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Geography MSci (Hons)

Geography addresses the key issues of today and tomorrow, such as climate change, water and ecosystem pollution, energy security, global economic problems, population pressure and a rapidly urbanising world. All of these factors have an impact on our daily lives, making this a rewarding and fulfilling subject to study. Here at Birmingham we have one of the UK's most exciting Geography departments, with a large number of staff with specialisms across human, physical and environmental geography.

The four year Geography MSci programme provides an opportunity for you to follow your interests in Geography more comprehensively, and to develop key skills for career development. It uses the same modules as the **BSc Geography (F800) (/undergraduate/courses/gees/geography-bsc.aspx)** and/or **BA Geography (L700) (/undergraduate/courses/gees/geography-ba.aspx)** degree for the first three years, followed by an additional specialist fourth year.

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham has been awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

UCAS code: F80A

Duration: 4 years

Places Available: 181 (All Geography courses)

Applications in 2012: 881

Typical Offer: AAA (**More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details (?OpenSection=EntryRequirements)**)

Start date: September

Related courses

Geography BSc (Hons) (/undergraduate/courses/gees/geography-bsc.aspx)

Geography BA (Hons) (/undergraduate/courses/gees/geography-ba.aspx)

Geography with International Year MSci (Hons) (/undergraduate/courses/gees/geography-msci-international.aspx)

Geography with Year Abroad BA (Hons) (/undergraduate/courses/gees/geography-ba-abroad.aspx)

Geography with Year Abroad BSc (Hons) (/undergraduate/courses/gees/geography-bsc-abroad.aspx)

Contact

Student Recruitment Team
Telephone enquiries: +44 (0)121 414 8327
Email: **uggeographyadmissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk (mailto:uggeographyadmissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk)**

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (/schools/gees/index.aspx)

Details

The MSci Geography course at Birmingham combines a sound academic training with an insight into practical, social, economic and environmental issues. You will refine your perspectives and develop skills in a degree programme that encourages the use of imagination and observation to resolve real problems affecting people and environments.

First year

The modular structure allows you maximum flexibility in developing your own interests without channeling you into decisive choices too early. In the first year you will be exposed to the main principles of human and physical geography, to global environmental issues, and to various practical skills. You will also explore contemporary urban issues using Birmingham as a real-world laboratory. The first semester also features residential fieldwork in human and physical geography.

Second year

During the second year you will be introduced to specialist techniques such as computer cartography and the use of databases and spreadsheets. You learn how to develop a research proposal, which may be the starting point for your dissertation in the final year. Training in more advanced fieldwork skills is provided by courses held in European centres. You also choose from optional modules in many different branches of Geography.

Third year

In the third year you select from a wide range of modules that provide more specialised knowledge and skills in the areas of Geography that appeal to you. You also undertake a supervised dissertation on a topic of your own choice.

Fourth year

The MSci provides a natural continuation to your first 3 years of study and allows you further your studies in human geography (city & modernity, geopolitics & globalisation, local economic development), physical geography (meteorological applications, hydrological & biogeochemical processes, river restoration) and environmental assessment or indeed a mixture of the disciplines.

Why study this course

Hannah Fitzpan, Geography graduate

"I have applied my degree course to work in an area that is stimulating, challenging, and varied. Furthermore, it is rewarding to know I play a major role in sustaining and protecting environments all over the world." **Read more from Hannah... (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/gees/our-students/undergraduate/geography-profile-fiszpan.aspx)**

Geography at Birmingham features high-quality programmes in a stimulating and friendly environment. Established in 1924, the Geography programme at Birmingham has a long and renowned history. Graduates from the School are to be found teaching in universities and schools across the world, as well as in government departments, finance, commerce and industry, the media and the caring professions. Our Geography staff have a reputation for high-quality teaching and research of an international standard, and we are one of the largest Geography departments in the country.

Our innovative research significantly contributes to understanding, explaining and solving the nature and problems of our human and physical environments. You will study and work with experts who will equip you with the first-class training required in this modern age. Indeed we have strong evidence that a Geography degree from Birmingham will ?open many doors? for you. Employers value a good degree, and over 70% of our students achieve either a 1st or 2.1 at graduation. Employers also value the additional skills you will acquire ? computing and presentation skills, experience of team-based projects and collaborative working and leadership qualities. This may be why each year, within six months after graduation over 92% of our students are either enjoying postgraduate study or are already employed.

Modules

Year 1

Compulsory core modules (100 credits):

- Contemporary Human Geography
- Earth and Ecological Systems
- Global Environmental Issues
- Tutorials, IT Skills and Field Course
- Mapping the Midlands and Physical Environments of Birmingham
- Physical Environment of Birmingham

Optional modules (20 credits):

- Natural Hazards
- MOMD 1 Module Outside the Main Discipline
- MOMD 2 Module Outside the Main Discipline

See Year 1 module descriptions (PDF 529KB) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-les/gees/Courses/Geographymodulesyear1.pdf)

Year 2

Compulsory core modules (60 credits):

- Geomatics for Geographers
- Research Methods for Dissertations
- Techniques and Fieldwork

You will take three optional 20 credit modules from the following list:

- Ecological Systems
- Geomorphological Processes
- Hydroclimatology: Climate and Water

- Cultural Geography
- Environmental Transfer Processes
- Environmental Assessment and Management
- Understanding Neighbourhood Poverty
- Reconstructing Quaternary Environments
- Social & Political Geography
- The Urban and Regional Economies, Problems and Policies

See Year 2 module descriptions (PDF 522KB) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-les/gees/Courses/Geographymodulesyear2.pdf)

Year 3*

Compulsory core modules (40 credits):

- Geography Dissertation

You will take four optional 20 credit modules from the following list:

- Applied Micrometeorology
- Contemporary Issues in Urban Development and Planning (for Geographers)
- Environmental Risk + Society

- Gender, body & performance

- Geographies of Incarceration
- Global Quaternary Climatic Change

- Applied Hydrology
- Environment and Landscape Change
- Environmental Governance

- Environmental Protection
- War, Peace and the Middle East
- Environmental Justice
- Geographies of Migration
- Landscape and Urban Ecology
- Professional Placements for Geographers

- Regenerating Urban Communities (for Geographers)

- Restoration of Freshwater Systems

- River Processes, Deposits and Environments
- Urban Life, Urban Communities
- Weather, Climate and Society
- Welfare, Work and Wealth

See Year 3 module descriptions (PDF 226KB) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-les/gees/Courses/Geographymodulesyear3.pdf)

Year 4

The MSci provides a natural continuation to your first 3 years of study and allows you further your studies in human geography (city & modernity, geopolitics & globalisation, local economic development), physical geography (meteorological applications, hydrological & biogeochemical processes, river restoration) and environmental assessment or indeed a mixture of the disciplines.

Fees and funding

Standard fees (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/fees/standard) apply
Learn more about **fees and funding (/undergraduate/fees/loans.aspx)**

Scholarships
Learn more about our **scholarships and awards (/undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx)**

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: AAA

Required subjects and grades: Geography at grade A. Grade C in each of GCSE English and Maths.

General Studies: We do not accept General Studies, Critical Thinking, Citizenship Studies, and World Development.

Additional information:

Unconditional offers will be made to high-quality applicants on course for straight As at A level. For details see the **Unconditional Offer Scheme 2015 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/unconditional-offer-scheme-2015.aspx)** .

Unconditional offers are based on:

- A Level predictions of AAA +
- AS results of at least ABB
- 5 GCSEs at grade A including English, Maths and a Science
- 2 GCSEs at grade B
- Academic reference
- Personal statement

Other qualifications are considered – see **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements)** for full details.

International students:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 36 points including 6,6,6 at HL including Geography. Minimum of 5 in SL English and Maths if not offered at GCSE or equivalent.

Standard English language requirements apply
Learn more about **international entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements/international)**

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at **www.ucas.com (http://www.ucas.com/)**
Learn more about **applying (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply)**

Key Information Set (KIS)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the **Unistats website (http://unistats.direct.gov.uk)** you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

Learning and teaching

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. At Birmingham we advocate an enquiry based learning approach, from the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner, qualities that are highly sought after by employers. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself. The panel of experts from the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE), when undertaking the most recent assessment of the quality of teaching in the School, rated us as 'Excellent', the highest grade possible.

"Staff in the geography department and in the whole university are friendly and made it really easy to settle in. At the same time they have offered a high standard of teaching and support." BSc Geography Graduate

As a student in the Geography department your degree will have a modular structure. In each year learning is delivered over two teaching semesters of eleven weeks and a third summer term of eight weeks for revision, examinations and progress review. Your learning will take place in a range of different settings,

including lectures, small group tutorials, seminars, laboratory classes, field classes and through supplementary IT-based materials, as well as the more traditional use of books and journals in the University Library. Particular course modules in Geography may involve individual or group project work, preparing oral presentations, and library or web-based research. One of the advantages of a larger, long-established university such as Birmingham is the breadth and size of the library resources. With approaching four million books and fast-growing electronic resources, the University Library and Information Services is something we are proud of.

You will have access to a comprehensive support system that will assist and encourage you, including personal tutors and welfare tutors who can help with both academic and welfare issues, and a formal transition review during your first year to check on your progress and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

Our Academic Skills Centre also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from drop-in sessions with support with mathematics and statistics based problems provided by experienced mathematicians, to workshops on a range of topics including note talking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

Studying with us you will benefit from cutting edge equipment and facilities in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, including our state-of-the-art Earth imaging and visualisation laboratory for teaching.

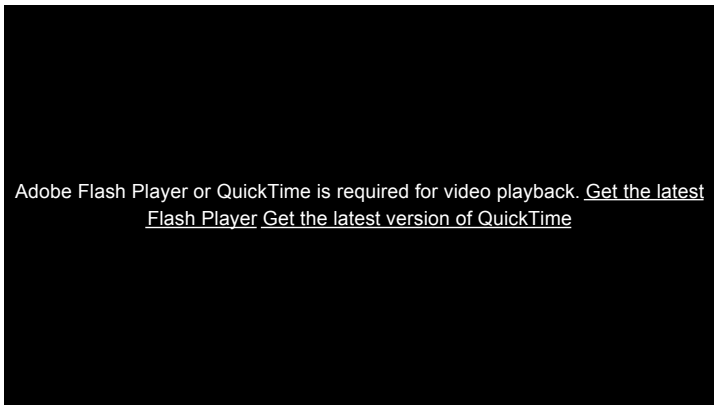
Take virtual tours of some of our facilities (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/gees/facili

Personal Tutor

From the outset, you will be assigned your own Personal Tutor who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your time here at Birmingham.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is a vital element of our degree programmes and is an essential part of your training. The Geography staff at Birmingham has considerable experience of researching geographical issues using field evidence.



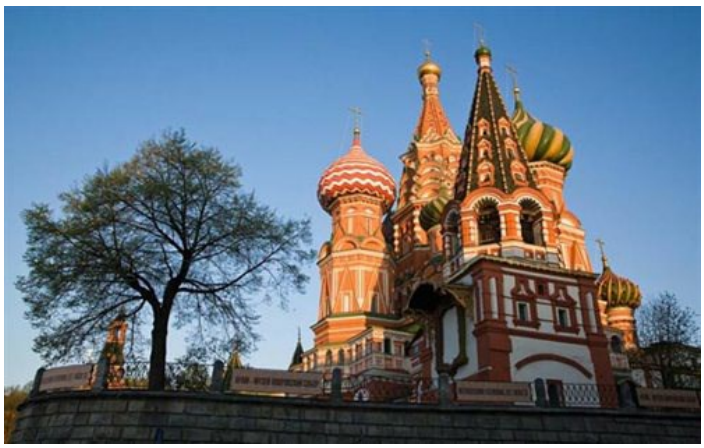
Video transcript here (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/accessibility/transcripts/les/fieldwork-gees.aspx)

Our students are clearly motivated and inspired to travel to other parts of the world to undertake research for their dissertations, to take part in social or environmental development programmes, and to travel and work abroad for a period after their graduation.

Fieldwork experience begins in the first semester, with the first field course designed to get you working and learning in small groups to understand how the city of Birmingham works. The fieldwork programme takes place in the City Centre, in the renowned and established Jewellery Quarter industrial area, and into some of the residential suburbs of the City, including the world-famous Bournville garden suburb, where Cadbury's is based (chocoholics beware!). A second semester field course uses the city's extensive green areas to examine urban climate and micro-meteorology, habitat conservation, and the use of mobile mapping technologies.

There is a UK residential field course of four days for all Geography students in November of Year 1. Don't worry, the weather is usually fine and sunny but you should bring your wellies just in case! Locations include Snowdonia, the Peak District, Shropshire, and the Forest of Dean. All field courses include themes from both human and physical geography. Students devise small group projects, collect data to answer particular questions, analyse their data, and present the results to the rest of the field course. You will do all of this in a single day, and then do it again the following day with a different problem and a different group. This is hard work but immensely enjoyable, and at the end of your field course you know 40 of your fellow geographers really well because you will have lived and worked with them as a team. You will also know more about the problems and possibilities of collecting field evidence to solve geographical research questions.

By Year 2 you are ready to take on the rest of the world - certainly Europe and potentially beyond. At the end of semester two Single Honours students undertake a second residential field course of six or seven days. Many of these field courses are centred in European cities, and they are more specialised and focus specifically on human or physical geography topics. Recent human geography field courses have been in cities such as Amsterdam; Moscow; Prague; Berlin; Dublin, and Seville, whilst physical geographers have been to Evora in Portugal; Malta; Tenerife; and Bala, in Wales.



In Years 2 and 3 (or Years 2 and 4 for

Year Abroad students) some field courses involve additional fieldwork components, which are usually non-residential. Such work is especially important in biogeography, palaeoecology and hydrology where experience in field methodologies is even more essential.

For the majority of students field training is an important part of the preparation for undertaking dissertation projects in the final year. For some projects in physical geography specialised equipment might be required, and the School loans such equipment to you as necessary. Some students decide to undertake research work overseas. This usually requires more preparation and some fund-raising. The School, the University, and the **Royal Geographical Society (http://www.rgs.org/HomePage.htm)** have competitive travel scholarships for this purpose. It is sometimes possible to develop dissertation research in association with staff research projects. Recent student research of this kind has been undertaken in Iceland, Costa Rica, Norway, the Pyrenees and in northern Italy.

We will make the necessary arrangements to accommodate students with disabilities for field courses throughout your time at Birmingham.

Find out more about **fieldwork costs and funding (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/gees/courses/undergraduate/fieldwork.aspx)** .

Studying Abroad

The Geography department has official ERASMUS exchange programmes with universities in Germany (Gottingen), the Netherlands (Groningen, where many of the courses are given in English), and Belgium (Leuvan). This enables students on the 4-year Study Abroad course to spend Year 3 at a partner institution.

Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching at school or college. You will be expected to think, discuss and engage critically with the subject and find things out for yourself. We will enable you to make this transition to a new style of learning, and the way that you are assessed during your studies will help you develop the essential skills you need to make a success of your time at Birmingham.

A range of assessment methods are used on our Geography programmes. Employers require graduates with a wide range of skills and it is our aim to ensure that these are assessed fully. As such, assessment at Birmingham is not limited to exams and students will be tested via presentations and group exercises, as well as project and field work.

During your first year you will also undergo a formal transition review to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you may encounter.

At the beginning of each module, you'll be given information on how and when you'll be assessed for that particular programme of study. You'll receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done for future modules.

Employability

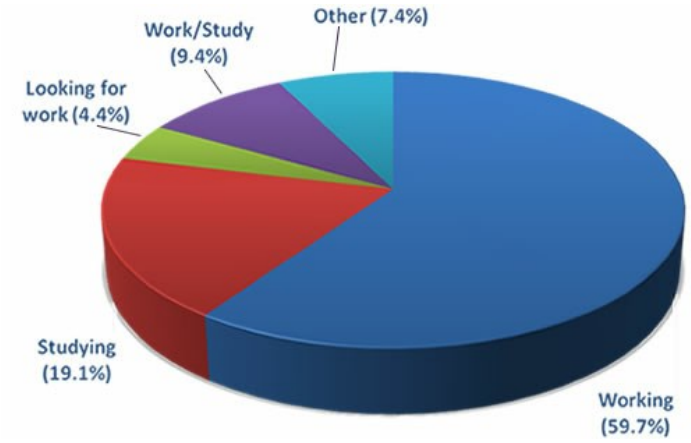
Geography graduates have an excellent employment record after University. Past evidence shows that you will be highly regarded by employers because you will be flexible, able to write and analyse well and have a broad range of transferable skills relevant to the challenges of today and tomorrow.

95.4% employability rate
2012/13 Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) - The DLHE survey is conducted 6 months after graduation.

If you use your time at university well, when you graduate you will be literate and able to write well in a number of different styles, and structure an argument fully. You will also be able to use a wide range of IT programmes and be familiar with industry-standard software packages, as well as proficient in the use of maps, visual media and images to effectively support your proposals. You will have developed personal transferable skills such as communication, presentation, and teamwork, and be able to use your own initiative, solve problems and manage your own time. This combination of skills will set you in good stead for a wide range of different careers upon graduation.

Preparation for your career should be one of the first things you think about as you start university. Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our **Careers Network (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/careers-network.aspx)** can help you achieve your goal.

Our unique careers guidance service is tailored to your academic subject area. Our team source exclusive **work experience opportunities (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/work-experience.aspx)** to help you stand out amongst the competition, with **mentoring (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/mentoring/index.aspx)** , **global internships (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/index.aspx)** and placements available to you. Once you have a career in your sights, one-to-one support with CV?s and job applications will help give you the edge. In addition, our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award (PSA) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/psa.aspx)** recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.



Geography and Planning - undergraduate destinations 2012/13

Find out more about career opportunities in Geography and Planning (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/gees/courses/undergraduate/careers/careers-geog-env-sci.aspx)

Recent graduates have found employment in a wide range of fields. Our most recent student survey showed that six months after graduation many students were engaged in work or study directly related to Geography, with the remainder choosing career paths in areas outside of the subject where the transferable skills gained on the programme prove invaluable.

Many Geography graduates use their skills to get jobs directly related to geography, including nature conservation, environmental consultancy, tourism development, and town planning. A significant proportion also go on to pursue careers in teaching. A number of students get jobs in the public services, the commercial sector and industry, including financial and professional services, personnel management, retail, and local government. Around a quarter of graduates tend to go on to further study before entering employment including PGCE's (for teaching), one-year taught Masters courses (such as those for town planning), or a doctoral research programme.

Hear from our students - find out what other students have gone on to do.

(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/gees/our-students/undergraduate/index.aspx)

94% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

MSci (Hons) Geography
Full time

To see more details and compare with other courses
Visit UNISTATS
Official data collected by HEFCE

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