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 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 counselling 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

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

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 him/her 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.
YEAR I
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 and Expanding Horizons for a variety of supports.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT
• Think about audiences for your research.
• Complete CRE 100 online module on research ethics if doing research regarding sensitive topics.
• Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
• Attend conferences in your field.

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 GSG Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory.
• Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY
• Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as the Literary Ruggage Kings of Kingston WritersFest, 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 SGGS.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER
• Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career counsellor for help. Check out books like So What Are You Going to Do With That? or The Academic Job Search from the Career Resource Area for advice on various career options.
• Start reading publications like University Affairs and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Browse non-academic labor market websites.
• Stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate Studies Career Week to explore your career pathways.

YEAR II
ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS
• Complete two 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.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT
• 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.

BUILD 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. Enroll in SGGS 902 or the PTL Certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY
• Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as the Literary Ruggage Kings of Kingston WritersFest, the Wolfe Island Writer's Festival.
• Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen's Connects, LinkedIn, the Queen's Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER
• Start building your teaching portfolio including examination evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
• Explore different careers of interest by using Queen's 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.

YEAR III
ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS
• 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 SGGS writing camps, such as Dissertation on the Lake, for writing help.
• Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore new ways to disseminate research findings. Learn from the Expanding Horizons publishing workshop.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT
• 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
• hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in community.
• Begin working as a tutorial leader for ENGL 100.
• Apply and prepare for a Teaching Fellowship in your fourth year.
• For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enroll in SGGS 902 or the PTL Certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY
• Consider joining professional associations like the ACQUFE, 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
• Start building your teaching portfolio including examination evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
• Explore different careers of interest by using Queen's 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.

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING
WHAT WILL I LEARN?
A graduate degree in English can equip you with:
• Knowledge and technical skills
• Effective communication skills in oral and written 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, 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

WHERE CAN I GO?
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.
• Writing
• Editing
• Publishing
• Teaching
• Law
• Civil service
• NGOs
• NPO work
• Information technologies

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

Visit careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps for the online version with links!
Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- MA degree with minimum average of B+ (77-79%), 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 School of Graduate Studies requires the following minimum scores: 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?

Minimum funding guarantee for PhD students: $20,000/year, throughout years 1-4. 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. Queen's will automatically issue a one time $10,000 award to Doctoral students who have won federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.