

# Cultural Studies PhD Map

## Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

GRAD MAP FOR PhD STUDENTS 

### Why GRADUATE STUDIES in CULTURAL STUDIES?

Cultural Studies is an emphatically interdisciplinary area of inquiry that intersects the humanities, science studies, social sciences, and the arts. Its researchers theorize the forces that shape the lived reality of people in the 21st century.

What distinguishes Cultural Studies from other approaches to the study of culture is its recognition that no single disciplinary approach can address the complexity of cultural and social forms and experiences. Cultural Studies researchers investigate values, beliefs and belongings, cultural processes and cultural objects, economic and social relations, institutions, and identities. Cultural Studies therefore draws on a range of methods and critical theories and strives to do so self-reflexively. We aim to break down conventional divisions not only among academic disciplines but also between academia and activism, and between theoretical analysis and cultural production. It is our expectation that analyses of class, race, and gender, alongside other axes of social difference and inequality, will pervade all teaching and research conducted in our program. Our students produce work in a variety of media and formats, from the monograph thesis to visual arts and community-engaged projects.



### Why QUEEN'S?

Comprising over 100 distinguished faculty from over 20 disciplines, and more than 100 students, Cultural Studies is the largest graduate program in Arts and Science at Queen's. We are committed to a diversity of students and faculty and grateful for the experience, expertise, creativity, and commitment that they bring



to our program. Our goal is to create an intellectual environment that combines a high level of academic scholarship and ongoing meaningful engagement with local and global communities. Cultural Studies students may write their thesis in French with the permission of their supervisor. Students and staff participate with faculty in program governance. In the first year, all students attend the Cultural Studies Colloquium and take the core course, Cultural Studies Past and Present; other courses are the choice of the student. Students have opportunities to work as research assistants on grant-funded faculty research, and to teach in departments across the university. Opportunities for practicums and volunteer work abound: many of our students are associated with local galleries and arts organizations, heritage projects, activist groups, and environmental and social justice projects.

### RESEARCH Areas

Research topics and methods in Cultural Studies are only limited by student ambition and preparation, and the combination of faculty members they can put together to supervise their work. Geographical spaces engaged by our current PhD students include China, Turkey, Cape Breton Island, Toronto, Pakistan, Lebanon, Akwesasne Mohawk Territory, Mexico, and Ghana.

Research Areas our PhD students are currently working in include:

- Animal Studies
- Carceral Studies and Prison Abolitionism
- Creative Writing

- Critical Education Studies
- Critical Race Studies
- Curation, Museum, and Critical Heritage Studies
- Diaspora and Migration Studies
- Gender Studies
- Environmental Humanities
- Film Studies and Documentary Film
- Indigenous Arts and Politics
- Music and Critical Sound Studies
- Performance and Visual Art
- Popular Culture
- Political and Social Theory
- Queer Studies
- Radical and Independent Media
- Religious Studies
- Settler Colonial Studies
- Theatre and Theatre Studies

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

Visit the Cultural Studies Program website to read faculty profiles and learn more about faculty members' research areas. When you find a faculty member with similar research interests to yours, contact them and tell them about your interest in graduate work, area of research interest, and related experience. Applicants are required to secure an agreement for supervision before being accepted into the program.

### Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years): 4 full-term courses, qualifying exams, and thesis or project.

# Cultural Studies PhD Map

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY



## YEAR I

## YEAR II

## YEAR III

## YEAR IV

### ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Complete 4 one-term courses, plus Cultural Studies Colloquium (CUST 802/902).
- Meet with your supervisor to discuss program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, and timelines.
- Consider the format of your PhD work: monograph thesis or portfolio? What will best match your materials, methods, goals, and desired audience?
- In the summer, form your supervisory committee and prepare for your qualifying exams.

- Complete your qualifying exams in the fall. Write and defend your thesis or project proposal in the winter. Embark on your substantive research in the summer.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) and professional development or Student Academic Success Services.
- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and career pathways.

- Continuing to meet regularly with your supervisor, write your dissertation. Check out the SGSPA writing camps, like Dissertation Boot Camp.
- Use conference presentations to accelerate your writing, meet colleagues, and practice effective dissemination of research findings.
- If doing community-engaged or artistic research, look for opportunities to exhibit or develop public-facing projects.
- Begin discussion of potential external thesis examiners.

- Complete thesis, portfolio, or project.
- Plan date of thesis submission and examination.
- Work with supervisor to prepare for defence.
- Review submission and examination guidelines.
- Archive your thesis or project on QSPACE.

### MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Complete CORE online module on research ethics if doing research with humans (interviews, community work etc.).
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field, even if you are not presenting.

- If necessary, apply for ethics review (GREB); consult with others for support.
- Present your work through professional associations, topic conferences, or at graduate conferences such as Undisciplined.
- Expand your research audience through social media or online presence.
- Apply for the Graduate Dean's Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.

- Continue to present at conferences.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) or GRADflix 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.
- Take a CUST micro-course to stay in touch with others, experience intensive discussion or skill building.

- 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.
- Consider being interviewed on the SGSPA radio show Grad Chat to talk about your research.
- Consider putting an article in The Conversation.

### BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Explore paid or volunteer media work with the Queen's Journal, Kingstonist, CFRC, blogs, etc.
- Participate in the Cultural Studies Student Caucus or Queen's spaces and initiatives such as Four Directions, Yellow House, etc.
- Check out professional development workshops from School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development.

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees, community organizations, etc.
- Get teaching tips from the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

- Investigate internships from MITACS and other sources.
- Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, SGSPA professional development, MITACS, etc.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QUIC and Four Directions.

- Serve as a Teaching Fellow (TF) in an appropriate undergraduate program..
- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, from casual conversation to contract work, volunteering, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

### ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Volunteer with a community organizations such as Loving Spoonful, Joe Mills, etc., or involve yourself in activist, artistic, or professional projects outside the university.
- Serve on faculty or university committees.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, or by organizing conferences.

- Engage with people working in careers of interest, through Queens Connects on LinkedIn, the Queen's Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Join professional associations such as the Canadian Association of Cultural Studies.

- Continue outreach to people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in Cultural Studies.

### LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Career advising and support is available at Career Services through workshops, special events (e.g. career fairs) or appointments with a career coach.
- Browse University Affairs, Chronicle of Higher Education, and non-academic labour market websites.
- Create your own Grad Map: [careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps](https://careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps)

- Start building your teaching portfolio.
- Explore different careers of interest by using Queens Connects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. For more information check out Career Cruising.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.
- Attend CUST Alumni events to hear what our graduates are doing after Queen's.

- Polish your academic resume and begin applying for academic jobs and post-docs.
- Don't neglect non-academic possibilities. Research organizations of interest and start putting together an "industry" resume.
- Consider speaking with an International Student Advisor, if you are an International student.

- Build connections with faculty outside of your program. Pursue interviews for faculty positions and apply for post-doc fellowships and positions.
- Apply to jobs or make plans for other opportunities to develop skills. Get help from Career Services with job searching, resumes, and interviews.
- If considering jobs abroad, research possible immigration regulations.

### Knowledge & Workplace Skills

A graduate degree in Cultural Studies 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**, 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

### Career Possibilities

A PhD in Cultural 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
- Civil Service
- Galleries
- Non-profit agencies
- Media
- Museums
- Publishing houses
- Social policy agencies

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

# Graduate Studies FAQs

## How do I make the most of my time at Queen's?

Use the Grad Map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. Everyone's journey is different - the ideas on the maps are just suggestions to help you explore possibilities. For more support with your professional development, take advantage of the SGSPA professional development framework and the new Professional Development Plan (PDP) process to set customized goals to help you get career ready when you graduate.

## 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 SGSPA website 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 10-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.

# Application FAQs

## What do I need to know to APPLY?

### ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree in Cultural Studies or a related discipline from a recognized university.

### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Writing sample.
- Statement of Interest.
- Video documentation of relevant work (if applicable).
- C.V.
- If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the English language proficiency requirements in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The following minimum scores are required: TOEFL (paper-based): 550, (2) 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:** January 31st to qualify for funding.
- **Notification of acceptance:** March 31st.

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

## What about FUNDING?

As of the 2025-26 academic year, doctoral students are guaranteed minimum funding of \$21,000 per year for years 1-4. The funding package may be comprised of Queen's Graduate Awards, Teaching Assistantships, and named internal Fellowships.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC, and other sources. For the 2025-26 academic year, Queen's will automatically issue a one time \$5,000 award to Doctoral students who have won federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on awards and scholarships.

