Discover Kingston

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

• 4 year Bachelor or Honours degree.
• Grade requirements: minimum of B+ average, with preference for those with an A-average or better in the final two years of undergraduate study.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

• Statement of interest.
• Two letters of reference.
• Numeracy skills and the ability to solve basic math problems using algebra and geometry.
• 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 Urban and Regional Planning requires the following minimum scores: (1) TOEFL (paper-based): 600 (2) TOEFL iBT: Writing 25/30; Speaking 25/30; Reading 25/30; Listening 25/30; for a total of 100/120 (applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score), or (2) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall band score and a 7.0 for each test band), or (4) PTE Academics: 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

• Application due: January 31st (international students) / March 1st (domestic students), which must include all supporting documents. However, late applications from domestic students may be considered on a rolling basis until all spots are filled.
• Notification of acceptance: Typically 6 weeks after the application is received.

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

What about FUNDING?

There is no guaranteed funding for MPL students. However, students may apply for Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant positions in the Department of Geography and Planning. Most students also undertake a paid professional internship in the summer between first and second year. Many students typically receive Queen’s Graduate Awards, based on class standing. For more information, see the School of Graduate Studies’ information on awards and scholarships.

Why GRADUATE STUDIES IN URBAN PLANNING?

The School of Urban & Regional Planning (SURP) in the Queen’s Department of Geography and Planning emphasizes excellence in teaching, with high faculty student engagement and courses that capitalize on the considerable planning experience of our energetic faculty. This is a professional education program that also has a significant research component. It is officially recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners as a key stage toward earning the Registered Professional Planners designation.

Why QUEEN’S?

Your instructors will be a team of exceptional professors. The core faculty combine years of professional experience with strong research skills and a passion for promoting learning. Their books are used as core texts in planning courses across Canada and several have been honoured with university teaching and professional service awards.

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Program STRUCTURE

There are three methods of completion for the Master’s of Urban and Regional Planning: Method I: course work and thesis. Method II: course work and research report. Method III: course work only. Most students also complete a paid summer internship.

Areas of SPECIALIZATION

• Environmental Services
• Health & Social Planning
• Land Use & Real Estate

Supervisors are matched late in the first year, based upon the final topic of the student’s report or thesis proposal and the availability and research skills of the particular faculty members. Most students preparing a thesis or Master’s research report find a research supervisor from among the regular or adjunct faculty of the School.

Over the past five years, more than 90% of our students have obtained paid professional internships during the summer term in the middle of the MPL program. And over 90% of our graduates have obtained planning-related employment within six months of graduation. About half of SURP graduates work in the public sector, with policy agencies at the federal and provincial levels or as planners at local and regional governments.

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ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS
- Start with key priorities like developing your relationship with your Advisor, preparing your Plan of Study, and doing your required coursework.
- Identify a research topic and supervisor (Term 2), if student is undertaking report or thesis option.
- Apply for Exchange Programs and International Experience Awards (Term 2).

MAXIMIZE RESEARCH IMPACT
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and OGS funding for Year 2.
- Prepare a proposal for a conference presentation.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars in the Department of Geography and Planning.

BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE
- Serve on SURP departmental, faculty or university committees. Talk to the Queen's Graduate Association of Planning Students (QGAPS) for tips on getting involved.
- Start keeping an ePortfolio of your skills, experiences and competencies.
- Check out professional development workshops from Expanding Horizons.
- Investigate internships from SURP, Mitacs and other sources (Term 1).

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY
- Tour Kingston, Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa with SURP field trips.
- Join professional associations like the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.
- Attend your first professional conference (Term 1).
- Participate in public visioning exercises for local projects.
- Explore how you can connect with your community through experiential opportunities on- and off-campus.

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 counsellor.
- Update (or prepare) your LinkedIn page (Term 1).
- Start reading publications like Plan Canada and browse planning job web sites. Stay on the lookout for special events like Graduate Student Career Week to explore your career pathways.
- Research careers of interest. Craft your CV or Resume and job application materials (Term 2).

SUMMER
- Literature review and start research proposal.
- Complete a paid professional internship related to planning.
- 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.

TERMS 1 AND 2
- If you will be continuing graduate studies, apply for SSHRC and OGS funding for Year 2.
- Prepare a proposal for a conference presentation.
- Attend and participate in graduate seminars in the Department of Geography and Planning.

TERMS 4 AND 5
- Update your Plan of Study.
- Complete your research proposal (Term 4).
- Possible international exchange (Term 5).
- Complete your coursework, Master’s Report or Thesis.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?
A professional degree in Urban Regional Planning can equip you with:

Knowledge and technical skills:
- Human Settlements
- History and Principles of Planning
- Government and Law
- Issues in Planning and Policy-Making
- Processes of Planning and Policy-Making
- Plan and Policy Implementation

Critical Thinking:
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- Identifying patterns and trends
- Thinking at various geographic scales
- Designing scenarios and plans

Social Interaction and Leadership:
- Mediation, facilitation, negotiation, and conflict resolution
- Inclusion of diverse people and values
- Team-work and team-building
- Relations to bosses, officials and the public

Professionalism:
- Managing complexity, uncertainty and change, learning from practice, and handling ethical dilemmas

WHERE CAN I GO?
A Master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning can take your career in many directions. Our students are equipped with a strong foundation for careers such as:
- City planner
- Community development officer
- Conflict resolution mediator or negotiator
- Doctoral studies
- Economic development officer
- Environmental planner
- Geographic Information System planner
- Health planner
- Heritage coordinator
- Industrial planner
- Land use planner
- Municipal, recreation, or park planner
- Planning director or consultant
- Policy or real estate analyst
- Regional planner
- Resource development officer
- Social planner
- Transportation planner
- Urban designer

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