Graduate Studies FAQs

How do I use this map?

Whether you are considering or have embarked on graduate studies at Queen’s, use this map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. The map helps you explore possibilities, set goals and track your individual accomplishments. Everyone’s journey is different – the guide offers options for finding your way at Queen’s and setting the foundation for your future. To make your own customized map, use the online My Grad Map tool.

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 SGS HABITAT 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
• A Master’s degree is normally required for admission to the Ph.D. program. In certain circumstances, direct admission to the Ph.D. program is possible.

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 School of Graduate Studies requires the following minimum scores: TOEFL (paper-based): 550, (2) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30); Speaking (22/30); Reading (22/30); Listening (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 Academics: 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES
• Application due: March 1st (To be considered for internal awards). Flexible deadline.
• Notification of acceptance: Pending confirmation of a supervisor.

Before you start your application, please review the Graduate studies application process.

What about FUNDING?

PhD students in Biomedical and Molecular Sciences are offered a minimum funding of $21,000 per year. As part of the basic funding package, you may serve as a Teaching Assistant for at least one term per year.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $10,000 award to winners of federal government tri-council awards for at least one term per year.

For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.

Biomedical & Molecular Sciences PhD Map

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

Why GRADUATE STUDIES IN BIOMEDICAL & MOLECULAR SCIENCES?

Graduate students and their work are an important part of an ongoing research process that provides the scientific community with ways of understanding fundamental biomedical and molecular processes underlying normal cellular and microbial processes, organ system function, and human disease. The faculty, staff and trainees in Biomedical and Molecular Sciences are engaged in world-class research and teaching, attracting and mentoring the best students, the finest educators, dedicated support staff, and internationally-competitive researchers. We value curiosity, creativity, commitment, and collegiality.

Why QUEEN’S?

The Biomedical and Molecular Sciences Department at Queen’s provides a cross-disciplinary environment and delivers the programs in a collaborative and integrated manner. This interdisciplinary approach gives candidates access to over 80 faculty members engaged in a broad spectrum of biomedical research, using techniques to address questions concerning single molecules, cellular/microbial function, organ systems, and whole-animal biology.

“DBMS provides graduate trainees the opportunity to conduct novel research in a collaborative, inclusive, and close-knit environment. Faculty promote cross-disciplinary learning by ensuring students are exposed to various scientific themes and cutting edge research techniques.”
– Rylend Mulder, PhD Candidate

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years, full time): Research and comprehensive exam, thesis, and oral defense.

Fields of SPECIALIZATION

• Biochemistry and Cell Biology: focuses on understanding the fundamental processes of life and human disease.
• Experimental Medicine: employs interdisciplinary methods to explore the processes responsible for both the normal and diseased state.
• Microbes, Immunity, and Inflammation: focuses on the role of bacteria and bacterial products and the immune system.
• Reproduction and Developmental Sciences: spans clinical and basic science, with a focus on fertility and embryo-implantation, prenatal health, women’s health, and more.
• Therapeutics, Drug Development, and Human Toxicology: focuses on the effects, both beneficial and deleterious, of chemicals including drugs and environmental contaminants, on human health.

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

Visit the Biomedical and Molecular Sciences website to read faculty profiles and learn about faculty members, research areas and research groups. When you find a faculty member with similar research interests to yours, contact her/him and tell them about your interest in graduate work and related experience.

See the Biomedical and Molecular Sciences Graduate Student Handbook online for more detailed information about the program.
**YEAR I**

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**
- Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, completing required health and safety, animal, human, research ethics training and 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.
- Link to Student Academic Success Services for support.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**
- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete ROMEO online module on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Contact CIHR, NSERC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**
- Serve on departmental, faculty, or university committees. Talk to the graduate representatives for tips on getting involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the DOGS, or media outlets like the Queen's Journal, CFRC, and the SGs Blog.
- Look in the AMS Clubs Directory.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**
- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as Kingston General Hospital.
- Connect to broader communities of biomedical and molecular science professionals.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**
- Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career counselor for help. Check out books like "What Am I Going to Do With That?" or "Planning a Scientific Career in Industry from the Career Resource Area for advice on various career options.
- Start publishing like University Affairs and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Ask about non-academic labour market websites.
- Stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate, Student Career Week to explore your career pathways.

**YEAR II**

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**
- Priorities include completing your comprehensive examination and pursuing substantive research.
- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of Expanding Horizons and SGs Habitat.
- Complete ADEA training in accessible customer service.
- Seek experiential/professional development opportunities.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**
- Present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
- Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter or a blog.
- Apply for the Graduate Dean's Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.

**BUILD 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.
- Enroll in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition.

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

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**
- Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading alumni profiles on the SGs website, and using Queen's Connects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni or find alumni in various careers through "Ask an Alumni". For more information check out Career Counselling.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other related opportunities of careers to interested.

**YEAR III**

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**
- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation.
- Check out the SGs Dissertation Boot Camp or Dissertation on the Lake.
- Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore ways to disseminate research findings. Learn from the Expanding Horizons Publishing workshop.
- Begin discussion of potential thesis defence examinations.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**
- Continue to present at conferences.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition.
- For guidance on speaking to news outlets about your work.
- For help from a Career Services workshop.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**
- Find opportunities for extra training through CTI, Expanding Horizons, Mitacs, or other sources to boost your skills. Investigate internships from Mitacs and other sources.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking QCIC's intercultural Competency Certificate.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen's 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 biomedical & molecular sciences, such as the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences (CSMB).
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in biomedical & molecular sciences.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**
- 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.
- Check out the free online module at MyGradSkills to help you plan your career.
- Build connections with faculty outside of your department. Pursue interviews for faculty positions, and apply for post-doc fellowships and positions.
- Apply for jobs or make plans for other adventures. Get help from Career Services with job searching resumes, or interviews.

**YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING**

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**
- 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, research foci, and publication options with your supervisor.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**
- 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.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**
- 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 Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences Annual Meeting. There are many to choose from, so talk to your supervisor for advice on which ones would be most relevant.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**
- Consider joining one of the many professional associations related to biomedical & molecular sciences, such as the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences (CSMB).
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in biomedical & molecular sciences.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**
- Build connections with faculty outside of your department. Pursue interviews for faculty positions, and apply for post-doc fellowships and positions.
- Apply for jobs or make plans for other adventures. Get help from Career Services with job searching resumes, or 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 Biomedical and Molecular Sciences can equip you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:
- 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, research and professional culture and constraints are different. Build your own Grad Map using our online My Grad Map tool.

**WHERE CAN I GO?**
A PhD in Biomedical & Molecular Sciences 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. The list includes (but is not limited to):
- Health Care (hospital clinical labs)
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Academic and research labs
- Scientific supply companies
- Administration in academic, health care or government settings
- Teaching positions in academic institutions or the private sector
- Technical positions in academic institutions or the private sector
- Marketing positions in private sector
- Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

Visit careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps for the online version with links!