

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

# School of Environmental Studies Graduate Program Guide

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## *Introduction* *Application and Admissions*

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## Introduction

**T**his guide contains the policies and procedures followed by the *School of Environmental Studies* (SES) in the administration of our *Master of Environmental Studies* (MES) Graduate Program. This program is administered in conjunction with the *School of Graduate Studies*, which governs all University regulations pertaining to graduate studies at Queen's.

The goal of the MES program is to provide graduate level training in environmental sustainability and its relationship to the sustainability of human health and social, ecological, and economic systems. The theme of sustainability emphasises the long-term nature and impacts of environmental change, the connections between today's decisions and tomorrow's welfare, and the strong dependency of human well-being on environmental quality. The interdisciplinary nature of the MES program reflects this inter-dependency and will provide the capacity to appreciate the breadth of environmental issues, develop concrete solutions to environmental problems, and the ability to interact with other professionals outside a single discipline.

There are two options for the *Master of Environmental Studies*. The first is a *course-based degree* that can be completed within 3-5 semesters, and balances course material and independent study (6 half-credit courses plus a library research project). The alternative is a *research-based degree* that can be completed within 6 semesters and places a greater emphasis on original research (4 half-credit courses plus thesis research and oral defense). The program is linked to other units at Queen's through graduate courses available from relevant disciplines. It is also linked to the undergraduate program through teaching assistantships and by opening selected 4<sup>th</sup> year courses for graduate students.

Current research of School Faculty Members is related to the three elements of sustainability indicated above, including the natural sciences, health sciences, and social sciences and humanities. A variety of projects are relevant to water quality and quantity, as it relates to human and ecological health, provision of municipal and agricultural water supplies, social justice, and the detection and mitigation of water-related problems. Other projects focus on broad issues of human and ecosystem health within urban and agricultural settings in various locations around the world. Research Opportunities for new students are not limited to those of the existing faculty members. We encourage students to seek relevant projects outside the School to encourage interactions among professors, departments and faculty faculties at Queen's University.

## Administration

School Director: Brian Cumming (July 1, 2010 - )

Graduate Chair: Louise Winn (2011-12)

Graduate Program Assistant: Karen Topping

ENSC Graduate Office: Room 3132 Biosciences Complex  
Phone: (613) 533-6000 Ext. 77531  
Fax: (613) 533-6090  
Email: [Karen Topping](mailto:Karen.Topping@queensu.ca)  
Web: <http://www.queensu.ca/ensc/>

All enquiries should be directed to Karen Topping.

## Advertising:

Advertising for the program will be maintained on the School's website at <http://www.queensu.ca/ensc/>, through the School of Graduate Studies at Queen's, through print ads placed in appropriate media and distributed at annual conferences of environmental societies and Graduate Fairs.

# Applications & Admissions

## **ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS FOR ADMISSION:**

To be considered for admission to a Master of Environmental Studies degree program, students must achieve a **B+** standing in:

- an Honours Bachelor Degree in Arts or Science (4 year degree at Canadian Universities)
- a Bachelor Degree in Applied Science or Law
- a Degree of Doctor of Medicine; or
- equivalent (please enquire)

## **PROCESS:**

The process for applying to the MES program follows the general guidelines and procedures of the *School of Graduate Studies*, as amended by additional specific requirements indicated in this document.

All interested applicants make initial inquiries to the School of Environmental Studies through the Graduate Program Assistant. There are two ways to apply to graduate studies at Queen's University. The online application is the preferred method.

### ***On Line Applications***

- a) Applications are completed on-line through the *School of Graduate Studies* <http://www.queensu.ca/sgs/forstudents/prospectivestudents/thinkingofapplying.html>
- b) The process flows in the following manner:
  - i. The application is received by the Graduate Program Assistant who circulates it to Faculty members for review. Applicants are encouraged to make contact with prospective supervisors/advisors before completing the application online.

Official current transcripts are required except for Queen's students. Unofficial transcripts will be used.

Two academic references are required. If an applicant has been in the workforce for several years a professional reference is acceptable.

Information regarding the number and type of documents required is available through the online application. Reference forms are provided with the online application.

Once all documents are received, the application is marked as “**Documents Received**” by the Graduate School and the SES.

- ii. Departments are then able to refuse or accept the application.
  - iii. SGS sends a letter to the applicant, based on department's decision in #ii.
  - iv. The School of Environmental Studies sends an email and offer letter when an offer is made.
- c) Documentation Required by SES
- i. English Score – Proof of competency in English as indicated by a TOEFL score of at least 600, or at least 250 on the computer-based score, or at least 88/120 on the new TOEFL iBT (internet based TOEFL exam). Minimum scores will be Writing (24/30), Speaking (22/30), Reading 22/30, Listening (20/30). Applications that do not meet the minimum English scores will not enter the online system.
  - ii. Course List indicating courses that are relevant to the program
  - iii. Statement of Interest. This statement should provide a brief explanation of the candidate's disciplinary background, interests in the area of sustainability, and the disciplines they might be combined for their area of study.
  - iv. Names of Faculty Members contacted. This is important as we do not accept students into the MES program unless they have an advisor for the course-based program or supervisor for the research-based program already in place.
- d) The deadline for applications is **March 1** in any year for a September start in that year. Currently the online application allows for continuous intake but the MES program only provides for September intake due to the nature of the required courses in the program. Applications will be considered until August 31 if there is room left in the program and acceptance can take place up to that time if a supervisor puts forth a good case for acceptance of a student.
- e) Students meeting the March 1 application deadline and who have applied for external scholarships such as NSERC, OGS, SSHRC and CIHR if possible, will be put forward for Queen's internal fellowships and bursaries if accepted into the program.

## 2) ***By Mail***

Those unable to apply on-line can request an application package from the School of Graduate Studies.

3) ***For both application procedures,***

- a) Any and all required supporting documents, letters of reference, transcripts and test scores (if applicable) are mailed directly to the ***School of Graduate Studies, Room 405, Gordon Hall, Queen's University, Kingston Ontario Canada K7L 3N6.***
- b) Completed application packages from the SGS are received by the Graduate Program Assistant who keeps up-to-date files in the School, checks for missing documentation, and advises the candidate if additional materials are needed.
- c) Applications are circulated by the Graduate Program Assistant (GPA) to all faculty members to provide an opportunity for those with available positions for graduate students to identify applicants who fit the profile for a specific project. Faculty members can respond to the GPA and/or contact the student directly to request more information and an interview by phone or in person. Funds are available for visits to the department at the application phase.
- d) Decisions on acceptance of individual students in both streams will be made by faculty members who are prepared to support the student and their research from their grants or apply to the School of Environmental Studies for support. The Graduate Program Committee is consulted for approval before offers are made. The numbers accepted each year will depend on the number of spaces determined by the School of Graduate Studies.
- e) Information about the status of the application will be kept by the Graduate Program Assistant. Applicants can also check the online system.
- f) It is recommended that applicants investigate [Faculty and Research](#) at the School and make contact with potential supervisors/advisors before submitting an application.

**ACCEPTANCE:**

- Acceptance into the program will be based on the judgment of the Graduate Program Committee derived from a consideration of a candidate's marks, statement of interest, work history and letters of recommendation and the ability of Faculty members to supervise/advise.
- Graduate School reviews all departmental decisions of acceptance before a letter of conditional or final acceptance is sent from SGS to the applicant.
- The applicant accepts or declines the offer.
- If the offer was conditional, the applicant sends proof of meeting the condition (normally a final transcript).
- Once the condition has been met, SGS sends a letter of final acceptance.
- If the offer was unconditional, SGS sends a letter of final acceptance right away.

**REJECTION:**

- Students not accepted into the program but who show promise will be placed on a waiting list pending letters of response from students who have been offered a position.
- If a position opens up, the top student on the waiting list will be made an offer and they will be asked to respond within 30 days and to provide a satisfactory transcript of final marks by August 31.
- Students not accepted into the program under any circumstance will be notified by an e-mail from the SGS.