**Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies**

**Public Health Sciences PhD Map**

**Why GRADUATE STUDIES in PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES?**

Graduate students and their work are an important part of ongoing research that helps us understand natural, cultural, imaginative, social, technological and health phenomena. In the PhD program in Public Health Sciences, students gain skills to communicate scientifically, describe trends and patterns of health and illness, critically review scientific literature, collect and analyze data, and more.

The goal of the Public Health Sciences PhD program is to graduate individuals who are capable of functioning as independent investigators within academic (or equivalent) research positions, or who can occupy positions of professional leadership in public health or health-related agencies where research is an important function.

The PhD program offers a general track or has specializations in Epidemiology or Biostatistics. Students in the general track study diverse public health topics including those related to health economics, health policy, global and population health, among others. These students collect and use a variety of types of data and research approaches depending on their own interests and the expertise of their Supervisor(s).

Students in the Epidemiology specialization will study advanced epidemiologic methods and biostatistics and conduct a thesis using those methods. Research topics and methods covered by this specialization include statistical methodological research in the context of public health, biomedical, or clinical studies.

**Why QUEEN’S?**

At Queen’s, we have world class researchers and instructors who provide exceptional learning and mentorship for doctoral students on an historic campus in the heart of Kingston. The relatively small size of our program allows students to get to know faculty members and each other very well. PhD students take on leadership roles in the Department frequently acting as Teaching Assistants for graduate level courses and getting involved in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Kingston is a wonderful city to live, learn and play in right on the shores of Lake Ontario. There are many housing options for graduate students and upper year students who are always willing to share their knowledge and expertise!

**Research AREAS**

There are many research areas including:

- Cancer Epidemiology
- Population Health
- Health Services & Policy Research
- Clinical Epidemiology
- Health Equity
- Global Health
- Health Economics
- Physical Activity Epidemiology
- Biostatistics
- Mental Health
- And more!

Visit PhD Public Health Sciences to learn about faculty members who are accepting students and their 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.

**Program STRUCTURE**

PhD (4 years) with an option to remain in a general track or specialize in Epidemiology or Biostatistics. Each student completes at least 4 courses, comprehensive exam, and dissertation.
2021-2022

Public Health Sciences

PhD Map

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

YEAR I

• Key priorities include completing required health and safety, animal, human research ethics training, any required coursework, and your comprehensive 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 a variety of supports.
• Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion.
• Priorities include completing your research outline and proposal, and pursuing research.
• Check out Expanding Horizons workshops and SGS website for guidance through the academic process.
• Complete AODA training in accessible customer service.
• Think about audiences for your research.
• Apply to CIRH, NSERC, OGS, and other funding.
• Attend conferences in your field.

YEAR II

• Continue to research and write your dissertation. Check out the SGS Dissertation Boot Camp.
• Consider publishing elements of your research. Learn from the Expanding Horizons workshops.
• Use conference presentations to create and refine dissertation material.
• Start to present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
• Expand your research audience through social media.
• If appropriate, apply for the Dean’s Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.
• Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, MITACS, or other sources to boost your skills.
• Investigate internships from MITACS and other sources.
• Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the QUIC and Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre’s Training Certificate.

YEAR III

• Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies for a Grad Chat or consider putting an article in The Conversation.
• Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Careers Services workshop.
• Continue participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
• Find opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, MITACS, or other sources to boost your skills.
• Investigate internships from MITACS and other sources.
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YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

• Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
• Present your research to graduate students and faculty or at conferences 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.
• Continue attending conferences and connecting with other scholars and community partners.
• Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre.
• Consider publishing elements of your research. Learn from the Expanding Horizons workshops.
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MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

• Perform 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. Enroll in the PUTI certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

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 Queen’s Cancer Research Institute or KFL&A Public Health.
• 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.
• Consider signing up for the PhD-Community Initiative program run by the SGS.
• Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen’s Connects on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Careers Services workshop.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

• Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the SGS for tips on getting involved.
• Consider positions in student services, the SGS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal, CFRC and the SGS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory.
• Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

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• Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen’s Connects on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Careers Services workshop.
• Consider joining one of the many professional associations like the Canadian Public Health Association, the Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics or the Canadian Cancer Trials Group.
• Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics.

WHERE CAN I GO?

A PhD in Public Health Sciences can take your career in many directions. In Canada about 40% of all PhDs will work in post-secondary education—the rest will work in industry, government, or non-profits.

• Health Care (Hospital clinical labs)
• Academic labs
• Research labs
• Scientific supply companies
• Administration in academic, health care or government settings
• Teaching positions in academic institutions or the private sector
• Technical positions in academic institutions or the private sector
• Time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you make a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A graduate degree in Public Health Sciences 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, prioritization, and synthesis of 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

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Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- Master's degree in health sciences, epidemiology, biostatistics, statistics, health promotion, health geography, economics or a related discipline.
- Demonstrated research competency, usually through a research-based thesis or a research project with peer-reviewed publication.
- **Grade requirements:** First-class academic standing (equivalent GPA of 3.7 or 80%).

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Statement of Interest (including area of research and potential supervisor).
- Transcripts and CV.
- Applicants with non-thesis based Master’s training may include published, in-press or under review research papers as documentation of academic research experience.
- 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:** January 31. Late applications will be considered until all positions are filled.
- Application review begins in mid-February.

Before you start your application, please review the [PHS website](https://phs.queensu.ca) and reach out to potential supervisors. Please also be familiar with the [Graduate studies application process](https://phs.queensu.ca/graduate-studies/admissions/). 

What about FUNDING?

The department guarantees a minimum funding package of $18,000 per year for every PhD student. There are also opportunities to compete for internal/external awards and take on paid research or teaching assistantships. For more information on internal and external awards please see the School of Graduate Studies' information on [awards and scholarships](https://phs.queensu.ca/graduate-studies/financial-aid/).