

Geography PhD Map

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in GEOGRAPHY?

Explore critical questions about our environment and our society as you develop research skills. Study with award-winning faculty in an interdisciplinary department that combines fundamental analysis and research with practical, applied approaches to planning and implementation.

"Geography gave me the support I needed. I was able to take a complex project and really run with it."

– Dr Sarah de Leeuw,
PhD

Why QUEEN'S?

The Department of Geography and Planning at Queen's University offers a comprehensive graduate program based on innovative research and strong collaboration between faculty and graduate students. Our specialized Earth System Science labs include GIS and remote-sensing labs equipped with a wide range of the latest software and hardware, and facilities with the latest field equipment and laboratory instrumentation. In human geography, we provide strong support for fieldwork that engages topics of public interest from the community to the national and international scale. Many of our students work on questions of global significance, including development projects in Latin



GRAD MAP FOR PhD STUDENTS →

America or Africa, ecological change in the Arctic, or the relationship between international migration and human rights. We provide a place for graduate students to learn and excel within a vibrant and supportive intellectual community.

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years): 3 courses (including GPHY 801), qualifying exam, dissertation, and oral defence.

RESEARCH Areas

- Bodies, Health, and Healthcare
- Citizenship, Identity, Justice, and Governance
- Earth Systems Science, with a strong focus on Arctic systems, forests, and resources
- Geographic Information Science
- Globalization, Development, Economies, and Sustainability
- Post-Colonialism, Indigenous Peoples, and Place
- Urban and Regional Planning
- Work, Identity, and Place (Labour Geographies)

Visit the Department of Geography and Planning 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, areas of research interest, and related experience. This is also an opportunity for you to find out if the faculty member is accepting new graduate students to supervise. Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at departmental events for prospective students.



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

Geography PhD Map

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)



YEAR I

YEAR II

YEAR III

YEAR IV

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Key priorities include forming your committee, coursework, developing your research proposal, and preparing for your qualifying 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 for supports. Attend and participate in graduate seminars in our Geography Colloquium and in other departments such as SNID, Policy Studies, and Environmental Studies.

- Complete thesis proposal and defend during Qualifying Exam.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) professional development.
- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as the Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting or the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting.
- Apply for fieldwork funding if needed.

- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the SGSPA writing camps, such as Dissertation Boot Camp.
- Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore ways to disseminate research findings. Begin discussion of potential thesis defence examiners.

- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research at conferences and departmental seminars 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.

Knowledge & Workplace Skills

A graduate degree in Geography can equip you with:

- **Research 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

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 such as Canadian Association of Geographers.

- Present your work at academic conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
- Expand your research audience through social media.
- Start a research blog or build a website.
- Consider being interviewed on the SGSPA radio show Grad Chat to talk about your research.

- Continue to present at conferences and Departmental speakers series..
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis or GRADflix competition.
- Contact the Queen's Media Centre to learn how to speak to news outlets about your work. List yourself on the Arts and Science University Research website.

- Continue to attend conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners, such as the American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, or GeoConvention.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen's Media Centre.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Join the departmental Graduate Student Council and seek ways to get 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 Club Directory.
- Use a Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, or Research Fellow position to develop your skills and experience. Consult SGSPA professional development.

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in the community.
- Start keeping an ePortfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.
- 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.

- Consider teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Investigate internships from MITACS and other sources. Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, SGSPA professional development, Mitacs, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Take the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QUIC and Four Directions.

- 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.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Volunteer with community organizations such as Sustainable Kingston, the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, or with Kingston Community Health Centres.
- Take advantage of the numerous facilities and laboratories and learn what research is occurring in the various departmental research groups.
- Consider joining professional associations like the Canadian Association of Geographers or Canadian Geophysical Union.
- Attend departmental and Geography Graduate Student Council seminar series.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- If pursuing research abroad, investigate options for support such as the Canadian Association of Geographers.
- Join groups on LinkedIn for specific careers or topics of interest and get involved in student or young researchers organizations.

- 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.
- Increase community engagement through the PhD Community Initiative.

- Expand your research network by connecting with researchers through social media, at conferences, or through LinkedIn.
- Organize panels at Canadian Association of Geographers and American Association of Geographers.
- Organize special issues in key geographic journals, such as Canadian Geographer and Hydrological Processes.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding a career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services 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 professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.

- Participate in hiring committees if possible 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.

Career Possibilities

A PhD in Geography 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
- Consulting
- International development
- Government
- Policy

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.



DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY AND
PLANNING

Kristina Fennell, Graduate Programs Coordinator
(613) 533-6000 ext. 77056
gpplgrad@queensu.ca
queensu.ca/geographyandplanning

Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree. Transcripts from all previous programs/degrees are considered.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- If English is not your 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:** January 31 (Domestic & International students), which must include all supporting documents. However, late applications may be considered on a rolling basis until all spots are filled.
- **Notification of acceptance:** March.

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

What about FUNDING?

As of the 2025-26 academic year, doctoral students in the Geography program are guaranteed minimum funding of \$21,000 per year for four years. Minimum funding levels are, however, generally higher than the guaranteed minimum. The funding package may be comprised of graduate awards and teaching assistantships. Additional funding is highly likely.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR, 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.

