Discover Kingston

University’s about Kingston’s history and culture, see Queen’s with its shopping, dining and waterfront. For more of the city, only a 10-minute walk to downtown community, with the campus nestled in the core studies. Queen’s is an integral part of the Kingston offers a wonderful environment for graduate funding packages and life in the affordable, professional development opportunities, excellent With the world's best scholars, prize-winning in Queen's more than 130 graduate programs 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 in Cultural Studies or a related discipline from a recognized university.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
• Writing sample.
• Statement of Interest.
• Video documentation of relevant work (if applicable).
• C.V.
• Demonstrated proficiency in a language other than English (if needed).
• If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the English language proficiency requirements in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The School of Graduate Studies requires the following minimum scores: TOEFL (paper-based): 550, (internet): TOEFL iBT: Writing (23/30), Speaking (20/30), Reading (20/30), Listening (20/30), for a total of 88/120 (applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score), or (3) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score), or (4) PTE Academic: 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES
• Application due: January 31st to qualify for funding.
• Notification of acceptance: March 31st.

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

What about FUNDING?

The minimum funding guarantee for Cultural Studies PhD students is $20,000 per year, throughout years 1-4. The funding package may be comprised of Queen’s Graduate Awards, Teaching Assistantships, and named internal Fellowships.

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 incoming PhD students who have an overall GPA of 3.5 or better and demonstrate a strong research potential. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in CULTURAL STUDIES?

Cultural Studies is graduate school reinvented for the 21st century. We are a self-governing, interdisciplinary graduate program for people who want to develop the tools to critically understand the world, and change it. The complexity of contemporary culture means that more than ever before society needs people trained in multiple disciplines, theories and practices. We work with communities throughout and beyond the university to create new forms and methods of research that could not be done in traditional departments. Our students write plays and curate exhibitions. They travel to Argentina, China and Turkey for their research. They win the highest academic accolades, including Fulbright and Vanier scholarships. What unites all these diverse research agendas is our passion for social justice. We believe that all our research should in some way be capable of addressing real world problems. Students work with indigenous peoples, artists, students, prisoners and activist groups to bring about social transformation. They also conduct artistic research-creation, and present their work in a variety of media. When they graduate, our students have superior intellectual tools and practical skills that will last them a lifetime outside of the university.

Why QUEEN’S?

Comprising over 100 students and over 90 distinguished faculty from 22 disciplines, Cultural Studies is an innovative and growing interdisciplinary research program. Our programs include opportunities for cultural production and community-activist fieldwork as options alongside traditional academic research. We are also committed to a diversity of students and faculty and to the global expertise that they bring to the cultural and academic fields. Students participate equally with faculty in the program’s governance.

RESEARCH Areas
• African Studies
• Asian Studies
• Critical Canadian Studies
• Critical Race Theory
• Environmental Humanities
• Europe and the Mediterranean
• Film, Media and Visual Arts
• Gender and Queer Theory
• Indigenous Arts and Politics
• Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
• Law, Prison, and Justice Studies
• Museum Studies and Curation
• Music and Sound Art
• Postcolonialism and the Global South
• Religion, Culture and Spirituality
• Science, Technology and Society
• Theatre and Performance
• Urban Studies

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

- Key priorities in the fall and winter include completing your coursework, and attending the Cultural Studies Colloquium (CUST 802/902).
- Meet early with your supervisor to set expectations and discuss roles, responsibilities, program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, and timelines.
- In the summer, form your supervisory committee and prepare for your qualifying exams.
- Consider studying abroad with an exchange partner.
- Complete your qualifying exams in the fall. Write and defend your thesis or project proposal in the winter. Embark on your substantive research in the summer.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of Expanding Horizons or Student Academic Success Services.
- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion.
- Complete the annual Report Form for your supervisor.
- 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.
- Archive your thesis or project on QSPACE.
- Discuss career pathways, references letters, and publication options with your supervisor.
- Consider putting an article in The Conversation.

Maximize research impact

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete CORE online module on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, or other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.
- Continue to present at conferences.
- Continue attending conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre.
- Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies for a Grad Chat to discuss your research interests.
- Begin teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- 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.
- Continue to attend conferences and connect with alumni profiles.
- Build connections with faculty outside of your career in many directions. In Canada, less than 40% of all PhDs will work in post-secondary education, or at conferences and work with supervisor to prepare for defence.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre.
- Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies for a Grad Chat to discuss your research interests.
- Consider putting an article in The Conversation.

Build skills and experience

- Serve on the Cultural Studies steering committee, faculty or university committees. Talk to the student caucus 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.
- Check out the professional development workshops from Expanding Horizons and the Cultural Studies Colloquium.
- 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 Intercultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by QUC and PDSIC.
- Begin teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- 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.
- Continue to attend conferences and connect with scholars in your field and with community partners.
- Continue public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre.
- Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies for a Grad Chat to discuss your research interests.
- Consider putting an article in The Conversation.

Engage with your community

- Consider volunteering with community organizations, museums, or cultural studies groups, such as Such as Martha’s Table, or Loving Spoonful.
- Participate in the Cultural Studies Student Caucus to give input.
- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, or by organizing conferences.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen’sConnect on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Join professional associations like the Canadian Association of Cultural Studies.
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in Cultural Studies.

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 What Are You Going to Do With That? or The Academic Job Search from the Queen’s 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.
- Start building your teaching portfolio.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading alumni profiles on the SGS website, and using Queen’sConnect on LinkedIn to connect with Queen’s alumni, or find alumni in various careers through Ask an Alum. For more information check out Career Cruising.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or other opportunities related to careers of interest.
- Build connections with faculty outside of your program. 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, or interviews.
- If considering jobs abroad, research possible immigration regulations.

Where can I go?

A PhD in Cultural Studies can take you down many paths:
- Academia and teaching
- Non-profit agencies
- Media
- Museums
- Galleries
- Civil Service
- Publishing houses
- Social policy agencies

Taking time to explore career options, build experiences, and network can help you have a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

What will I learn?

A graduate degree in Cultural 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 ethical sensitivity
- Professionalism in all aspects of work, research, and interactions
- Leadership initiative and vision leading people and discussion

Visit careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps for the online version with links!

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