Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
• Master’s degree. Transcripts from all previous programs/degrees are considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
• Statement of research interest.
• C.V. highlighting scholarly outputs and work experiences.
• If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the English language proficiency requirements: 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 deadline: January 15 (international students)/January 31 (domestic students). Late applications may be accepted.
• Notification of acceptance: March.

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

What about FUNDING?

The minimum funding guarantee for Geography PhD students is $18,000 per year, throughout years 1–4. The funding package may be comprised of graduate awards and teaching assistantships. Additional funding is highly likely.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR, 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 GEOGRAPHY?

Explore critical questions about our environment and our society as you develop research skills. Study with award-winning faculty in an interdisciplinary department that combines fundamental analysis and research with practical, applied approaches to planning and implementation.

“Geography gave me the support I needed. I was able to take a complex project and really run with it.”
– Dr. Sarah de Leeuw, PhD

Why QUEEN’S?

The Department of Geography and Planning at Queen’s University offers a comprehensive graduate program based on innovative research and strong collaboration between faculty and graduate students. Our specialized Earth System Science labs include GIS and remote-sensing labs equipped with a wide range of the latest software and hardware, and facilities with the latest field equipment and laboratory instrumentation. In human geography, we provide strong support for fieldwork that engages topics of public interest from the community to the national or international scale. Many of our students work on questions of global significance, including development projects in Latin America or Africa, ecological change in the Arctic or the relationship between international migration and human rights. We provide a place for graduate students to learn and excel within a vibrant and supportive intellectual community.

Program STRUCTURE

PHD (4 years): 3 courses (including GPHY 801), qualifying exam, dissertation and oral defense.

RESEARCH Areas
• Work, Identity, and Place (Labour Geographies)
• Globalization, Development, Economics, and Sustainability
• Bodies, Health, and Healthcare
• Citizenship, Identity, Justice, and Governance
• Post-Colonialism, Indigenous Peoples, and Place
• Earth Systems Science, with a strong focus on Arctic systems, forests, and resources
• Geographic Information Science
• Urban and Regional Planning

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

Visit the Department of Geography and Planning website to read faculty profiles and learn more about faculty member 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, areas of research interest, and related experience.
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

YEAR I

ACHEIVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Key priorities include forming your committee, coursework, developing your research proposal, and preparing for your qualifying 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 supports.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars in our Geography Colloquium and in other departments such as SNS, Policy Studies, and Environmental Studies.
- Write and defend your thesis proposal.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of Expanding Horizons.
- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as the Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting or the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting.

YEAR II

- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation.
- 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 examiner.
- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research to graduate students and faculty at or conferences 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.

YEAR III

- Explore different careers of interest by reading books like Doing Research With That?
- Check out the SGS or putting your skills.
- Find opportunities for extra training through CIL, 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 QUL’s Intercultural Competency Certificate.
- Practice articulating the skills you’ve been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Careers Services workshop.
- Continue to attend conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners, such as the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting or GeoConvention.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre.
- Build connections with faculty outside of your department. 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 searching, resumes, or interviews.
- Consider joining professional associations like the Queen’s Alumni Association or the Queen’s Alumni Association.

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

- Find 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? 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 to stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate Student Career Week to explore your career pathways.
- Participate in hiring committees if possible and attend job talks. Research academic careers of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.
- Participate in hiring committees if possible and attend job talks. Research academic careers of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.
- Organize panels at AAG and CAG.
- Organize special issues in key geographic journals.
- Visit careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps for the online version with links!

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

- A graduate degree in Geography 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 of understanding of sound ethical practices, social responsibility, responsible research and cultural sensitivity.
- Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interactions.
- Leadership initiative and visionary leadership.

WHERE CAN I GO?

- A PhD in Geography 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.
- Academia and teaching.
- Consulting.
- International development.
- Government:
  - Policy.
  - Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

* This map is intended to provide suggestions for activities and careers, but everyone’s abilities, experiences, and constraints are different. Build your own Grad Map using our online My Grad Map tool.