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 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)

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.
Use the 5 rows of the map to explore possibilities and plan for success in the five overlapping areas of career and academics. The map just offers suggestions – you don’t have to do it all! To make your own custom map, use the My Grad Map tool.

Maximize Research Impact

• 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 support. Attend and participate in graduate seminars in our Geography Colloquium and in other departments such as SGSPA, Policy Studies, and Environmental Studies.

Build Skills and Experience

• Key priorities include forming your committee, coursework, developing your research proposal, and preparing for your qualifying exam.
• 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 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.

Engage with Your Community

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

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-Geography lab internships.
• Stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Career Week to explore your career pathways.

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. The map just offers suggestions – you don’t have to do it all! To make your own custom map, use the My Grad Map tool.

What will I learn?

A graduate degree in Geography can equip you with:
• Research and technical skills
• Effective communication skills in multiple forms for different 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 write conclusions
• Creativity and innovation
• Perseverance
• Independence and experience as a collaborative professional
• Awareness, an understanding of sound ethical practices, social responsibility, responsible research, and cultural sensitivity
• Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interaction
• Leadership: initiative and vision leading people and discussion

Where can I go?

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
• 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.
Graduate Studies FAQs

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
• Statement of research interest.
• C.V. highlighting scholarly outputs and work experiences.
• 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?

Doctoral students in the Geography program are guaranteed minimum funding of $20,000 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. 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 and Postdoctoral Affairs’ information on awards and scholarships.

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 Individual Development Plan (IDP) 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.

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