

English PhD Map

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

GRAD MAP FOR PhD STUDENTS 

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in ENGLISH?

The English Department at Queen's University is a professionally-oriented research department whose faculty members are distinguished by both scholarly prowess and teaching excellence. Students in the MA, MPhil, and the PhD programs take courses that involve a wide range of critical methodologies, historical periods, and literary genres; they also take a pedagogical and professional skills course that ranges from academic counseling to grant applications to mentoring undergraduate students.

"I have been at Queen's for both my MA & PhD, and I can say it's an outstanding program. The library collections are among the best in the country. The size of the program is ideal [...] and, probably most importantly, the faculty are both accomplished and approachable at the same time."

– Robyn Carruthers, PhD

Why QUEEN'S?

The Master's and Doctoral programs in English at Queen's are among the oldest and most prestigious in the country, combining commitment to historical breadth with promotion of methodological and disciplinary innovation. The department's vibrant intellectual community is developed and sustained by the synergies between the knowledge and passion of our distinguished faculty and the ideas and inspirations of our outstanding graduate students.

Offered by Queen's since 1942, the PhD in English is designed to foster the scholarly development of our students; we prioritize mentorship, professionalization, and intellectual exchange while maintaining an abiding excitement about our students' autonomous programs of research. The



department is small enough that students get to know our faculty, yet large enough to boast faculty expertise in all major historical periods and a wide array of critical methodologies for literary study.

Fields of STUDY

- American Literature
- Canadian Literature
- Gender Studies
- Indigenous Studies
- Literary Theory
- Medieval Literature
- Modernist Literature
- Modern Popular Culture
- Postcolonial Studies
- Renaissance Literature
- Restoration & 18th-Century Literature
- Romantic Literature
- Victorian Literature

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

Visit the English Department 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 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.

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years): course work, two-part comprehensive examination (Field Examination and Special Topic Presentation), and dissertation.

Students entering the PhD from MPhil program will have completed the first part of the comprehensive exams and can go directly to pursuing more independent research in the Special Topic Presentation and the dissertation.



Queen's
UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE STUDIES AND
POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS

queensu.ca/grad-postdoc

YEAR I

YEAR II

YEAR III

YEAR IV

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Key priorities include developing relationships with members of your cohort and pursuing courses in your field of study while fulfilling historical breadth requirements.
- 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.

- Complete field exams in your area of specialization in the fall.
- Assemble your supervisory committee (including supervisor and second reader). Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion. Seek experiential/professional development opportunities.
- Produce Thesis Proposal and Special Topic Presentation Proposal. Complete the Special Topic Presentation.

- Continue researching and begin writing your dissertation. Year III is the one in which students often find it the most difficult to be productive.
- Ensure you have completed language requirements and the upper-year elements of ENGL 900.
- Check out the SGSPA writing camps, such as Dissertation on the Lake, for writing help.
- Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore ways to disseminate research findings.

- 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

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete CORE online module on research ethics if doing research regarding sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.

- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as the annual McGill English Graduate Conference.
- Expand your research audience through social media.
- 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 Graduate Assistant Arts and Science Research website.

- Continue to attend conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners, such as The Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen's Media Centre.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Serve on departmental, faculty, or university committees. Talk to the Graduate English Society for tips on getting involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen's Journal, CFRC, and the SGSPA Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in community.
- Begin working as a tutorial leader for ENGL 100.
- For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enrol in SGS902 or the PUTL Certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

- Continue working as a tutorial leader for ENGL 100.
- Apply and prepare for a Teaching Fellowship in your fourth or fifth year.
- Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Professional development, MITACS, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment.

- Teach a one-term course as a Departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in difficult forums: casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as Literacy Kingston, Kingston WritersFest, or the Wolfe Island Writer's Festival.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- Consider signing up for the PhD-Community Initiative program run by the SGSPA.

- Do some targeted networking 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.

- Consider joining professional associations like the ACCUTE, the Modern Language Association, and more.
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in English studies.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career educator and coach for help.
- Start reading publications like University Affairs and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Browse non-academic labour market websites.

- Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
- 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 full-time jobs 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.

- 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, and 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.

Knowledge & Workplace Skills

A graduate degree in English can equip you with:

- **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 English 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.

- Business
- Civil service
- Editing
- Information technologies
- Law
- NGO work
- Publishing
- Teaching
- Writing

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

How to use this map

Use the 5 rows of the map to explore possibilities and plan for success in the five overlapping areas of career and academics. To make your own custom map, use the My Grad Map tool: careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps.

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

- MA degree with minimum average of A- (3.7/4.3 GPA), or successful completion of the MPhil program.
- Cumulative minimum average of A- (80%) in 10 full-year English Literature courses (or equivalent).

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Statement of Intent
- Writing sample to be sent directly to English Department
- 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. (academic module overall band score). These tests must have been taken within a year of the date of pre-application.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- **Application due:** January 15.
- **Notification of acceptance:** March and April.

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

What about FUNDING?

PhD students receive guaranteed funding for four years. There are some additional funding sources available in the fifth year, if necessary. The funding package may be comprised of Queen's Graduate Awards, Teaching Assistantships, or 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.



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