**Graduate Studies FAQs**

**How do I use this map?**

Whether you are considering or have embarked on graduate studies at Queen's, use this map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. The map helps you explore possibilities, set goals and track your individual accomplishments. Everyone’s journey is different – the guide offers options for finding your way at Queen’s, and setting the foundation for your future. To make your own customized map, use the online My Grad Map tool.

**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 HABITAT 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.

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**Application FAQs**

**What do I need to know to APPLY?**

**ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**
- Honours Bachelor’s Arts & Sciences degree.
- Grade requirements: minimum upper second class standing (B+ average).

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**
- Correspond with potential supervisors (May require CV).
- 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, (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: March 1 (domestic students), February 15 (international students).
- Notification of acceptance: Students are accepted on a rolling basis as applications are reviewed.

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

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**What about FUNDING?**

MSc. students in Biology receive minimum funding of $24,300 per year for the two years of the program.

Apply for external funding from OGS, NSERC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $5,000 top-up to Masters winners of federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships or see what awards are offered through the Biology Department.

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**Biology**

**MSc Map**

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

**Why GRADUATE STUDIES in BIOLOGY?**

There is no end to the fascinating questions we can ask about how the natural world functions, from dissecting the molecular mechanisms at play in cells to understanding the complexity of interactions in the biosphere, the beauty and mystery of nature astounds. It is an incredibly exciting time to do biological research and we are learning about the natural world at a rate unprecedented in History. The remarkable power of modern research tools, from powerful gene-editing techniques to bioinformatics to ecosystem modelling, is driving exciting discoveries daily. These discoveries are made by graduate students. Regardless of your area of interest, there is something in biology for you. Questions waiting to be answered, and riddles of nature to be solved.

**Why QUEEN’S?**

The Biology Department at Queen’s is one of the largest departments on campus, comprising more than 3200 hectares of woodland, fields and lakes is a site to drive away and has excellent research facilities and living quarters.

We offer a broad and challenging program in one of the top Biology departments in the country. We have an impressive range of sophisticated infrastructure for cell biology, biochemistry, molecular biology, ecology, and evolutionary research including: a confocal microscopy suite, DNA and RNA sequencing services, aquatic research facilities, and a state-of-the-art phytotron. Our field station, comprising more than 3200 hectares of woodland, fields and lakes is a site to drive away and has excellent research facilities and living quarters.

**Program STRUCTURE**

MSc (2 years): 4 single-term courses with minimum standing of 70% in each, research thesis and defence.

_Students who show exceptional promise in their research have the option to transfer to the PhD program after one year._

**RESEARCH Areas**
- Animal Physiology
- Cell and Molecular Biology
- Ecology, Evolution and Behaviour
- Plant Sciences
- Mathematical Modeling & Bioinformatics

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

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**DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY**

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**Graduate School of Studies**

Create an impact

www.queensu.ca/sgs
**GETTING STARTED**

- Start with key priorities like developing your relationship with your supervisor, forming your committee, and doing your coursework.
- Complete WHMIS safety training.
- Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and Expanding Horizons professional development workshops, the department Grad Chair and the SGS Habitat.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- Start to think about the audiences for your research.
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for NSERC and OGS funding.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as Departmental Seminars, EEB, Limnology, and MGCR Seminars, as well as the AT Downe Lecture.
- Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter.
- Consider putting an article in The Conversation.
- 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 GS5901 or the PUTL certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.
- Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, interviews. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Check out opportunities for extra training through CTL, Expanding Horizons, MGCR, or other sources to boost your skills.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen'sConnects on LinkedIn, the Queen's Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Join professional associations like Science for Peace, and the many discipline-specific societies that host annual meetings.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Consider positions in student services, the SOPS, or media outlets like the Queen'sJournal, CFRC and the SGS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory for more ideas.
- Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the Biology Graduate Student Council for tips on getting involved.
- Check out professional development workshops from Expanding Horizons.
- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups like Let's Talk Science.
- Prepare for work or study in a multi-cultural environment by taking the QCIC and Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre's Training Certificate.
- If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an International Student Advisor.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading alumni profiles on the SGS website, and using Queenconnects on LinkedIn to connect with Queen's alumni, or find alumni in various careers through Ask an Alumn.
- If you are considering a PhD, explore programs of interest, reach out to faculty, and apply to PhD programs and external scholarships.
- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Start focusing on areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your CV or resume for potential positions of interest. Get help from Career Services with job searching, resumes, or interviews.

**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, museums, and cultural studies groups, such as the Kingston Field Naturalists.
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**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a Career Services career planning workshop or meeting with a career counselor. Check out books like So What Are You Going to Do With That? or Planning a Scientific Career in Industry. Or meet with a career counselor for more ideas.
- 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 Forum to explore your career pathways.
- Check admission test deadlines, if needed for further studies.

**INTERMEDIATE STAGE**

- Complete your coursework, begin to research and write your thesis.
- Consider publication options for your research.
- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as those hosted by the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, Society for Experimental Biology, Canadian Society of Plant Biology, or many other national and international groups that feature graduate research.
- Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies for a Grad Chat to discuss your research interests.
- Start to think about the audiences for your research.
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for NSERC and OGS funding.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
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- Join professional associations like Science for Peace, and the many discipline-specific societies that host annual meetings.

**WRAPPING UP**

- Complete and defend your thesis.
- Consider publication options for your research.
- Attend or present at a graduate conference such as those hosted by the Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, Society for Experimental Biology, Canadian Society of Plant Biology, or many other national and international groups that feature graduate research.
- Set up a meeting with the School of Graduate Studies for a Grad Chat to discuss your research interests.
- Start to think about the audiences for your research.
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for NSERC and OGS funding.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as Departmental Seminars, EEB, Limnology, and MGCR Seminars, as well as the AT Downe Lecture.
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**WHAT WILL I LEARN?**

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

**WHERE CAN I GO?**

A Master's degree in Biology can take your career in many directions. Many of our MSc students choose to continue their academic inquiry with a PhD. Our Master's students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers in:

- Academia and teaching
- Agriculture
- Pharmacy and medicine
- Environmental law, patent law
- Government research centres and organizations
- Biotechnology industries
- Wildlife conservation and environmental consulting
- 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 careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps for the online version with links!

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