Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- M.A. degree with minimum average of 68 (77-79%).
- Cumulative minimum average of A (88%) in 10 full-year English Literature courses (or equivalent).

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Statement of Intent
- Writing sample to be sent directly to English Department.
- 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 (3) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score), or (4) PTE Academics: 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES
- Application due: January 15.
- Notification of acceptance: March and April.

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

What about FUNDING?
Minimum funding guarantee for PhD students: $20,000/year, throughout years 1-4. The funding package may be comprised of Queen’s Graduate Awards, Teaching Assistantships, or named internal Fellowships.

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

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in ENGLISH?

The English Department at Queen’s University is a professionally-oriented research department whose faculty members are distinguished by both scholarly prowess and teaching excellence. Students in the MA and the PhD programs take courses that involve a wide range of critical methodologies, historical periods, and literary genres; they also take a pedagogical and professional skills course that ranges from academic counselling to grant applications to mentoring undergraduate students.

“I have been at Queen’s for both my MA & PhD, and I can say it’s an outstanding program. The library collections are among the best in the country. The size of the program is ideal […] and, probably most importantly, the faculty are both accomplished and approachable at the same time.”
– Robyn Carruthers, PhD

Why QUEEN’S?

The Master’s and Doctoral programs in English at Queen’s are among the oldest and most prestigious in the country, combining commitment to historical breadth with promotion of methodological and disciplinary innovation. The department’s vibrant intellectual community is developed and sustained by the synergies between the knowledge and passion of our distinguished faculty and the ideas and inspirations of our outstanding graduate students.

Offered by Queen’s since 1942, the PhD in English is designed to foster the scholarly development of our students: we prioritize mentorship, professionalization, and intellectual exchange while maintaining an abiding excitement about our students’ autonomous programs of research. The department is small enough that students get to know our faculty, yet large enough to boast faculty expertise in all major historical periods and a wide array of critical methodologies for literary study.

Program STRUCTURE
- PhD (4 years): course work, two-part comprehensive examination (Field Examination and Special Topic Presentation), and dissertation.
YEAR I

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Key priorities include developing relationships with members of your cohort and pursuing courses in your field of study while fulfilling historical breadth requirements.
- Meet early with your supervisor to set expectations and discuss roles, responsibilities, program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, timelines, and any required accommodation plans.
- Look to Student Academic Success Services and Expanding Horizons for a variety of supports.

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.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the Graduate English Society for tips on getting involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the SOGS, or media outlets like the Queen's Journal, CFRC, and the AMS Clubs Directory. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory for a list of clubs.
- 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 the Kingston WritersFest, the Wolfe Island WritersFest, or the Farmers' Market.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career counselor for help. Check out Bickle, 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.
- 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 Career Week to explore your career pathways.

YEAR II

- Complete two field exams in your area of specialization in the fall.
- Assemble your supervisory committee (including supervisor and second reader). Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion. Seek exponential/professional development opportunities.

YEAR III

- Continue researching and begin writing your dissertation. Year III is the one in which students often find it the most difficult to be productive.
- Ensure you have completed language requirements and the upper-year elements of ENGL 900.
- Check out the SGO Dissertations Boot Camp or Dissertation on the Lake for writing help.
- Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore ways to disseminate research findings. Learn from the Expanding Horizons Publishing workshop.

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research 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.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A graduate degree in English 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, critique, approve findings, draw and act on conclusions
- Creativity and innovation
- Perseverance
- Independence and experience as a collaborative worker

WHERE CAN I GO?

A PhD in English 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. Consider joining professional associations like the ACCUTE, the Modern Language Association, and the ACBS.

Continued from special sources, career pathways, and targets, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

- Consider a teaching assistant or research assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as Violation: Representations of Literature and Culture, an Interdisciplinary Graduate Conference at McGill University.
- Expand your research audience through social media.
- Apply for the Graduate Dean's Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.
- Continue to present at conferences.
- Continue presenting in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
- Contact the Queen's Media Centre for guidance on speaking to news outlets about your work. List yourself on the Arts and Science University Research website.

- Continue working as a tutorial leader for ENGL 100.
- Apply and prepare for a Teaching Fellowship in your fourth year.
- Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking QUSC's Intercultural Competency Certificate.

- Teach a one-term course as a Departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in difficult forums: casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

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

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups like Material Matters.

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