



University
of Glasgow

Frequently asked questions about studying Geography at the University of Glasgow

Further information:

Geography degree: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/geography/>

Geography graduates on their careers: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/ges/careersa-z/>

Why study Geography at Glasgow?: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/ges/informationforapplicants/>

Geographical & Earth Sciences at Glasgow on Twitter: @GESUofG

School of Geographical & Earth Sciences: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/ges/>

University Prospectus: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/prospectuses/>

Contact us: ges-enquiries@glasgow.ac.uk

School of Geographical & Earth Sciences

East Quadrangle, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8QQ, Scotland,
UK Tel: +44 (0)141 330 5436/4782; Fax: +44 (0)141 330 4817/4894



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What is Geography?

Geography is the study of the surface of the Earth as the site of human living and working. It considers the variability in physical and human landscapes, along with the interrelationships commonly binding them together. As such it is concerned with the interactions of the Earth's surface processes and climates and human occupation of the earth surface. Geography is a suitable programme for all those with an enquiring mind and an interest in the past, present and future of our planet in the context of human occupation and change.

Entry requirements?

The University sets the tariff for entry to Science (BSc), Social Science MA (Social Science) and Arts (MA) programmes - Geography can be studied in all three programmes. The Geography component is identical in all 3 programmes. The subjects you studied at School to gain entry, and the subjects which you will study in 1st and 2nd year along with Geography, make the difference between each programme. When applying, you should make it clear that your intention is to enter for a specific degree (for example Geography), but you will actually be accepted to do a Science degree, to do a Social Science degree or to do an Arts degree, and whichever route you chose will affect the range of subjects you take in 1st year. The entry requirements are available from the University website or the Prospectus, and are also published on the Geography Open Day Brochures. This system is a great advantage because it allows students to change their minds and switch to a different degree subject. Typically students only make their final degree subject choice towards the end of 2nd year. All enquires about admissions should be directed to the Recruitment and International Office (<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/rio/>).

How crucial is a Geography background?

It ηέλπσ το ηαπε α βαχκγρουνδ ιν Geography background is certainly helpful, but it is not essential. We make no assumptions about your background in the delivery of our courses. Students in the past have come into Geography with a very wide range of backgrounds, have graduated with excellent degrees and gone on to a great diversity of successful careers. Geography is a very broad subject so there is no way that any individual can have the “ideal” background.

Are any joint honours programmes available?

Geography offers a very wide range of joint honours programmes that span the Science, Social Science and Arts programmes including Geography and: Mathematics, Computing Science, Statistics, Celtic, Classics, Digital Media & Information Studies, Economic & Social History, Economics, French, German, History, and Archaeology amongst others. See the University Undergraduate Prospectus for the full list.

What is an adviser of studies?

On entry to the University of Glasgow you will be assigned an adviser of studies who will guide you through the academic decisions that you need to make. Your adviser will typically be based in the School appropriate for your degree choice. They will usually arrange to meet you at the start of each semester to discuss course choices and any other issues.

Can you take a year abroad?

Yes! There are many possibilities for taking a year or semester away from Glasgow. A year abroad can be very beneficial for a number of different reasons and there are several Universities where we know that there is a good match between their courses and ours. The most common destinations for a year abroad in Geography include: New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the USA. We would recommend either 2nd or 3rd year as the ideal time to take a year abroad.

Why Geography@Glasgow?

1. The west of Scotland is an ideal place to study Geography since not only do we have the spectacular landscapes of coast, river, mountain and glens on our doorsteps, we are situated in the most populous area of Scotland where a rich historical and cultural heritage mixes with a vibrant and dynamic present. Great for Geographers of all hues!
2. In national surveys, our students consistently express their satisfaction with ALL aspects of the degree programme. For example, 100% of our BSc students and 96% of all our students were satisfied overall with the Geography degree in the NSS survey (January 2013) and Geography students at Glasgow consistently report very high levels of satisfaction in national surveys of this type.

But please don't just take our word on this. Come and visit on one of the Open days and crucially, whilst here, chat to not only the staff, but also the current students who are taking our courses. Ask them what it is like doing Geography@Glasgow. You can also contact us (ges-enquiries@glasgow.ac.uk) to arrange a visit.

Where do the field trips go and how much do they cost?

Field work is an essential and highly enjoyable component of any Geography degree. All students undertake two residential field classes in their second and third year of study (currently York and Mallorca) and some of the options course at third and fourth year have field classes associated with them. The University does charge a standard fee, but this does not cover the costs of field excursions. The second year class to York costs about £350 and the third year class to Mallorca costs about £400.

Does a Glasgow degree offer good job prospects?

Geography at Glasgow is a broadly-based subject whose mode of teaching imparts a wide range of transferrable skills to our graduates including graphicacy, numeracy, literacy, and critical thought: all of which are highly sought after in the market place. That Glasgow Geography graduates have studied both physical and human processes, and the outcomes and realities of modern life, makes them ideally placed to bridge the divide between science and society, a sector where demand is high and increasing. National surveys indicate that, compared to other Universities, our graduates have excellent success in gaining employment or places in further study.

FAQ about 1st year Geography

What other courses can you take?

In first year, students spend a third of their time doing Geography courses. Timetabling does restrict the subjects available to you a little, but many other 1st year courses are compatible with doing the Geography courses. In 1st year you are required to take a total of 40 credits of Geography plus 80 credits of other courses chosen from a long list of other courses. The options open to you will vary depending on whether you are a science, a social science, or an arts student, and possible combinations are too numerous to list. Your adviser of studies will give advice on suitable combinations of subjects. First year in the University of Glasgow provides an ideal opportunity to explore other subjects.

What are “credits”?

University courses are allocated a certain “credit” weighting that simply indicates the size of each course. Each year a student is required to complete 120 credits in total, such that on completion of the 4 year degree they have acquired 480 credits. Generally in Geography our courses are either 10, 20 or 30 credits and this structure gives the programme flexibility and maximises student choice.

When are the exams?

Exams for all 1st and 2nd year courses occur at the end of each course. So 1st semester courses are examined in December and 2nd semester courses are examined in April/May. A further diet of examinations is available in August for those unable to attend the first sitting or requiring a resit.

How much continuous assessment is done?

Continuous assessment exercises make up 50% of the total assessment of the 1st year Geography courses. Over the entire Geography degree programme, the balance between continuous assessment and examination depends on the choice of options but is typically 50% exams: 50% continuous assessment, but some courses have 100% continuous assessment.

What are the entry requirements for direct entry into 2nd year Geography?

If you attain exceptional A-level or Advanced Higher grades in Geography it is possible to gain exemption from 1st year and enter directly into 2nd year Geography.

What grades do you need to progress into 2nd year Geography?

First year Geography needs to be passed at grade D3 or better. In addition to this requirement there are University rules about progression that require a certain average grade over all of the courses that you take.

Will you enjoy the course?

Comments from students who have done Geography at level 1 previously are very positive. A high proportion of 1st year Geography students choose to progress into 2nd year Geography.

FAQ about 2nd year Geography**Do the grades that you get in 1st and 2nd year count towards your final degree classification?**

No, the grades from 1st year only allow you to progress into 2nd year and grades from 1st and 2nd year constrain progression into 3rd year. Your degree classification will be solely based on your 3rd year (40% weighted) and 4th year (60% weighted) grades.

What other courses can you take?

Your grades from 1st year courses control what 2nd year courses you may enrol in. Hence if you have taken Geography in 1st year and have the required grades from this course you may take Geography 2nd year. Your choice of 2nd year courses and your performance in these courses will ultimately restrict what honours programmes you choose in 3rd year. However, in 2nd year, if you wish to you can also take additional courses from the 1st year “menu”.

What grades do you need to progress into 3rd year Geography?

If you wish to progress into the 3rd year Geography honours programme you will need to pass Level 2 Geography at C3 or better and attend the residential field class.

Where does the field class go at Easter?

The residential field class in Geography-2 is currently held in York. This is a 6-day compulsory course for anyone wishing to progress into Geography-3. The course is based around a mixture of human, physical and environmental geography components, and seeks to introduce students to a range of methods and field practices.

Does the Earth Science field class count for Geography entry and vice-versa?

No. If you wish to gain entry to 3rd year Geography you must attend the Geography field course. Entry to 3rd year Earth Science requires attendance at the Earth Science field class.

Will you enjoy the course?

Most do.

FAQ about 3rd year Geography

Do grades from 3rd year count towards the final degree classification?

Yes. The grades you obtain in 3rd year contribute 40% of the final degree classification.

What option choice is available?

Half of the Level 3 course consists of Core courses in Geography but the remaining 50% is made up of Option courses. These allow you to tailor your degree to your particular interests whether this is Physical or Human Geography or a mixture of both. Several of the Earth Science 3rd year courses are available as Options for those who prefer Physical Geography. Details of option courses will be available in the course handbook.

Why don't all options run every year?

Although some options do run every year, the majority are only offered in alternate years. This means that if an option is not available in 3rd year, students will still have the possibility of taking that option in 4th year. This alternating system frees up essential time for the lecturing staff allowing them to maintain their research profile at the cutting edge of their subject. Clearly this is also very beneficial to the teaching programmes.

When are exams held?

Most of the Geography core and option courses are examined in April/May.

Where does the field class go at Easter?

The residential field class in Geography-3 is held in Mallorca. This is a 7-day compulsory course for those wishing to graduate with an Honours Geography degree. The course is based around preparation for dissertation project work and a wide range of both physical and human topics are offered with a free student choice of topic.

Most students find the field classes the most enjoyable part of a very enjoyable degree programme.

What grades do you need to progress into 4th year Geography?

An average across the 3rd year Geography courses of D3 or better is required to progress into 4th year.

Will you enjoy the course?

The 3rd year Geography courses are typically thought to be the academically toughest of the programme. They will be challenging but students find 3rd year also one of the most enjoyable.

FAQ about 4th year Geography and careers

When are the exams held?

All 4th year courses are examined in the April/May diet. A high proportion of the 4th year is assessed by continuous assessment.

What is the dissertation?

Glasgow Geography students do an independent project called a dissertation which, although submitted in 4th year, much of the training takes place during 3rd year and on the 3rd year field class. The dissertation is a major piece of independent work that counts for 30 credits of the 120 credits needed for 4th year. It is challenging but most students greatly value the independent nature of the work and enjoy and gain from the experience. The dissertation also gives those students who wish to continue in postgraduate study a competitive edge and unique insight into research techniques.

What training in transferable skills will you receive?

Transferable skills are embedded throughout the 4 years of the degree programme. Students undertake techniques courses in IT skills, statistics, interviewing skills etc and as part of individual courses they regularly present seminars, present posters, and undertake group exercises.

Do staff within the School offer summer internships?

A variety of projects are offered each year, typically contributing to active research programmes of the staff.

Does a Glasgow Geography degree provide a good basis for further study?

Glasgow Geography students regularly obtain positions on very competitive MRes or MSc programmes or go on to study for PhD positions.

Will you enjoy the course?

Our consistent and positive feedback from surveys such as National Student Survey (NSS) would certainly suggest this.