Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- A Master’s degree.

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, (I)TOEFL IBT: Writing (24/30), Speaking (22/30), Reading (22/30), Listening (25/30), 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: February 1st.
- Notification of acceptance: As soon as possible after receiving the full application.

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

What about FUNDING?

The minimum funding guarantee for Environmental Studies PhD students is $20,000 per year, throughout years 1-4. This basic level of funding is pro-rated based on the duration of study. Your overall financial support will consist of graduate awards, external scholarships, internal fellowships and bursaries, teaching and research assistantships, research grants and/or support from the School of Environmental Studies.

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 ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES?

The Earth’s environment is stressed, and the search for solutions is anything but simple. Requiring an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving and education, our program emphasizes the diverse contributions of the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences to understand and solve environmental problems.

The PhD program meets a growing student demand for post-graduate training relevant to environmental careers in industry, government, and non-governmental organizations. It responds to a strong market in Canada for professionals with environmentally related skills.

Why QUEEN’S?

The PhD program at Queen’s University provides graduate level training in the field of Environmental Sustainability by practicing an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the long-term dynamics, impacts and management of environmental change, the connections between today’s decisions and tomorrow’s well-being, and the strong dependence of human progress on environmental quality. This program provides opportunities for joint projects with many disciplines at Queen’s and RMC, government agencies and partnerships with community organizations.

RESEARCH Areas
- Environmental Chemistry & Toxicology: Analysis of chemicals, their pathways and fates in the environment, their effects on plants, animals, and humans, and remediation options.
- Ecosystem & Human Health: Application of a systems approach to understanding the impact of human activities on climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem functions and human health.
- Society, Culture & Economic Sustainability: Finding solutions to environmental problems and sustainable living involving the investigation of cultural, social and economic systems.

Visit the School of Environmental Studies 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 and related experience. Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at departmental events for prospective students. We encourage you to identify a research area of interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years): seminars, original interdisciplinary research, readings, comprehensive examination, thesis, formal defense.
Environmental Studies PhD MAP

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)**

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Key priorities include forming your committee, coursework, field exams, and language exam.
- 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 for a variety of supports.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as ENVG 997. Seminars in Environmental Studies.

**YEAR I**

- Complete ROMEO online module on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, DGS, or other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field such as Water Institute, Queen's Blog, or Queen's Sustainability Conference.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- Present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
- Expand your research audience through social media.
- Take part in the Environmental Studies Research Day.
- Apply for the Graduate Dean's Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- None skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in the community.
- Start keeping an eportfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- Help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enroll in SGS901 or the PUTL certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Consider volunteering with student groups and initiatives for sustainability.
- Use the PhD-Community Initiative to develop leadership and other professional skills and engage in a multi-disciplinary project that serves the greater community.

**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 books like So What Are You Going to Do With That? for advice on various career options.
- Start writing 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 career pathways.
- 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 QueenConnects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni or find alumni in various careers through the Ask an Alum. For more information check out Career Counselling.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.

**YEAR II**

- Priorities include completing your comprehensive exam, pursuing substantive research, and writing your research proposal.
- 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.
- Seek professional/developmental opportunities.
- Present at the Sustainability Conference.
- Develop your skills and experience.
- Start focusing on non-academic areas of interest.
- Continue to present at conferences.
- Seek experiential/professional development opportunities.
- 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. List yourself on the Arts and Science University Research website.
- Attend a major conference in your field, such as the International IUPAC Conference on Green Chemistry.

**YEAR III**

- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and prepare for dissertation.
- 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.
- Seek professional/developmental opportunities.
- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in the community.
- Start keeping an eportfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- Help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enroll 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 Material Matters.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through QueenConnects on LinkedIn, the Queen's Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Consider joining professional associations like the Ontario Environment Industry Association and the Canadian institute for Environmental Law and Policy.
- Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest.

**YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING**

- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research to graduate students and faculty or at conferences and work with supervision for defence.
- Review submission and examination guidelines.
- Secure necessary oral defence accommodations.
- Begin discussion of potential thesis defence examiners.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as Arts and Science University Research website.
- 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.
- Build connections with faculty outside of your department such as SERA industry partners. 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 search Planning.
- 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 Environmental 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
  - 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 PhD in Environmental 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 non-profits.

- Environmental protection – water quality, natural heritage, parks management, biodiversity conservation, wildlife management
- Conservation and management of natural resources – forestry, energy, aggregates, minerals and metals, natural resources management
- Environmental sustainability – education, monitoring, restoration, communication and public awareness, sustainable development management, policy and legislation

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!