

Master's Degree Program

Admissions Process

To enroll in the CIA master's degree programs, the applicant must meet the following requirements by the program start date:

- Have a bachelor's degree from an accredited U.S. institution, or hold an international equivalent to a bachelor's degree.
- Complete an English proficiency examination if the student's first language is not English. See the list of examinations the CIA accepts, along with qualifying test scores, under Application Procedure, step #7.

Application materials will be reviewed by CIA admissions, program administration, and the dean of the School of Business and Management.

Application Procedure

The steps to apply for admission to the master's degree program are as follows:

1. **Complete the application.**
 - To apply online, the applicant must choose one of the following methods:
 - If a CIA account is already set up, [start the application](#).
 - If a CIA account is not already set up, [create one](#).
2. **Pay the \$75 application fee.**
 - The applicant may pay by credit card at the end of the online application.
3. **Submit an essay.** The graduate level programs are a rigorous course of study requiring commitment and professionalism. The prospective student must write an essay that describes their purpose for pursuing this master's degree and why they are a strong candidate for the program. The response should be 500–1,000 words, and include the following:
 - Any relevant academic and/or professional achievements that allow the CIA to understand the prospective student as a professional;
 - Specific qualities and/or skills that the student possesses that can help them excel within this program;
 - Professional goals and how this program will help the student achieve those goals in the food world;
 - An understanding of the program content indicating how the student perceives the program content will help them achieve their goals.

Applications are reviewed and evaluated individually and holistically by a program-specific committee for the ability to benefit from, and contribute to, the cohort-based program. It is important to include all of the requested components of the essay for consideration.

For the **Master's in Food Business**, the ideal applicant is looking to further their career in a way that positively impacts the food system and addresses challenges that the industry faces today. This can be within an organization or in an entrepreneurial endeavor, and in a foodservice focused area or in a food product concept area. The prospective student must address this in their essay when writing about their professional and career goals.

In addition, the prospective student must specify which track they may be interested pursuing during the second year of the program—Restaurant/Foodservice Track or Food Product/Concept Track—and note how the track selection relates to their goals.

For the **Master's in Food Systems and Sustainability**, the ideal applicant for this program is interested in developing the leadership skills necessary to make positive change in the food system, has a passion for the health, equity, and sustainability of the planet and its inhabitants, and is seeking the knowledge, tools, and contacts to make a difference. Successful applicants will articulate a commitment to an immersive exploration of the issues, institutions, people, places, and relationships that make up the food system and the social, political, economic, and environmental issues that shape it. Applicants should be prepared for a challenging hands-on program based on identifying and solving complex local, regional, and global challenges related to agriculture, climate change, health and nutrition, social justice, food service, and environmental sustainability.

4. **Provide a copy of a résumé or CV.**
5. **Ask for one letter of recommendation.** Through the online application, the applicant will be prompted to provide the contact information for one recommender. That person will then receive an electronic request with instructions for submitting a recommendation through the application portal. The e-mail will be sent immediately upon saving the application.
 - The recommendation should be completed by supervisors or professional colleagues who can attest to the applicant's professional abilities.
 - A recommendation from a former professor is acceptable for applicants with limited professional experience.
 - The recommender can submit their letter before an applicant submits an application.
6. **Request official transcripts from all previously attended institutions.** Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions in the United States from which credit has been earned should be mailed to the CIA Admissions Office. Transcripts should either be sent in an envelope sealed by the school's registrar, or e-mailed to the CIA via an official online transcript provider.
 - If the student is currently completing an undergraduate degree, the degree must be conferred by July 1 in order to be granted admission. All U.S. institutions must be accredited through one of the bodies officially recognized by the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

Official transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions outside of the United States from which credit has been earned must be submitted to the CIA Admissions Office for review and evaluation. Applicants must demonstrate that they have successfully completed a degree equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree before they may be considered for admission to a master's program. Please be advised the CIA will not review graduate applications while a bachelor's degree is in progress at a higher education institution outside the U.S. Applicants applying to a master's program should complete the degree before submitting official transcripts.

7. **Demonstrate English proficiency.** Graduate coursework at the CIA is reading-and writing-intensive and requires proficiency in written and spoken English. If English is not the applicant's native language, they will be required to demonstrate proficiency through one of the following exams. The test results must be attached to the application:
 - [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#)—minimum score of 80 points with at least 20 points in each band.
 - [International English Language Testing System \(IELTS\)](#)—minimum score of 6.0
 - [Pearson Language Test \(PTE\)](#)—minimum score of 53
 - [Cambridge English: Advanced \(CAE\)](#)—minimum score of 180, with at least 175 points in each section

In lieu of an English Proficiency exam, the applicant may also enroll and complete a program from one of the [approved language schools](#).

All documentation provided with the CIA application must be in English or be accompanied by a notarized translation of the documents into English alongside the original copies