Why GRADUATE STUDIES in PHILOSOPHY?

The Department of Philosophy at Queen’s University has faculty working in a wide variety of fields, including political philosophy, ethics, bioethics, feminism, contemporary metaphysics and epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, continental philosophy and the history of philosophy. The Department now has an exciting new MA program in Political and Legal Thought (PLT) that involves interdisciplinary work in Philosophy, Political Studies and Law. The department’s colloquium, which meets weekly during the term, affords the opportunity for graduate students to interact with distinguished visiting scholars in a wide variety of philosophical fields.

“The Philosophy department is both intimate and vibrant – offering the benefits of smaller classes with the advantages of a diverse faculty.”
– Christine Esselmont, MA, PhD

Why QUEEN’S?

Queen’s offers high quality graduate programs that aspire to give students both a solid general education in philosophy and opportunities for specialized work on topics of students’ choosing. Queen’s Philosophy faculty is very productive in a broad range of areas of research. The small size of the graduate programs allows for individual attention and a collegial atmosphere. The MA is a 12 month program, unique amongst Canadian MA programs to have courses and a thesis component to be completed in one year.

At Queen’s, the philosophy graduate students form an active and supportive community. They organize their own colloquium series at which they present work-in-progress, and they participate in departmental reading and research groups, such as the Political Philosophy Reading Group that meets regularly throughout the year. All students are members of the Philosophy Graduate Student Association, which selects representatives to serve on various departmental committees. The historic city of Kingston, with its vibrant downtown, is a great place to live and study, and the University is proud of its attractive campus situated on beautiful Lake Ontario.

Program STRUCTURE

The 12-month Master’s of Philosophy is offered with 2 options:

- Option I: 6 term-length courses, thesis and oral defense.
- Option II (specialization in Political and Legal Thought): 6 term-length courses, four of which to be taken in the field of Political and Legal Thought, major research paper.

RESEARCH Areas

- Ethics
- Social & Political Philosophy
- Epistemology & Metaphysics
- Philosophy of Language
- Applied Ethics

We encourage you to identify an area of research interest and contact a potential supervisor before applying.

Visit the Philosophy Department 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.

The email correspondence is also an opportunity for you to find out if the faculty member is accepting new graduate students to supervise. Consider meeting with your potential supervisor at departmental events for prospective students.
GETTING STARTED

- Start with key priorities like doing your coursework, defining your thesis project, identifying your supervisor, and forming your committee.
- Consider how your course papers can contribute to your thesis or major research paper.
- Find your way through the academic process with help from departmental and expanding horizons professional development workshops, the department grad chair and the SGS Habitat.

INTERMEDIATE STAGE

- Complete your coursework, begin to research and write your thesis or major research paper.
- Attend the highly-regarded Philosophy guest speaker series, the Philosophy Colloquium.
- Consider applying to attend a Dissertation Boot Camp.

WRAPPING UP

- Complete your thesis or major research paper.
- Consider publication options for your research.
- Attend a major conference in your field, such as through the Canadian Philosophical Association.
- 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.

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT

- Start to think about the audiences for your research.
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and OGS funding.
- Expand your research audience through social media such as Twitter or a blog.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Consider positions in student services, the SGS, or media outlets like the Queen’s Journal, CFRG, and the SGS Blog. Look in the AMS Clubs Directory for more ideas.
- Serve on departmental or university committees. Talk to the Philosophy Graduate Student Association (PGSA) for tips on getting involved.
- Check out professional development workshops from expanding horizons.

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, museums, and cultural studies groups, such as the Coalition of Kingston Communities, Vision for Kingston, local food banks, Boys and Girls Club, Elizabeth Fry Society, Agnes Etherington Art Gallery, or the Marine Museum.

LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

- Finding a career that fits starts with knowing yourself. Get help by taking a Career Services workshop or meeting with a career counselor. 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 School of Graduate Studies Career Week to explore your career pathways.
- Check admission test deadlines if needed for further studies.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

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

- Knowledge and technical skills
- Effective communication skills
- Detailed understanding of large amounts of information
- Information management: prioritize, organize and synthesize
- 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 Master’s degree in Philosophy can take your career in many directions. Many of our MA students choose to continue their academic inquiry with a PhD. Our Master’s students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers in:

- Academia and teaching
- Government sector
- Journalism
- Law
- 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.
Application FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS
- Honours BA in Philosophy or equivalent.
- Grade requirements: an A- average is normally required to be competitive.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS
- Statement of Interest
- Writing sample (maximum 10-15 pages)
- 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: February 2.
- Notification of acceptance: Early March.

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

What about FUNDING?

All admitted students to the Master’s of Philosophy program are offered a funding package consisting of a grant and a teaching assistantship.

Apply for external funding from OGS, SSHRC and other sources. Queen’s will automatically issue a one time $5,000 top-up to Masters winners of federal government tri-council awards. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships, or see what awards are offered through the Philosophy Department.