Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- BA Honours undergraduate degree in Sociology or equivalent with a minimum B+ standing.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Writing Sample
- Statement of Interest

KEY DATES & DEADLINES
- Application deadline: Our deadline for applications is February 1 for internal awards. However, in some cases, applications are considered before the Fall term begins, as long as space is available in the program.
- Notification of acceptance: Decisions are made in March.

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

What about FUNDING?

MA students are guaranteed a minimum of $14,000 in the form of a Queen's Graduate Award and a Teaching Assistantship. Funding is guaranteed for 2 years.

Apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC and other sources. Queen's will automatically issue a $5,000 top-up to Masters winners of 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 Sociology Department.

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in SOCIOLOGY?

In general, a sociological approach engages with contemporary social problems and questions from a critical perspective. Students of sociology are trained to critically examine social dynamics and structures, and to engage with the formation of pathways towards social change. Our students at the MA level are trained (theoretically and methodologically) in advanced critical social analysis. Both micro and macro sociological approaches are covered.

The Sociology graduate program at Queen's has particular strengths in socio-legal studies and criminology, critical sociology, and surveillance and digital media. Most of our graduates from the MA program proceed to doctoral programs throughout Canada and beyond. Others move into law, social work, or take up employment in policy analysis and research. Many graduates of the MA program remain on the intimate, supportive and cohesive culture of the Department.

Why QUEEN'S?

In addition to the benefits of a small department where students receive ample attention from faculty and staff, inside the classroom and out, Sociology at Queen's offers an annual graduate student conference where MA students who are in the sociology program can present their research, and a bi-annual opportunity for students to work on a collaborative research project. The department also offers an opportunity for our graduate students to gain valuable teaching experience.

The Surveillance Studies Centre is a multi-disciplinary and international research centre affiliated with the Department. It offers several speakers series that have attracted leading figures in surveillance, including Edward Snowden. Its current streams include big data surveillance, drones, wearable, and social sorting.

Queen's is located in Kingston, which offers meaningful points of social and political engagement. Because of the significance Kingston holds in the federal penal system, there are many local associations concerned with prison transitions and reform. Some of our graduates work with the Elizabeth Frye Society, while others work within local prisons. There is a large and growing Boys and Girls club where members of the Queen's community interact on a regular basis. Some of our graduate students work with local shelters for women, and in feminist legal studies in Law at Queen's.

Program STRUCTURE

The 2-year Master of Sociology offers 2 methods of completion:
- Method I (Thesis): Two core half courses, two other half courses, and a thesis weighted at one-quarter of the total program.
- Method II (Essay): Two core half courses, four other half courses, and an essay weighted at one-quarter of the total program.

RESEARCH Areas/Streams
- Criminology and Law
- Power, Inequalities and Social Justice
- Media, Information and Surveillance

Visit the Sociology Department website to read faculty profiles and learn more about faculty member research areas.
ACHEIVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS
• Start with key priorities like developing your relationship with your supervisor, forming your committee, and doing your coursework.
• Consider how your course papers can contribute to your MA essay or thesis.
• Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and Expanding Horizons professional development workshops, the department Grad Chair and the GSS Habitat.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT
• Start to think about the audiences for your research.
• If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and GGS funding.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE
• Consider positions in student services, the GSS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal SFRC and the GSS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory for more ideas.
• Serve on departmental or university committees. Talk to the Departmental Committee graduate student representative for tips on getting involved.
• Check out professional development workshops from Expanding Horizons.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY
• Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus.
• Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as the Elizabeth Frye Society, and the Boys and Girls Club.
• Follow the Sociology Department on Twitter.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER
• Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a Career Services career planning workshop or meeting with a career counselor. 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. Browse non-academic labour market websites. Stay on the lookout for special events like Grad Student Career Week to explore your career pathways.
• Check admission test deadlines if needed for further studies.

GETTING STARTED
• Start your masters by checking your courses, competencies, and work on your career map.

INTERMEDIATE STAGE
• Complete your coursework, begin to research and write your essay or thesis.

WRAPPING UP
• Complete your essay or thesis.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?
Knowledge and technical skills including:
• Qualitative/quantitative research techniques to analyze social issues.
• Critical thinking to evaluate social problems and interactions by challenging common assumptions.
• Research design: to select and effectively deploy appropriate research designs for examining and interpreting a variety of social phenomena.
• Program evaluation to collect, evaluate and analyse information concerning the effectiveness of a wide range of projects and policies.
• Organizing critical debate and discussion to define, interpret and explain multifaceted current issues, and their implications for individual lives, social groups and institutions, by combining sociological knowledge with a critical and reflexive understanding of the complexities of present-day societies.
• Policy Analysis to consider the impact and unintended consequences of policies, and consider the role of social intervention in creating conflict, social movements and social protest around policies.
• User research to understand individual and group understandings, behaviors, needs, and motivations through observation techniques, task analysis, and other feedback methodologies.

Essential transferable skills including:
• Communication of complex information and arguments about social issues in appropriate formats and a range of media and digital technologies.
• Teamwork/Leadership: working creatively by cooperating with others in a manner which recognizes diverse views, values and cultural positions.
• Information management: prioritizing, organizing and synthesizing large amounts of information.
• Time management: meet deadlines despite competing demands.
• Project management: developing ideas, gathering information, analyzing and appraising findings, drawing and acting on conclusions.
• Creativity and innovation: addressing complex, multifaceted challenges.
• Perseverance to work through challenges to achieve desired outcomes.
• Awareness and understanding of sound ethical practices, social responsibility, responsible research and cultural sensitivity.
• Independence and experience as a collaborative worker.
• Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interactions.

WHERE CAN I GO?
Almost half of the Department’s Master’s graduates have chosen to pursue doctoral studies. Those who have not continued on to doctoral work have secured challenging positions commensurate with their advanced level skills as sociologists in:
• Research
• Policy Analysis
• Policing Analysis
• Policing and Corrections
• Marketing
• Social Justice Advocacy
• Health Care Administration
• Teaching

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 the Department of Sociology website to see where the degree can take you.

* 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.