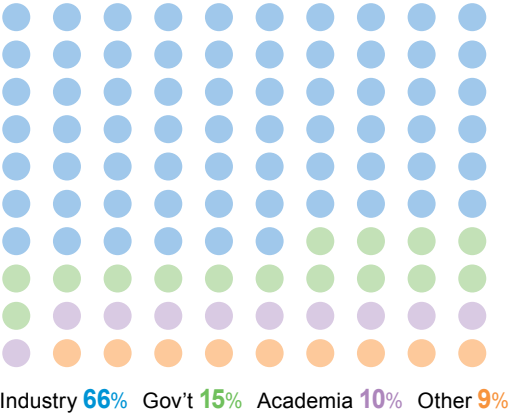
WORK SETTING Graduating Students Domestic

- Industry
- Government
- Academia
- Other settings

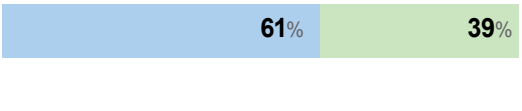
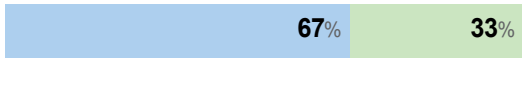
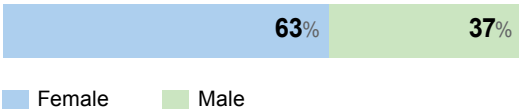


WORK SETTING Graduating Students International

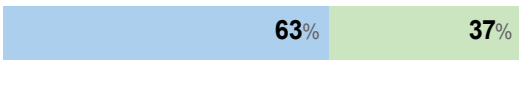
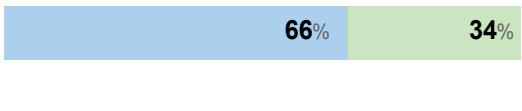
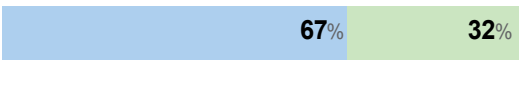
Numbers and matrix groups
may not match due to rounding.



GENDER Newly Enrolled 2024-25 Students Domestic



GENDER Newly Enrolled 2024-25 Students International



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student Findings

AGE

Newly Enrolled
2024-25 Students

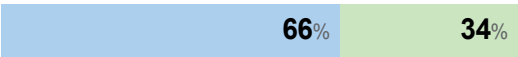
Domestic

International

Baccalaureate

Master's

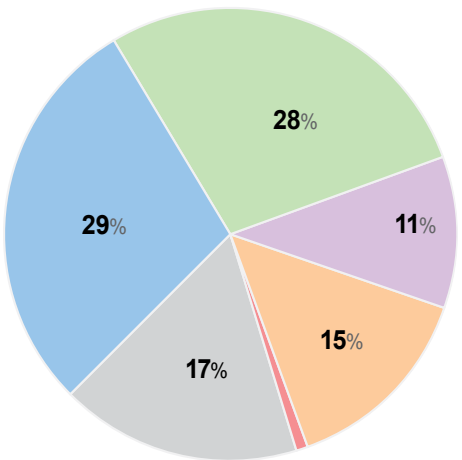
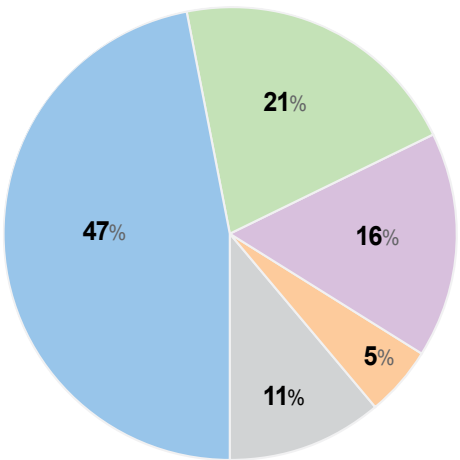
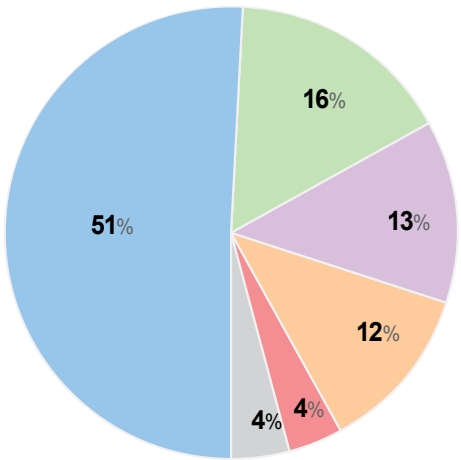
Doctorate



■ "Traditional" student ■ Older "non-traditional" student

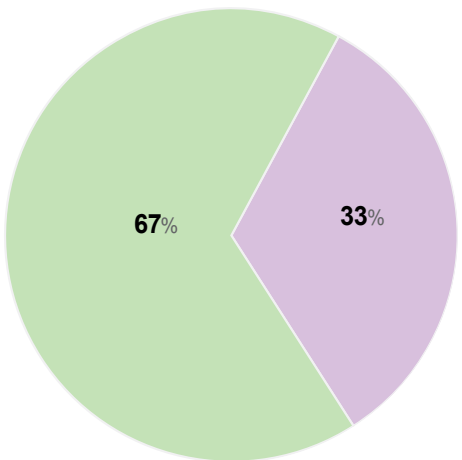
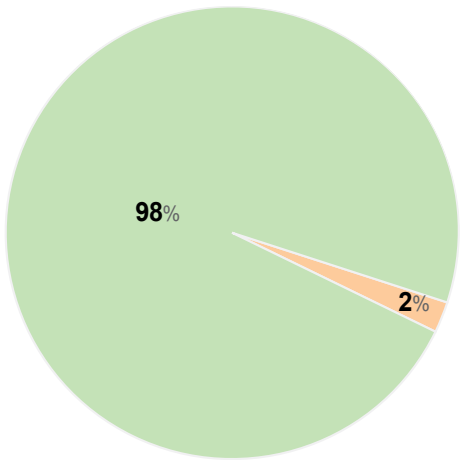
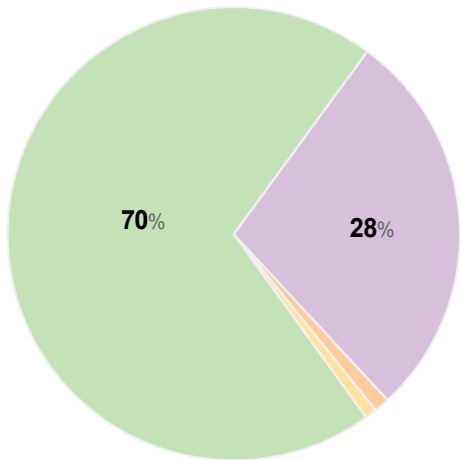
RACIAL/ETHNIC PROFILE

Newly Enrolled
2024-25 Students
Domestic



RACIAL/ETHNIC PROFILE

Newly Enrolled
2024-25 Students
International



■ White, not Hispanic
■ Asian / Asian-American
■ Latinx or Hispanic
■ Black / African-American
■ Biracial or Multiracial
■ Other
■ Chose not to disclose

APPLICATIONS AND ACCEPTANCES

Graduate programs in food science are receiving greater numbers of applications in 2025 than they did in 2023. However, those applications are not always successful, as enrollment has decreased over the same time period.

One reason for the drop in graduate student enrollment is likely economic. “Funding for graduate students has been reduced, limiting [the] number enrolled in our program,” one respondent noted.

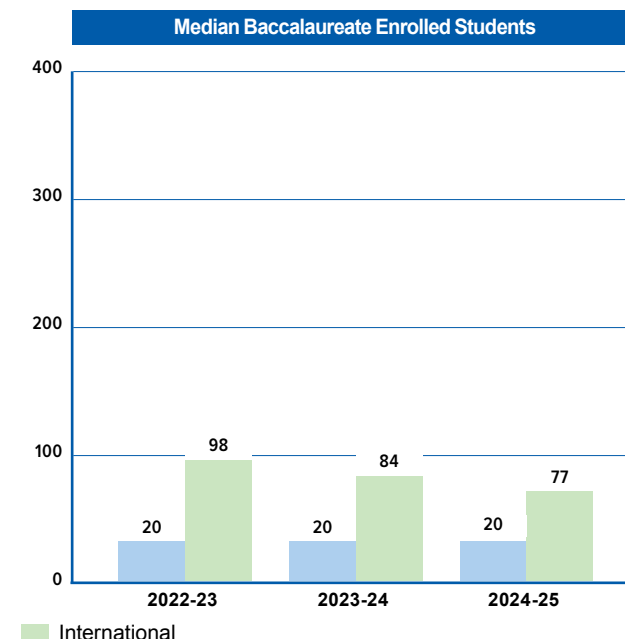
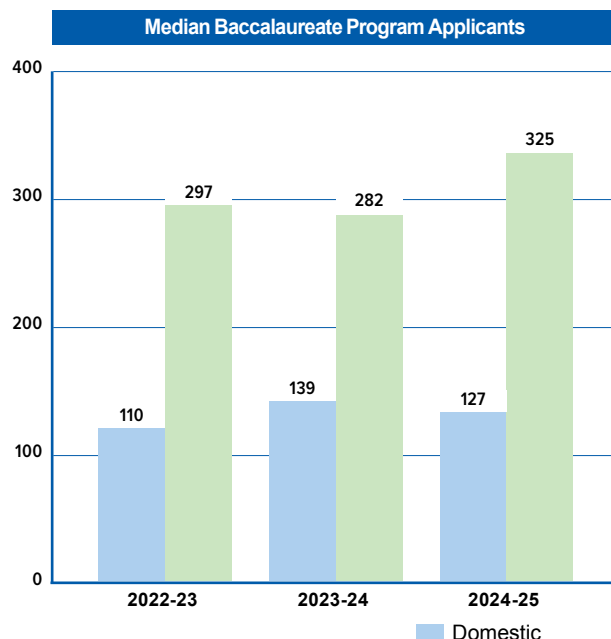
BALANCING BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS

Among U.S.-based bachelor's programs, application rates and acceptance rates both dropped since 2023 survey data, but those figures were balanced out by an increase in enrollment. In 2023, U.S. bachelor's programs in food science drew 126 applicants and 70 acceptances, compared to 114 and 41 in 2025. Enrollment increased from 23 newly enrolled applicants in 2023 to 26 in 2025.

When asked what factors have influenced recent patterns of applicants, acceptance, and enrollment, one respondent said their institution has hired “staff members to assist with recruiting efforts and to assist with academic program management, including graduate student admissions; increased awareness of incoming students of food science and technology as a major; and faculty working as a team to host prospective student tours of facilities, meetings with professors, and campus visits.”

When examined as a longer-term trend, applications to baccalaureate programs have grown since 2018. During that same period, enrollment in U.S. based programs has dropped to a median of 20 students per year.

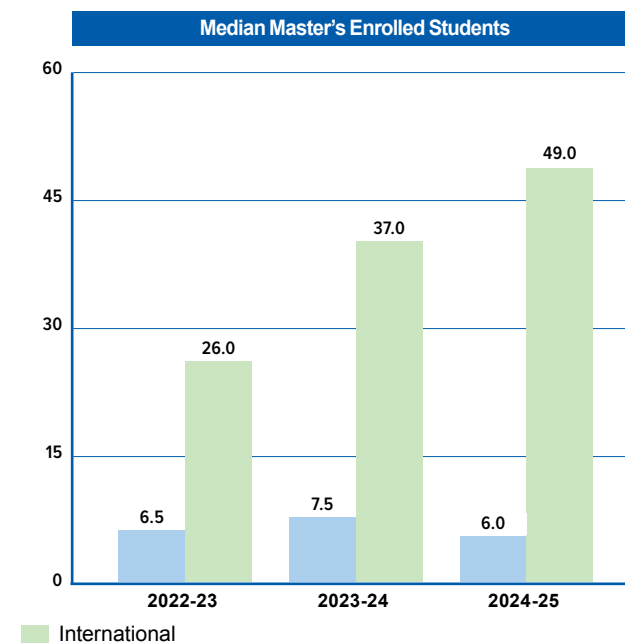
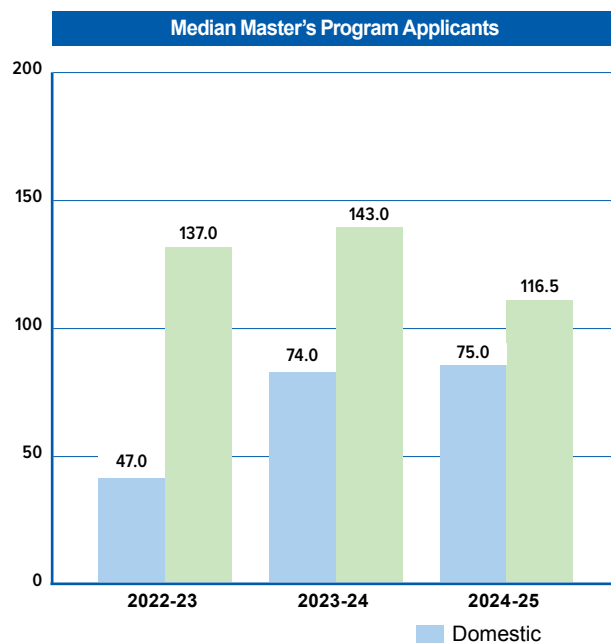
In response to a question about what factors have influenced recent patterns of applicants, acceptance, and enrollment, “financial constraints are the biggest” factor, one institutional respondent said. Another noted that because the institution is “a private school and most students [are] self-funded, the economy may have resulted in our lower numbers.”



MASTER'S APPLICANTS MAKE A COMEBACK

Application and acceptance rates for master's programs are similar to 2023, with slight decreases in both figures.

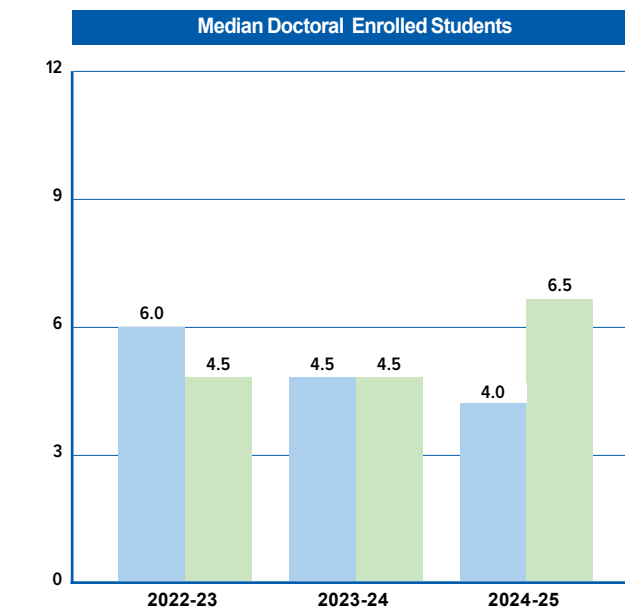
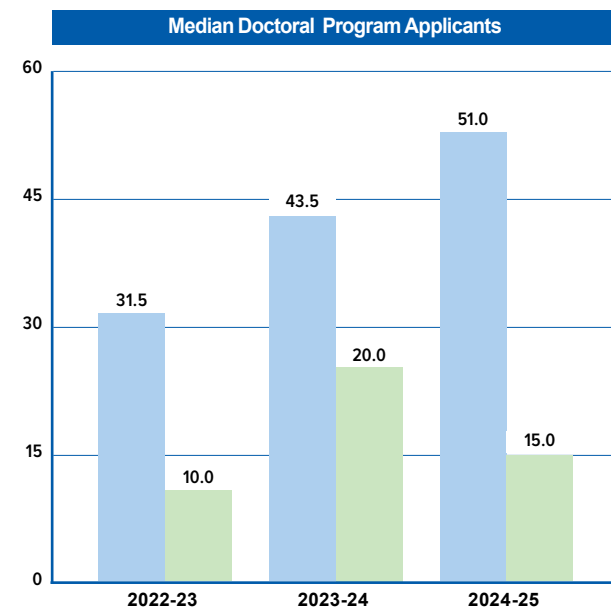
When viewed as a long-term trend, domestic applications for master's programs have made a comeback in recent years. However, enrollment in U.S.-based master's programs hit an all-time low since IFT launched this research project in 2018, with a median of six enrolled master's students.



DEEP DOCTORAL DROP

The acceptance rates for doctoral programs in the United States dropped 50% since the last survey, which considered Fall 2022/Spring 2023 data. At that time, U.S. doctoral programs reported 10 total acceptances and 8 enrollees.

Taking a longer-term view of the trends in food science doctoral programs, the number of applicants for U.S.-based programs has grown over time, but enrollment has recently dipped back down to levels seen in 2020-2021, at the height of pandemic restrictions.



METHODOLOGY

Institutional Survey

The Institute of Food Technologists' Feeding Tomorrow Fund conducted a confidential survey among institutions between January 21 and March 17, 2025. A total of 42 food science programs participated to a point where we could use their survey responses. This represented an increase from 33 food science programs in 2023 and the 15 that participated in 2018.

Student Survey

A survey was conducted by the Institute of Food Technologists' Feeding Tomorrow Fund in partnership with the Council of Food Science Administrators and Higher Education Review Board approved programs to provide the survey among students.

- One panel of the survey was conducted among IFT student members worldwide, launched on March 20 with reminders sent March 26, April 1, and April 8 with a final deadline of April 14.
- A second version of the survey was shared with food science programs that participated in a separate institutional survey by sharing an invitation and sometimes a reminder message with a generic link to the survey. Responses were collected from March 27 through April 19.

A total of 919 students completed a survey sufficiently to be included in the final results. IFT members (58%) were more numerous than those who responded to message from their food science program (42%).

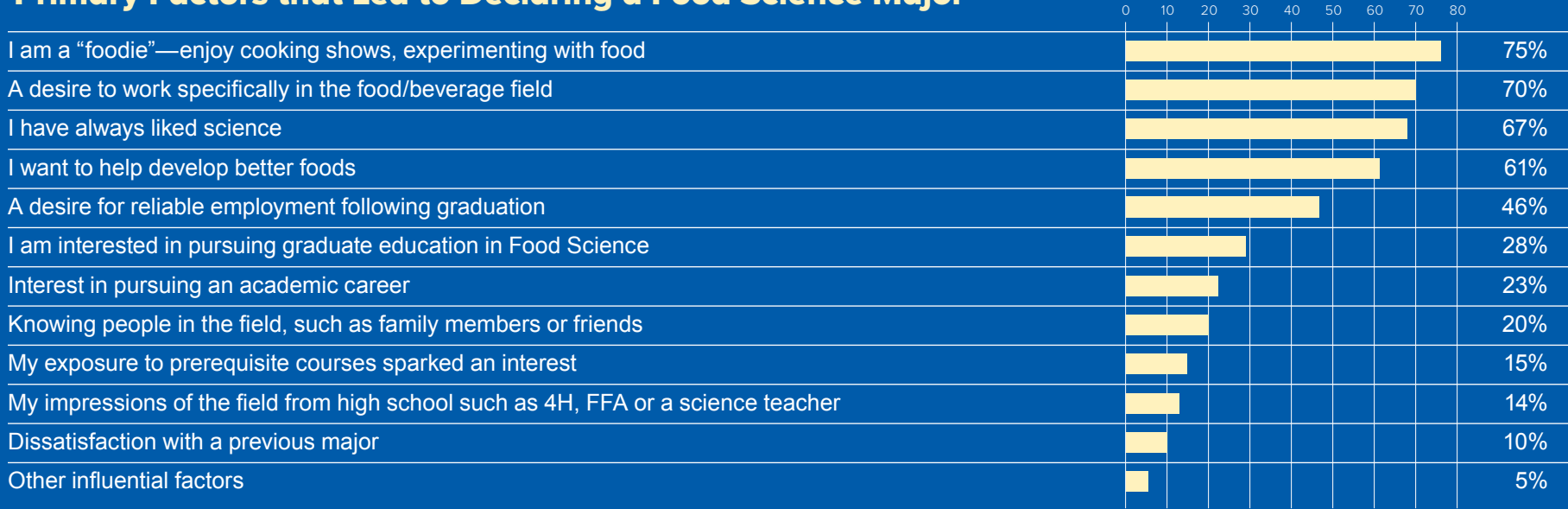
- Compared to past results, this represented a significant increase from 757 responses in 2023 and 456 in 2018. In 2023 the survey included international students for the first time, a proportion that increased from 25% in 2023 to 33% of survey participants this year.

STUDENT REPORT

Relationships with family and friends have become increasingly important in students' decisions to study food science. While students in food science programs in the United

States and globally are enthusiastic about the field, with currently uncertain global economic conditions, they are less optimistic about job prospects than in the last study.

Primary Factors that Led to Declaring a Food Science Major



OTHER INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

Career Transition and Development:

Desire to work in food but not the restaurant industry. Career change from food retail to manufacturing. Internship experience in food science. Working in a bakery and seeing the importance of science in food.

Educational and Family Influence:

Family owns a business developing of dairy products. My father took food science classes and told me about the field. University cut chemical engineering course, switched to food tech. Agricultural Science Faculty is highly ranked.

Personal Health and Interest:

Have celiac disease and want to improve gluten-free foods. Love of sustainability combined with food. Wanted to understand the interplay between food and health. Always interested in food but needed direction.

Culinary Background and Curiosity:

With a culinary background, wanting to know how food works. Have a culinary degree and want to expand knowledge of science. Went to culinary school but prefer the science of food. YouTube videos about food science topics and culinary program in high school.

Influence of Media and Mentorship:

Inspired by a career path seen in a show and further research. Spoke to department head and found the department welcoming. Talking with someone currently in the industry.

Public Policy and Food Safety:

Interests in public policy and food safety. Work for USDA FSIS.

CHOOSING TO STUDY FOOD SCIENCE

The 2025 study reflects a sharp increase in the role that family and friends play in influencing students to choose a food science major.

In 2025, the No. 1 influencing factor for students deciding to study food science was the influence of family members or friends, up from 2.74 in the last survey. Family members and friends replaced faculty members in food science programs in the top spot. “My father took food science classes when he was in school and told me about the field when I was young,” explained one respondent.

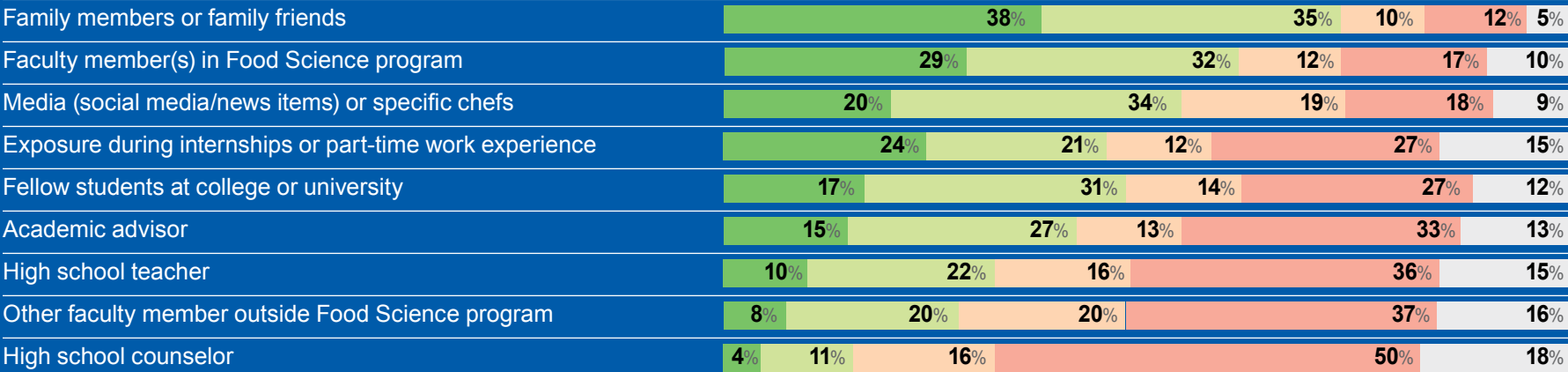
Despite dropping to the No. 2 spot, faculty members continue to wield important

influence over students’ decisions to study food science. For example, when asked the primary factors that led them to declare a food science major, one student said, “[I] spoke to [the] department head and she and the rest of the department were so welcoming.”

Students in U.S.-based programs are more likely to find program faculty members influential while students in international programs said that family members/friends, media, internships/part time work experience, fellow students, other non-program faculty members, and a high school guidance counselor were more influential.

Influence of People on Decision to Study Food Science

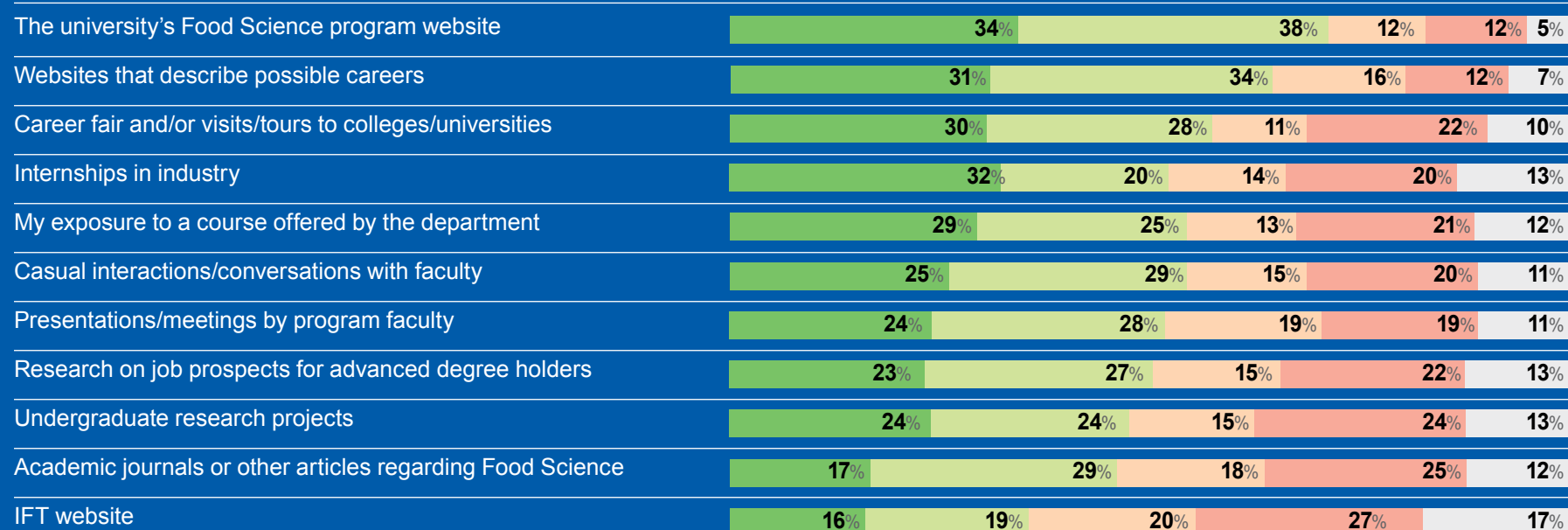
Extremely Important Somewhat Important Somewhat Unimportant Not at all Important No Opinion



Influence of Resources on Decision to Major in Food Science

In addition to the influence of various individuals, a number of other resources play a role in guiding students to make a decision to study food science. Similar to the 2023 study, students from U.S.-based programs rate all influences lower than their international counterparts, except for assigning a similar rating to that of students in international programs for casual faculty interactions. *Replies suggest that strong web presences helped students finalize their choice after being fairly predisposed to the field.*

■ Extremely Important
 ■ Somewhat Important
 ■ Somewhat Unimportant
 ■ Not at all Important
 ■ No Opinion

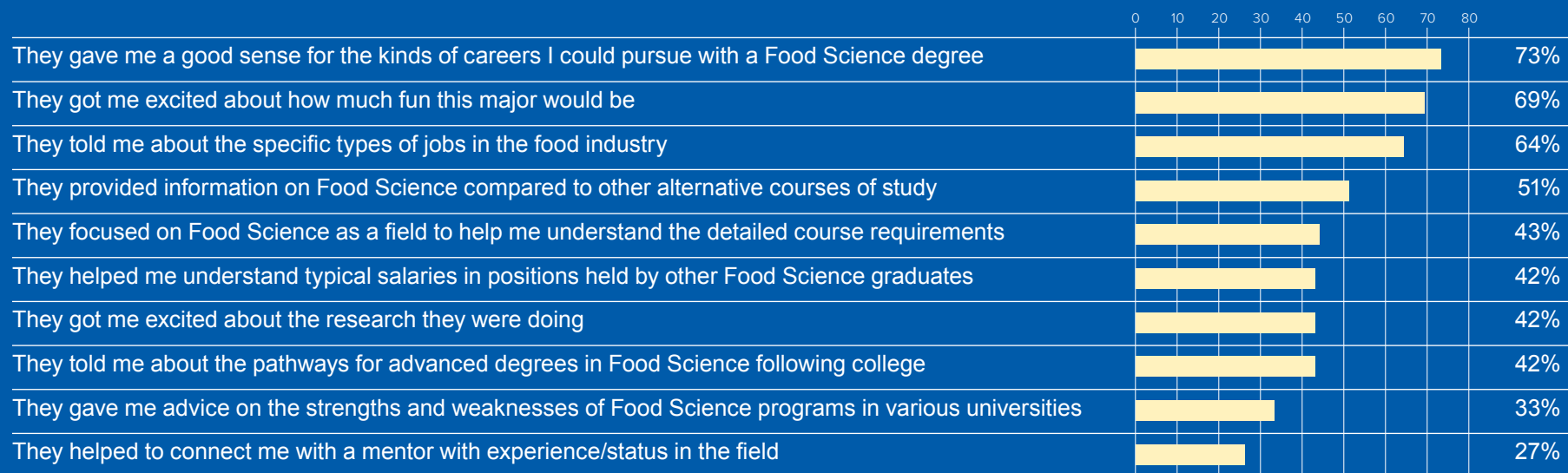


INFLUENCE INSIGHTS

The individuals and resources that influenced current students to major in food science made impressions in a variety of ways. When asked how individuals and resources helped students make a decision to study food science, the top response remains the same as in the last study: “They gave me a good sense for the kinds of careers I could pursue with a food science degree.”

In 2023, the second-place answer was “They provided information on food science compared to other alternative courses of study,” which dropped to fourth place this year. The second option for 2025, “They get me excited about how much fun this major would be,” was tied for third in the last study with the current third-place answer, “They told me about the specific types of jobs in the food industry.”

How did the individuals and resources who were very important in your decision specifically help you?



HOW DID INDIVIDUALS/RESOURCES HELP YOU IN YOUR DECISION?

- Allowed me to network through presentations at conferences to see what others in the field were doing and the potential of the food and beverage industry
- Emotional and financial support
- Got me interested in the topic.
- Helped me figuring out that my interest was in Food Science
- I told them what I wanted, they supported me to the best of their ability
- It was an interest I just had from myself and I liked it
- Many told me doing culinary school was stupid and just get a job but also network since job market kind of sucks
- Mostly teachers discouraged about our field
- Mentors explained disadvantages of other fields rather than the importance of food science; I did not have proper information about pay scale in food science and it would have been better if I was aware.
- Strong recommendation (alumni network)
- They told me that I could be an Extension Agent with this degree
- Through job experiences I saw how professional food scientists played huge roles in helping the food industry sector overcome challenges
- Told me it existed

FUTURE PLANS

Uncertainty in the global economy may be responsible for food science majors' changing outlook on their futures. Students report more concern about the job market than in the last survey; however, perhaps because of economic concerns, more of them are planning to enter the job market than attend graduate school, compared to 2023.

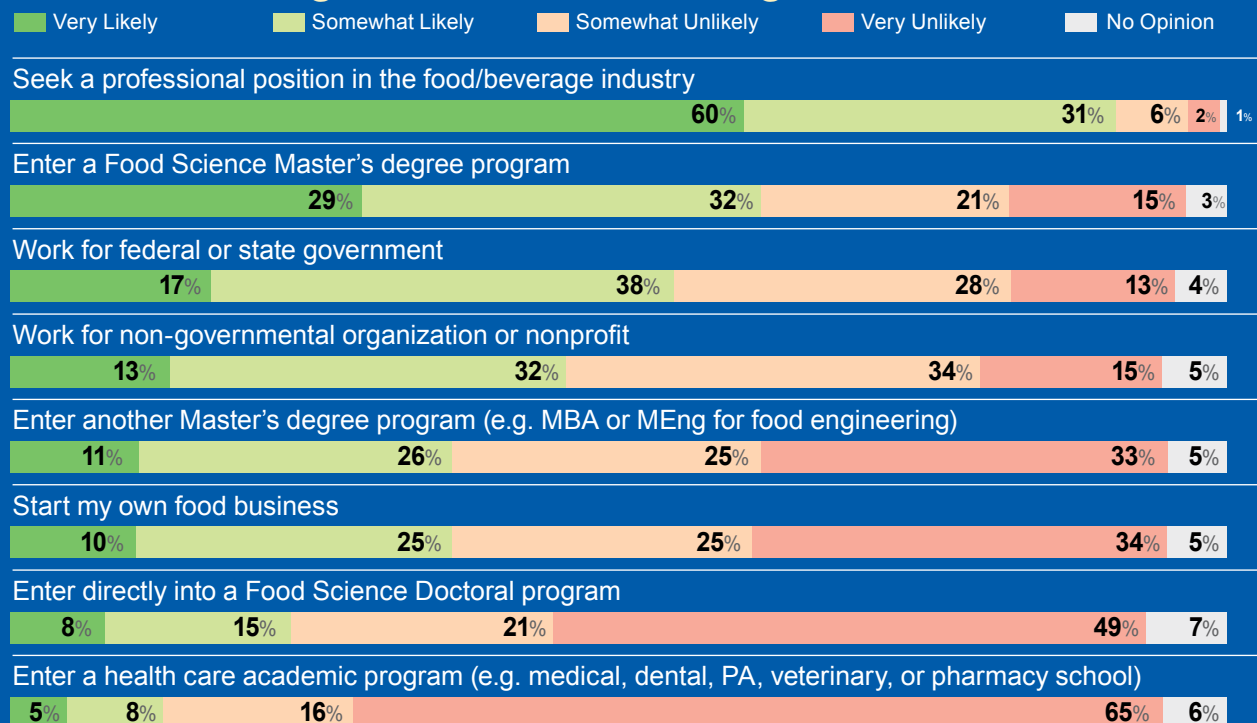
CHARTING A POST-GRAD PATH

Despite lower confidence in the job market, more undergrads tentatively plan to enter the job market rather than attend graduate school upon graduation, compared to 2023.

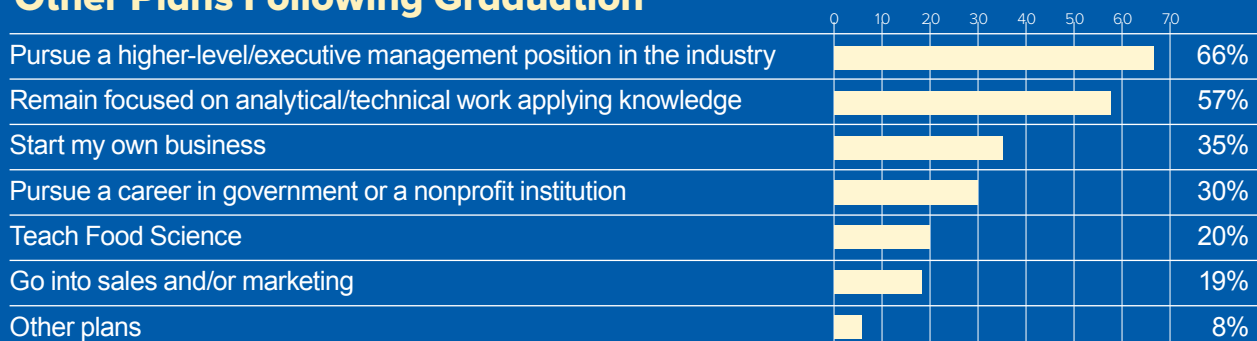
The number of respondents who said they are “very likely” to enter the food industry after graduating from their current undergraduate program increased by 8% from the 2023 survey. Those who said they are “very likely” to enter a food science master’s degree program fell by 9% compared to 2023.

Some students have plans that aren’t included in the list of positions above. For those with other plans, a higher percentage plan to start their own businesses than in 2023. The option to “start my own business” swapped places with “pursue a career in government or a nonprofit institution,” and all other options remained in the same order since the last study.

Tentative Undergraduate Plans Following Graduation



Other Plans Following Graduation



CLEAR CAREER GOALS

Food science majors have a wide variety of career options, and many respondents to the survey shared their unique goals and aspirations. Respondents expressed interest in working as a “sensory scientist,” working in “food safety,” “food trends and analysis,” or “a microbiologic lab.” Others said they were interested in “alcoholic beverage production,” “halal supervising and

auditing,” and “CBD and medical integration with food and science.”

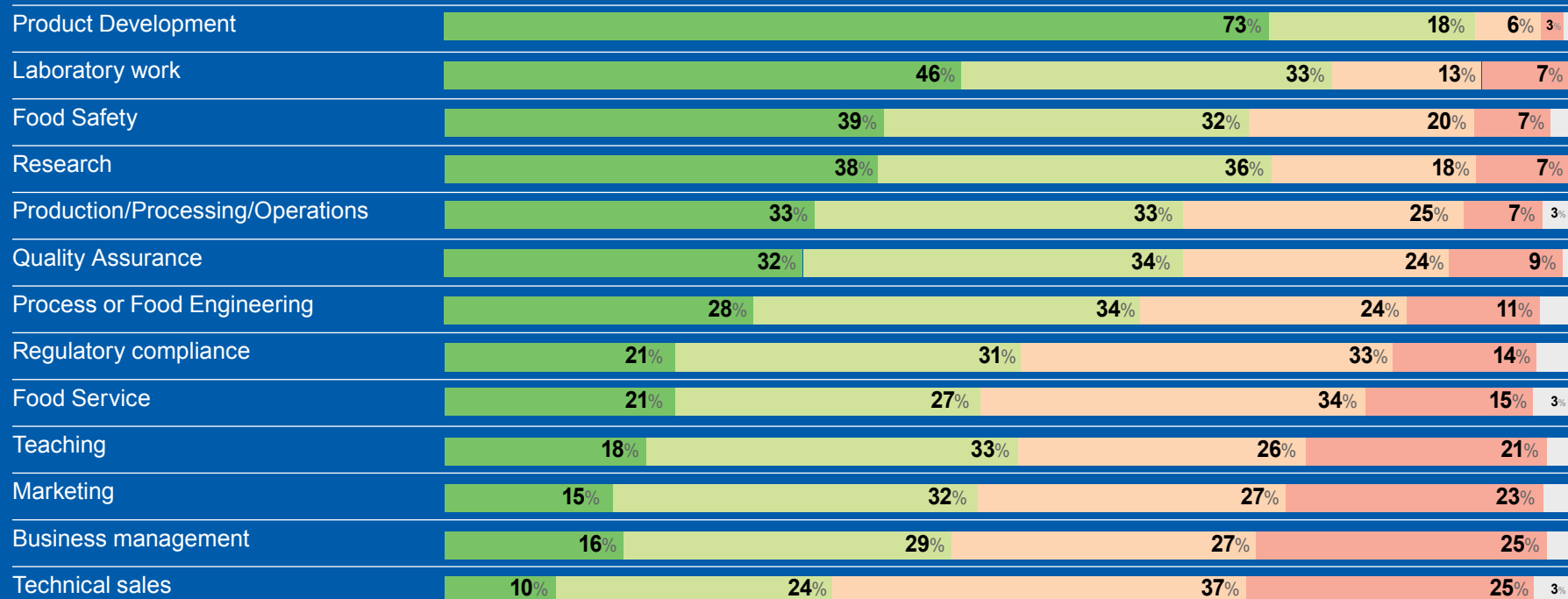
Overall, product development remains the most appealing job among students, with 73% rating it as very appealing, the same percentage as 2023. Respondents’ interest in laboratory work is in second place this year, up from third place with an increase of 4% finding it very

appealing since 2023. Interest in food safety is in third place, up from fourth place in 2023, with the same 39% rating it as very appealing.

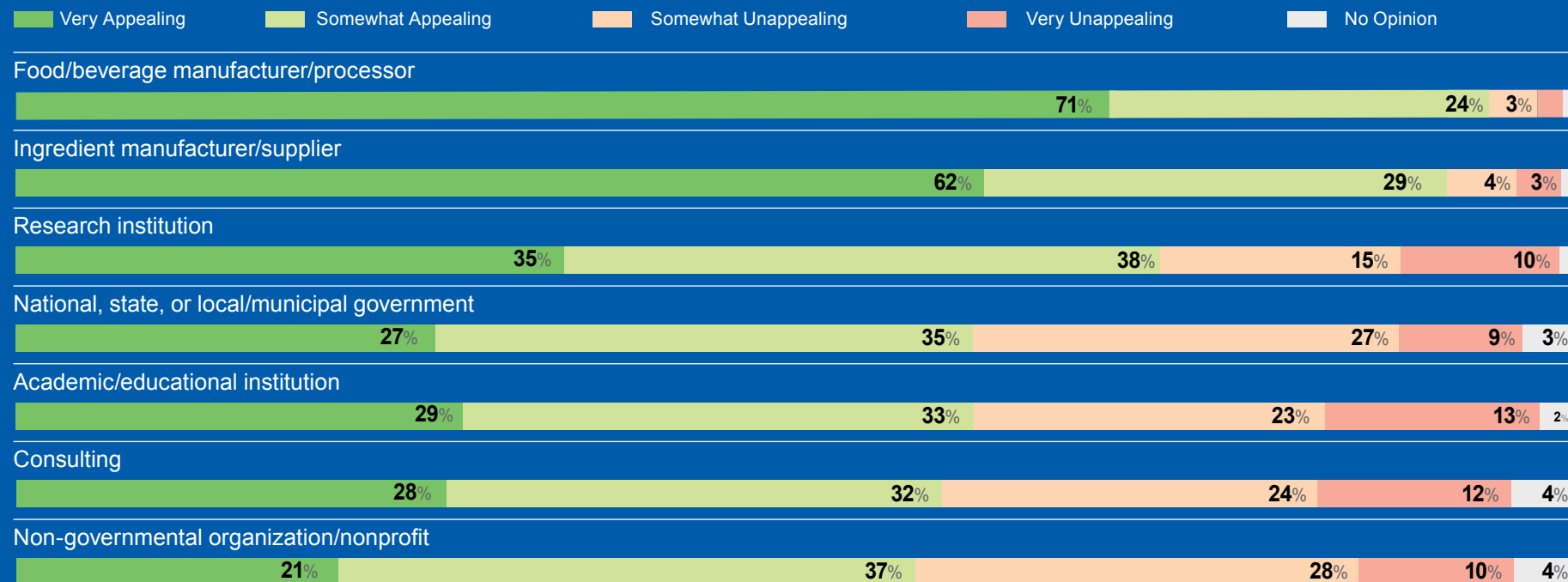
The number of students who rank careers in research as very appealing has dropped 6% since 2023, leading that role to drop from second place to fourth place.

Appeal of Positions After Graduation

Very Appealing Somewhat Appealing Somewhat Unappealing Very Unappealing No Opinion



Appeal of Employer Fields After Undergraduate Program



BENEFITS & SALARY

- Ones with flexible hours and a lot of funding for research, preferably 401k matching in a livable location with lots of public transport

CULTURE

- Employers who are actively representing their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs and focusing on the well-being of their employees appeal greatly to me
- Employers who respect their employees and are willing to foster growth and a work-life balance

PROMOTION POTENTIAL

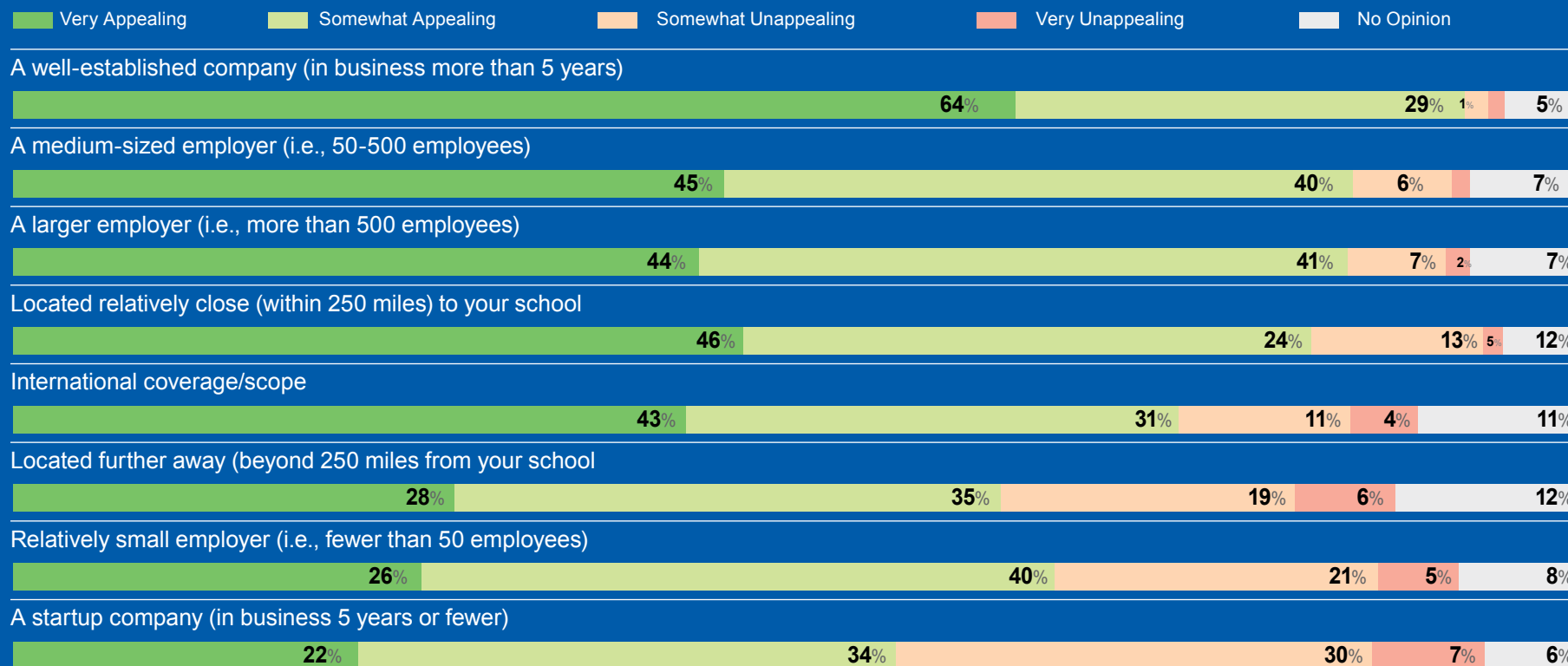
- Larger companies that are looking for R&D or have leadership programs
- Opportunities to learn abroad with different offices of the same company

- Research institutes that allow me to ask the questions that I am interested in
- Employers who strive to constantly be improving instead of being satisfied with where they are at

FOCUS/PRODUCTS

- Companies with global impact and more hands-on roles
- Development of new products or improvement of existing ones and something related to regulations and public health
- Employers on the cutting edge of the food industry researching new technologies
- Product development.
- Women, Infants, and Children (food and nutrition major with nutrition focus working in a food science lab)

Appeal of Employer Characteristics After Undergraduate Program



SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION/QUALITIES

- Employers that have relocation, open internships before having a full-time job
- Employers who emphasize sustainability and ingredient sourcing
- Employers with locations outside of the U.S. that have travel opportunities for employees
- FDA or USDA

- Food manufacturers (Lamb Weston, Tree Top) and product development consultation offices (Culinex, Tastepoint)
- Woman-led
- Well-known companies like Frito Lay and Pepsi

JOB MARKET JITTERS

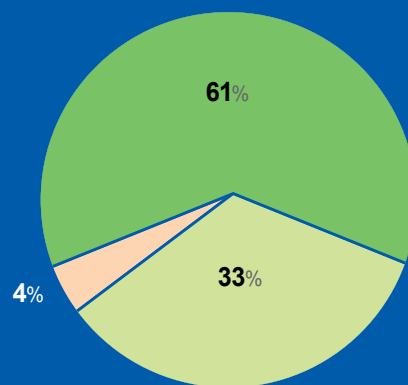
Food science majors are considerably less confident about the job market than they were in 2023, most likely due to broader macroeconomic trends. Optimism about the job market dropped sharply. For example, respondents who agree that the job market will be strong enough for them to find an entry-level position they want dropped by 6% since the last survey. Also, those who strongly agree that the job market will remain strong enough for them to grow into the level of responsibility they want in the long term dropped by 13%.

On the brighter side, respondents' satisfaction levels with their educational programs remained at high 2023 levels.

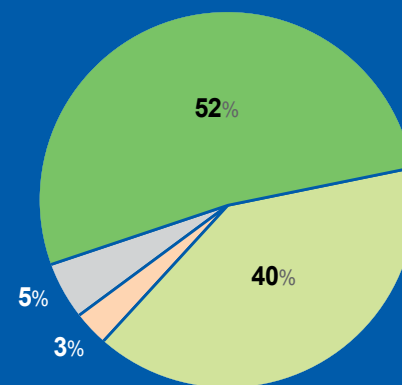
Confidence in Current Experiences/Program & Future Employment

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Disagree Somewhat Strongly Disagree No Opinion

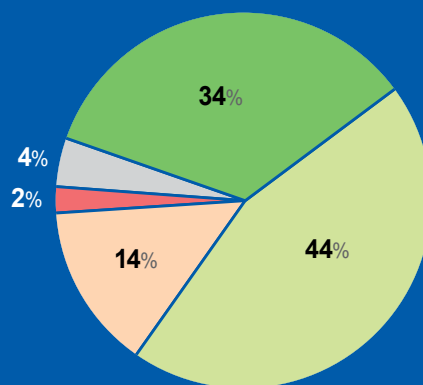
My education is preparing me well for my future employment/career



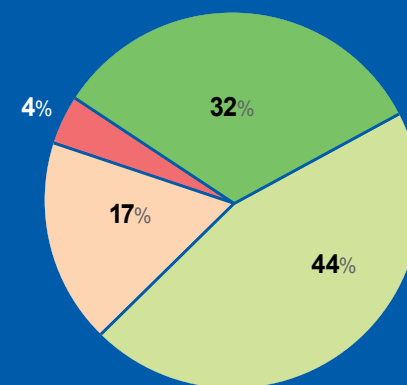
My education is preparing me well for graduate school



The job market will remain strong for me to grow into the level of responsibility that I want in the long term

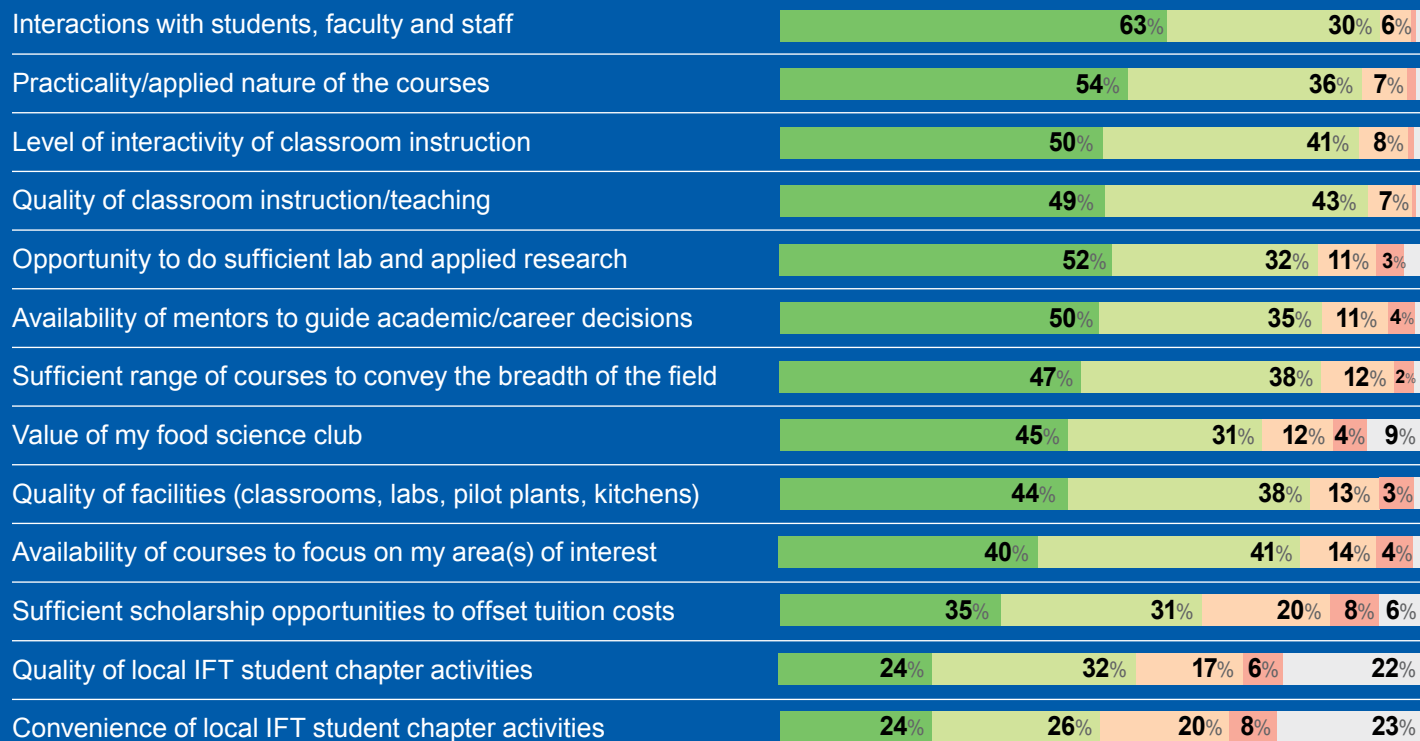


The job market will be strong enough for me to find an entry-level position I want to have

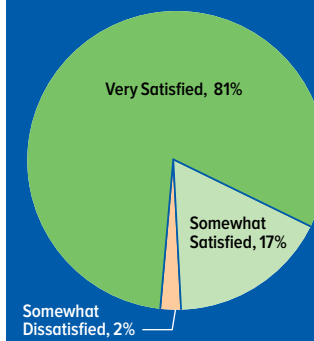


Satisfaction with Undergraduate Program

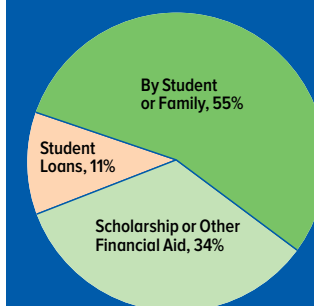
■ Very Satisfied
 ■ Somewhat Satisfied
 ■ Somewhat Dissatisfied
 ■ Very Dissatisfied
 ■ Not Applicable



Overall Satisfaction with Choice of Major



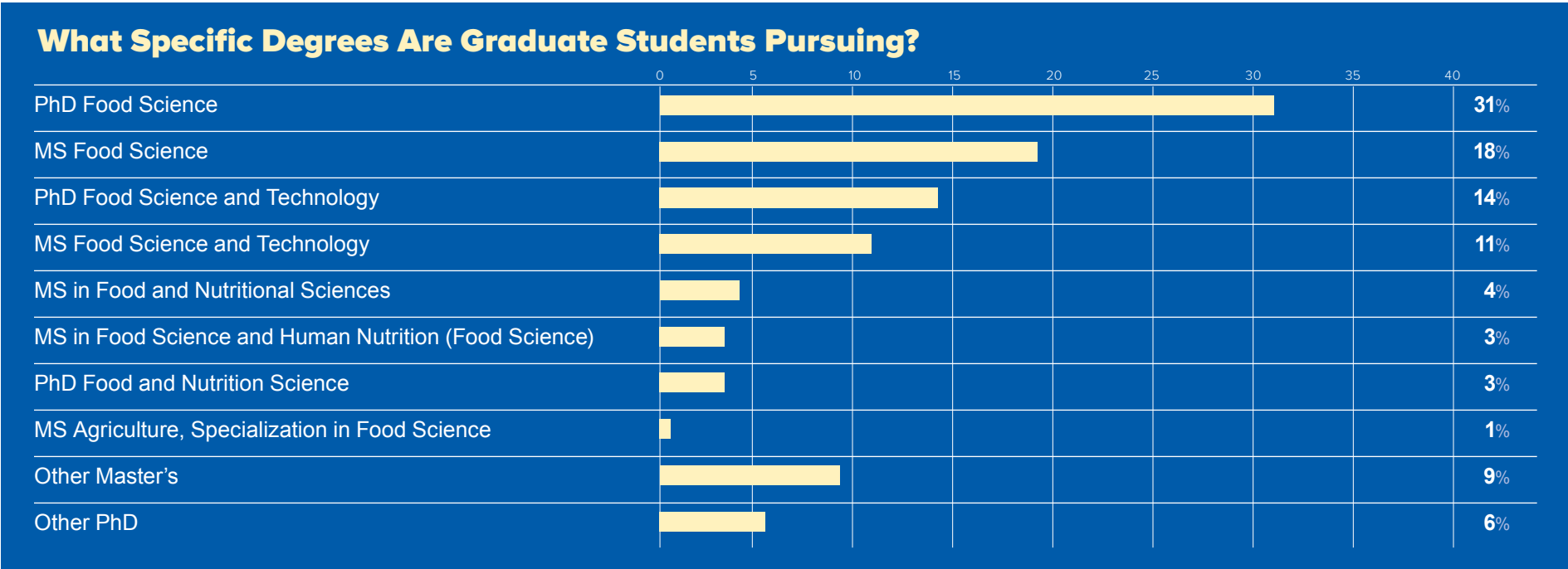
Proportion of Current Tuition/Fees Paid



GRADUATE STUDENTS

While institutions report a decrease in graduate program participation, those who are pursuing graduate degrees in food science are enthusiastic and committed to the field, survey responses show.

“I don’t see myself deviating from food science; this is my dream,” commented a master’s program participant.



GRADUATE PROGRAM CHOICES

Survey respondents included graduate students who are pursuing both master’s degrees and doctoral degrees, in a number of fields related to food science. Since 2023, there are many more participating in a PhD Food Science program and fewer pursuing a Food Science master’s degree. In Food Science and Technology programs, there are fewer students pursuing PhDs and more pursuing master’s degrees.

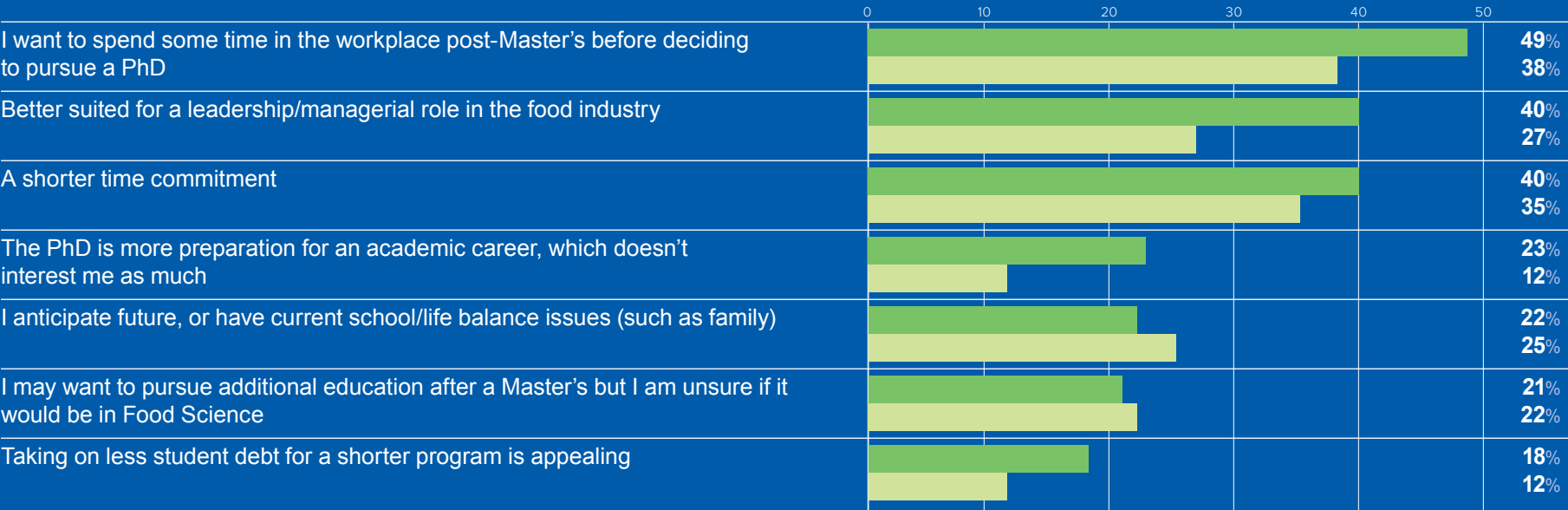
Master’s program participants were asked why they chose to pursue a master’s degree rather than a PhD. The No. 1 reason, “I want to spend some time in the workplace post-Masters before deciding to pursue a PhD,” grew 9% from 2023 results, bumping it

up from second place. In the last survey, the top response was “A shorter time commitment,” which dropped to third place with a loss of 9%.

A number of master’s degree program participants commented that they plan to pursue doctoral programs in the future. “Since a master’s program involves a thesis component, it offers a chance to enhance my research abilities, explore various methodologies, and determine the specific areas of study that truly interest me before undertaking a long-term PhD commitment,” one student wrote.

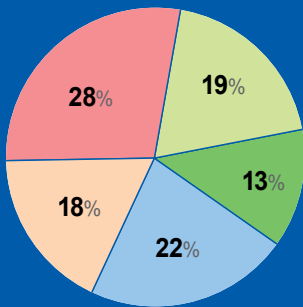
Reasons for Choosing a Master's Degree Over PhD Program

Master's Doctorate



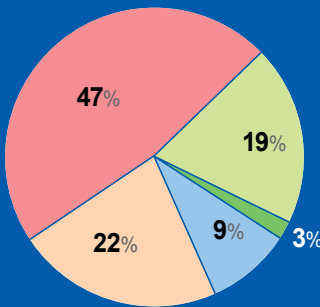
Proportion of Current Tuition/Fees Paid, Master's

Grants
Teaching / Research asst.
School/ Financial Aid
Student loans
You or your family



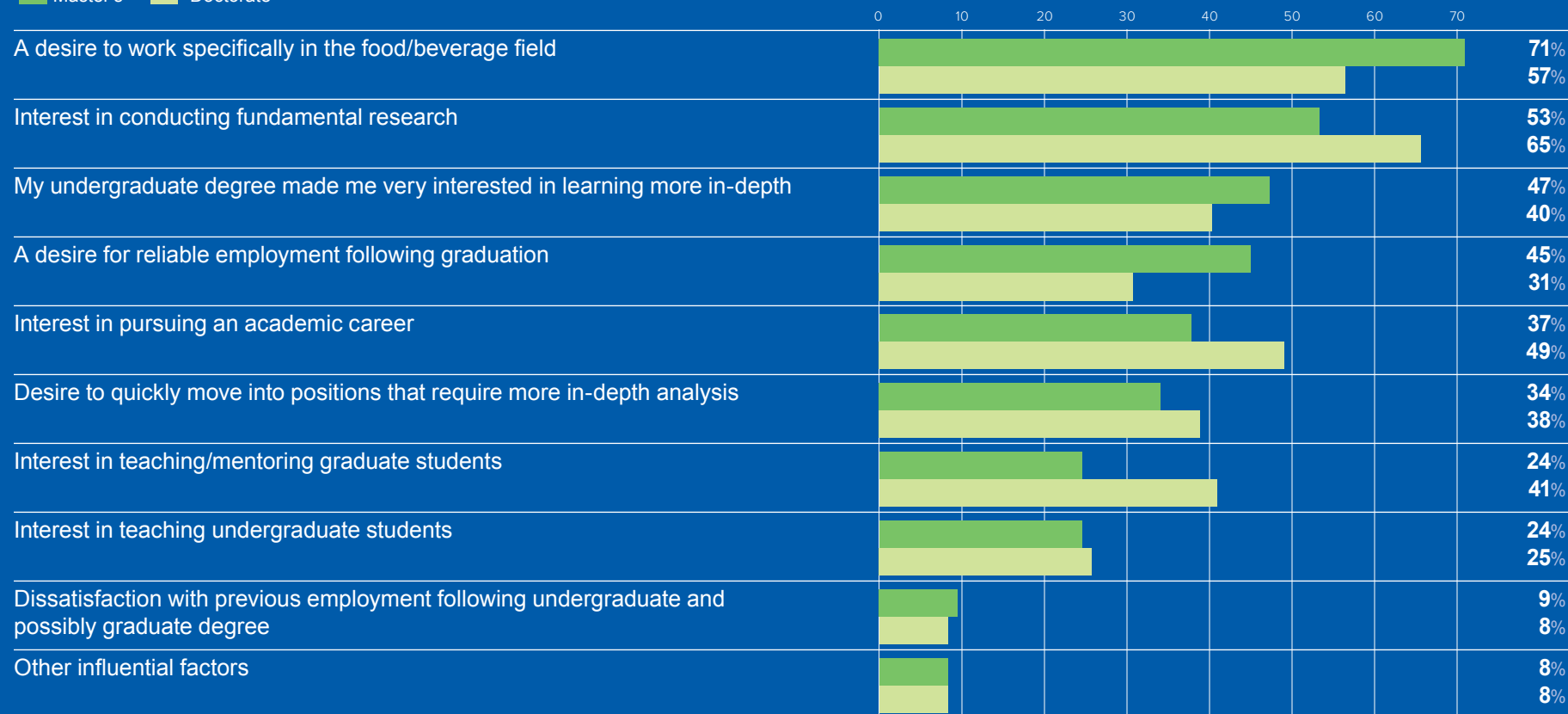
Proportion of Current Tuition/Fees Paid, Doctorate

Grants
Teaching / Research asst.
Scholarships / Other aid
Student loans
You or your family



Primary Factors on Deciding to Pursue Graduate Degree in Food Science

■ Master's ■ Doctorate



DRIVING FACTORS FOR GRADUATE STUDY

The desire to work specifically in the food and beverage field (71%) is by far the most common reason reported by master's students for pursuing a graduate degree in food science. The only other reason selected by a majority of respondents was an interest in conducting fundamental research (53%).

Other common reasons students reported pursuing graduate study include that their undergraduate degree made them very interested in learning more in depth (47%) and a desire for reliable employment following graduation (45%).

More than one-third also mentioned an interest in an academic career (37%) and the desire to quickly move into positions that require more in-depth analysis (34%). Less-common reasons for pursuing a Master's are an interest in teaching undergraduate students or teaching/mentoring graduate students (24% each), and dissatisfaction with previous employment following undergraduate (and possibly graduate) degrees (9%).

INFLUENCING FACTORS ON GRADUATE SCHOOL DECISIONS

Like undergrads, graduate students said both individuals and resources influenced their decisions to pursue graduate degrees. However, in the case of master's students, family members and friends played a less important role; they were more influenced by their own work experience and colleagues, as well as food science faculty members. They also said exposure to the field through internships or part-time work experience was influential.

Doctoral students are similar, in that the most influential

factors are their own work experience and colleagues, as well as faculty members in the food science program. Exposure to the field during internships or part-time work experience is less important to them than to master's students.

A combination of resources ranked as influential for graduate students' educational decisions. The most important resource for respondents was research on job prospects for advanced degree holders.

Five other types of resources were closely ranked in their importance: undergraduate research projects, casual interactions/conversations with faculty, and academic journals or other articles regarding food science, internships in industry, and the university's food science program website.

Even the least influential resources, presentations/meetings by program faculty, has 65% of respondents who regard it as very or somewhat important.

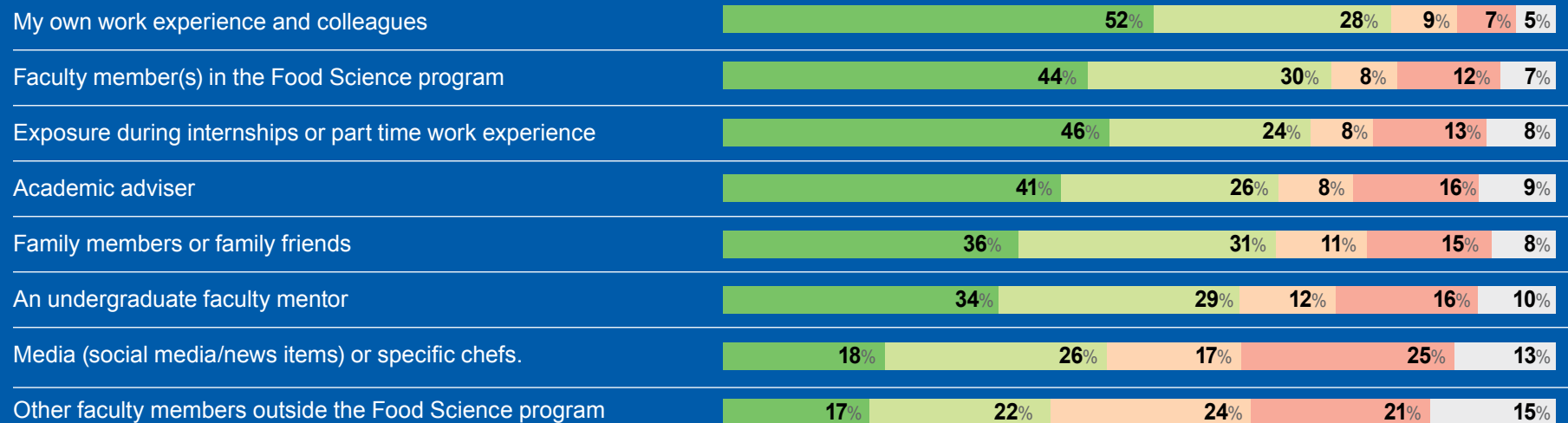
Influential Resources for Graduate Students

Extremely Important Somewhat Important Somewhat Unimportant Not at all Important No Opinion



Influential People for Graduate Students

■ Extremely Important
 ■ Somewhat Important
 ■ Somewhat Unimportant
 ■ Not at all Important
 ■ No Opinion



FUTURE GOALS

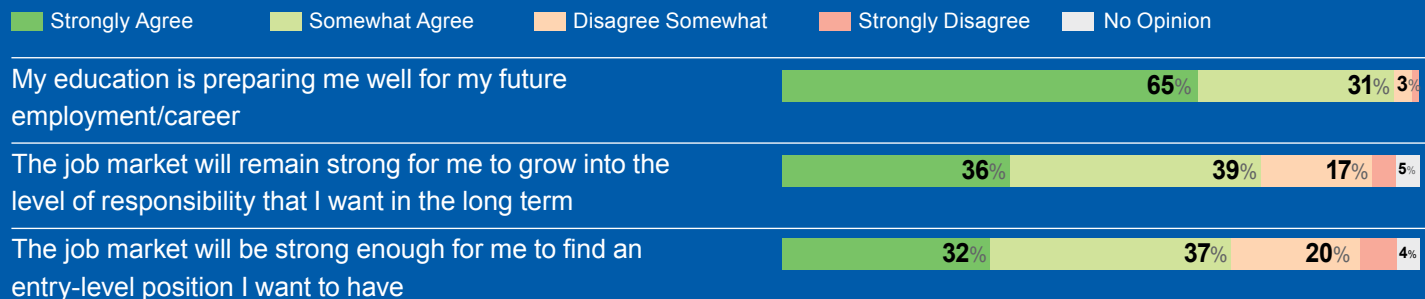
Like undergraduate respondents, graduate respondents also report decreased confidence in career prospects, given current economic conditions.

CAREER CONFIDENCE DWINDLES

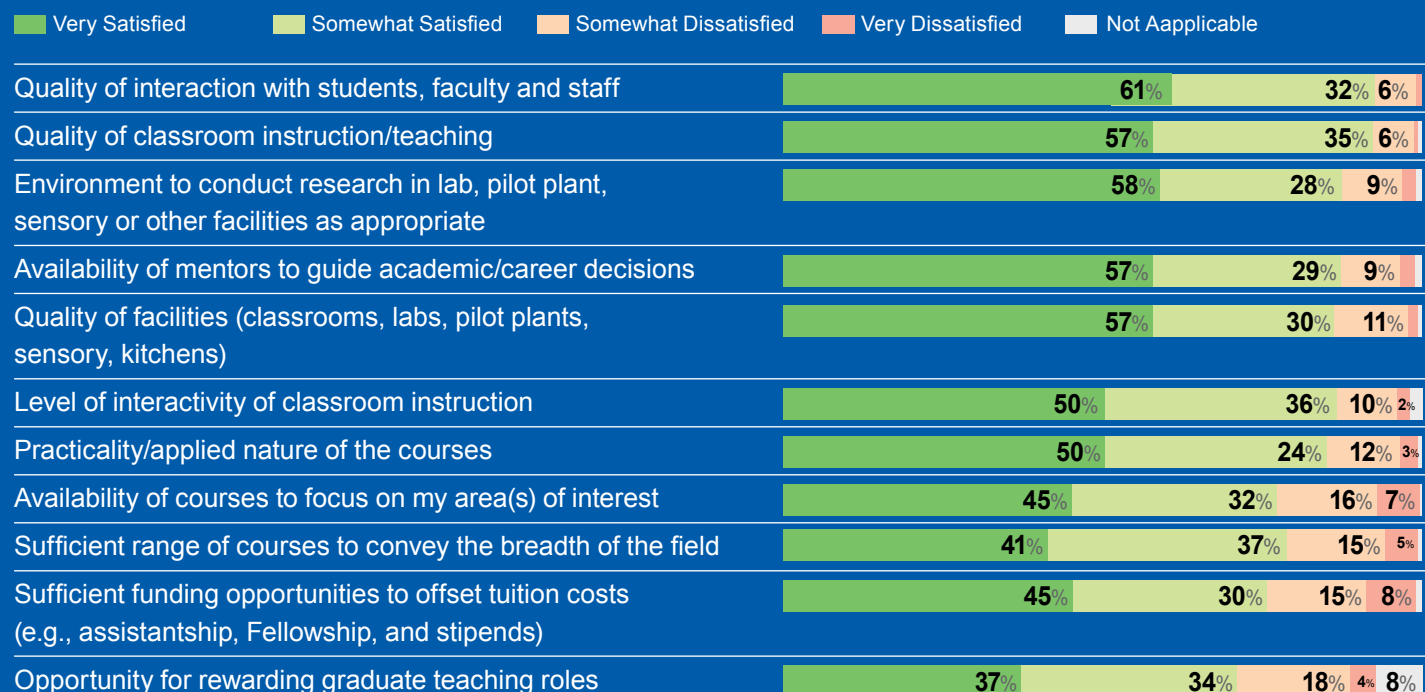
When asked about their confidence level regarding their educational program and future employment, the only variance from 2023 was in regard to the job market. Graduate students are generally confident that their education is preparing them well for their future employment/career, with 65% strongly agreeing and 31% somewhat agreeing.

There is far less confidence that the job market will remain strong for them to grow into the level of responsibility they want in the long term or that it will be strong enough to find an entry-level position they want. These responses are in line with broader macroeconomic trends in 2025.

Confidence in Graduate Training and Future Employment Prospects



Satisfaction with Graduate Food Science Program

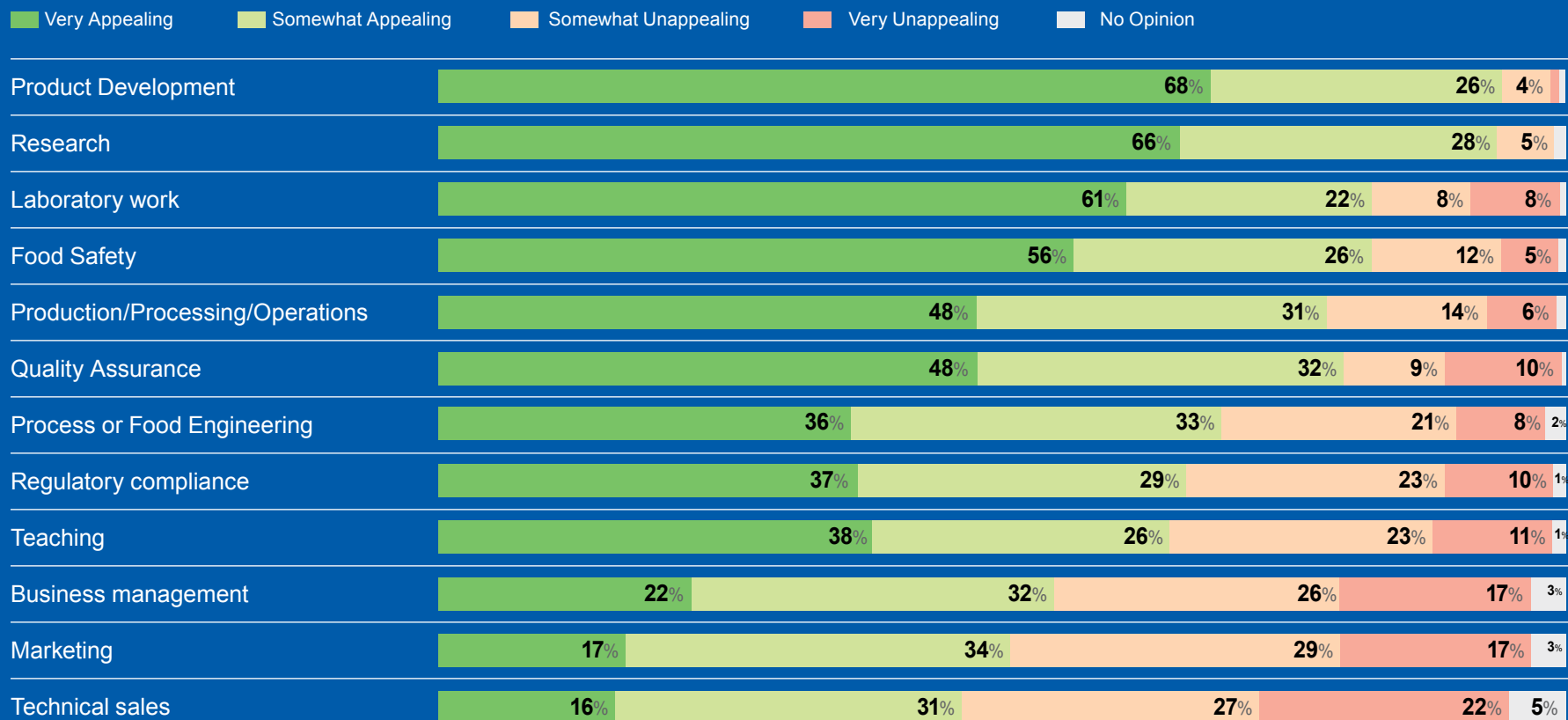


FOOD SCIENCE GOALS ABIDE

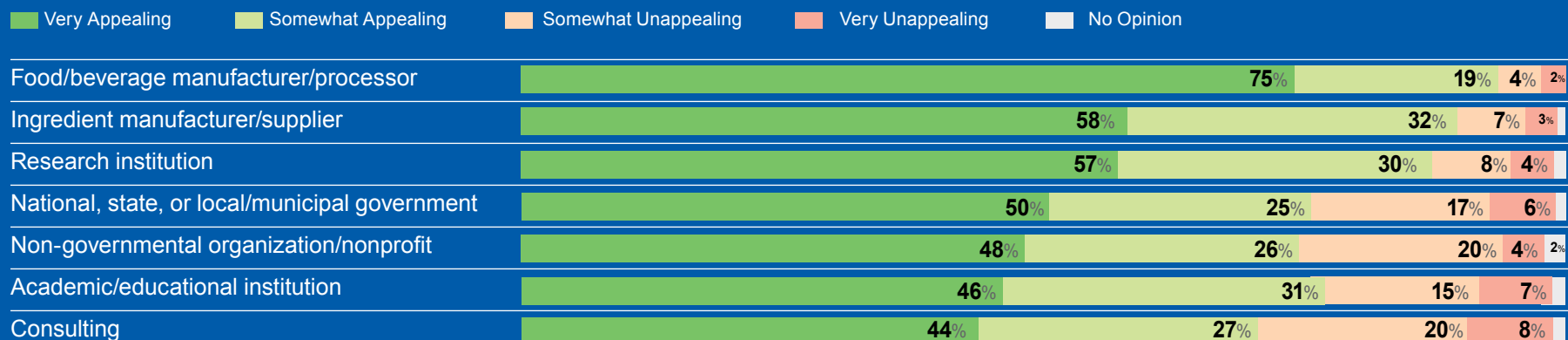
Despite the drop in job market confidence, graduate student respondents' hopes and dreams for food science careers are alive and well. The potential positions graduate students find most appealing include product development, research, and lab work—and the appeal of research and lab work have increased significantly since 2023.

While the list of appealing career choices is largely unchanged since 2023, the number of students who ranked research as “very appealing” increased by 10% and those who ranked lab work as “very appealing” grew by 12%.

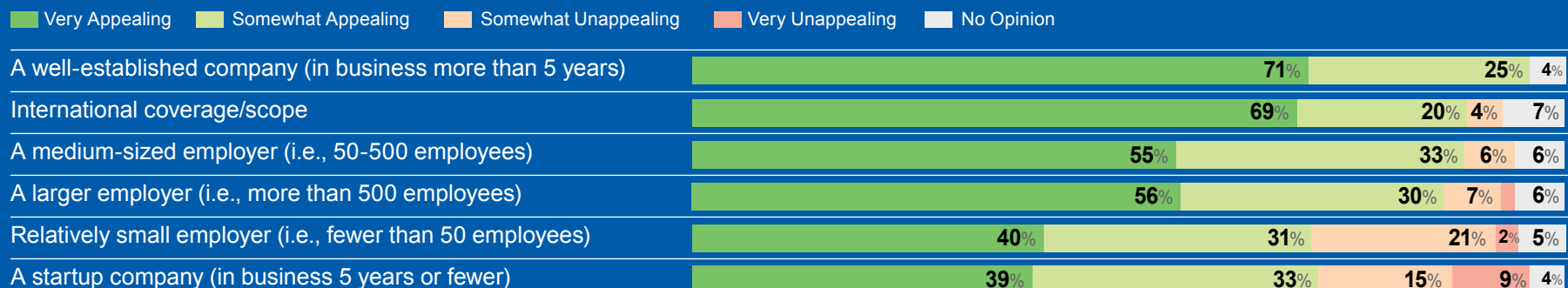
Appeal of Positions/Functions Following Master's



Appeal of Employer Fields Following Master's

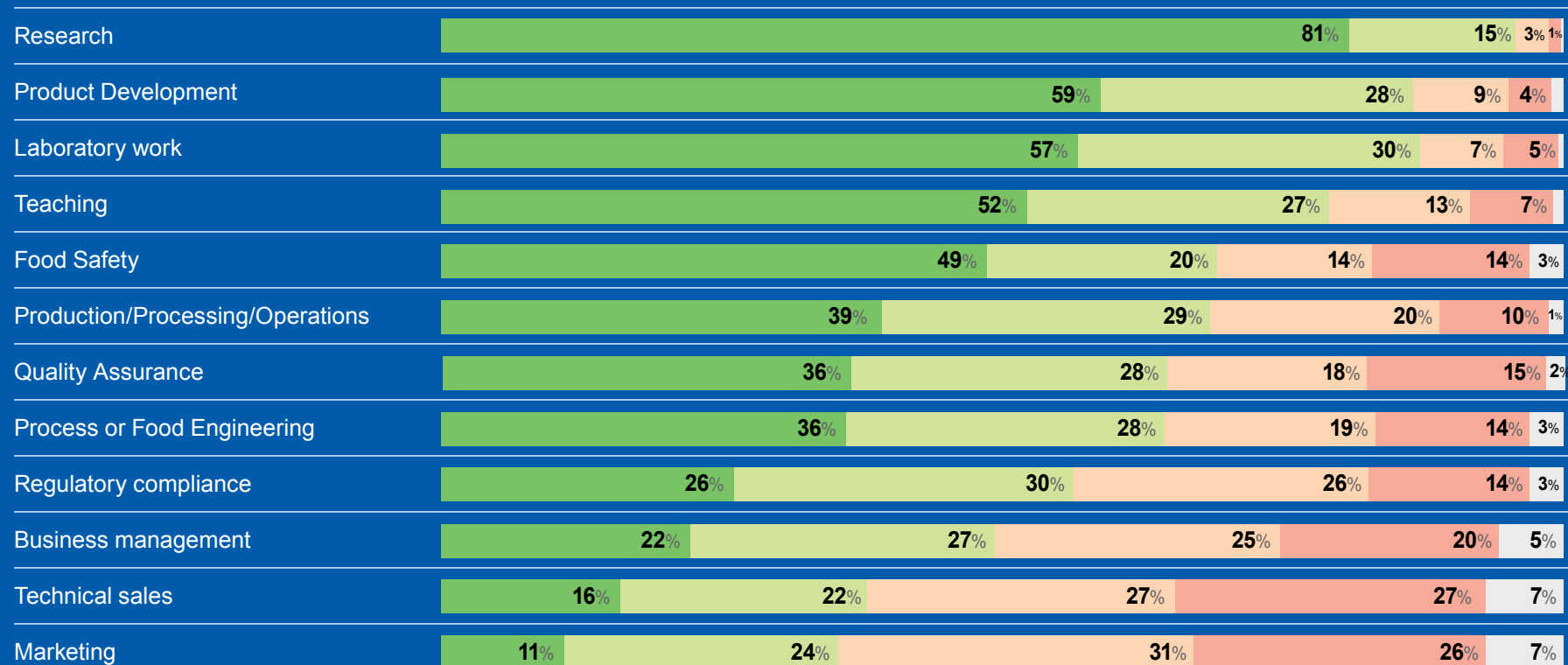


Appeal of Employer Characteristics Following Master's



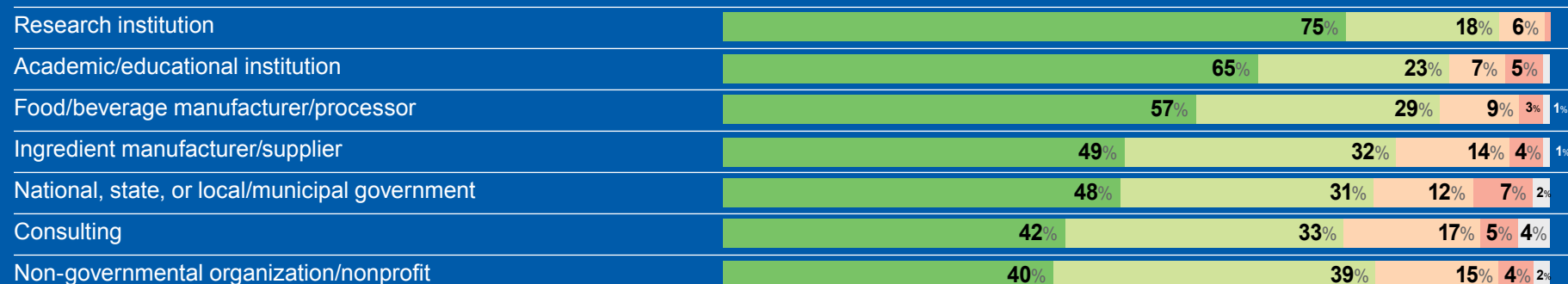
Appeal of Positions/Functions Following Doctorate

Very Appealing Somewhat Appealing Somewhat Unappealing Very Unappealing No Opinion



Appeal of Employer Fields Following Doctorate

Very Appealing Somewhat Appealing Somewhat Unappealing Very Unappealing No Opinion



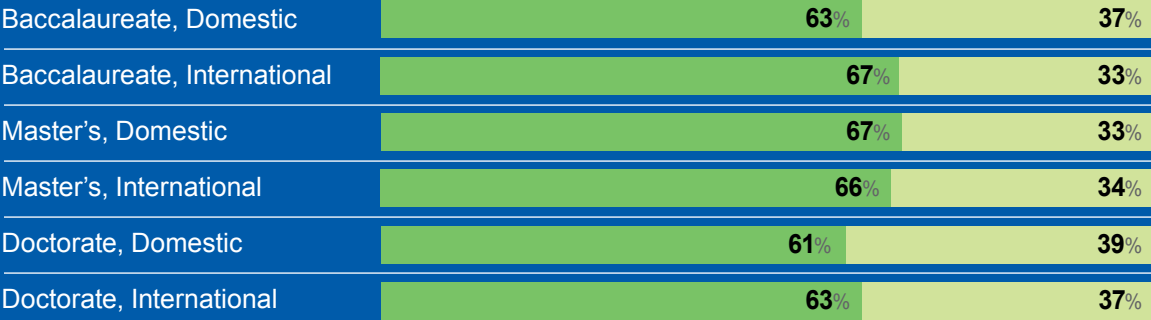
Appeal of Employer Characteristics Following Doctorate

Very Appealing Somewhat Appealing Somewhat Unappealing Very Unappealing No Opinion



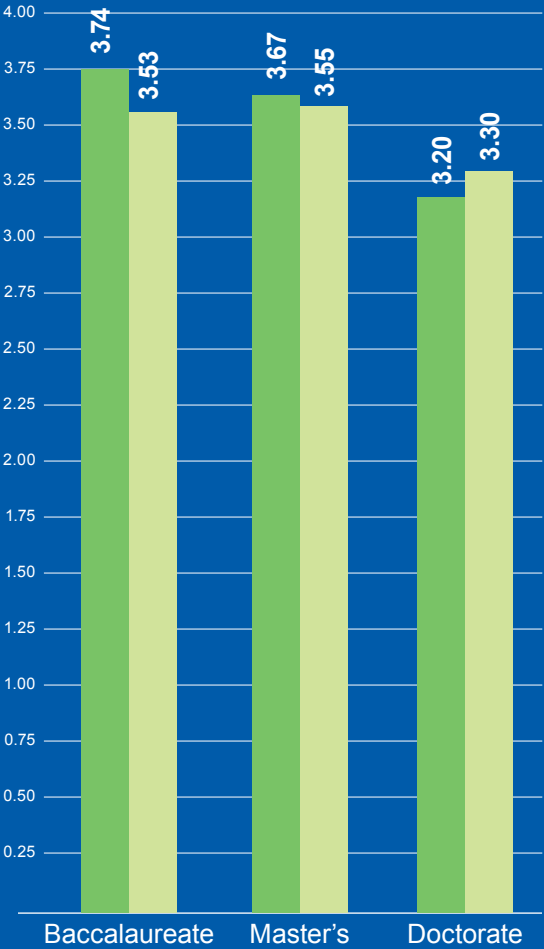
Gender of Newly Enrolled 2024-25 Students

Female Male



Mean GPA of Enrolled Applicants for Fall 2024

Domestic International

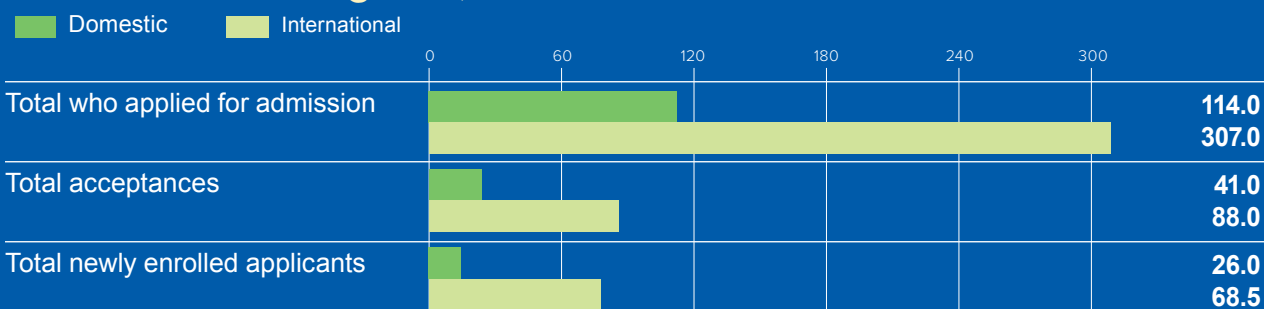


Traditional vs Non-Traditional Student

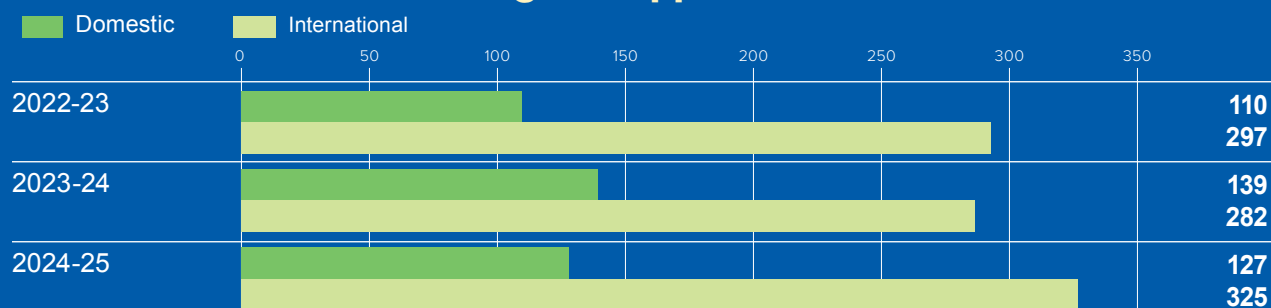
Traditional student Non-traditional student



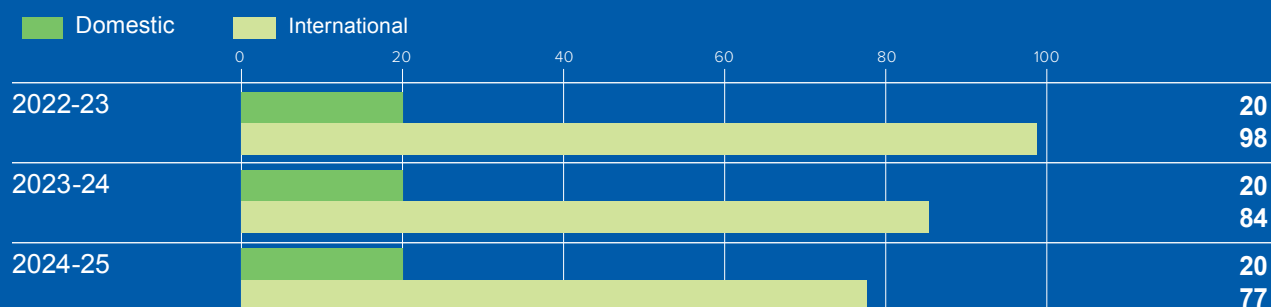
Baccalaureate Programs, 2025



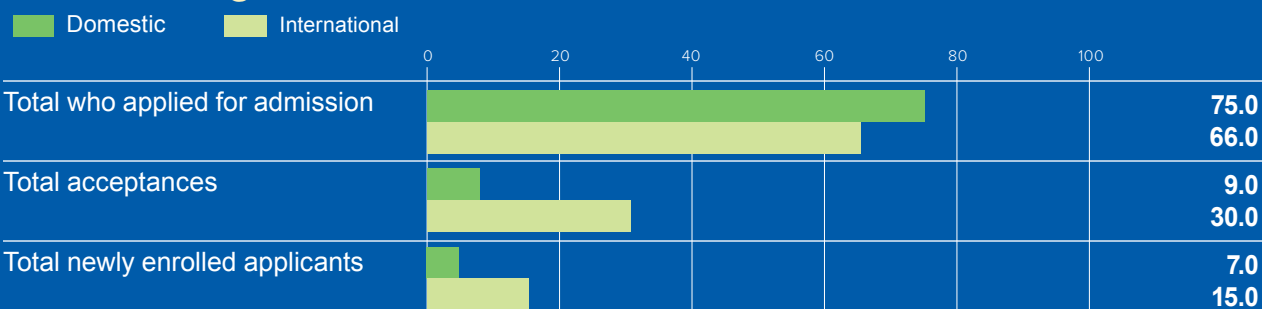
Median Baccalaureate Program Applicants



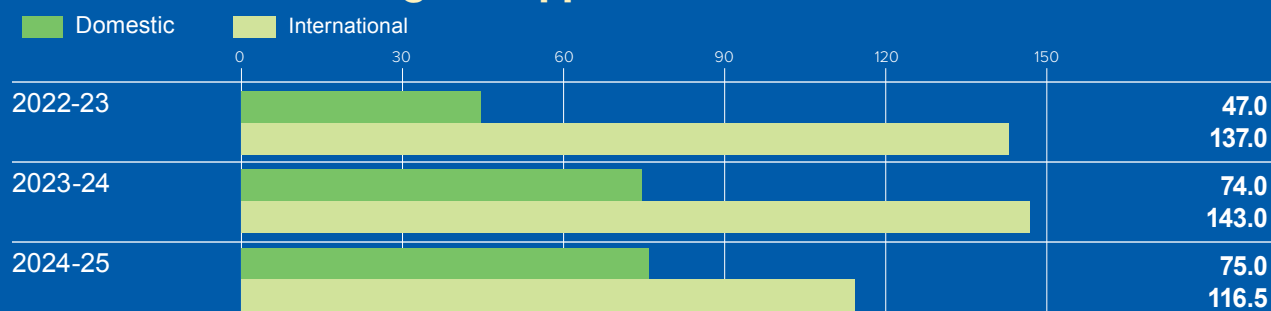
Median Baccalaureate Enrolled Students



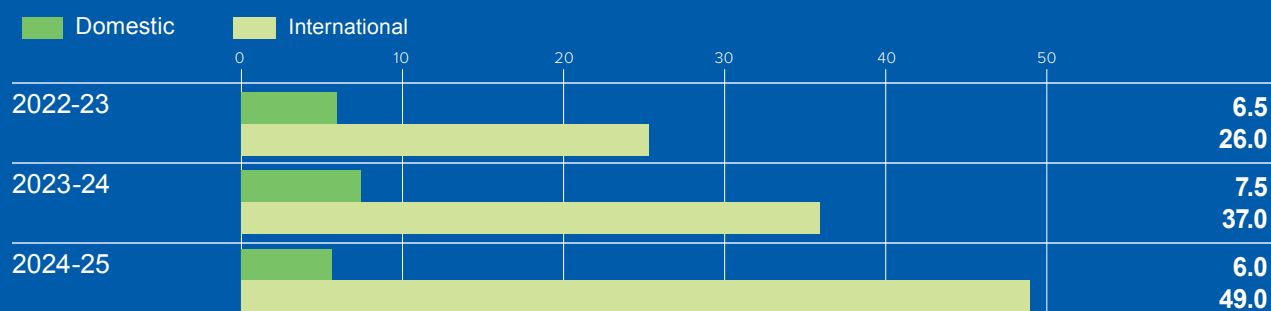
Master's Programs, 2025



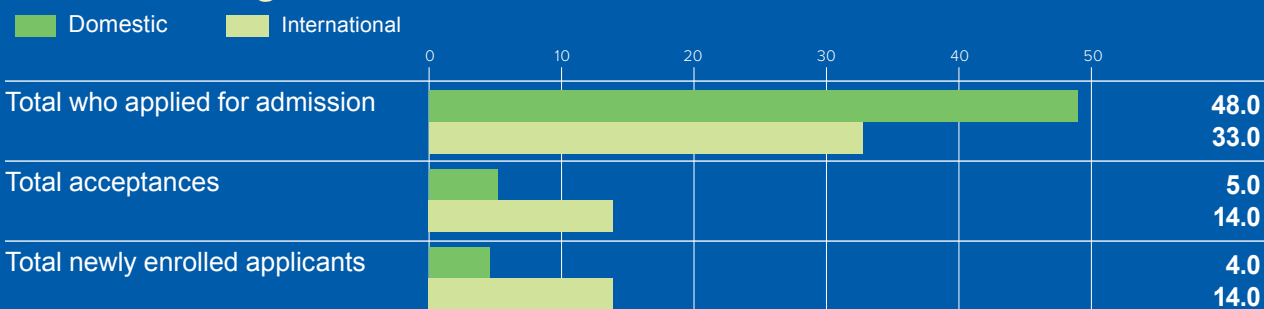
Median Master's Program Applicants



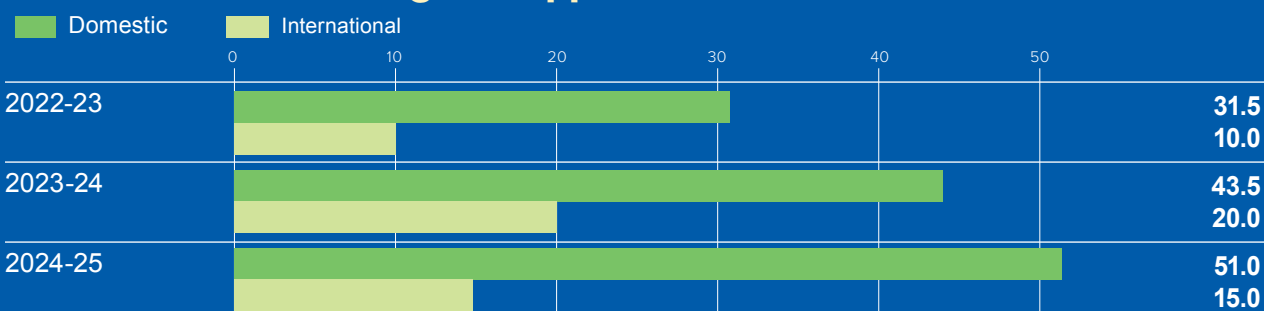
Median Master's Enrolled Students



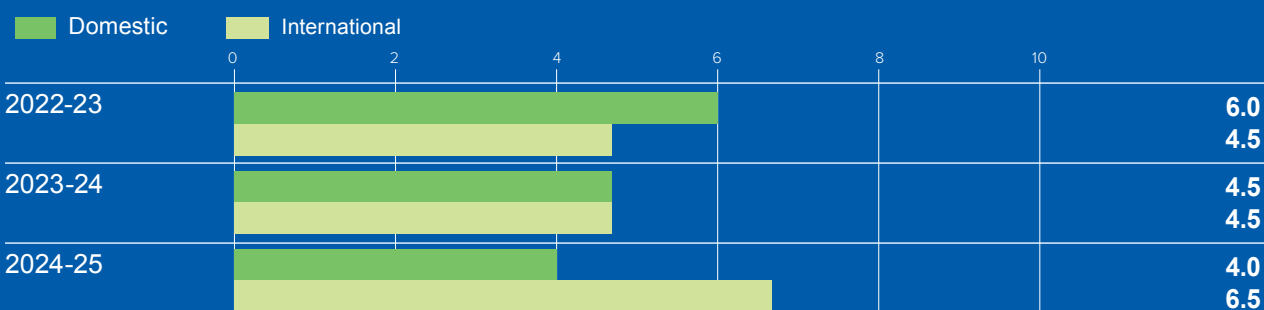
Doctorate Programs, 2025



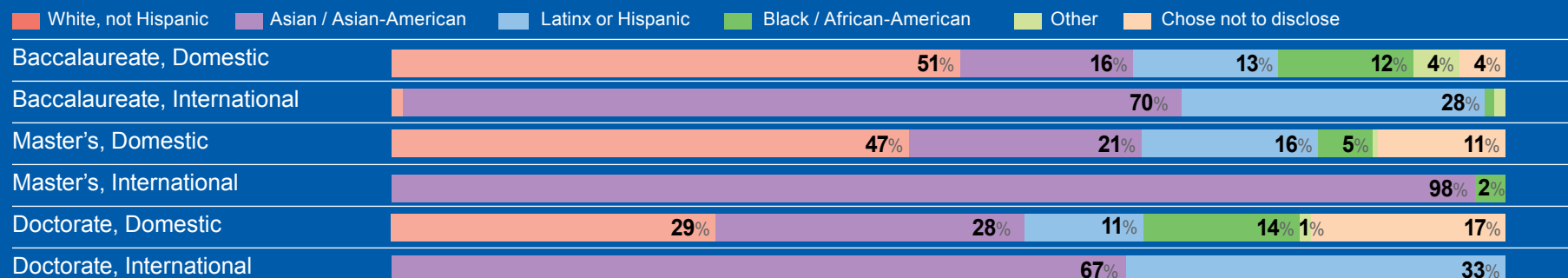
Median Doctorate Program Applicants



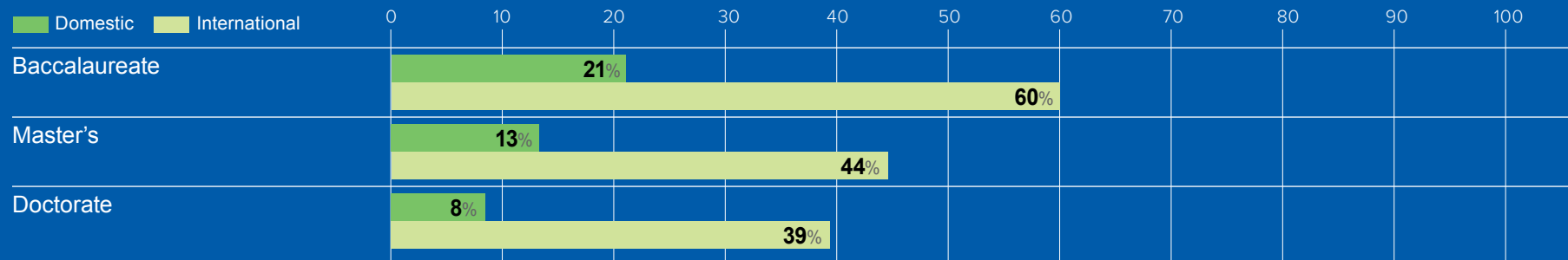
Median Doctorate Enrolled Students



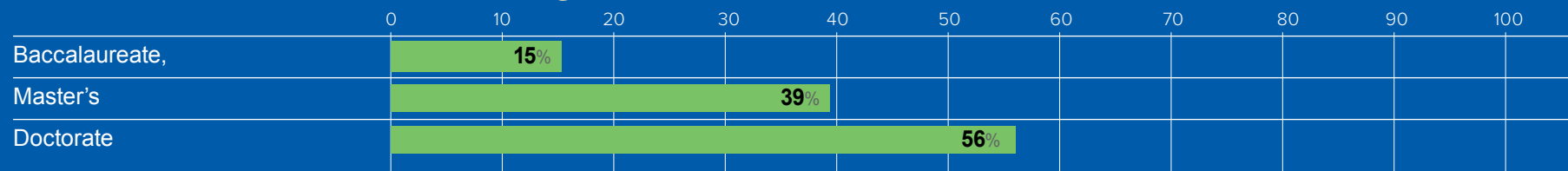
Racial/Ethnic Profile of Newly Enrolled 2022-23 Students



First Generation College



Non-U.S. Citizens in Domestic Programs



STUDENT OUTCOMES: GRADUATION AND JOB PROSPECTS

Driving applications, acceptances, and enrollment is important for most institutions—but graduation rates and job placements are crucial metrics for keeping that cycle going. The research shows that graduation rates and job prospects vary significantly between U.S.-based and international food science programs.

AFTER GRADUATION, WHAT'S NEXT?

Fewer students graduating from food science programs are getting jobs in the industry than they were in 2023. The current survey results show that average placement into a full-time professional position within six months of graduation is estimated to be a mean of 72% in U.S. programs and 64% in international programs. These figures are down considerably from the 85% and 70% reported in 2023, respectively.

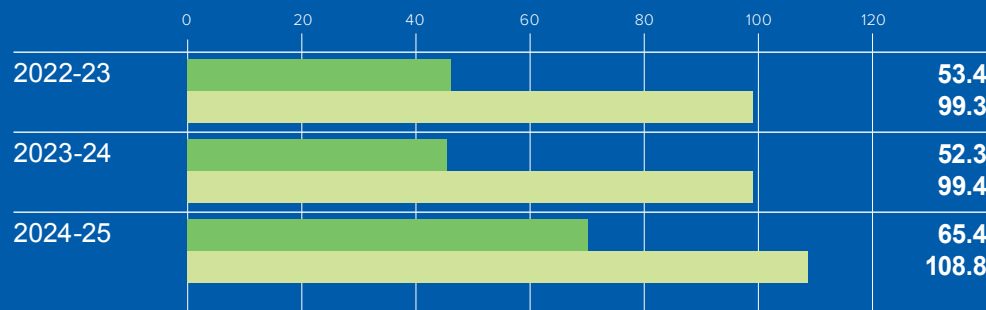
However, graduating students who don't find a full-time position within six months may likely be attending graduate school, at least in the United States. The mean proportion of graduating student entering a graduate academic program in the United States is 29%. That figure implies that all U.S. food science graduates are able to choose either work (72%) or advanced education (29%).

Internationally, the figures are close, but infer that some food science graduates are neither securing job placement or graduate school spots. In international programs, mean job placement for graduates is 64% and mean entrance into a graduate program is 24%.

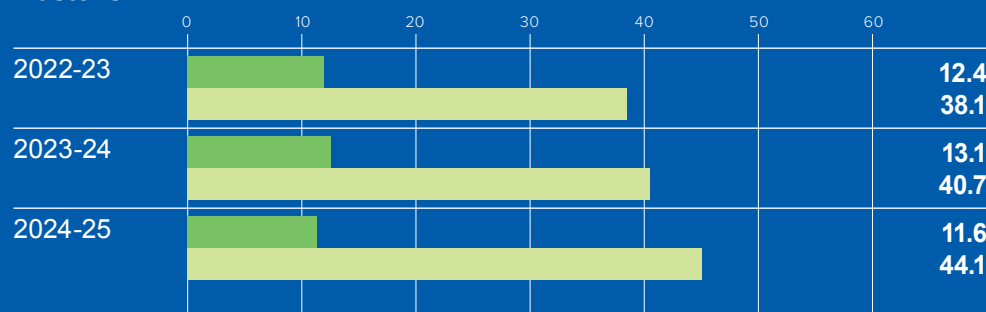
Mean Total Students Graduated from Program

Domestic International

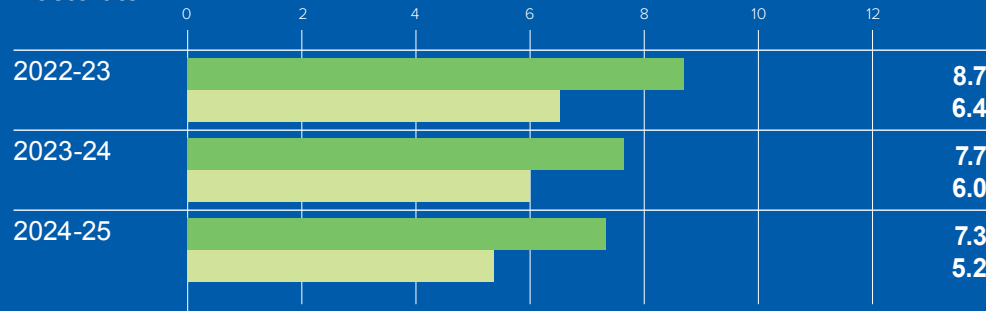
Baccalaureate



Master's



Doctorate



BACCALAUREATE GRADUATION RATES

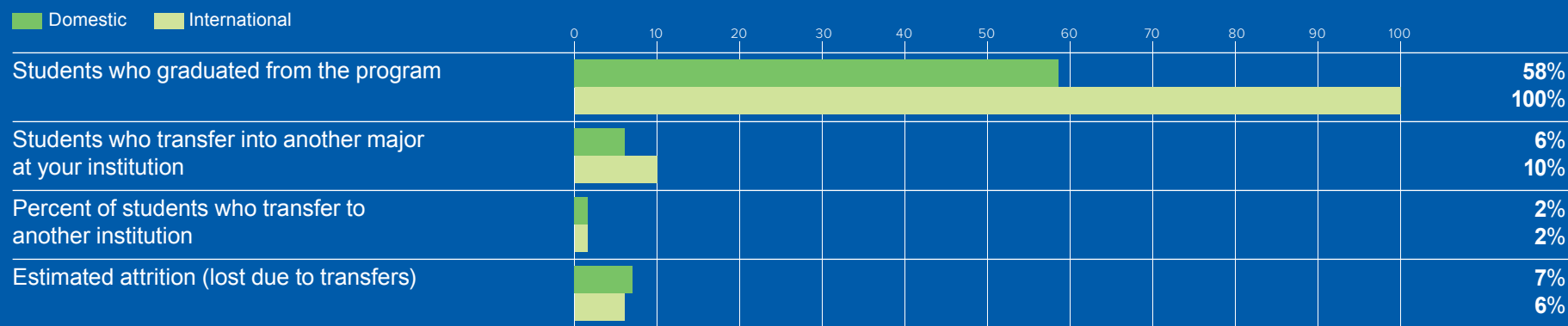
In U.S. programs, graduation rates from bachelor's degree programs are down to 58%, compared with 69% in 2023. International programs, on the other hand, report a 100% graduation rate for the previous academic year (2023-2024).

Those reported as not graduating may be graduating from a different academic program at the same institution or may graduate from a different institution. During the academic year, attrition from students transferring into another major at their current institution

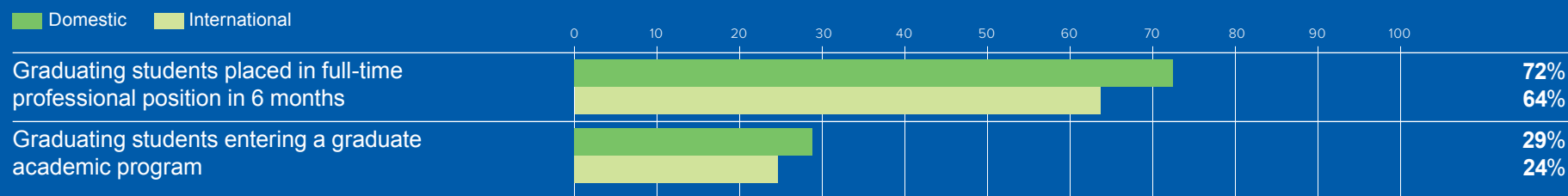
occurs for a mean 6% of students in U.S. and 10% of students in international programs.

The average percentage of students lost due to transfer to another institution is only 2% for all programs, and estimated total attrition due to transfers and other factors is estimated to be 7% for U.S. and 6% for all institutional programs. Total attrition is unchanged from 2023 for U.S. programs and somewhat lower than the 10% for international programs reported in 2023.

Graduation and Attrition Rates for Baccalaureate Programs



Post-Graduation Placements for Baccalaureate Programs

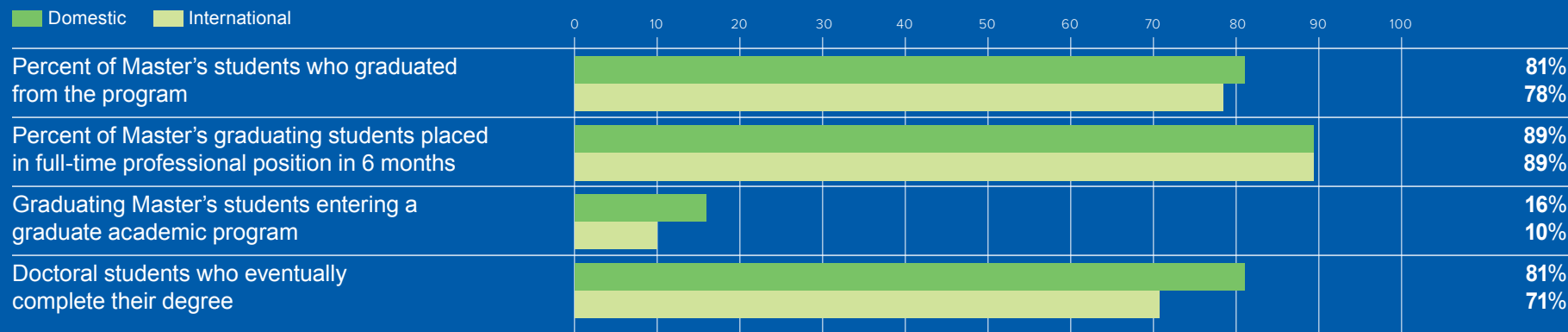


GRADUATE SCHOOL OUTCOMES

Graduation rates for master's programs are similar in the United States and internationally, at 81% for U.S. programs and 78% for international programs. These figures are down 10% and 7% respectively from 2023 results.

Rates of completion for doctoral programs are also down from the last study. Eventual completion of degree in doctoral programs is higher for U.S. programs at 81%, while it is 71% in international programs. These rates are lower than the 88% and 93% from 2023.

Student Outcomes: Graduate School

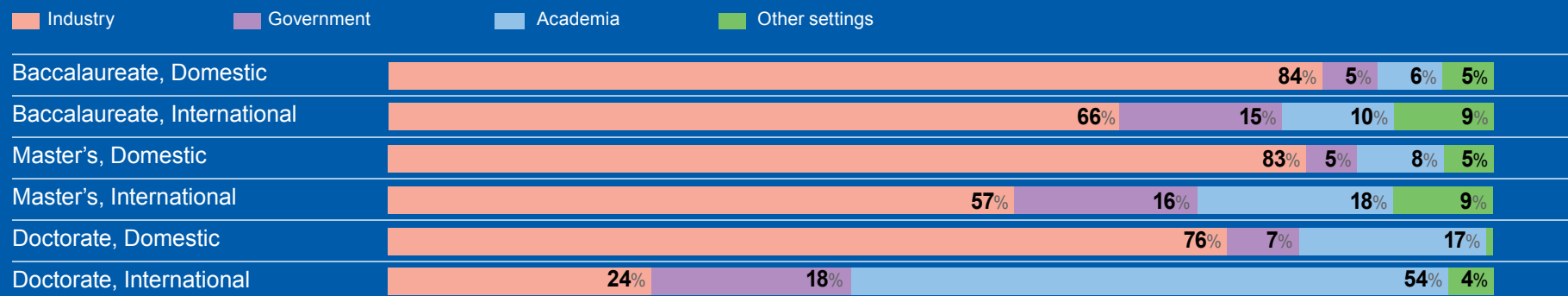


OFF TO WORK

Most food science graduates are entering jobs in industry after completing their educational programs. While industry has long been the most popular setting for food science graduates, it has become even more so. In 2025, 84% of graduates from U.S.

baccalaureate programs are working in industry, up from 77% two years ago. Those who complete doctoral programs in the United States are also more likely to enter jobs in industry, up from 69% in 2023 to 76% in 2025.

Work Setting of Graduating Students



FACULTY/STAFF PROFILE

U.S. institutions have generally added food science faculty and staff members in recent years. Some survey respondents mentioned that new hires have helped boost enrollment through additional recruiting efforts and more opportunities to assist in teaching and research.

“Hiring of additional faculty members within [the] department has resulted in an increase in funding, allowing [for] more graduate student assistantship positions, which increases enrollment,” noted one respondent.

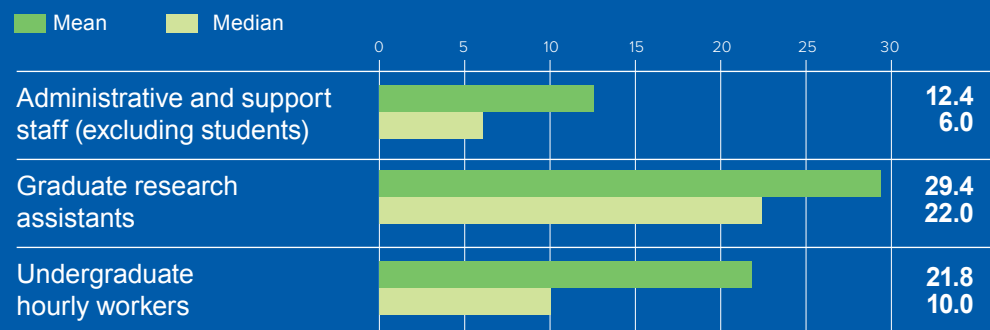
COUNTING THE RANKS

Academic food science programs in the United States reported a mean of 12.4 administrative and support staff, not including students. This figure is significantly higher by more than five more full-time staff than in the 2023 survey.

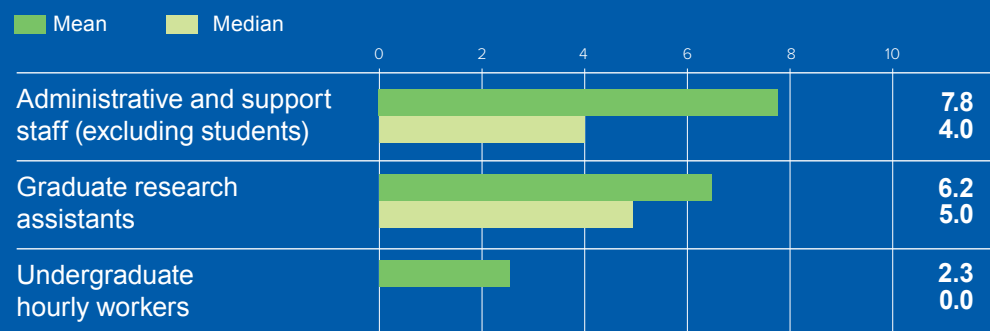
U.S. programs now report a mean of more than six additional research assistants than they did in 2023, with a 2025 mean of 29.4 graduate research assistants. The mean number of undergraduate workers has dropped by one to 21.8 for 2025.

International programs have smaller administrative staffs, which have shrunk in the past two years. They report a mean of 7.8 full-time employees, 6.2 graduate research assistants, and 2.3 undergraduate hourly workers. These figures represent decreases from means of 9.3, 5.0, and 1.2 staff in the three categories from the 2023 survey.

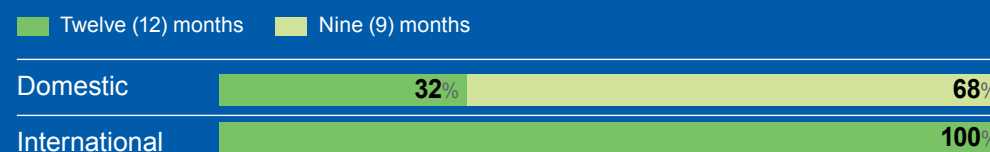
FTE Program Staff, Domestic



FTE Program Staff, International



Basis for Calculating Full-time Equivalent



FACULTY NUMBERS GROW

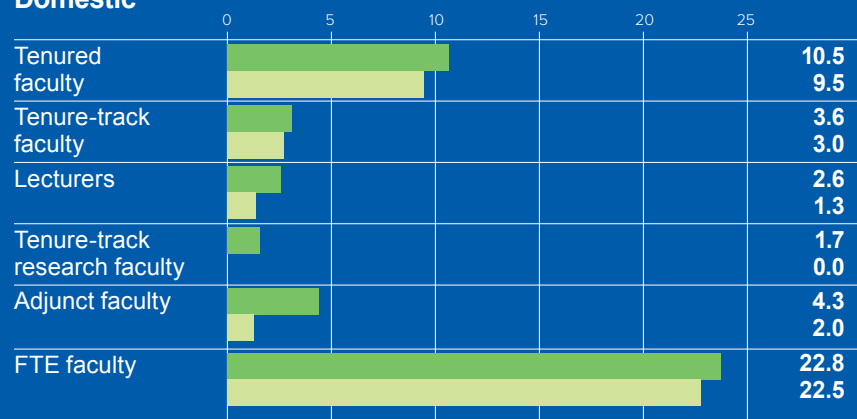
The number of faculty members has increased in both U.S. and international programs since 2023. U.S. programs report a mean total of 22.8 full-time faculty members, a substantial increase from 17.3 in 2023.

International programs are larger in terms of mean full-time faculty members, with 41.4. That's an increase over 2023, when international programs reported 11.3 mean tenured faculty and 9.3 lecturers. However, the median of 20 full-time faculty members in international programs is slightly smaller than the average U.S. program.

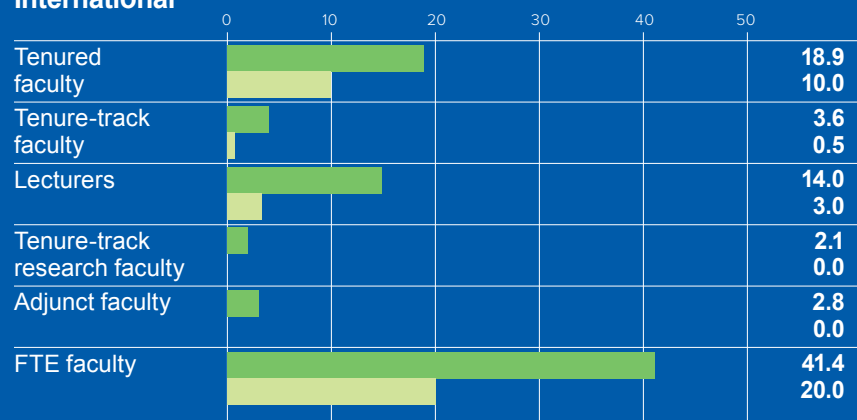
Faculty/Staff in Various Positions

Mean Median

Domestic



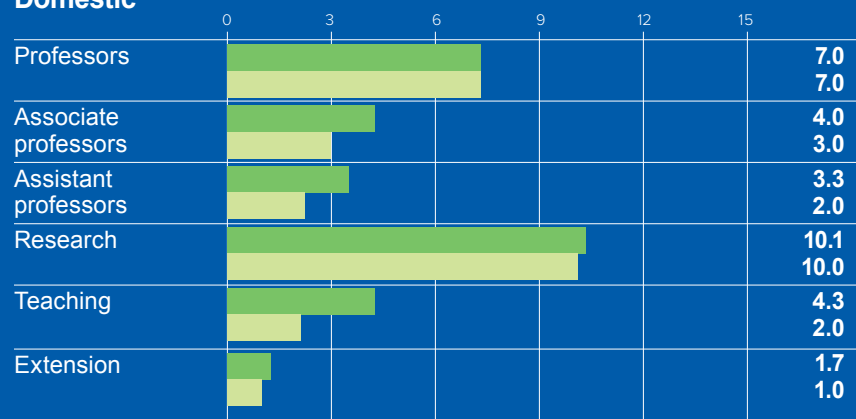
International



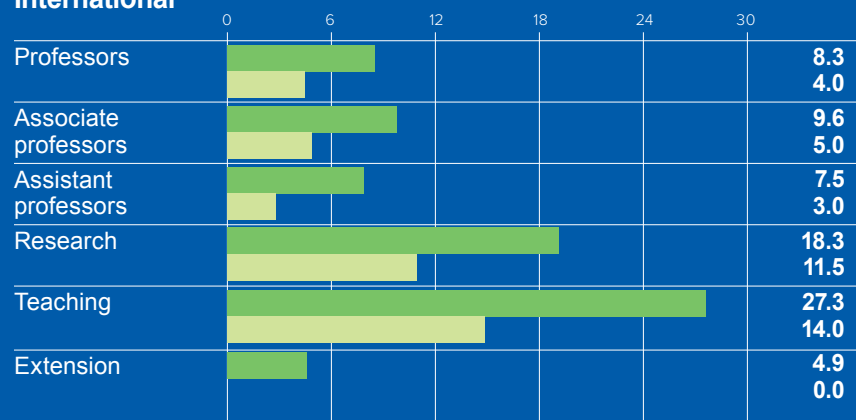
Faculty/Staff by Title & Area of Responsibility

Mean Median

Domestic



International



WHO'S TEACHING IN FOOD SCIENCE PROGRAMS?

Faculty members look a little different in U.S. programs and international programs. U.S.-based programs report that their faculty have an average of 20 years of professional experience after receiving their PhDs, and an average of 15 years working in their current program. U.S. program faculty are older than their international program counterparts, with an average age of 50, and are more likely to be males (56%).

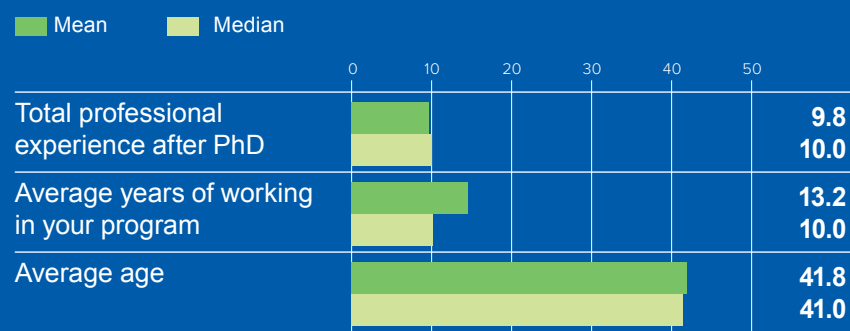
In international programs, faculty are younger, with a mean age of 41.8, and are more

likely to be females (56%). International program faculty have a median of 10 years of professional experience after earning their PhDs, and 10 years working for their current programs. International program faculty report a mean of 13 years working for their programs, which can be attributed to some faculty working for their current program while attending it.

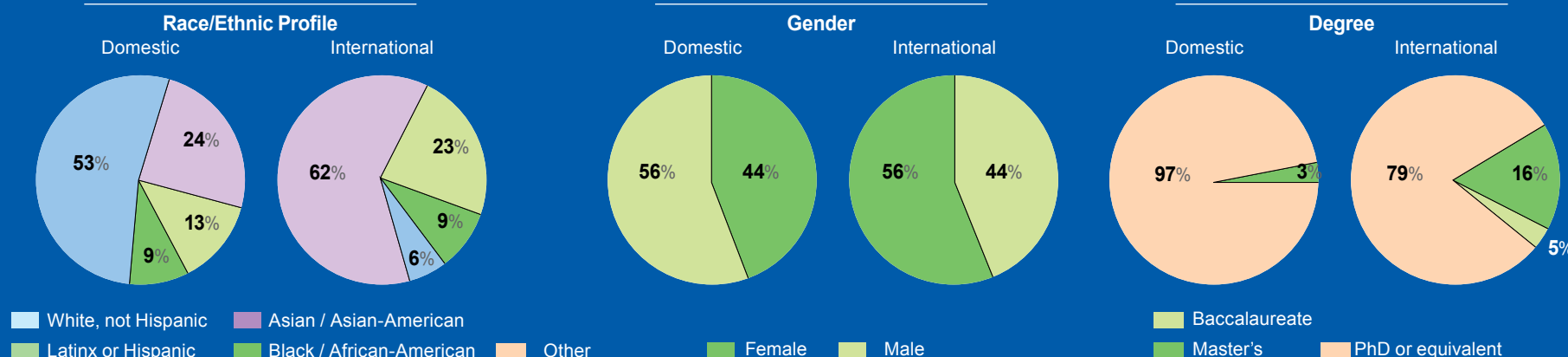
Average Faculty History, Domestic



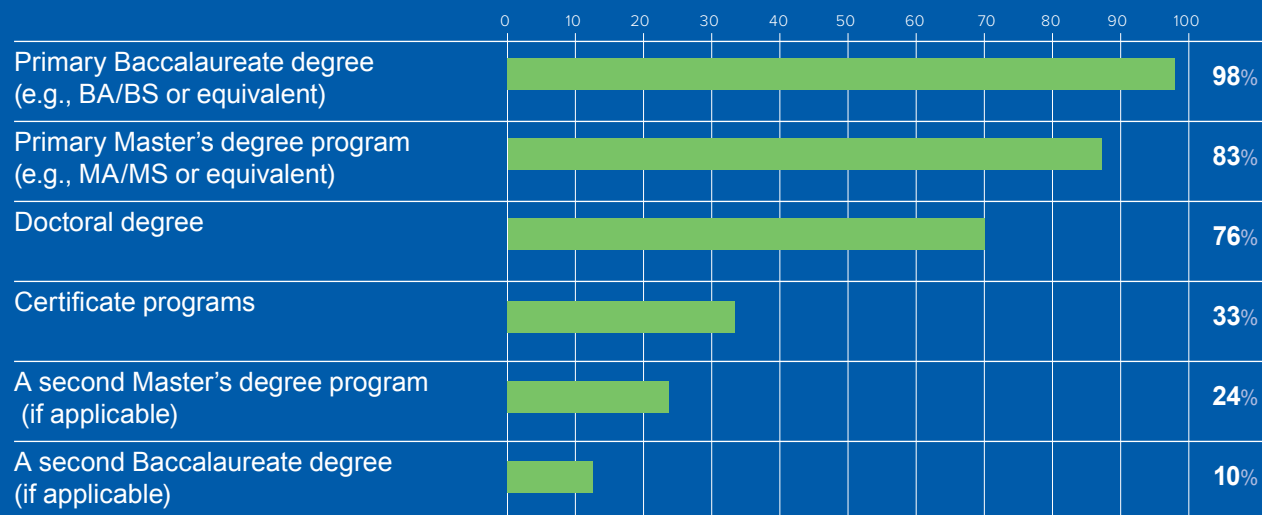
Average Faculty History, International



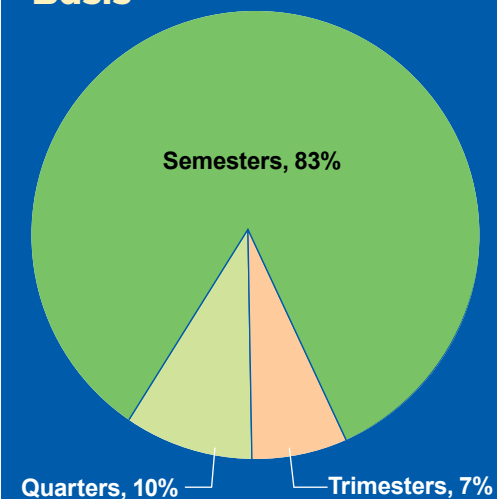
Faculty Demographics



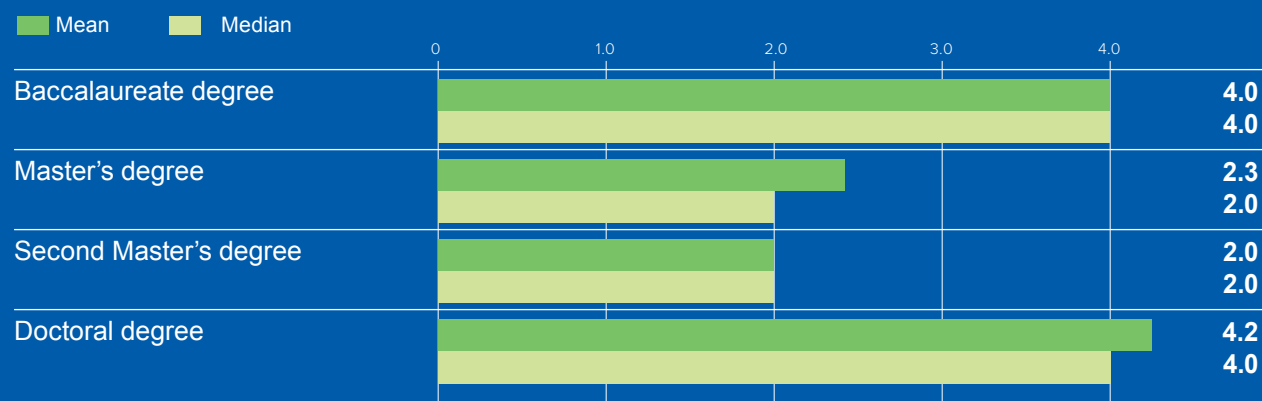
Degrees Offered in Your Program



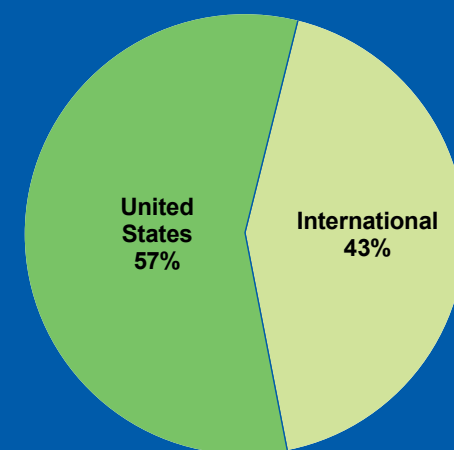
Academic Calendar Basis



Average Years to Complete Program



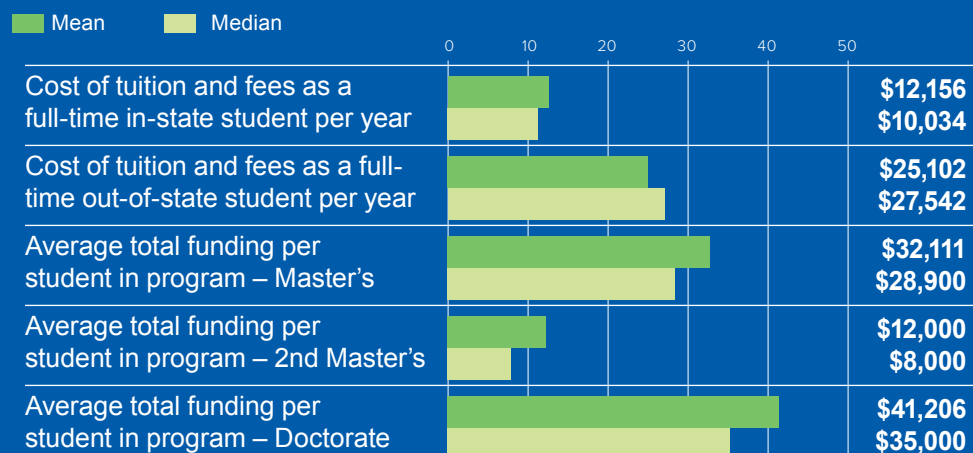
Geographic Location



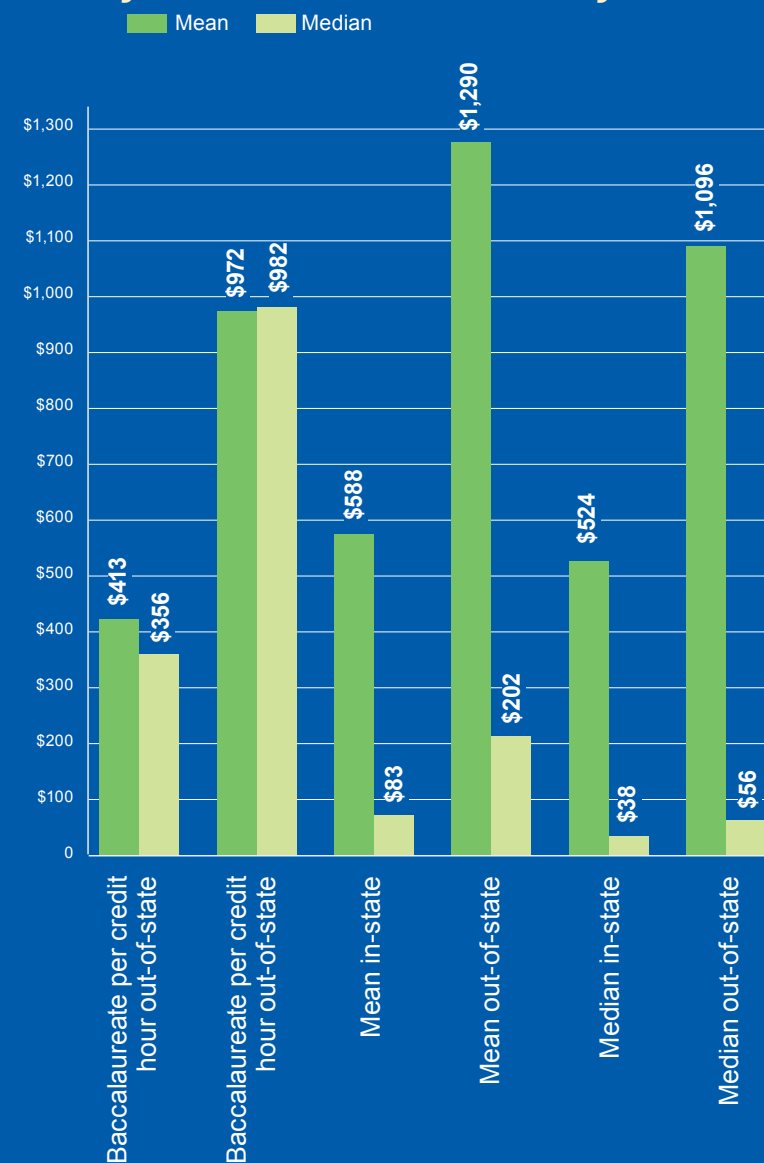
INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Tuition and Fees

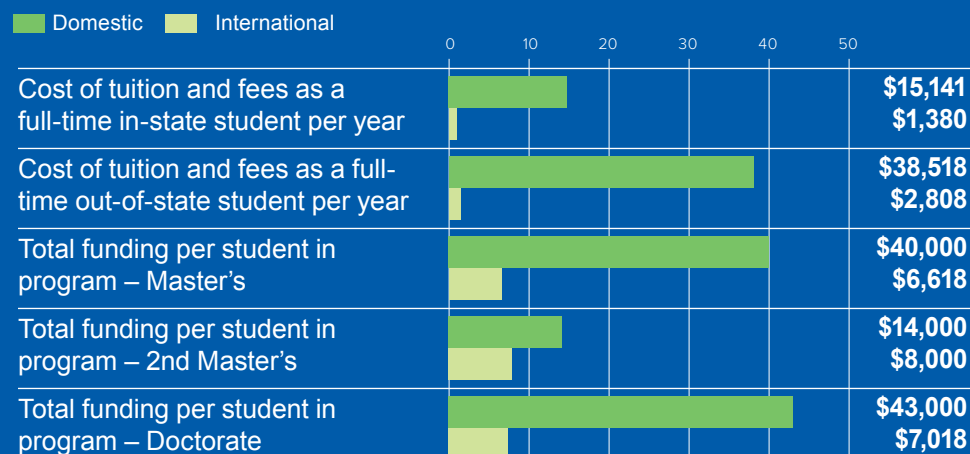
Current Tuition/Academic Fees



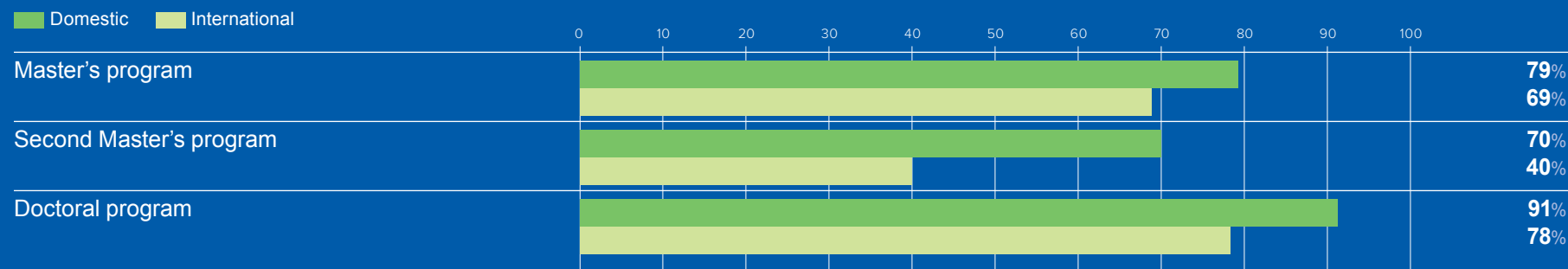
Hourly Tuition/Academic Fees by Location



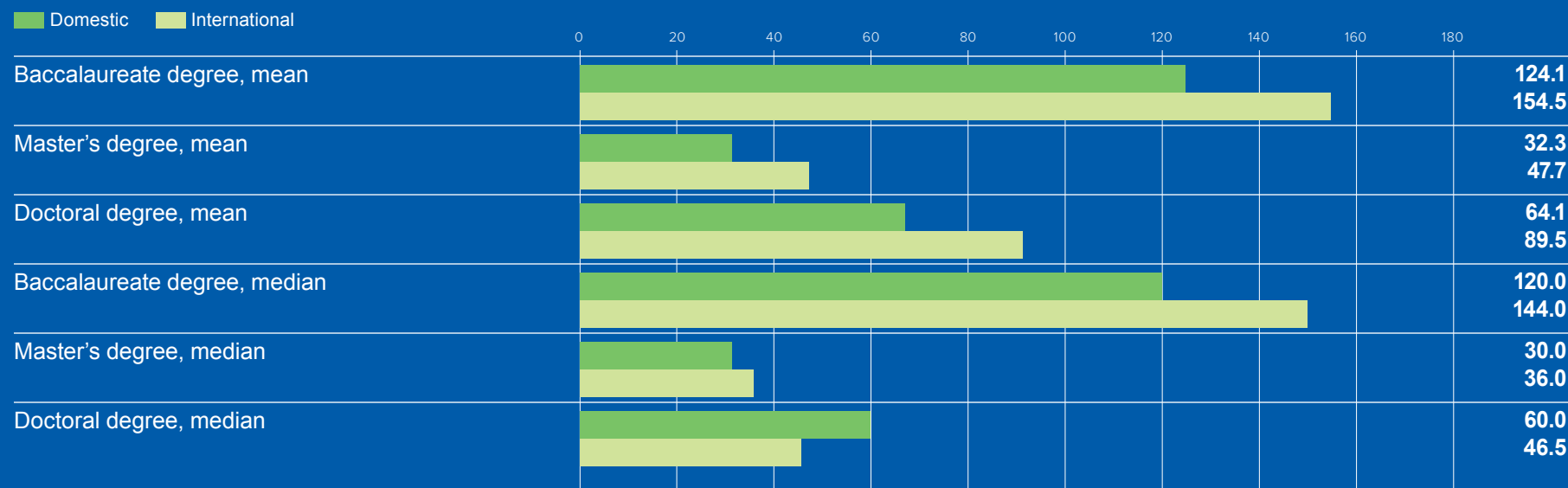
Current Median Tuition/Academic Fees by Location



Students Receiving Aid



Credit Hours Required to Graduate

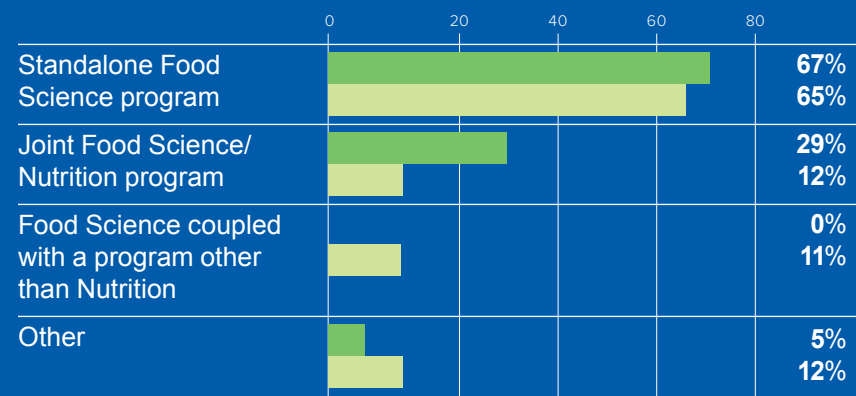


INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Other Institutional Characteristics

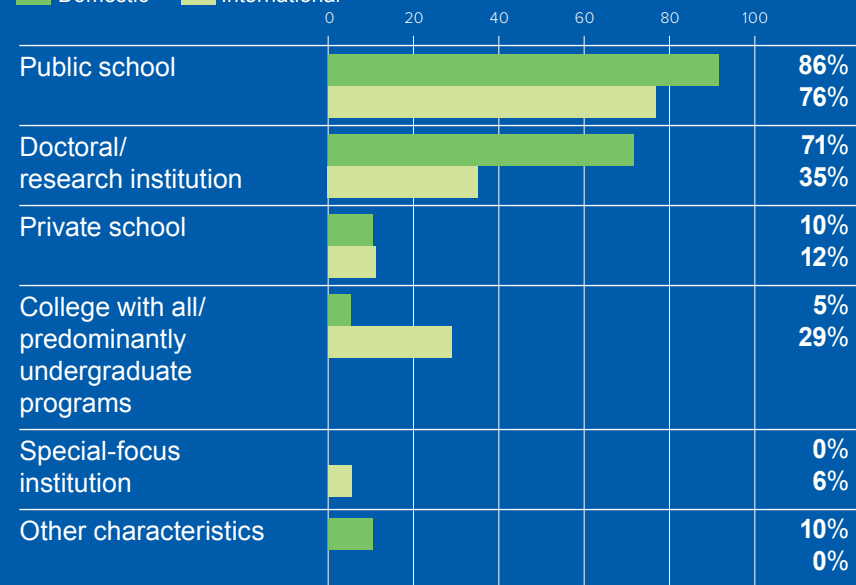
Where Program Resides

Domestic International



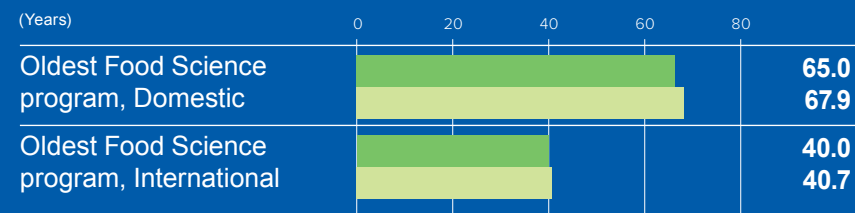
Other Program Qualities

Domestic International



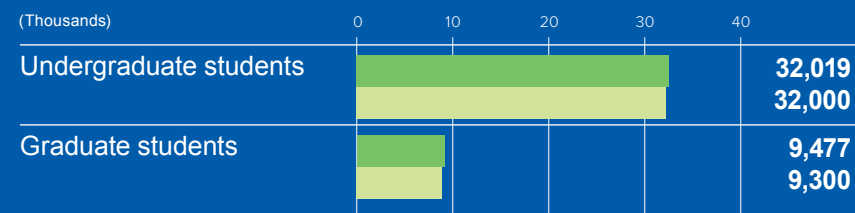
Program History

Mean Median



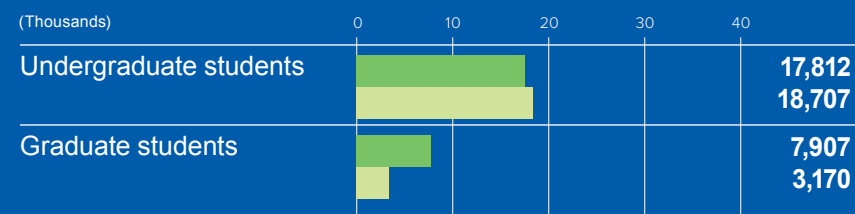
Student Population, Domestic

Mean Median



Student Population, International

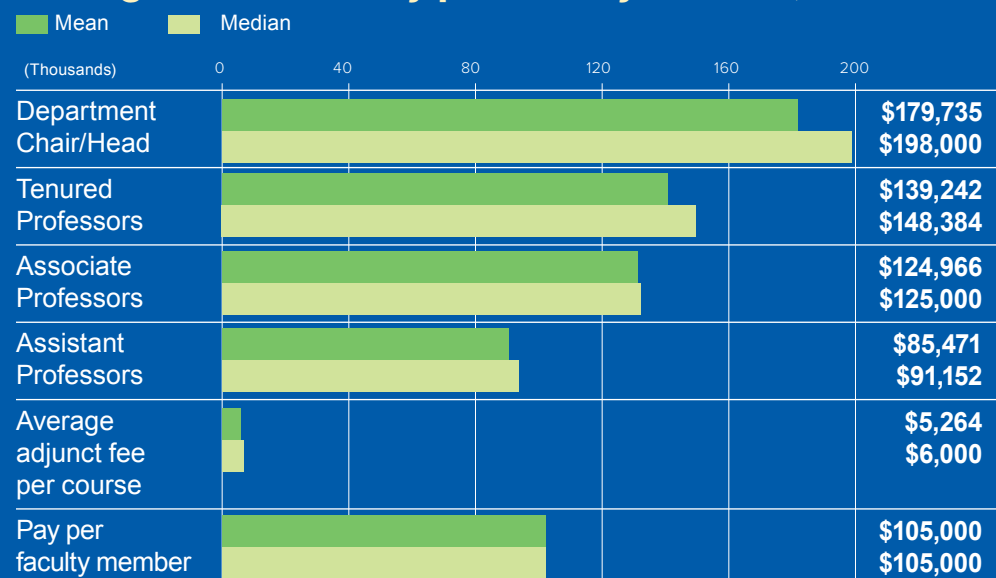
Mean Median



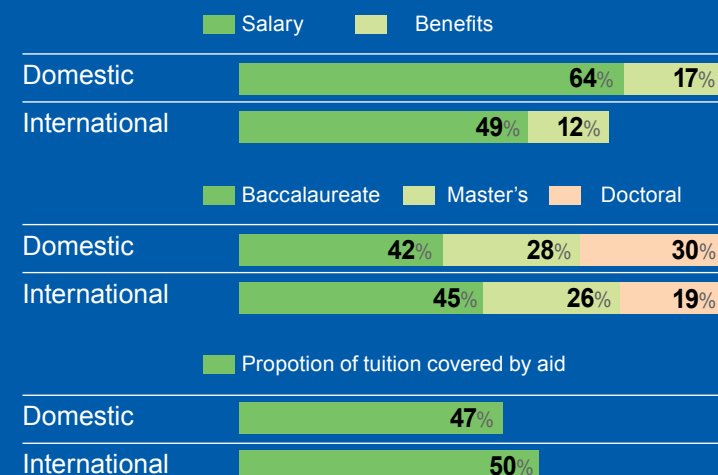
INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Other Institutional Characteristics

Average Annual Salary per Faculty Member, Domestic



Percent of Budget



Average Annual Salary per Faculty Member, Int'l

