Graduate Studies FAQs

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. You will need (1) a total TOEFL (paper-based) score of at least 600, or (2) TOEFL IBT: Writing (24/30), Speaking (22/30), Reading (22/30), 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 Academics: 65.

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. International students will be provided with an additional $5,000 per year to help offset higher tuition costs. 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, CFI, 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.

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.

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YEAR I

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 your Geography Colloquium and in other departments such as SNID, Policy Studies, and Environmental Studies.

YEAR II

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT
- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete ROMEO online modules on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRQ, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field such as Canadian Association of Geographers.

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 SGPS 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.

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 Geographical Union.
- Attend departmental and Geography Graduate Student Council Emerging Research seminar series.

YEAR III

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING
- 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.

- 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.

- Present at conferences and Emerging 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.

- 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.

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through QuinceConnects on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association professional associations, or at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Join Canadian Association of Geographers and American Association of Geographers specialty group committees.
- Increase community engagement through the PhD Community Initiative.

- Contact teaching as a departmental Teaching Fellow.
- Find opportunities for extra training through the金沙 lure, Expanding Horizons, Mitacs, or other sources to boost your skills. Investigate internships from Mitacs and other sources.
- Take the InterCultural Awareness Training Certificate hosted by OCUE and Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre.

- 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 public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre.

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

- Continue to attend conferences and connect with researchers through social media, at conferences, or through LinkedIn.
- Organize panels on the Canadian Association of Geographers or the American Association of Geographers.
- Organize special issues in key geographic journals, such as Canadian Geographer and Hydrological Processes.

- Expand your research network by connecting with researchers through social media, at conferences, or through LinkedIn.
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- 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, or 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 for advice on various career options.

YEAR V

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
- Persistence
- 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

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 make a smooth transition to the world of work after graduation.

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