

Rehabilitation Science PhD

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

GRAD MAP FOR PhD STUDENTS 

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in REHABILITATION SCIENCE?

Graduate programs in Rehabilitation Science at Queen's University stress the multidisciplinary contribution of many health professions and disciplines to rehabilitation. The focus is on understanding how people who experience disability can be enabled to live full and satisfying lives as members of their community, considering a broad range of individual, community, and societal factors. Students can expect to be introduced to a broad spectrum of rehabilitation related concerns including function and participation across a wide range of health conditions and disabilities (for example neurotrauma, mental health, intellectual disabilities), policy development, professional education, and interdisciplinary and intersectoral services. The program attracts students from varied backgrounds including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, kinesiology, psychology, social work, arts & humanities, nursing, education, epidemiology, law, engineering, and others.

Why QUEEN'S?

The School of Rehabilitation Therapy at Queen's University is committed to leading and inspiring positive changes that transform lives through rehabilitation research, education, and practice. As part of this commitment, part of our core mission is to educate rehabilitation scientists who contribute to health and well-being globally through collaboration, creativity, and the discovery of new knowledge. We are recognized nationally and internationally for our excellent faculty, high-quality professional and research programs, and the ways in which our scholarship contributes to the lives of people affected by or at risk of disability.



"Completing graduate studies in Rehabilitation Science at Queen's has provided me the opportunity to develop new research skills and build my confidence as a leader. I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn and work alongside a dynamic group of students, clinicians, and researchers within the School of Rehabilitation Therapy."

- Kyle Vader, PT, PhD

Program STRUCTURE

PhD in Rehabilitation Science students are required to take 2 core courses (6 credits), 2 elective courses (6 credits), a comprehensive examination, a proposal presentation, and a written thesis with an oral defense over 48 months (4 years).

RESEARCH Areas

- Community-Based Rehabilitation
- Disability & Participation
- Health Professional Education
- Human Mobility & Motor Control Across Lifespan
- Military and Veteran Health
- Moving Knowledge into Practice and Policy
- Workplace Health & Accommodation

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.



Visit the [Rehabilitation Science website](#) to read faculty profiles, and learn more about faculty members' research areas. When you find a faculty member with similar research interests to yours, contact them and tell them about your interest in graduate work and related experience. This is also an opportunity for you to find out if the faculty member is accepting new graduate students to supervise.

Rehabilitation Science PhD Map

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

How to use this map

Use the 5 rows of the map to explore possibilities and plan for success in the five overlapping areas of career and academics. The map just offers suggestions – you don't have to do it all! To make your own custom map, use the [My Grad Map](#) tool.



YEAR I

YEAR II

YEAR III

YEAR IV

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, completing required health and safety, animal, human research ethics training, any required coursework, and developing your research proposal.
- Meet early with your supervisor to set expectations and discuss roles, responsibilities, program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, timelines, and any required accommodation plans.

- Priorities include completing your comprehensive examination and pursuing research.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of [School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development](#) workshops and [SGSPA website](#).
- Participate in RHBS 903 Academic and Professional Development for Ph.D. Students.

- Continue to research and write your dissertation. Check out the [SGSPA writing camps](#), such as Dissertation Boot Camp.
- Consider publishing elements of your research.
- Use conference presentations to create and refine dissertation material.

- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research to graduate students and faculty or at conferences and work with supervisor to prepare for defence.
- Review submission and examination guidelines.
- Secure necessary oral defence accommodations.
- Discuss career pathways, references letters, and publication options with your supervisor.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete CORE online module on research ethics if doing research regarding sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.

- Present your work at graduate conferences such as the [Rehabilitation Research Colloquium](#), the [Canadian Student Health Research Conference](#), or at topic conferences.
- Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter or a blog.

- Continue to present at conferences.
- Consider participating in the [3 Minute Thesis \(3MT\)](#) competition.
- Contact the [Queen's Media Centre](#) for guidance on speaking to news outlets about your work.

- Continue to attend conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen's Media Centre.
- Continue to pursue publication options for your research.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Serve on departmental, faculty, or university committees. Talk to the program assistant for tips on getting involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen's Journal, CFRC, and the SGSPA Blog. Look in the [AMS Clubs Directory](#).
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in community.
- Start keeping an eportfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.
- For help with teaching, get support from the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#). Enrol in SGS902 or the PUTL Certificate for more professional development.

- Begin teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, [School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development](#), MITACS, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the [Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate](#) hosted by [QUIC](#) and [FDISC](#).

- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Attend a major conference in your field, such as the [International Conference for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation](#), or the [annual conference of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Canada](#).

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Consider volunteering with different community organizations aligned with the Rehabilitation Sciences, such as local hospitals, community services, and associations that support people with disabilities and promote accessibility of community opportunities for all citizens.
- Connect to broader communities of rehabilitation professionals.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- If pursuing research abroad or outside Kingston, investigate options for funding with your supervisor or the Program Director.

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through [Queens Connects](#) on LinkedIn, the [Queen's Alumni Association](#), professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

- Consider joining one of the many professional associations related to disability and rehabilitation, such as the [Canadian Association of Physical Rehabilitation and Medicine](#).
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in rehabilitation.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a [Career Services career planning workshop](#) or meet with a career educator and coach for help. Check out the [Career Resource Area](#) for advice on various career options.
- Start reading publications like [University Affairs](#) and the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#). Browse non-academic labour market websites.
- Stay on the lookout for special events like School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Career Week to explore your career pathways.

- Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
- Explore different careers of interest by using [Queens Connects](#) on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. For more information check out [Career Cruising](#).
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.

- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Research academic careers of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.
- Start focusing on non-academic areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your industry resume and begin your job search plan.

- Build connections with faculty outside of your department. Pursue interviews for faculty positions and apply for post-doc fellowships and positions.
- Apply to jobs or make plans for other adventures. Get help from Career Services with job searching, resumes, and interviews.
- If considering jobs abroad, research possible immigration regulations. If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an [International Student Advisor](#).

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A graduate degree in Rehabilitation Science can equip you with:

- **Knowledge and technical skills**
- **Effective communication skills** in multiple forms for diverse audiences
- **Information management:** prioritize, organize, and synthesize large amounts of information
- **Time management:** meet deadlines and manage responsibilities despite competing demands
- **Project management:** develop ideas, gather information, analyze, critically appraise findings, draw and act on conclusions
- **Creativity and innovation**
- **Perseverance**
- **Independence** and experience as a **collaborative** worker
- **Awareness** and understanding of sound **ethical** practices, **social responsibility**, responsible research, and **cultural sensitivity**
- **Professionalism** in all aspects of work, research, and interactions
- **Leadership:** initiative and vision leading people and discussion

WHERE CAN I GO?

A PhD in Rehabilitation Science can take your career in many directions. In Canada, less than 40% of all PhDs will work in post-secondary education – the majority will work in industry, government, or non-profits.

- Academia (research and teaching)
- Agencies - government, not-for-profit, or private - that support clinical care, research or workforces related to health or disability
- Clinical/Program Research and evaluation
- International community-based rehabilitation
- Policy development
- Program development at the local, national or international level

Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

Graduate Studies FAQs

How do I make the most of my time at Queen's?

Use the Grad Map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. Everyone's journey is different - the ideas on the maps are just suggestions to help you explore possibilities. For more support with your professional development, take advantage of the SGSPA professional development framework and the new [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) process to set customized goals to help you get career ready when you graduate.

Where can I get help?

Queen's provides you with a broad range of support services from your first point of contact with the university through to graduation. Ranging from help with academics and careers, to physical, emotional, or spiritual resources – our welcoming environment offers the programs and services you need to be successful, both academically and personally. Check out the [SGSPA website](#) for available resources.

What is the community like?

At Queen's, graduate students from all disciplines learn and discover in a close-knit intellectual community. You will find friends, peers and support among the graduate students enrolled in Queen's more than 130 graduate programs within 50+ departments & research centres. With the world's best scholars, prize-winning professional development opportunities, excellent funding packages and life in the affordable, historic waterfront city of Kingston, Queen's offers a wonderful environment for graduate studies. Queen's is an integral part of the Kingston community, with the campus nestled in the core of the city, only a 10-minute walk to downtown with its shopping, dining and waterfront. For more about Kingston's history and culture, see Queen's University's [Discover Kingston](#) page.

Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- High academic standing in a completed Master's degree in Rehabilitation Science or a related field. Contact the program director and potential supervisors to discuss how your studies and experiences to date may be related to rehabilitation sciences.
- The entire transcript is reviewed but particular attention is given to your last 20 courses and how well you have progressed throughout your academic career. Preference is given to students with higher academic standing.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the [English language proficiency requirements](#) in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The following minimum scores are required: (1) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30); Speaking (22/30); Reading (22/30); Listening (20/30). Applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score, or (2) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score and a 7.0 for each test band), or (3) PTE Academics: 65, or (4) CAEL CE -70 (minimum overall score).

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- **Application due:** February 15th.
- **Notification of acceptance:** Late April/Early May.

Before you start your application, please review the [Graduate studies application process](#).

What about FUNDING?

PhD students in Rehabilitation Science are offered a minimum funding of \$22,000 per year.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, CIHR, SSHRC, and other sources. Queen's will automatically issue a one time \$10,000 award to incoming PhD students who have won federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on [awards and scholarships](#).



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