Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
• MSc in Biology or direct entry from BSc for exceptional candidates.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
• Correspond with potential supervisors (May require C.V.).
• If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the English language proficiency requirements: Writing (24/30); 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.

What about FUNDING?

The minimum funding guarantee for Biology PhD students is $24,300 per year, throughout years 1-4. The funding package may be comprised of graduate awards and teaching assistantships.

Apply for external funding from OGS, NSERC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $10,000 award to incoming PhD students who have won federal government tri-council assistantships.

For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.

Why GRADUATE STUDIES IN BIOLOGY?

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 short drive away and has excellent research facilities and living quarters.

Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years): research thesis and defense. (Some courses may be required.)

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.
**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Key priorities include forming your committee, coursework, field exams, and language exams.
- Meet early with your supervisor to discuss and set expectations, roles, responsibilities, program requirements, resources, research/occupational goals, timelines, and any required accommodation plans.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars such as Departmental Seminars, EEB, Limnology, and MBEB Seminars, as well as the AI Downe Lecture.

**MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT**

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete ROMEO online module on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Apply to NSERC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.
- Consider volunteering with different community organizations. Talk to the Biology Graduate Student Council for tips on getting involved.
- Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the Biology Graduate Student Council for tips on getting involved.
- 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 groups that feature graduate research.
- Apply for the Graduate Dean’s Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in the community.
- Start keeping an eportofolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (avail in SGS900 or the PUTF certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning).
- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Consider volunteering with different community organizations such as Science Rendezvous.
- Join professional associations like Science for Peace, and the many discipline-specific societies that host annual meetings.
- Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest.
- Complete the Annual Research Progress Report (1/2).

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Start building your career portfolio including student evaluations, and seek mentorship.
- Investigate requirements for full-time jobs or other opportunities related to careers of interest.
- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Research academics of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.
- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Research academics of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.
- Start focusing on non-academic areas of interest. Start putting together your industry resume and begin your job search plan.

**YEAR I**

- Write and defend your thesis proposal.
- Embark on your substantive research.
- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion.
- Seek experiential/professional development opportunities.

**YEAR II**

- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation.
- Use conference presentations to create, discuss, and explore ways to disseminate research findings. Learn from the Expanding Horizons Publishing workshop.
- Begin discussion of potential thesis defence examiners.
- Complete the Annual Research Progress Report (1/2).

**YEAR III**

- Continue to present at conferences.
- Consider participating in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT) competition.
- Contact the Queen’s Media Centre for guidance on speaking to news outlets about your work.
- Prepare for work or studies in a multi-cultural environment by taking the QUIC and Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre’s Training Certificate.

**YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING**

- 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.
- Build connections with faculty outside of your department. Pursue interviews for faculty positions and apply for post-doc fellowships and positions.
- 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.

**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 skills
- 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 PhD in Biology 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-profit.

- Academia and teaching
- Agriculture
- Pharmacy and medicine
- Environmental law, patent law
- Government research centres and organizations
- Biotechnology industries
- Wildlife conservation and environmental consulting

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

© Career Services, Queen’s University, 2018-2019