

# Geography PhD Map

*Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies*



GRAD MAP FOR PhD STUDENTS →

## 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

- Work, Identity, and Place (Labour Geographies)
- Globalization, Development, Economies, and Sustainability
- Bodies, Health, and Healthcare
- Citizenship, Identity, Justice, and Governance
- Post-Colonialism, Indigenous Peoples, and Place
- Earth Systems Science, with a strong focus on Arctic systems, forests, and resources
- Geographic Information Science
- Urban and Regional Planning

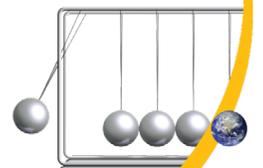
We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.

Visit the [Department of Geography and Planning 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, areas of research interest,

and related experience. This is also an opportunity for you to find out if the faculty member is accepting new graduate students to supervise. Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at departmental events for prospective students.



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### YEAR I

### YEAR II

### YEAR III

### YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

#### ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

- 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 supports. Attend and participate in graduate seminars in our Geography Colloquium and in other departments such as SNID, Policy Studies, and Environmental Studies.

- Complete thesis proposal and defend during Qualifying Exam.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of [Expanding Horizons](#).
- 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.

- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the [SGS writing camps](#), such as Dissertation Boot Camp.
- Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore ways to disseminate research findings. Learn from the Expanding Horizons publishing workshop. Begin discussion of potential thesis defence examiners.

- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research at conferences and departmental seminars and work with supervisor to prepare for defence.
- Review submission and examination guidelines.
- Secure necessary oral defence accommodations.
- Discuss career pathways, references letters, and publication options with your supervisor.

#### WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A graduate degree in Geography can equip you with:

- **Research 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 interactions
- **Leadership:** initiative and vision leading people and discussion

#### MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete CORE online module on research ethics if doing research regarding sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field such as [Canadian Association of Geographers](#).

- Present your work at academic conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
- Expand your research audience through social media.
- Start a research blog or build a website.
- Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies for a [Grad Chat](#) to discuss your research interests.

- Continue to present at conferences and Departmental speakers series..
- Consider participating in the [3 Minute Thesis](#) competition.
- Contact the [Queen's Media Centre](#) to learn how to speak to news outlets about your work. List yourself on the [Arts and Science University Research website](#).

- Continue to attend conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners, such as the [American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting](#), or [GeoConvention](#).
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen's Media Centre.

#### BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Join the departmental Graduate Student Council and seek ways to get involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen's Journal, CFRC, and the SGS Blog. Look in the [AMS Club Directory](#).
- Use a Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, or Research Fellow position to develop your skills and experience. Consult [Expanding Horizons](#).

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in the community.
- Start keeping an ePortfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- For help with teaching, get support from the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#). Enroll in SG5902 or the PUTL Certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

- Consider teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Investigate internships from [MITACS](#) and other sources. Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, Mitacs, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Take the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QUIC.

- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

#### ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Volunteer with community organizations such as [Sustainable Kingston](#), the [Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve](#), or with [Kingston Community Health Centres](#).
- Take advantage of the numerous facilities and laboratories and learn what research is occurring in the various departmental research groups.
- Consider joining professional associations like the [Canadian Association of Geographers](#) or [Canadian Geophysical Union](#)
- Attend departmental and Geography Graduate Student Council seminar series.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- If pursuing research abroad, investigate options for support such as the [Canadian Association of Geographers](#).
- Join groups on LinkedIn for specific careers or topics of interest.
- Get involved in student or young researchers organizations (e.g. through the [Canadian Geophysical Union](#), [Canadian Association of Geographers](#), and the [Association of Polar Early Career Scientists](#)).

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through [Queens Connects](#) on LinkedIn, the [Queen's Alumni Association](#), professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Increase community engagement through the [PhD Community Initiative](#).

- Expand your research network by connecting with researchers through social media, at conferences, or through LinkedIn.
- Organize panels at [Canadian Association of Geographers](#) and [American Association of Geographers](#).
- Organize special issues in key geographic journals, such as [Canadian Geographer](#) and [Hydrological Processes](#).

#### LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding a career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a [Career Services 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 labour market websites.
- Stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate Studies 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 [Queens Connects](#) on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni. For more information check out [Career Cruising](#).
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.

- Participate in hiring committees if possible 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.
- Apply to jobs or make plans for other adventures. 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](#).

#### 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
- Government
- 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.

\* This map is intended to provide suggestions for activities and careers, but everyone's abilities, experiences, and constraints are different. Build your own Grad Map using our online [My Grad Map](#) tool.

# 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 SGS 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 [SGS 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

- 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' information on [awards and scholarships](#).



**Queen's**  
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