**Application FAQs**

**What do I need to know to APPLY?**

**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**
- Honours Bachelor’s Arts & Sciences degree.
- Grade requirements: minimum upper second class standing (B+ average).

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**
- Correspond with potential supervisors (May require CV).
- If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the English language proficiency requirements in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The School of Graduate Studies requires the following minimum scores: TOEFL (paper-based): 550, (2) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30), Speaking (22/30), Reading (20/30); for a total of 88; 120 applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score), or (3) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score), or (4) PTE Academic: 65.

**KEY DATES & DEADLINES**
- Application due: March 1 (domestic students), February 15 (international students).
- Notification of acceptance: Students are accepted on a rolling basis as applications are reviewed.

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

**What about FUNDING?**

MSc students in Biology receive minimum funding of $23,895 per year for the two years of the program.

Apply for external funding from OGS, NSERC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $5,000 top-up to Masters winners of federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships, or see what awards are offered through the Biology Department.

**Why QUEEN’S?**

The Biology Department at Queen’s is one of the largest departments on campus with approximately 110 graduate students supervised by 32 faculty with research opportunities in a range of disciplines. Our faculty are world leaders in several research fields, including many Canada Research Chairs and Queen’s National Scholars, and winners of national and international awards for research and teaching excellence.

> *When I started my Biology graduate degree at Queen’s, all of a sudden I had this new network of friends who were interested in the same biological questions that I was- it was a ton of fun.*
>  
> — Rosyln Dakin, PhD

**Why GRADUATE STUDIES in BIOLOGY?**

There is no end to the fascinating questions we can ask about how the natural world functions, from dissecting the molecular mechanisms at play in cells to understanding the complexity of interactions in the biosphere, the beauty and mystery of nature abounds. It is an incredibly exciting time to do biological research and we are learning about the natural world at a rate unprecedented in history. The remarkable power of modern research tools, from powerful gene-editing techniques to bioinformatics to ecosystem modelling, is driving exciting discoveries daily. These discoveries are made by graduate students. Regardless of your area of interest, there is something in biology for you, questions waiting to be answered, and riddles of nature to be solved.

We offer a broad and challenging program in one of the top Biology departments in the country. We have an impressive range of sophisticated infrastructure for cell biology, biochemistry, molecular biology, ecology, and evolutionary research including: a confocal microscopy suite, DNA and RNA sequencing services, aquatic research facilities, and a state-of-the-art phytotron. Our field station, comprising more than 1000 hectares of woodland, fields and lakes is a short drive away and has excellent research facilities and living quarters.

**Program STRUCTURE**

MSc (2 years): 4 single-term courses with minimum standing of 70% in each, research thesis and defence.

Students who show exceptional promise in their research have the option to transfer to the PhD program after one year.

**RESEARCH Areas**

- Animal Physiology
- Cell and Molecular Biology
- Ecology, Evolution and Behaviour
- Plant Sciences
- Mathematical Modeling & Bioinformatics

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.
**Achieve your academic goals**

- Start with key priorities like developing your relationship with your supervisor, forming your committee, and doing your coursework.
- Complete WHMIS safety training.
- Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and **Expanding Horizons** professional development workshops, the department Grad Chair and the **SGS Habitat**.

**Maximize research impact**

- Start to think about the audiences for your research. If you are continuing graduate studies, apply for NSERC and OGS funding.

**Engage with your community**

- Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus. Consider volunteering with different community organizations, museums, and cultural studies groups, such as the **Kingston Field Naturalists**.

**Launch your career**

- Finding a career that fits by having knowledge. Get help by taking a Career Services career planning workshop, or meeting with a career counsellor. Check out books like So What Are You Going to do With That? or Planning a Scientific Career in Industry from 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 Graduate Student Week to explore your career path.
- Check admission test deadlines if needed for further studies.

**Getting started**

- Complete your coursework, begin to research and write your thesis.
- Consider participating in the **3 Minute Thesis (3MT)** competition.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as **Departmental Seminars**, **EEB Linology**, and **MCB** seminars, as well as the **AI Downs Lecture**.
- Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter.

**Intermediate stage**

- Start keeping an up-to-date portfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- Use a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant position to develop your research or teaching skills.
- For help with teaching, get support from the **Centre for Teaching and Learning**, Enrol in SGS901 or the **PUTL certificate** for more professional development in teaching and learning.
- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups like the **Material Matters** or the **Let’s Talk Science**.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking **W&M** or the **Intercultural Competency Certificate**.
- If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an **International Student Advisor** and completing the **My Grad Map**.

**Wrapping up**

- Complete and defend your thesis.
- Consider publishing options for your research.
- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as those hosted by the **Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution**, **Society for Experimental Biology**, **Canadian Society of Plant Biology**, or the many other national and international groups that feature graduate research.
- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, interviews. Get help from a **Career Services workshop**.
- Check out opportunities for extra training through CTL, **Expanding Horizons**, **Matta**, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest through **Quinnects** on LinkedIn, the **Queen’s Alumni Association**, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a **Career Services workshop**.
- Join professional associations like **Science for Peace**, and the many discipline-specific societies that host annual meetings.
- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Start focusing on areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your CV or resume for potential positions of interest. Get help from Career Services with job searching, resumes, or interviews.

**What will I learn?**

- 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, an 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 Master's degree in Biology can take your career in many directions. Many of our MSc students choose to continue their academic inquiry with a PhD. Our Master’s students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers in:

- **Academia and teaching**: Agriculture
- **Pharmacy and medicine**: Environmental law, patent law
- **Government research centres and organizations**: Wildlife conservation and environmental consulting

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