Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- M.A. in Political Science, Political Studies, or an equivalent.
- Grade requirements: 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, (i)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 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 OGS, SSHRC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $10,000 award to incoming PhD students who have won federal government tri-council awards. 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

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years, full-time): course work, second-language examination, field examinations in two fields, thesis proposal, thesis and defense.

FIELDS of Study
- 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.

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.

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 130 graduate programs within 50+ departments & research centres. With the world’s best scholars, prize-winning professional development opportunities, excellent funding packages and life in the affordable, historic waterfront city of Kingston, Queen’s offers a wonderful environment for graduate studies. Queen’s is an integral part of the Kingston community, with the campus nestled in the core of the city, only a 15-minute walk to downtown with its shopping, dining and waterfront. For more about Kingston’s history and culture, see Queen’s University’s Discover Kingston page.
**Political Studies PhD MAP**

**ACHEIVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, forming your committee, coursework, field exam, 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, Attend or present at a graduate conference such as Political Studies Graduate Student Association (PSGSA).

**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.
- Present at conferences in your field.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Serve on departmental or university committees, Talk to the Political Studies Graduate Student Association (PSGSA) to get involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal (CFRC) and the SGGS Blog, or the Community Affairs Office.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.
- 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.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, museums, and cultural studies groups, such as the Centre for Studies on Democracy and Diversifying, the Centre on International and Defence Policy (CIDP), 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 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 Directory 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.
- Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading alumni profiles on the SGGS website, and using QueenConnects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen’s alumni in various careers through “Ask an Alumni” for more information check our Career Cruising.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.
- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Research academic 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.

**YEAR I**

- Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, forming your committee, coursework, field exam, 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, Attend or present at a graduate conference such as Political Studies Graduate Student Association (PSGSA).

**YEAR II**

- 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 SGGS 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).

**YEAR III**

- Start building your teaching portfolio including teaching experience, and develop your skills and experience.
- Consider participating in the Political Studies Graduate Student Association (PSGSA) Research organizations of interest and start putting together your industry resume and begin your job search plan.
- Present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading publications like Queen’s Alumni Association (QSA)
- Hone skills for non-academic employment by developing your skills and experience.
- Attend teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
- Continue attending conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre.

**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 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, 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 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 organizations
- politics

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!