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.

“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

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

PhD MAP *

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)

YEAR I

ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS

• 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.
• 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 Expanding Horizons workshops and SGS Habitat for guidance through the academic process.
• Complete AODA training in accessible customer service.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

• Think about audiences for your research.
• Apply to CEPH, NSERC, OGS, and other funding.
• Attend conferences in your field such as CSEP’s Annual Conference.
• 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.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

• Serve on departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the SGS for tips on getting involved.
• Consider positions in student services, the SGS Blog, or media outlets like Queen’s Journal, CFIC, and the SGS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory.
• Use a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant position to develop your skills and experience.
• Acquire skills for non-academic employment by continuing involvement on committees and in community.
• Start keeping an epistolary of your skills, experiences and competencies.
• For help with teaching, get support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Enroll in S5901 or the PUTL certificate for more professional development in teaching and learning.

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, 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.
• Participate in your graduate and professional community through activities such as graduate student outreach programs, organizing conferences, and research groups.
• Do some targeted networking with people working in careers of interest, through Queen’s Connects on LinkedIn, the Queen’s Alumni Association, professional associations, and at conferences. Get help from a Careers Services workshop.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

• Finding career fit starts with knowing yourself. Take a Career Services career planning workshop or meet with a career counselor for help. Check out books like 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.
• 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’s Connects 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.
• 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.
• 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.

YEAR II

• 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 III

• 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.
• Secure necessary oral defence accommodations.
• Discuss career pathways, references letters, and publication options with your supervisor.
• 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.
• 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.

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.
• Continue focusing on non-academic areas of interest. Research organizations of interest and start putting together your industry resume and begin your job search plan.
• 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.
• Practice articulating the skills you have been developing in settings outside the university, such as casual conversation, networking, and interviews. Get help from a Careers Services workshop.
• Consider putting an article in The Conversation.

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, prioritization, and 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 interaction

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
• Take 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!

* 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.
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 Academics: 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, CBCF, 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.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

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