

**University of Plymouth**

Faculty of Science and Engineering

School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

**Programme Specification**

BSc (Hons) Geography (0079)

September 2022

## 1. **BSc (Hons) Geography**

**Final award title:** BSc (Hons) Geography

**UCAS code:** F800

**JACS code:** F800

2. **Awarding Institution:** University of Plymouth

**Teaching institution(s):** University of Plymouth

3. **Accrediting body:** Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

## 4. **Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience**

The BSc (Hons) Geography programme at Plymouth is distinguished by:

**The variety of opportunities for specialist study**, in physical and environmental geography option modules and within core modules such as field courses and the final year dissertation. This variety mirrors the breadth of subject matter within the discipline and arises from the number of academic staff and the diversity of their specialist interests.

The **research and scholarly activity of staff** provide strong support to our teaching. Commitment to personal research and scholarly activity are defining elements of Geography's academic community. Staff members model the process of discovery that is encouraged in students, bringing enthusiasm and intellectual authority to their teaching.

**Experiential learning** is 'learning by doing' and is shown, in physical and environmental geography, by the 'hands-on' approach to exploring the discipline. We offer a substantial programme of experiential learning, including an extensive fieldwork programme that is among the best of all HEI geography programmes in the UK, activities in scientific, IT and cartographic labs, debate and role-play, and work-based learning.

**Explicit preparation for employment** is a cornerstone of the geography curriculum and is seen particularly in opportunities for work placements in the curriculum (including the option to spend a year in industry) and module(s) that focus specifically on career development. In addition, the BSc (Hons) Geography programme provides ample opportunity for students to develop the personal transferable skills valued by employers, such as problem-solving, team work and dealing with complexity and uncertainty.

**Independence, responsibility and autonomy** are developed in students through the carefully structuring of investigative tasks throughout the degree, culminating in the student-led dissertation, usually in physical or environmental geography, at the final stage.

Geography staff members provide individualised support for **students' academic and personal development**, primarily through an active personal tutoring system. The academic community of staff and students has a positive atmosphere; academic staff members are accessible to students and relationships between staff and students are good. Further, students benefit from an exceptionally committed and well-qualified professional support staff.

## **5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)**

Geography

[http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Subject-benchmark\\_statement-Geography.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Subject-benchmark_statement-Geography.pdf)

## **6. Programme Structure**

The BSc (Hons) Geography programme is modular. It takes a minimum of three years to complete, and most students complete one Stage of study each year. In addition, students may undertake a work experience placement between Stages 2 and 4, which does not contribute numerically to the final degree but leads to the University's Certificate of Professional Experience.

The School has well-established exchange schemes with universities in the USA and Canada and most countries in continental Europe. Students may spend Stage 2 on such a scheme. Students on exchange must follow and pass an approved programme of study, but the marks gained do not contribute numerically to the final degree (thus the programme follows the University regulations, in that 10% of the final aggregate mark is calculated as from the best 80 credits in Stage 1 and the remaining 90% from all modules at Stage 4).

A complete Stage of study consists of 120 credits; in all three stages, modules are 20 credits each unless shown otherwise. At each stage, students study the compulsory or 'core' modules shown in Figure 1 and, at Stages 2 and 4, further modules are selected from a wide range of options. Table 1 lists the modules in each of these categories and Figure 1 shows the pattern of core and option modules needed to complete the BSc (Hons) Geography programme.

The BA and BSc (Hons) Geography programmes share the same diet of core and option modules. The award title is normally determined by the balance of human geography modules (GGH) and physical geography (GPP) modules

taken at Stages 2 and 4, as well as the subject matter of the dissertation. Determination of the final award title (whether BA or BSc) usually takes place in Stage 4 when the final selection of modules has been completed and dissertation topics are known. Students may, therefore, register initially for a BA and graduate with a BSc and *vice versa*.

The Intended Learning Outcomes of the BSc (Hons) Geography programme are covered largely in the core modules; the substantive knowledge and understanding of geography is provided in option modules at Stages 2 & 4, and these modules also provide opportunities to develop cognitive and intellectual, key, transferable, employment-related and practical skills. Students studying for the BSc (Hons) Geography will normally take the core modules and **mainly** GGP modules at Stages 2 and 4 and undertake a dissertation within physical or environmental geography.

**Figure 1. BSc (Hons) Geography programme structure.**

First Year (core modules shaded grey)	
<b>Semester A</b>	<b>Semester B</b>
GGH1202 Changing Places	GGH1203 Culture, Society and Space
GGX1205 Geographical Journeys	GGX1206 Sustainable Futures
GGP1207 Hydrology and Geomorphology	GGP1206 Environment and Climate

Second Year (core modules shaded grey)	
<b>Semester A</b>	<b>Semester B</b>
GGX2201 Principles and Applications of Geography I	GGX2202 Principles and Applications of Geography II
Option 1*	GGX2204 Fieldwork in Geography
Option 2*	Option 3#
* Choose two from: GGH2206: Nature, Country and Society GGH2208: Urban Planning, Design and Security GGP2206: Quaternary to Anthropocene GGP2207: Catchment to Coast GGX2203A: Geographical Information Systems	# Choose one from: GGH2207: Transport, Travel and Mobilities ENVS 2005: Weather and Climate

Final Year (core modules shaded grey)	
<b>Semester A</b>	<b>Semester B</b>
GGX3200: Dissertation in Geography	
Option 1*	Option 3#
Option 2*	Option 4#
* Choose two from: GGH3207: Sustainable Cities GGH3208: Citizenship, Territory and War GGP3205: Global Climate Change GGP3209: Dryland Change GGX3203: Work Based Learning in Geography GGX3204: Big data and spatial analytics	# Choose two from: GGH3209: Living Landscapes GGH3210: Environmental Politics and Governance GGP3210: Polar and Alpine Change GGP3204: Biological Conservation

**Table 1. Modules available in BSc (Hons) Geography. All modules are 20 credits except where noted.**

Stage 1 (all core)

GGX1205 Geographical Journeys  
GGX1206 Geography and Sustainability  
GGP1207 Hydrology and Geomorphology  
GGP1206 Climate and Environment  
GGH1202 Changing Places  
GGH1203 Culture, Society and Space

Stage 2

Core

GGX2204 Fieldwork in Geography  
GGX2201 Principles and Applications of Geography 1  
GGX2202 Principles and Applications of Geography 2

Options: Distribution between semesters may vary from year to year

GGH2206: Nature, Country and Society  
GGH2207: Transport, Travel and Mobilities  
GGP2206: Quaternary to Anthropocene  
GGP2207: Catchment to Coast  
GGX2203: Geographical Information Systems  
GGH2208: Urban Planning, Design and Security  
ENVS 2005: Weather and Climate

Stage 2 modules with fewer than 15 registered students in any given academic year will not run in that year.

Stage 3

Stage 3 consists of the optional work placement year. Students electing to take this year follow the non credit-bearing module below. The majority of students pass directly from Stage 2 to Stage 4.

APIE305 Placement in Geography

Stage 4

Core

GGX3200 Dissertation in Geography (40 credits)

Options: Distribution between semesters will vary from year to year

GGH3207: Sustainable Cities  
GGH3208: Citizenship, Territory and War  
GGP3205: Global Climate Change

GGP3209: Dryland Change  
GGX3203: Work Based Learning in Geography  
GGX2204: Big data and spatial analytics  
GGH3209: Living Landscapes  
GGH3210: Environmental Politics and Governance  
GGP3210: Polar and Alpine Change  
GGP3204: Biological Conservation

Stage 4 modules with fewer than 15 registered students in any given academic year will not run in that year.

## **7. Programme Aims**

The aims of the BSc (Hons) Geography programme at Plymouth are to:

Provide a wide-ranging, relevant and contemporary curriculum in geography, focusing on physical (and environmental) geography, enriched by the research and scholarly activity of staff and characterised by an active 'hands-on' approach to learning.

Develop graduates who:

- Have thorough knowledge, understanding and practical experience in geography, focusing on physical (and environmental) geography
- Are critical, rational and creative thinkers
- Are confident, adaptable and independent learners
- Are readily employable and equipped for lifelong learning
- Are prepared to take a co-operative and responsible role in society.

## **8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes**

### **8.1. Knowledge and understanding**

On successful completion graduates should be able to demonstrate an understanding:

- 1) Of the complex and reciprocal nature of geographical processes, particularly those operating in the physical landscape
- 2) That geographical processes operate over a variety of scales in space and time
- 3) That spatial variation in geographical processes leads to pattern in the distribution of geographical phenomena, particularly in the physical landscape, and to both distinctiveness and interdependence among places
- 4) Of the diversity of approaches to generating geographical knowledge, through experience of their epistemologies, focussing on those of the natural sciences, with appropriate reference to those of social science and humanities.

### **8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills**

On successful completion graduates should be able to:

- 1) Discuss the contested and provisional nature of knowledge and understanding
- 2) Assess the reliability and validity of evidence, articulating weaknesses in the arguments of others
- 3) Develop a reasoned and sustained argument
- 4) Identify, formulate and evaluate questions or problems
- 5) Evaluate and synthesise information effectively from disparate sources.

### **8.3. Key, transferable and employment-related skills**

On successful completion graduates should be able to:

- 1) Communicate effectively and fluently by written, oral and visual means, adapting material to different audiences in various settings
- 2) Work independently and organise their own learning
- 3) Search for, retrieve, sift, select and order information from a variety of sources including both academic and employers' literature
- 4) Reflect upon their learning processes, evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses
- 5) Apply numerical skills effectively and appropriately.
- 6) Participate effectively and supportively in teams, meeting obligations to others

#### 8.4. Practical skills

On successful completion graduates should be able to:

- 1) Evaluate, select and apply appropriate geographical techniques, to *collect* geographical information
- 2) Evaluate, select and apply appropriate geographical techniques, to *analyse* geographical information, in qualitative and quantitative forms
- 3) Evaluate, select and apply appropriate geographical techniques, to *present* geographical information
- 4) Plan, design, execute and report on an original geographical investigation, safely and with due regard to ethical considerations
- 5) Apply concepts and principles of geographical knowledge to new issues and situations.

#### 9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements

All applicants must have GCSE (or equivalent) Maths and English at Grade C or above. Further requirements are set out in Table 2.

A-level/AS-level	Normal minimum entry requirements are 108 - 112 UCAS points, a typical offer is 112 points from a minimum of 2 A-levels including C in Geography, excluding General Studies
BTEC National Diploma/QCF Extended Diploma	BTEC 18 Unit Extended Diploma – These would be on an individual basis and depend upon the amount of Geography included.
Access to Higher Education at level 3	Pass a named Access to HE Diploma (e.g. Science, Humanities, Combined), (including GCSE English and Maths grade C /4 or above or equivalent) with at least 33 credits at Merit and to include at least 12 credits in Geography related units with Merits. If not studying Geography units please refer to Admissions Tutor who will look at on an individual basis (Humanities units have been accepted instead, for example).
Welsh Baccalaureate	120 points – can be accepted as a supplement to 2 A Levels, including Geography.
Scottish Qualifications Authority	280 points including C at Advanced Higher in Geography.
Irish Leaving Certificate	BBBBB in Highers including Geography. Irish Leaving Certificate Ordinary Level Grade C or above for English and Maths.
International Baccalaureate	28 points overall to include 5 at Higher Level Geography. English and Mathematics must be included.

Progression from BSc (Hons) Earth Sciences with Foundation	Students who pass BSc (Hons) Earth Sciences with Foundation with an overall aggregate mark of 50% or greater are guaranteed progression to the BSc Geography degree programme.
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**Table 2.** Admissions criteria for BSc (Hons) Geography.

**10. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards**

Progression within BSc (Hons) Geography and the award of intermediate awards, follows the University of Plymouth's Academic Regulations, available at <http://www1.plymouth.ac.uk/extexam/pages/academic-regulations.aspx>

**11. Exceptions to Regulations**

None.

**12. Transitional Arrangements**

2019-20	2020-2021
GGP1205 Catchments and Coasts	GGP1207 Geomorphology and Hydrology

### 13. Mapping and Appendices:

#### 13.1. ILOs against modules mapping

<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>		
On successful completion graduates should be able to demonstrate an understanding:		
	Core modules	Option modules at Stages 2 & 4
1) Of the complex and reciprocal nature of geographical processes, particularly those operating in the physical landscape	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All stage 2 All stage 4
2) That geographical processes operate over a variety of scales in space and time	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All stage 2 All stage 4
3) That spatial variation in geographical processes leads to pattern in the distribution of geographical phenomena, particularly in the physical landscape, and to both distinctiveness and interdependence among places	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All stage 2 All stage 4
4) Of the diversity of approaches to generating geographical knowledge, through experience of their epistemologies, focussing on those of the natural sciences, with appropriate reference to those of social science and humanities	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All stage 2 All stage 4

<b>Cognitive and intellectual skills</b>		
On successful completion graduates should be able to:		
	Core modules	Option modules at Stages 2 & 4
1) Discuss the contested and provisional nature of knowledge and understanding	GGX2201,GGX2202 GGX3200	All stage 2 All stage 4
2) Assess the reliability and validity of evidence, articulating weaknesses in the arguments of others	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All stage 2 All stage 4
3) Develop a reasoned and sustained argument	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All Stage 2 All Stage 4
4) Identify, formulate and evaluate questions or problems	GGX2204, GGX3200	
5) Evaluate and synthesise information effectively from disparate sources	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All Stage 2 All Stage 4

<b>Key, transferable and employment-related skills</b>		
On successful completion graduates should be able to:		
	Core modules	Option modules at Stages 2 & 4
1) Communicate effectively and fluently by written, oral and visual means, adapting material to different audiences	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All Stage 2 All Stage 4

2) Work independently and organise his/ her own learning	GGX3200	All Stage 2 All Stage 4
3) Search for, retrieve, sift, select and order information from a variety of sources including both academic ones as well as employers' literature	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	All Stage 2 All Stage 4
4) Reflect upon his / her learning process, evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses	GGX1205, GGX2200	
5) Apply numerical skills effectively and appropriately	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX2201, GGX2202	
6) Participate effectively and supportively in teams, meeting obligations to others	GGX2204	

<b>Practical skills</b>		
On successful completion graduates should be able to:		
	Core modules GGX	Option modules at Stages 2 & 4
1) Evaluate, select and apply appropriate techniques, to collect geographical information	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX1205, GGX1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	
2) Evaluate, select and apply appropriate techniques, to analyse geographical information, in qualitative and quantitative forms	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX2204, GGX3200	
3) Evaluate, select and apply appropriate techniques, to present geographical information	GGH1202, GGH1203, GGP1207, GGP1206, GGX2201, GGX2202, GGX3200	
4) Plan, design, execute and report on an original geographical investigation safely and with due regard to ethical considerations	GGX2204, GGX3200	
5) Apply concepts and principles of geographical knowledge to new issues and situations	GGX2201, GGX2202 GGX3200	

## 13.2 Assessment against modules mapping

Module	Credit	E1	O1	C1	P1	A1
<b>Stage 1 (all core)</b>						
GGX1205 Geographical Journeys	20			100%		
GGX1206 Sustainable Futures	20			50%	50%	
GGP1207 Hydrology and Geomorphology	20			40%	60%	
GGP1206 Environmental and Climate	20	50%		50%		
GGH1202 Changing Places	20	50%		50%		
GGH1203 Culture, Society and Space	20			100%		
<b>Stage 2</b>						
<i>Core</i>						
GGX2200 Fieldwork in Geography	20			100%		
GGX2201 Principles and Applications of Geography 1	20			70%	30%	
GGX2202 Principles and Applications of Geography 2	20			60%	40%	
<i>Options</i>						
GGH2206 Nature, Country and Society	20			100%		
GGH2207 Transport, Travel and Mobilities	20			50%	50%	
GGP2206 Quaternary to Anthropocene	20	50%		50%		
GGP2207 Catchment to Coast	20			100%		
GGX2203 Geographical Information Systems	20			100%		
GGH2208: Urban Planning, Design and Security				60%	40%	
ENVS2005 Weather and Climate	20	50%		50%		
<b>Stage 4</b>						
<i>Core</i>						
GGX3200 Dissertation in Geography	40			100%		
<i>Options</i>						
GGH3207 Sustainable Cities	20			100%		
GGH3208 Citizenship, Territory and War	20			100%		
GGH3209 Living Landscapes	20			100%		
GGH3210 Environmental Politics and Governance	20			100%		
GGP3205 Global Climate Change	20	50%		50%		
GGP3209 Dryland Change	20			50%	50%	
GGP3204 Biological Conservation	20			100%		

GGP3210 Polar and Alpine Change	20			50%	50%	
GGX3203 Work Based Learning in Geography	20			70%	30%	
GGX3204 Big Data and Spatial Analytics	20			100%		