

Environmental Studies MES Map

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

GRAD MAP FOR MES STUDENTS 

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES?

The Earth's environment is under stress, and the search for solutions is anything but simple. It requires an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving and education. Our program emphasizes the diverse contributions of the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences to understanding and solving environmental problems.

The MES program meets a growing student demand for post-graduate training relevant to environmental careers in industry, government, and non-governmental organizations. It responds to a strong market in Canada for professionals with environmentally related skills.

Why QUEEN'S?

The MES program at Queen's University provides graduate level training in the field of Environmental Sustainability by practicing an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the long-term dynamics, impacts, and management of environmental change, the connections between today's decisions and tomorrow's wellbeing, and the strong dependence of human progress on environmental quality. This program provides opportunities for joint projects with many disciplines at Queen's and RMC, government agencies, and partnerships with community organizations.

Program STRUCTURE

The MES is offered with two methods of completion:

- **Method I** (Research – 2 years): four half-credit courses, original research, thesis, seminars, formal defense.
- **Method II** (Course based – 16 to 20 months): development of conceptual thinking, analytical & interpretive skills. Six half-credit courses, seminars, library-based interdisciplinary paper.



RESEARCH Areas

- **Environmental Chemistry & Toxicology:** Analysis of chemicals, their pathways and fates in the environment, their effects on plants, animals, and humans, and remediation options.
- **Ecosystem & Human Health:** Application of a systems approach to understanding the impact of human activities on climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and human health.
- **Society, Culture & Economic Sustainability:** Finding solutions to environmental problems and sustainable living involving the investigation of cultural, social and economic systems.
- **Past projects have involved:** land-use planning, governance, social justice, Indigenous studies, activism, and environmental philosophy.

Visit the School of Environmental Studies 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.

"The academic environment is excellent. The faculty is supportive, and the students are really friendly."

– Atanu Sarkar, MES



Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at departmental events for prospective students. We encourage you to identify a research area of interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.



GRADUATE STUDIES AND POSTDOCTORAL AFFAIRS

queensu.ca/grad-postdoc

Environmental Studies MES Map

MASTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (MES)



GETTING STARTED

INTERMEDIATE STAGE

WRAPPING UP

ACHIEVE 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 essay or thesis. Seek guidance from departmental and School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) professional development workshops, the department Grad Chair, and the SGSPA website.

- Complete your coursework; begin to research and write your essay or thesis.
- Take additional training through the Analytical Research Unit (ASU) on chemical analysis techniques or contamination remediation.

- Complete your essay or thesis.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Start to think about the audiences for your research.
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and OGS funding.

- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as Water Initiative for the Future (WatIF).
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as ENSC 897: Seminars in Environmental Studies.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) or GRADflix competition.

- Consider publication options for your research.
- Attend a major conference in your field, such as the IUPAC Annual Conference on Green Chemistry.
- 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

- 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 for more ideas.
- Serve on departmental, faculty, or university committees. Talk to the school Graduate Chair for tips on getting involved.
- Check out professional development workshops from SGSPA and the School of Environmental Studies.

- Start keeping an ePortfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.
- Use a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant position to develop your research or teaching skills.
- 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.

- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Investigate internships from MITACS and other sources.
- Check out opportunities for extra training through CTL, SGSPA professional development, or other sources to boost your skills.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus.
- Consider volunteering with different student groups and initiatives for sustainability.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QUIC and Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre.
- If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an International Student Advisor.

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen's 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 Ontario Environment Industry Association and the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a Career Services workshop or meeting with a career educator and coach.
- Start reading publications like University Affairs and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Browse non-academic labour market websites.

- Explore different careers of interest by using Queens Connects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. Check out Career Cruising for more information.
- If you are considering a PhD, explore programs of interest reach out to faculty, and apply to PhD programs and external scholarships.

- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Start focusing on areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your CV or resume for potential positions of interest. Get help from Career Services with job searching, resumes, and interviews.

Knowledge & Workplace Skills

A graduate degree in Environmental Studies 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 Master's degree in Environmental Studies can take your career in many directions. Many of our MES students choose to continue their academic inquiry with a PhD. Our Master's students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers in:

- **Conservation and management** of natural resources – forestry, energy, aggregates, minerals and metals, natural resources management
- **Environmental protection** – water quality, natural heritage planning, parks management, biodiversity conservation, wildlife management
- **Environmental sustainability** – education, monitoring, restoration, communication and public awareness, sustainable development management, policy, and legislation

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

- 4 year Honours undergraduate degree (or the equivalent). The program is suited to students with a wide range of educational backgrounds, including Environmental Studies, History, Geography, Biology, Chemistry, Life Sciences, Engineering, Law, Philosophy, and Art.
- **Grade requirements:** minimum cumulative GPA of B+.

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 following minimum scores are required: (1) TOEFL iBT: Writing (24/30); Speaking (22/30); Reading (22/30); Listening (20/30). Applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score, or (2) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score and a 7.0 for each test band), or (3) PTE Academics: 65, or (4) CAEL CE -70 (minimum overall score).

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- **Application due:** February 1st.
- **Notification of acceptance:** As soon as possible after receiving the full application.

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

What about FUNDING?

MES students receive minimum funding of \$16,000 per year for the two years of the program. This basic level of funding is pro-rated based on the duration of study. Your overall financial support will consist of graduate awards, external scholarships, internal fellowships and bursaries, teaching and research assistantships, research grants, and/or support from the School of Environmental Studies.

Apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC, and other sources. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' information on awards and scholarships.

