Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in NEUROSCIENCE?

The multidisciplinary graduate program in Neuroscience is educating the next generation of leaders who will build on the progress in reducing the impact of neurological disorders. Top students from across North America and beyond come to the Centre to learn in a collaborative environment where they can learn from the best minds in the field. The Neuroscience graduate program is firmly rooted in research because our objective is to produce highly-trained graduates who will continue our efforts to prevent and treat neurological diseases. The program offers studies spanning the full spectrum of neuroscience research, from cellular/molecular to clinical studies.

Why QUEEN’S?

At the forefront of discovery and innovation is the Centre for Neuroscience Studies (CNS) at Queen’s University. A hub of multidisciplinary research and teaching aimed at improving the understanding of the brain, how it works and how new therapies and diagnoses can play an important role in the prevention and treatment of diseases like Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, Stroke, Obesity, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Schizophrenia, Behavioral Disorders, and Depression.

The Centre for Neuroscience Studies (CNS) welcomes applications from students from a variety of different academic backgrounds. It offers an interdisciplinary program recruiting expertise from a wide range of research areas and backgrounds, ranging from the use of cellular/molecular and genetic approaches to those that emphasize neuronal systems, whole organism and clinical studies.

“Right from the day I started at the Centre for Neuroscience Studies, it felt like family. The camaraderie and support you get is amazing.”
– Alicia Peltsch, PhD

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years, full time): Research project, seminar series, thesis, defense, and a comprehensive examination in 2nd year.

Research AREAS

The CNS has four research areas of strength in Decision Making and Adaptive Control, Mood Disorders, Neurodegeneration and Pain. There are also many other neuroscience topics studied under the umbrella of the CNS. Our research spans cellular molecular research, systems, behavioural, cognitive, and clinical applications.
2023-2024

Neuroscience PhD Map

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, completing required health and safety, oral, human research ethics training and any required coursework, developing your research proposal, and finishing part 1 of your PhD thesis form.

- Priorities include pursing research, completing your comprehensive exam, and writing your Annual Report.

- Find your way through the academic process with the help of workshops offered through the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs.

YEAR I

YEAR II

YEAR III

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Complete CORE online module on research ethics if doing research regarding sensitive topics.

- Apply to CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, Heart and Stroke Foundation, and other funding.

- Attend or present at a local, national, or international research conference in your field of expertise.

- Present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.

- Expand your research audience through social media.

- Apply for the Graduate Dean's Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.

YEAR IV

YEAR V

YEAR VI

YEAR VII

YEAR VIII

YEAR IX

YEAR X

YEAR XI

YEAR XII

YEAR XIII

YEAR XIV

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Serve on departmental, faculty, or university committees.

- Consider positions in student services, the SGSPA, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal, CFRC, and the SGSPA Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs-Directory.

- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in community.

- Start keeping an eportfolio of your skills, experiences, and competencies.

- For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

YEAR III

YEAR IV

YEAR V

YEAR VI

YEAR VII

YEAR VIII

YEAR IX

YEAR X

YEAR XI

YEAR XII

YEAR XIII

YEAR XIV

YEAR XV

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus.

- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as the Neuroscience Program, SGSPA, or various volunteer sites.

- Attend the seminar series put on by the Centre for Neuroscience Studies.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen’s Graduate Network on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

- Consider signing up for the PhD-Community Initiative program run by the SGSPA.

YEAR IV

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YEAR VI

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YEAR VIII

YEAR IX

YEAR X

YEAR XI

YEAR XII

YEAR XIII

YEAR XIV

YEAR XV

YEAR XVI

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services workshop or meet with a career educator and coach for help.


- Stay on the lookout for special events like School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Career Week to explore your career pathways.

- Start building your teaching portfolio including student 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 Coaching.

- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.

- Participate in hiring committees 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.

- 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.

YEAR III

YEAR IV

YEAR V

YEAR VI

YEAR VII

YEAR VIII

YEAR IX

YEAR X

YEAR XI

YEAR XII

YEAR XIII

YEAR XIV

YEAR XV

YEAR XVI

YEAR XVII

WHERE CAN I GO?

A PhD in Neuroscience can take you 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.

- Medical school
- Neurotech Industry
- Outreach education
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Post-doctoral study or academia
- Scientific writing

- Time taking to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.
Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
• A Master's degree in Neuroscience, or in a field with a strong neuroscience and research component.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
• Statement of Interest.
• 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: To be eligible for internal awards, applications must be submitted by February 1st. Applications received after the deadline will be accepted based on supervisor availability.

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

What about FUNDING?

PhD students in Neurosciences are offered a minimum funding of $23,000 per year. As part of the minimum funding package, you may serve as a Teaching Assistant, but it is not guaranteed. The Centre for Neuroscience offers numerous academic awards. Applicants to the Centre for Neuroscience program with external funding awards will have a greater opportunity of being accepted to the program.

Apply for external funding from OGS, CIHR/NSERC, and other sources. Queen's will automatically issue a one time $5,000 top-up to Master's winners of federal government tri-council awards. See the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs information on awards and scholarships for more.

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