Why GRADUATE STUDIES in SOCIOLOGY?

The MA program in Sociology at Queen's provides advanced training for students seeking to critically examine the social world at every level, and to engage with the formation of pathways towards social change. Students are well supported to develop their theoretical knowledge and methodological skills through a combination of well-designed courses and research opportunities under expert supervision. The department is particularly well known for its strengths in criminology and the law; media, information, and surveillance; power, inequalities, and social justice.

The MA program equips students with the essential research skills in analytic thinking and data analysis, alongside communication and presentational competencies that are highly valuable for a range of careers. Our graduates often pursue doctoral research throughout Canada and beyond, or establish careers in law, media, education, development, marketing, social work, corrections, policy analysis and research. Graduates of the MA program remark on the intimate, supportive, and cohesive culture of the department, with small classes and close supervision.

Why QUEEN’S?

Our faculty are recognized as academic leaders in their fields, conducting a wide range of funded research programs that enhance the classroom experience and provide opportunities for collaborative research and training. In addition to the benefits of a small department where students receive close supervision and support from faculty and staff, Sociology at Queen's offers an annual graduate student conference where MA students can develop their organizational skills and present their research within a collegial and collaborative environment with faculty and other graduate students.

The Surveillance Studies Centre is a multi-disciplinary international research centre affiliated with the department. It offers several speakers series, research seminars and workshops that facilitate collaboration between faculty and students across departments and faculties. Its current research programs focus on the social, political and ethical implications of big data surveillance, ‘smart’ cities, wearable technologies and drones.

Our students also have unique opportunities to engage with local institutions, communities and services. Because of the significance that Kingston holds in the federal penal system, there are many local associations concerned with prison transitions and reform. Some of our graduate’s work with the Elizabeth Frye Society, while others work within local prisons, or with local shelters for women. More broadly, graduate students at Queen’s gain the benefits of a close-knit intellectual community, competitive funding packages, and a lively city full of stimulating events, experiences and opportunities.

“Choosing the MA program in the Department of Sociology at Queen’s was a great decision. Faculty and staff make an exceptional effort to foster a sense of community both inside and outside the classroom, as well as support students individually in their coursework and research.”

– Joe Stieb, MA Candidate

Program STRUCTURE

The 2-year Master of Sociology offers 2 methods of completion:

• Method I (Thesis): Students are required to complete four courses and write a thesis of 25,000 words and defend it before a committee of three examiners.

• Method II (Essay): Students are required to complete six courses and write an extended essay of between 10,000-12,000 words.

RESEARCH Areas/Streams

• Criminology and Law
• Power, Inequalities and Social Justice
• Media, Information and Surveillance

Visit the Sociology Department website to read faculty profiles and learn more about faculty members’ research areas.
2021-2022

Sociology

MA Map *

MASTER OF ARTS (MA)

GETTING STARTED

INTERMEDIATE STAGE

WRAPPING UP

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

• Start with key priorities like developing your relationship with your supervisor, forming your committee, and doing your coursework.
• Consider how your course papers can contribute to your MA essay or thesis.
• Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and Expanding Horizons professional development workshops, the department Grad Chair and the SGS website.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

• Start to think about the audiences for your research.
• If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and OGS funding.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

• Consider positions in student services, the SGPS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journals, CFRC, and the SGS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory for more ideas.
• Serve on departmental or university committees. Talk to the Departmental Committee graduate student representative for tips on getting involved.
• Check out professional development workshops from Expanding Horizons.

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 Elizabeth Frye Society and the Boys and Girls Club.
• Follow the Sociology Department on Twitter.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

• Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a Career Services workshop or meeting with a career counsellor. 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 Student Career Week to explore your career pathways. Check admission test deadlines if needed for further studies.

• Start keeping an ePortfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
• Use a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant position to develop your research or teaching skills.
• For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enroll in SG5962 or the PUTL Certificate for more professional development in teaching.

• Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
• Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate.
• If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an International Student Advisor.

• 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.
• Investigate internships from MITACS and other sources.
• Check out opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, MITACS, or other sources to boost your skills.

• Attend or present at the Sociology Graduate Student Conference.
• Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
• Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter or a blog.

• Complete your coursework; begin to research and write your essay or thesis.
• Attend a major conference in your field, such as the Canadian Sociological Association Congress, The American Criminology Society Annual Meeting, the Society for Social Studies of Science Annual Meeting, American Sociological Association, and Association of Internat Researches.

• Complete your essay or thesis.
• Consider publication options for your research.
• Attend a major conference in your field, such as the Canadian Sociological Association Congress, The American Criminology Society Annual Meeting, the Society for Social Studies of Science Annual Meeting, American Sociological Association, and Association of Internat Researches.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

Knowledge and technical skills including:
• Qualitative/Quantitative research techniques to analyze social issues.
• Critical thinking to evaluate social problems and interactions by challenging common assumptions.
• Research design to select and effectively deploy appropriate research designs for examining and interpreting a variety of social phenomena.
• Program Evaluation to collect, evaluate and analyse information concerning the effectiveness of a wide range of projects and programs.
• Organizing critical debate and discussion to define, interpret and explain multifaceted current issues.
• Policy Analysis to consider the impact and unintended consequences of policies, and consider the role of social differentiation in creating conflict, social movements and social protest around policies.
• User research to understand individual and group understandings, behaviors, needs, and motivations through observation techniques, task analysis, and other feedback methodologies.

Essential transferable skills including:
• Communication of complex information and arguments about social issues in appropriate formats and a range of media.
• Teamwork/Leadership: working creatively by cooperating with others in a manner which recognizes diverse views, values and cultural positions.
• Information management: prioritizing, organizing and synthesizing large amounts of information.
• Time management: meet deadlines despite competing demands.
• Project management: developing ideas, gathering information, analyzing and appraising findings, drawing and acting on conclusions.
• Creativity and innovation to address complex, multifaceted challenges.
• Persistence to work through challenges to achieve desired outcome.
• Awareness and understanding of sound ethical practices, social responsibility, responsible research and cultural sensitivity.
• Independence and experience as a collaborative worker.
• Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interactions.

WHERE CAN I GO?

Almost half of the Master’s graduates have chosen to pursue doctoral studies. Those who have not continued on to doctoral work have secured challenging positions commensurate with their advanced level skills as sociologist in:
• Research
• Policy Analysis
• Policing Analysis
• Policing and Corrections
• Marketing
• Social Justice Advocacy
• Health Care Administration
• Teaching
• Taking time to explore career options, build experience, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation. Visit the Department of Sociology website to find out more about where the degree can take you.

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* 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.
Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- BA Honours undergraduate degree in Sociology or equivalent with a minimum B+ standing.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Writing Sample
- Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)
- Statement of Interest

KEY DATES & DEADLINES
- Application due: January 15th
- Notification of acceptance: Late February

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

What about FUNDING?

All eligible full-time graduate students who request funding (financial support) as part of their initial application can expect to receive a funding offer to help them with the costs associated with their graduate studies in the Department of Sociology.

The minimum guaranteed funding package for MA students is $16,000 per year for two years. It is important to note that they are encouraged to apply for all major external and internal (where appropriate) scholarships for which they are eligible.

Funding packages may consist of any or a combination of the following: scholarships, fellowships, external awards, internal awards, teaching assistantships or research assistantships. The Department also offers funding for participation in conferences.

Apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC/NSERC and other sources. Queen's will automatically issue a one time $5,000 award to incoming Masters students who have won federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies' information on awards and scholarships and the Department of Sociology funding information.

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.

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.

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