

# Nursing PhD Map

## Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

### Why Graduate Studies in Nursing?

Consider a graduate degree in Nursing for all it has to offer: well-developed skills in critical thinking, writing, research and, perhaps more importantly, skills to facilitate change in today's health care system. Graduate students and their work are an important part of an ongoing knowledge creation process that provides the health care system with the necessary tools to understand phenomena using various ways of knowing. Today's job market seeks people with advanced practice skills who can critically analyze information and evidence, synthesize scholarly and public reports, create new knowledge, and lead meaningful transformation. The Nursing PhD program equips graduates with precisely these skills, preparing them to meet the demands of an evolving health care landscape.

### Why Queen's?

The School of Nursing at Queen's University offers an innovative blended delivery PhD program. Students attend three on-campus residencies in year one (September, January, and May) and complete most of their coursework online. This program equips graduates with the analytical and research skills needed to advance knowledge of clinical, theoretical, and health systems issues. Students are taught primarily in small graduate seminars, where they engage in a lively, critical examination of philosophy and evidence, and develop their own independent research. Nurtured by close mentoring relationships with faculty supervisors, students engage early and continuously in research and successfully



"I loved the collegial atmosphere provided by the caring and supportive faculty. It was at Queen's that I developed my thirst for knowledge through evidence based research." – Judeline Innocent, RN, PhD

complete the program within four years. Graduates emerge well-prepared for careers as leaders in research, clinical practice, and health care administration.

### Program Structure

PhD (4 years, full-time): coursework, comprehensive exam, thesis proposal, research, and final thesis examination.

### Research Areas

#### Practice environments

- Communication strategies and systems
- Leadership
- Models of care
- Workplace culture, structure and health

#### Populations with complex conditions

- Mental health and/or addictions
- Multimorbidity
- Optimizing function and well-being
- Outcomes monitoring

#### Health care quality

- Advancing safety
- Educational and technological innovations
- Health system service and delivery
- Risk assessment and reduction

You are required to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.

Visit the [School of Nursing website](#) to read faculty profiles and learn more about their research. When you find a faculty member with similar research interests, contact them to introduce yourself and discuss your interest in pursuing graduate studies and relevant experience.



2026-2027

# Nursing PhD Map

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)

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](https://careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps).



|                             | 1ST YEAR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2ND YEAR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 3RD YEAR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 4TH YEAR & TRANSITIONING                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Attend three 7-10-day on-campus residencies (September, January, and May).</li><li>Complete 5 courses (4 online; 1 on-campus during May residency).</li><li>Meet early with your supervisor to set expectations and discuss roles, responsibilities, program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, timelines, and any required accommodation plans.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Write your comprehensive exams.</li><li>Form your thesis committee, embark on your substantive research, and write and defend your thesis proposal.</li><li>Consider enrolling in additional electives that may benefit your research and career goals.</li><li>Explore experiential and professional development opportunities, and consider attending the PhD Seminar every other week.</li></ul>                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the <a href="#">School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) writing camps</a>, such as Dissertation on the Lake.</li><li>Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore ways to disseminate research findings.</li><li>Start thinking of potential thesis examiners.</li></ul>                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Plan date of thesis submission for examination.</li><li>Present your research at conferences or to other graduate students and faculty members, and work with your supervisor to prepare for your examination.</li><li>Review submission and examination guidelines.</li><li>Secure all necessary oral examination accommodations.</li><li>Discuss career pathways, reference letters, and publication options with your supervisor.</li></ul>                                                 |
| MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Think about audiences for your research.</li><li>Complete Course on Research Ethics (CORE).</li><li>Apply to Tri-Council, OGS, and other funding.</li><li>Attend the annual Graduate Student Research Day, the <a href="#">JBI Comprehensive Systematic Review Training Workshop</a>, and participate in biweekly Academic Series.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Attend and present at the Annual Scientific Meeting of Health Sciences Research Trainees, the Annual Graduate Student Research day, in biweekly Academic Series, through professional associations, or at topic conferences.</li><li>Expand your research audience through social media like LinkedIn, a blog or podcast.</li><li>Apply to National Training Research Programs, such as the <a href="#">Canadian Frailty Network</a>, or <a href="#">TUTOR-PHC</a>.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to present at conferences.</li><li>Consider participating in the <a href="#">3 Minute Thesis (3MT)</a> or <a href="#">GRADflix</a> competition.</li><li>Contact <a href="#">Queen's Media Relations</a> for guidance on speaking to news outlets about your work. Check out the <a href="#">Nursing and Health Research webpage</a>.</li><li>Attend and present at the Annual Graduate Student Research Day.</li></ul>                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Keep attending conferences and connecting with scholars in your field, and with community partners.</li><li>Continue public outreach through social media and <a href="#">Queen's Media Relations</a>.</li><li>Attend and present at the Annual Student Nursing Research Day.</li><li>Consider being interviewed on the <a href="#">SGSPA radio show Grad Chat</a> to talk about your research.</li></ul>                                                                                      |
| BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the Associate Director (Graduate Nursing Programs) for tips on getting involved.</li><li>Consider positions in student services, the <a href="#">SGPS</a>, or media outlets like the <a href="#">Queen's Journal</a>, <a href="#">CFRC</a>, and the <a href="#">SGSPA Blog</a>. Look in the <a href="#">AMS Clubs Directory</a>.</li></ul>                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in the community.</li><li>Create an eportfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.</li><li>For help with teaching, get support from the <a href="#">Centre for Teaching and Learning</a>. Enrol in <a href="#">SGS902</a> or the <a href="#">PUTL Certificate</a> for more professional development.</li></ul>                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Begin teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.</li><li>Find opportunities for extra training through <a href="#">CTL</a>, <a href="#">SGSPA professional development</a>, <a href="#">MITACS</a>, or other sources to boost your skills.</li><li>Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by <a href="#">Volunteering with QUIC</a> for the English Conversation program, planning social events and in the Intercultural Wellness Leaders Program</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a <a href="#">Career Services</a> workshop.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.</li><li>If pursuing research abroad or outside Kingston, investigate options such as Fulbright Scholarships.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through LinkedIn, the <a href="#">Queen's Alumni Association</a>, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a <a href="#">Career Services</a> workshop.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider joining professional associations like the <a href="#">Canadian Nurses' Association</a>.</li><li>Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in Nursing.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| LAUNCH YOUR CAREER          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Take a <a href="#">Career Services</a> career planning workshop or meet with a career educator and coach for help.</li><li>Start reading publications like <a href="#">University Affairs</a> and the <a href="#">Chronicle of Higher Education</a>. Browse non-academic labour market websites.</li><li>Find impactful work that aligns with your values using the <a href="#">Queen's Career Guide to the UN Sustainable Development Goals</a></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.</li><li>Explore different careers of interest by using LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. For more information check out <a href="#">Career Cruising</a>.</li><li>Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.</li></ul>                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Research academic careers of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.</li><li>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.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Build connections with faculty outside of your department. Pursue interviews for faculty positions and apply for post-doc fellowships and positions.</li><li>Get help from <a href="#">Career Services</a> with job searching, resumes, and interviews.</li><li>If considering jobs abroad, research possible immigration regulations. If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an <a href="#">International Student Advisor</a>.</li></ul> |

Knowledge & Workplace Skills

A graduate degree in Nursing equips you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:

- Knowledge and technical proficiency:** Apply advanced nursing knowledge and discipline-specific technical skills in complex clinical and research contexts
- Ability to effectively convey complex information** to a diverse audience
- 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**
- Capacity to work both independently and as part of a team**
- Aware of sound ethical practices** and understanding of research and cultural sensitivity
- Professionalism** in all aspects of work, research, and interactions
- Leadership:** demonstrate initiative and vision in guiding people and discussions

Career Possibilities

A PhD in Nursing 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. Graduates from the Nursing PhD program have found careers as:

- Advanced Practice Nurses
- Deans or Directors
- Healthcare Administrators
- Professors
- Research Scientists

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 use this map?

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 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 personalized 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?

Queen's offers graduate students from every discipline a close-knit intellectual community where they can learn, discover, and build lasting connections. With more than 130 graduate programs across 50+ departments and research centres, students benefit from world-class scholars, prize-winning professional development, generous funding packages, and life in the historic waterfront city of Kingston. The campus sits at the heart of Kingston, just a 10-minute walk from downtown's shops, restaurants, and waterfront, and is deeply integrated with the local community. For more on 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 Nursing or equivalent. Applicants without a Master's university degree in Nursing will be considered on an individual basis, and are strongly encouraged to contact the School of Nursing to discuss this opportunity prior to applying.
- **Grade requirements:** Minimum overall average equivalent to B+.

### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Two academic letters of reference (e.g. course professors).
- Registration, or eligibility for registration, as a registered nurse with the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)
- Statement of academic, research and professional plans.
- A copy of your curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé.
- Completion of the Doctoral Nursing Program application questions
- If English is not a first language, nor was the language of instruction in undergraduate studies, prospective students must meet English language proficiency requirements in writing, speaking, reading, and listening as part of the application process, and before final acceptance is granted, as per School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' regulations.
- Applicants are required to connect with potential supervisors prior to applying. Prospective applicants are also encouraged to identify potential supervisor(s) in your application, state why you are interested in working with this supervisor and how working with this supervisor would be a good fit for yourself and your research, and briefly outline how you could contribute to this supervisor's current research program.

### KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- **Application deadline:** February 1st
- Applications open in September for admission in the following fall term.
- **Notification of acceptance:** mid-March to early April.

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

## What about Funding?

In keeping with the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs policy, eligible full-time Ph.D. students qualify for research assistantships (RA), teaching assistantships (TA), teaching fellowships (TF), Queen's Graduate Awards (QGA), and internal awards.

We encourage all students to apply for external funding from CIHR, OGS, SSHRC, and other sources. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs' awards and scholarships.