

# Cultural Studies PhD Map

*Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies*



GRAD MAP FOR PhD STUDENTS →

## 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.

*Cultural Studies hosts a lively community of scholars, artists, and activists with a broad array of interests and creative practices. The ability to build an international research-creation project allowed me to integrate my research fields with my practice."*

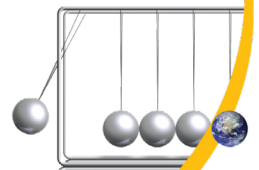
*- Zaira Zarza, PhD 2015*

Visit the [Cultural Studies Program website](#) to read [faculty profiles](#) and learn more about faculty members' research areas. When you find a faculty member with similar research interests to yours, contact him/her and tell them about your interest in graduate work, area of research interest and related experience. Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at program events for prospective students.

## Program STRUCTURE

PhD (4 years): 4 full-term courses, qualifying exams, and thesis or project.

School of  
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# Cultural Studies PhD MAP\*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)



## YEAR I

### 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.

### MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Complete [ROME online module](#) on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.
- Apply to SSHRC, OGS, and [other funding](#).
- Attend conferences in your field.

### 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 [SGPS](#), 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.

### ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

- Consider volunteering with community organizations, museums, or cultural studies groups, such as [Martha's Table](#), or [Loving Spoonful](#).
- Participate in the [Cultural Studies Student Caucus](#) to give input.

### 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 counsellor. Check out books like *So What Are You Going to do With That?* or *The Academic Job Search* from the [Career 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 Forum](#) to explore your career pathways.

## YEAR II

- 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.

- Present your work through professional associations, topic conferences or at graduate conferences such as [Undisciplined](#).
- 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](#).

- Hone skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees.
- For help with teaching, get support from the [Centre for Teaching and Learning](#). Enroll in [SGS901](#) or the [PUTL certificate](#) for more professional development in teaching and learning.
- Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.

- Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, or by organizing conferences.

- Start building your teaching portfolio.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading [alumni profiles](#) on the SGS website, and using [QueensConnects](#) 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.

## YEAR III

- 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.

- 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. List yourself on the [Arts and Science University Research website](#).

- 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 [QUIC and Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre's Training Certificate](#).

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through [QueensConnects](#) on LinkedIn, the [Queen's Alumni Association](#), professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a [Career Services workshop](#).

- Start putting together your resume and begin your job search plan.
- 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.
- If you are an international student interested in staying in Canada, consider speaking with an [International Student Advisor](#).

## YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

- 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.

- 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](#).

- 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](#).

- 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.

- 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.

### 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 **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 Cultural Studies 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
- Non-profit agencies
- Media
- Museums
- Galleries
- Civil Service
- Publishing houses
- Social policy agencies

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

# 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.

# 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, (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 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 \$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](#).



GRADUATE PROGRAM  
CULTURAL STUDIES

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