Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- M.A. in Political Science, Political Studies, or an equivalent.
- Grade requirement: minimum A-average.

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): 6.0 (academic module overall band score), or (PTE Academics): 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- Application due: Late January (see Political Studies website).
- Notification of acceptance: From late March to early April.

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

What about FUNDING?

The minimum funding guarantee for Political Studies PhD students is $18,000/year, throughout years 1-4. The basic funding package consists of graduate awards and teaching assistantships.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from CGS, 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 or see what awards are offered through the Political Studies Department.

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in POLITICAL STUDIES?

The Department of Political Studies at Queen’s University has long been known for its graduate programs. We are small enough to provide our students with a highly personalized graduate experience, and our faculty are strong, diverse, and well recognized for their research so that we can provide a well-rounded education that gives our graduates a solid basis for a wide range of careers. The department is particularly well known for its strength in the study of ethnically divided and diverse societies.

Why QUEEN’S?

As one of Canada’s premier departments of political science, we are committed to both research and teaching. Our faculty are actively engaged in a wide range of research activities and projects, and highly visible in the discipline both in Canada and abroad. And we are no less committed to our students.

“Upon setting foot in the Department, I found an open and supportive community of graduate students, as well as a genuinely helpful and caring faculty. The almost daily contact with fellow graduate students and faculty forced me to stay focused on research and helped me to complete the dissertation in a timely manner.”

— Rémi Léger, PhD

FUNDING

- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Politics
- Gender and Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory

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

Visit the Political Studies Department website to read about fields of study and learn more about supervisor interest 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. This is also an opportunity for you to find out if the faculty member is accepting new graduate students to supervise. Meet with your potential supervisor at departmental events for prospective students.
WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A graduate degree in Political Studies can equip you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:

- **Research skills:** Analyze and assess arguments about policy and institutions, based on their empirical and normative components
- **Analytical writing skills:** Write in a clear, succinct, explanatory and persuasive manner
- **Effective verbal communication skills:**
- **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, criticize, appraise findings, draw and act on conclusions
- **Creativity and innovation**
- **PERSISTENCE**
- **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 Political 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.

- **Academia and teaching**
- **Policy analytics**
- **Law**
- **International and non-profit organisations**
- **Politics**

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

**Year I**

- **Achieve Your Academic Goals**
  - Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, 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.

- **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 SSIR, OGS, and other funding.
  - Attend conferences in your field.

- **Build Skills and Experience**
  - Serve on departmental or university committees.
  - Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal, CFRC, and the SGSS Blog.
  - Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

- **Engage with Your Community**
  - Consider volunteering with different community organizations, museums, and cultural studies groups, such as the Centre for Studies on Democracy, and the Centre for International and Defence Policy (CIDD) and the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations.
  - 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**
  - Finding career fits starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career counsellor for help. Check out books like *What Are You Going to Do With That?* or The Academic Job Search from the CAREER Resource Directory for advice on various career options.
  - Start reading publications like *University Affairs* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to 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**

- **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 GSGS Habitat.
  - Attend a major conference in your field, such as the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA) Annual Conference or Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN).

- **Maximize Research Impact**
  - Present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
  - Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter or a blog.

- **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 to news outlets about your work.
  - List yourself on the Arts and Science University Research website.

- **Engage with Your Community**
  - Begin teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
  - Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, Mitacs, or other sources to boost your skills. Investigate internships from Mitacs and other sources.
  - Prepare for work or study in a multi-cultural environment by taking OUCY’s Intercultural Competency Certificate.

- **Launch Your Career**
  - Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in difficult forums: causal conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

**Year III**

- **Achieve Your Academic Goals**
  - Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the GSGS’ 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**
  - Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in difficult forums: causal conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

- **Build Skills and Experience**
  - Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.
  - Start focusing on non-academic areas of interest.
  - Research organizations of interest and start putting together your industry resume and begin your job search plan.
  - Check out the free online modules at MyGradSkills to help you plan your career.

- **Engage with Your Community**
  - Consider joining professional associations like the Canadian Political Science Association.
  - Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest.

- **Launch Your Career**
  - 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.

- **WHAT WILL I LEARN?**

A graduate degree in Political Studies can equip you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:

- Research skills: Analyze and assess arguments about policy and institutions, based on their empirical and normative components
- Analytical writing skills: Write in a clear, succinct, explanatory and persuasive manner
- Effective verbal communication skills
- 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, criticize, appraise findings, draw and act on conclusions
- Creativity and innovation
- Persistence
- 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

**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.

- **Maximize Research Impact**

- **Build Skills and Experience**

- **Engage with Your Community**

- **Launch Your Career**