Why GRADUATE STUDIES in ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES?

The Earth's environment is stressed, and the search for solutions is anything but simple. Requiring an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving and education, our program emphasizes the diverse contributions of the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences to understand and solve environmental problems.

The PhD program meets a growing student demand for post-graduate training relevant to environmental careers in industry, government, and non-governmental organizations. It responds to a strong market in Canada for professionals with environmentally related skills.

Why QUEEN'S?

The PhD program at Queen's University provides graduate level training in the field of Environmental Sustainability by practicing an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the long-term dynamics, impacts and management of environmental change, the connections between today's decisions and tomorrow's wellbeing, and the strong dependence of human progress on environmental quality.

This program provides opportunities for joint projects with many disciplines at Queen's and RMC, government agencies and partnerships with community organizations.

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years): seminars, original interdisciplinary research, readings, comprehensive examination, thesis, formal defense.

RESEARCH Areas

- Environmental Chemistry & Toxicology: Analysis of chemicals, their pathways and fates in the environment, their effects on plants, animals, and humans, and remediation options.
- Ecosystem & Human Health: Application of a systems approach to understanding the impact of human activities on climate change, biodiversity, ecosystem functions and human health.
- Society, Culture & Economic Sustainability: Finding solutions to environmental problems and sustainable living involving the investigation of cultural, social and economic systems.
- Past projects have involved: land-use planning, governance, social justice, Indigenous studies, activism, and environmental philosophy

Visit the School of Environmental Studies 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. Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at departmental events for prospective students. We encourage you to identify a research area of interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.
Environmental Studies PhD Map

**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Key priorities include forming your committee, coursework, field exams, and language 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.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as ENSC 897: Seminars in Environmental Studies.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- Complete CORE online module on research ethics if doing research regarding sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, or other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field, such as Water Initiative for the Future (WatIF) or Queen’s Sustainability Conference.
- Use the PhD-Community Initiative to develop leadership and other professional skills and engage in a multi-disciplinary project that serves the greater community.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the school Graduate Chair about getting 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 Clubs Directory.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Consider volunteering with student groups and initiatives for sustainability.
- Use the PhD-Community Initiative to develop leadership and other professional skills and engage in a multi-disciplinary project that serves the greater community.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Finding a career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Careers Services workshop or meet with a Career Counsellor for help.
- Check out books like So What Are You Going to Do With That? for advice on various career options.
- Start reading publications like University Affairs and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Browse non-academic labour website.
- Stay on the lookout for special events like School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Career Week to explore your career pathways.

**YEAR I**

- Key priorities include forming your committee, coursework, field exams, and language 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.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as ENSC 897: Seminars in Environmental Studies.

**YEAR II**

- Priorities include completing your comprehensive examination, pursuing substantive research, and writing your research proposal.
- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development workshops.

**YEAR III**

- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the SGSPA writing camps, such as Dissertation on the Cake.
- Attend the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs professional development publishing workshop.
- Take additional training through the Analytical Research Unit (ARU) on chemical analysis techniques or contamination remediation.
- Begin discussion of potential thesis defence examiners.

**YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING**

- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research to graduate students and faculty at conferences and work with supervisor to prepare for defence.
- Review submission and examination guidelines.
- Secure necessary oral defence accommodations.

**WHAT WILL I LEARN?**

A graduate degree in Environmental Studies can equip you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:

- Knowledge 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 academic life
- Leadership: initiative and vision leading people and discussion

WHERE CAN I GO?

A PhD in Environmental Studies 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 nonprofit.

- Environmental protection – water quality, natural heritage planning, parks management, biodiversity conservation, wildlife management
- Conservation and management of natural resources – forestry, energy, aggregates, minerals and metals, natural resource management
- Environmental sustainability – education, monitoring, restoration, communication and public awareness, sustainable development management, policy and legislation

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 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.

Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- A Master’s degree.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- 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: February 1st.
- Notification of acceptance: As soon as possible after receiving the full application.

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

What about FUNDING?

The minimum funding guarantee for Environmental Studies PhD students is $20,000 per year, throughout years 1-4. This basic level of funding is pro-rated based on the duration of study. Your overall financial support will consist of graduate awards, external scholarships, internal fellowships and bursaries, teaching and research assistantships, research grants and/or support from the School of Environmental Studies.

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 and Postdoctoral Affairs’ information on awards and scholarships.