Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- Master’s degree in epidemiology or a related discipline.
- Demonstrated research competency, usually through a research-based thesis.
- Grade requirements: First-class academic standing (80%).

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Statement of Interest (including area of research and potential supervisor).
- Transcripts and CV.
- Applicants with non-thesis based Master’s training may include published, in-press or under review research papers as documentation of academic research experience.
- 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 Academic: 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES
- Application due: January 31.
- Application review begins in early March.

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

What about FUNDING?
The Epidemiology department guarantees a minimum funding of $18,000 per year. There are also opportunities for paid research assistantships.

Apply for external funding from CIHR, NSERC, OGS, the Heart & Stroke Foundation, CRCB, the Department of Defence, the American Cancer Society and other sources. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.

Why GRADUATE STUDIES in EPIDEMIOLOGY?
Graduate students and their work are an important part of an ongoing research process that provides the community with ways of understanding natural, cultural, imaginative, social and technological phenomena. Students gain skills to communicate scientifically, describe trends and patterns of disease incidence and prevalence, critically review scientific literature related to public health and epidemiology, collect and analyse data, and more.

The goal of the Epidemiology PhD program is to provide a common methodological foundation from which to conduct research in human populations across diverse health-related areas. The scope of the field of epidemiology is broad; it includes a range of content areas and methodologies. Depending upon their focus, students learn about various research designs, biostatistics, program evaluation, health economics, as well as how to design surveys or use administrative data.

Why QUEEN’S?
At Queen’s, our established strengths are in the areas of cancer, injury, obesity, disability, and mental health epidemiology as well as research in various health services contexts including public health, primary care, cancer care and critical care. We also have some emerging strengths in the areas of Northern health, Aboriginal health, and global health studies.

EPIDEMIOLOGY
Sue Preston, Graduate Assistant
(613) 533-2600
epid@queensu.ca
queensu.ca/phs

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“Combined with the intimate and supportive environment cultivated by the faculty, the Queen’s Epidemiology program is an outstanding choice for your graduate career!”
— Atif Kukaswadia, PhD

Program STRUCTURE
PhD (4 years): Course work (3 core courses), comprehensive exam, and dissertation.

Research AREAS
- Epidemiology and Population Health
- Health Services and Policy Research
- Clinical Epidemiology

GRAD MAP FOR PhD STUDENTS
Visit the Epidemiology website to learn 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 and related experience.

School of Graduate Studies
Create an impact
www.queensu.ca/sgs
Epidemiology PhD MAP *

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

YEAR I

- Key priorities include completing required health and safety, animal, human, research ethics training, any required coursework, and your comprehensive 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 a variety of supports.

YEAR II

- Set up regular meetings with your supervisor to discuss progress and obstacles to timely completion.
- Priorities include completing your research outline and proposal, and pursuing research.
- Check out the Expanding Horizons workshops and SGS Hub for guidance through the academic process.
- Complete AOCD training in accessible customer service.

YEAR III

- Continue to research and write your dissertation. Check out the SGS Dissertation Boot Camp or Dissertation on the Lake.
- Consider publishing elements of your research. Learn from the Expanding Horizons Publishing workshop.
- Use conference presentations to create and refine dissertation material.

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 defense.
- Review submission and examination guidelines.
- Secure necessary oral defence accommodations.
- Discuss career pathways, references letters, and publication options with your supervisor.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

YEAR I

- Think about audiences for your research.
- Apply to CNIP, NSERC, OGS, and other funding.
- Attend conferences in your field such as the CTEB Annual Conference.

YEAR II

- Start to present your work at graduate conferences, through professional associations, or topic conferences.
- Expand your research audience through social media.
- Apply for the Graduate Dean’s Travel Grant for Doctoral Field Research.
- Complete ROMEO online module on research ethics if doing research with living people or sensitive topics.

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.

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.
- Consider putting an article in The Conversation.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

YEAR I

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

YEAR II

- 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 S55901 or the PULTi certification for more professional development in teaching and learning.

YEAR III

- Find opportunities for extra training through CEP, 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 Quest and Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centres 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.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading books like Neuroscience Studies.
- Investigate requirements for professional positions or tips on finding work after graduation. Get help from Queen’s Alumni, or find alumni in various careers through Ask An Alum. For more information check out Career Cruising.

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

YEAR I

- Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus.
- Consider volunteering with different community organizations, such as the Queen’s Cancer Research Institute or KFL&A Public Health.
- Attend the seminar series put on by the Centre for Neuroscience Studies.

YEAR II

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

YEAR III

- Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen’s Connects or LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Career Services workshop.

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

- Consider joining one of the many professional associations like the Canadian Society for Epidemiology and Biostatistics or the Canadian Cancer Trials Group.
- Continue targeted networking with people working in careers of interest. Join groups on LinkedIn reflecting specific careers or topics of interest in epidemiology, biostatistics, health services and policy research, and clinical epidemiology.
- Start focusing on non-academic areas of interest. Craft your CV and job application materials.
- Consider publishing elements of your research. Learn from the Expanding Horizons Publishing workshop.
- Use conference presentations to create and refine dissertation material.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

YEAR I

- Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career counsellor for help. Check out books like So What Are You Going to Do With That? or Planning a Scientific Career in Industry 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

- Start building your teaching portfolio including student evaluations, and seeking mentorship.
- Explore different careers of interest by reading alumni profiles on the SGS website, and using Queen’sConnects 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

- 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.

YEAR IV & TRANSITIONING

- 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.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

A graduate degree in Epidemiology 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 social, ethical, professional roles
- Responsible research and ethical 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 Epidemiology can take your career in many directions. In Canada, about 40% of all PhDs will work in post-secondary education - the rest will work in industry, government, or non-profits.

- Health Care (Hospital clinical labs)
- Academic labs
- 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

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

* 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!