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.

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
• Master’s degree in Cultural Studies or a related discipline from a recognized university.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
• Writing sample.
• Statement of interest.
• Video documentation of relevant work (if applicable).
• CV
• Demonstrated proficiency in a language other than English (if needed).
• 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 86/120 (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: January 31st to qualify for funding.
• Notification of acceptance: March 31st.

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

What about FUNDING?
The minimum funding guarantee for Cultural Studies PhD students is $20,000 per year, throughout years 1-4. The funding package may be comprised of Queen’s Graduate Awards, Teaching Assistantships, and named internal Fellowships.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC and other sources. For incoming student, Queen’s will automatically issue a $51,000 award to winners of federal government tri-council awards for PhD studies. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.

Why CULTURAL STUDIES in CULTURAL STUDIES?
Cultural Studies is graduate school reinvented for the 21st century. We are a self-governing, interdisciplinary graduate program for people who want to develop the tools to critically understand the world, and change it. The complexity of contemporary culture means that more than ever before society needs people trained in multiple disciplines, theories and practices. We work with communities throughout and beyond the university to create new forms and methods of research that could not be done in traditional departments. Our students write plays and curate exhibitions. They travel to Argentina, China and Turkey for their research. They win the highest academic accolades, including Fulbright and Vanier scholarships.

What unites all these diverse research agendas is our passion for social justice. We believe that all our research should be in some way capable of addressing real world problems. Students work with indigenous peoples, artists, students, prisoners and activist groups to bring about social transformation. They also conduct artistic research creation, and present their work in a variety of media. When they graduate, our students have superior intellectual tools and practical skills that will last them a lifetime outside of the university.

RESEARCH Areas
• African Studies
• Asian Studies
• Critical Canadian Studies
• Critical Race Theory
• Environmental Humanities
• Europe and the Mediterranean
• Film, Media and Visual Arts
• Gender and Queer Theory
• Indigenous Arts and Politics
• Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
• Law, Prison, and Justice Studies
• Museum Studies and Curation
• Music and Sound Art
• Postcolonialism and the Global South
• Religion, Culture and Spirituality
• Science, Technology and Society
• Theatre and Performance
• Urban Studies

Why QUEEN’S?
Comprising 100 students and 90 distinguished faculty from 22 disciplines, Cultural Studies is an innovative and growing interdisciplinary research program. Our programs include opportunities for cultural production and community-activist fieldwork as options alongside traditional academic research. We are also committed to a diversity of students and faculty and to the global expertise that they bring to the cultural and academic fields. Students participate equally with faculty in the program’s governance.

“I valued the freedom to research what I wanted how I wanted without having to appease the disciplinary sensibilities of a committee who was set in their ways.”
- Sharday Mosurinjohn, PhD

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying. Visit the Cultural Studies Program 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 him/her and tell them about your interest in graduate work, area of research interest and related experience. Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at program events for prospective students.

Program STRUCTURE
PhD (4 years): 4 full-term courses, qualifying exams, and thesis or project.

“Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies
• Preparing your application
• Understanding the process

- Program strand
- Graduate Assistant
- Graduate and Professional Development
- Cross-Disciplinary Programs
- Grad Map for PhD Students
- Grad Map for MA Students
- Grad Map for MEd Students
- Grad Map for MSc Students
- Grad Map for MFA Students
- Grad Map for MDes Students
- Grad Map for MIP Students

- Frequently asked questions
- Program FAQs

- Application FAQs
- Funding FAQs
- Graduate Studies FAQs

- School of Graduate Studies
- Create an impact
- www.queensu.ca/sgs
Cultural Studies PhD MAP *

YEAR I

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Key priorities in the fall and winter include completing your coursework, and attending the Cultural Studies Colloquium (CST 682/692).
- Meet early with your supervisor to set expectations and discuss responsibilities, program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, and timelines.
- In the summer, form your supervisory committee and prepare for your qualifying exams.
- Consider studying abroad with an exchange partner.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete the ROMEO online module on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Serve on the Cultural Studies steering committee, faculty or university committees. Talk to the program director for tips on getting involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGS, or media outlets like the Queen's Journal, CFRC, and the SGS Blog back 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 community organizations, museums, or cultural studies groups, such as Martha's Table or Loving Spoonful.
- Participate in the Cultural Studies Student Caucus to give input.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career counsellor for help. Check out books like So What Are You Going to Do With That? or The Academic Job Search from the Career Resource Area for advice on various career options.
- Stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate Student Career Week to explore your career pathways.

YEAR II

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Continue targeted networking with people working in your field.
- Meet regularly with your supervisor.
- Review research progress, and write your dissertation.
- Continue to attend conferences and connect with other researchers.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading resources, research groups like the Cultural Studies steering committee, faculty or university committees. Talk to the program director for tips on getting involved.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- Present your work through professional associations, topic conferences or at graduate conferences such as Undisciplined.
- 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.
- For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enrol in SGS901 or the PUADD certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

**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.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
- Explore different career paths of interest through alumni profiles on the SGS website, and using Queen'sConnects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni or find alumni in various careers through the Ask an Alumni! For more information check out MyGradSkills.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.

YEAR III

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Plan your research in collaboration with your supervisor.
- Complete a scholarly project.
- Find ways to disseminate research findings, such as doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the SSHRC Dissertation Boot Camp or Dissertation on the Lake.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- 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 examiners.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Continue to present at conferences.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
- Contact the Queen's Media Centre for guidance on speaking about your work.
- List yourself on the Arts and Science University Research website.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Begin teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen'sConnects on LinkedIn, the Queen's Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen'sConnects on LinkedIn, the Queen's Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Join professional associations like the Canadian Association of Cultural Studies.
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in Cultural Studies.

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Plan your research in collaboration with your supervisor.
- Complete a scholarly project.
- Find ways to disseminate research findings, such as doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the SSHRC 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 examiners.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- Continue to attend conferences and connect with colleagues 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.
- Embark on your substantive research in the summer.
- Review research progress, and write your dissertation.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Continue discussion of potential thesis defence examiners.
- Defend your thesis or project proposal in the winter.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen'sConnects on LinkedIn, the Queen's Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Join professional associations like the Canadian Association of Cultural Studies.
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in Cultural Studies.

**WHAT WILL I LEARN?**

A graduate degree in Cultural Studies 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
- Persistence
- Independence and experience as a collaborative leader
- 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 PhD in Cultural Studies 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 nonprofits.

- Academia and teaching
- Non-profit agencies
- Media
- Museums
- Consulting
- Civil Service
- Publishing houses
- Social policy agencies

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

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