Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**
- Master’s degree in Geological Sciences or Geological Engineering, Mining Engineering, or Civil Engineering are acceptable. Degrees in related fields such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Sciences or Geography are considered, but may require additional Geology courses.

**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, (internet-based): 80, IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score), or (4) PTE Academcis: 65.

**KEY DATES & DEADLINES**
- **Application deadline:** February 1 for September admission.
- **Notification of acceptance:** Typically, 4 weeks after the full application has been received.

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

What about FUNDING?

The level of financial support consequently varies among graduate students in the Department, with a guaranteed minimum level of $23,000 for PhD students. As part of the minimum funding package, you may be offered a Teaching Assistantship.

You are encouraged to apply for external funding from OGS, NSERC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $10,000 award to incoming PhD students who have won government or institutional awards.

FUNDING

**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 139 graduate programs within 50+ departments & research centres.

With the world’s best scholars, prize-winning and innovative researchers – 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.

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**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.

**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.

**Why GRADUATE STUDIES in GEOLOGICAL ENGINEERING?**

Geological Engineering is the application of geological knowledge to working with earth materials – whether for sustainable development of resources including water, oil, gas, and minerals; for construction of projects on, in, or of soil and rock; or to safeguard the public from geohazards. At Queen’s, students in these fields will be exposed to geology from the field to the laboratory scale, and to analysis and decision-making in Earth Sciences, enjoying multiple field trips, and utilizing world-class labs for chemical and physical characterization of Earth materials, and numerical modelling of their behaviour.

Graduate students and their work are an important part of an ongoing research process that provides the community with ways of understanding natural, cultural, imaginative, social and technological phenomena.

**Why QUEEN’S?**

As a PhD student in Geological Engineering at Queen’s you are part of one of the most-research intensive universities in Canada. Our research program is internationally renowned with a wide range of research activities in all of the major specialization areas of geological engineering.

The Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering provides opportunities for advanced studies and research in the Earth Sciences. Faculty interests span disciplines in Applied GeoEnvironmental Sciences and Geotechnique, Geophysics and Geochronology, Economic Geology and Mineral Exploration, Petrology and Structural Geology, Sedimentology, Sedimentary Geochemistry and Paleobiology often in a multidisciplinary fashion and including applications to economic and environmental problems.

Our students come from countries all over the world, such as Brazil, Chile, Greece, and China. At Queen’s, graduate students from all disciplines learn and discover in a close-knit intellectual community.

**Program STRUCTURE**

PhD (4 years): Required to take a minimum of four term length graduate courses (or equivalents) beyond the Master’s degree course requirement and thesis.
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)  

YEAR I  
ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS  
- Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, forming your research committee, coursework and comprehensive exams.  
- 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.

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 the SGS Habitat.  
- Seek experiential/professional development opportunities.

YEAR III  
ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS  
- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review progress, and work on 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 examiners.

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING  
ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS  
- 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.

YEAR IV  
WHAT WILL I LEARN?  
- A graduate degree in Geological Engineering 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  
  - Interpersonal effectiveness  
  - Independence and experience as a collaborative worker  
  - Awareness of the importance of ethical practices, social responsibility, responsible research and cultural sensitivity  
  - Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interactions  
  - Leadership: initiative, self-assessment, vision leading people and discussion

WHERE CAN I GO?  
- A PhD in Geological Engineering 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. Graduates from the Geological Engineering PhD program have found careers within:  
  - Academia and Research  
  - Consulting  
  - Mineral and oil exploration  
  - Mining and hydrocarbon extraction  
  - Policy analysis  
  - Surface and underground construction  
  - Environmental assessment  
  - Protection and rehabilitation  
  - Resource management  
- Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

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 NSERC, CGS, and other funding.  
- Apply for the Graduate Dean’s Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE  
- Serve on faculty or university committees. Talk to the Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPs) for tips on getting involved.  
- Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal, CFCF and the SGS Blog. Look in the AMS Club 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 KingstonFest.  
- Connect to broader communities of engineers by joining an Engineering Society Design Team.

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? 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.

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

- Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.  
- Explore different careers of interest by reading alumni profiles on the SGPS website, and using Queen’s Connects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen’s alumni and find alumni in various careers through “Ask an Alum.” For more information check out Career Cruising.  
- Investgate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.

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- 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.  
- Attend a major conference in your field, such as the Canadian Geotechnical Society Annual Meeting.

- 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.  
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking Queen’s Intercultural Competency Certificate.

- 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.

- Consider joining professional associations like the Canadian Geotechnical Society.  
- Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest.

- Build connections with faculty outside of your department. Pursue internships 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.  
- 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.