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 page.

Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
• A Master’s degree is normally required for admission to the Ph.D. program. In certain circumstances, direct admission to the Ph.D. program is possible.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
• 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 68/120 (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 1st (To be considered for internal awards). Flexible deadline. Notification of acceptance: Pending confirmation of a supervisor.

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

What about FUNDING?
PhD students in Biomedical and Molecular Sciences are offered a minimum funding of $21,000 per year. As part of the basic funding package, you may serve as a Teaching Assistant for at least one term per year.
We encourage all students to apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a $10,000 award to incoming PhD students who have won federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.

Biomedical & Molecular Sciences PhD Map

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in BIOMEDICAL & MOLECULAR SCIENCES?
Graduate students and their work are an important part of an ongoing research process that provides the scientific community with ways of understanding fundamental biomedical and molecular processes underlying normal cellular and microbial processes, organ system function, and human disease. The faculty, staff and trainees in Biomedical and Molecular Sciences are engaged in world-class research and teaching, attracting and mentoring the best students, the finest educators, dedicated support staff, and internationally-competitive researchers. We value curiosity, creativity, commitment, and collegiality.

Why QUEEN’S?
The Biomedical and Molecular Sciences Department at Queen’s provides a cross-disciplinary environment and delivers the programs in a collaborative and integrated manner. This interdisciplinary approach gives candidates access to over 80 faculty members engaged in a broad spectrum of biomedical research, using techniques to address questions concerning single molecules, cellular/microbial function, organ-systems, and whole-animal biology.

“DBMS provides graduate trainees the opportunity to conduct novel research in a collaborative, inclusive, and close-knit environment. Faculty promote cross-disciplinary learning by ensuring students are exposed to various scientific themes and cutting edge research techniques.”
– Rylend Mulder, PhD Candidate

Program STRUCTURE
PhD (4 years, full time): Research and comprehensive exam, thesis, and oral defense.

Fields of SPECIALIZATION
• Biochemistry and Cell Biology: focuses on understanding the fundamental processes of life and human disease.
• Experimental Medicine: employs interdisciplinary methods to explore the processes responsible for both the normal and diseased state.
• Microbes, Immunity, and Inflammation: focuses on questions at the cellular and molecular level involving viral and bacterial organisms and the immune system.
• Reproduction and Development: spans clinical and basic science, with a focus on fertilization and embryo implantation, perinatal health, women’s health, and more.
• Therapeutics, Drug Development, and Human Toxicology: focuses on the effects, both beneficial and deleterious, of chemicals including drugs and environmental contaminants, on human health.

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.
**ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS**

- Key priorities include your relationship with your supervisor, completing required health and safety, animal, human research ethics training and any required coursework, and developing your research proposal.
- Meet 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.

**YEAR I**

- Prioritize completing your comprehensive examination and pursuing substantive research.
- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion.
- Find your way through the academic process with the help of Expanding Horizons and SGS Habitat.
- Complete AODA training in accessible customer service.
- Seek experiential/professional development opportunities.

**YEAR II**

- Continue to meet regularly with your supervisor, review research progress, and write your dissertation. Check out the SGS Dissertation Boot Camp or Dissertation on the Lake.
- 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.

**YEAR III**

- Plan date of thesis submission for examination.
- Present your research to graduate students and faculty at conferences and work with supervisor to prepare for defence.
- Review submission and examination guidelines.
- Secure necessary oral defence accommodations.
- Discuss career pathways, references, letters, and publication options with your supervisor.

**YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING**

- 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.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in areas of interest 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 multicultural environment by taking the QUIC and Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centres, Training Certificate.
- 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.
- Attend a major conference in your field, such as Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences Annual Meeting. There are many to choose from, so talk to your supervisor for advice on which ones would be most relevant.

**BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

- Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the graduate representatives for tips on getting involved.
- Consider positions in student services, the SGGS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal, CPCR, and the SGGS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

**ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as the Kingston General Hospital or other organizations.
- Connect to broader communities of biomedical and molecular science professionals.

**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 CIHR, NSERC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field.
- Present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
- Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter or a blog.
- Apply for the Graduate Dean’s Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.

**PROJECT OUTCOMES & TRANSITIONING**

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in community.
- Start keeping an eportfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enroll in SG950 or the PUTL certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

**LAUNCH YOUR CAREER**

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
- If pursuing research abroad or outside Kingston, investigate options for funding with your supervisor or the Program Director.
- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Use Queen’s Connects on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.
- Participate in hiring committees and attend job talks. Research academic careers of interest, craft your CV and job application materials.
- Start focusing on non-academic areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your industry resume and begin your job search plan.
- Participate in student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and public outreach through social media and the Queen’s Media Centre. Attend hiring committees and attend job talks. Research academic careers of interest, craft your CV and job application materials.
- 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.

**WHERE CAN I GO?**

A Master's degree in Biomedical & Molecular Sciences 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:

- Health Care (Hospital clinical labs)
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Academic and research labs
- Scientific supply companies
- Administration in academic, health care or government settings
- Teaching positions in academic institutions or the private sector
- Technical positions in academic institutions or the private sector
- Marketing positions in private sector

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

**WHAT WILL I LEARN?**

A graduate degree in Biomedical and Molecular Sciences can equip you with valuable and versatile skills, such as:

- Knowledge and technical skills
- Effective communication skills in multiple formats to different 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, 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

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

*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."