

# Doctoral Programme Profile

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## Geography and Environment

This Programme Profile provides.

Awarding Institution	University of Southampton
Teaching Institution	University of Southampton
Final award	PhD
Name of academic discipline	Geography and Environment
Interim Exit awards	MPhil (Level 7)
FHEQ level of final award	Level 8
Doctoral Programme Director	Dr Paul Hughes
Director of the Faculty Graduate School	Professor Chris Howls

Date Programme Profile was last revised 21/10/2014

All PGR Programme Profiles should be read alongside the *University of Southampton's Regulations for the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy and the Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision*.

## Admissions Requirements

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At a minimum, successful applicants must meet the admissions requirements of the University Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision.

### Subject-specific criteria:

Applications are welcomed from students who have achieved at least a 2i result in a related subject during their undergraduate study, This could in Geography or a related subject, where previous training is of particular relevance to Geography. Other degrees will be considered where there is a clear relationship to the proposed research and Geography.

Applications from candidates with Masters degrees are also welcomed.

**English Language requirement for candidates whose first language is not English:** Applicants whose first language is not English and who are not exempt from taking an English Language test, according to the University of Southampton's regulations, are required to obtain a minimum of 7.0 overall in the IELTS test, with no individual elements of the test scoring below 6.0 (or an equivalent secure English Language test from band D in the University list of recognised tests).

### Other Criteria:

A research proposal in research area of interest to the doctoral programme may be submitted with the application. This is not mandatory

All candidates whose first language is not English and who require a visa to study must comply with the minimum requirements for language proficiency set by UK Visas and Immigration for the issuance of the visa.

Candidates will not be able to register for the programme until they have received an offer letter and met and/or accepted the conditions laid out in it.

## Funding

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Any offer of a place is distinct and different from any offer of funding. Offers of funding will depend on the availability of funds, the rules governing source of the funds, the academic competition for them, as well as eligibility due to nationality. This may vary from year to year and within each annual recruitment cycle. For latest details please consult the programme website at:

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/geography/postgraduate/index.page>

This programme is eligible for funding from a wide selection of scholarships Postgraduate Scholarship Fund:

- the annual Geography and Environment Academic Unit (GEAU) studentship competition [https://www.southampton.ac.uk/geography/postgraduate/research\\_degrees/studentships.page](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/geography/postgraduate/research_degrees/studentships.page)
- the University of Southampton Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/esrcdtc>
- the University of Southampton Nature Environment Research Council (NERC) Doctoral Training Programme (DTP) – also known as SPITFIRE: <http://www.spitfire.ac.uk>
- the University of Southampton Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) - Next Generation Computational Modelling (NGCM) <http://www.ngcm.soton.ac.uk/>
- Chevening Scholarships <http://www.chevening.org/> and <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/international/scholarships/chevening.shtml>
- Commonwealth Scholarships <http://cscuk.dfid.gov.uk/> and <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/international/scholarships/commonwealth.shtml>
- Chinese Scholarship Council Scholarships [http://www.southampton.ac.uk/international/scholarships/chinese\\_scholarship\\_council.shtml](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/international/scholarships/chinese_scholarship_council.shtml)
- the University of Southampton's Postgraduate Scholarship Fund
- Country-specific scholarships [http://www.southampton.ac.uk/international/scholarships/country\\_scholarships.shtml](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/international/scholarships/country_scholarships.shtml)

## Fees

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The current fees charged for the programme may be found on the University Postgraduate Fees and Funding website.

## Procedure for Application

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Apply using the University online application form. A full guide to this process may be downloaded from the accompanying guidance notes.

Applicants may be interviewed and references will be taken up.

Applicants may submit a research proposal with their application which may strengthen their application.

Research proposals are used as a guide for selectors to help them evaluate the application and to assess whether there are suitable staff available to supervise the project. As the nature of research tends to be uncertain, the eventual PhD project may evolve and diverge from the original proposal.

At least two members of academic staff will consider the application.

Applicants for funding from the ESRC DTC must also simultaneously submit a separate DTC application form details of which may be found on the University of Southampton ESRC DTC website.

## Programme Outline

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### Brief outline of the programme

The University of Southampton is strongly committed to providing the very best learning experience to all our students in a friendly and stimulating environment. We are known nationally and internationally for our

excellence in research and teaching, and are continually improving the scope and delivery of our activities, we aim to generate a community of doctoral graduates equipped to act as research leaders in the most pressing scientific and geography challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Aims of the Programme**

The aims of the programme are to provide candidates with:

- experience of, and the opportunity to gain expertise in, rigorous, leading edge research in a geography and/or environmental science discipline;
- broad knowledge of the contextual background of your research problem in the general field of geography and the environment;
- a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical foundations of your chosen discipline and area of research;
- training in generic and transferable research skills;
- a high quality and intellectually stimulating experience of learning in a supportive, research-led environment;
- communication and presentation skills through seminar presentations, conference attendance
- production of a research proposal, upgrade report and thesis
- the ability to interpret and critically evaluate research and scholarship in areas of geography and the environment;
- the ability to conceptualise, design, implement and manage research for the generation of new knowledge, tools, applications or understanding at the forefront of geography and the environment;
- the ability to create and interpret new knowledge through original research of a quality to satisfy peer review and merit publication;
- the capacity to present ideas, arguments and research findings effectively to a variety of specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- the ability to contribute to the research and development needs of the discipline sector

### **Mode of Delivery**

Maximum candidature is 48 months in Full Time registration, 84 months in Part Time Registration. Candidates may be in receipt of funding for shorter periods.

Candidates are based in the Geography and Environment Academic Unit (GEAU) at the Highfield Campus of the University of Southampton. Depending on the research project, fieldwork may also be required.

## **Supervisory Team**

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Research students are allocated a supervisory team of at least two members, one of whom will be the 'main supervisor'. The main supervisor should be an academic member of University of Southampton staff. The supervisory team must comply with the requirements of the Code of Practice.

The supervisory team typically either consists of a main supervisor and a second supervisor, or for a multi-disciplinary project more than one co-supervisor (one of whom must still be designated as the main supervisor). The main supervisor is typically the technical lead for the project and is responsible for organising the completion of all progression paperwork and timely examination. A second supervisor may have less direct involvement with your work, but may still attend a number of review meetings with you (as well as progression milestones) and be available to discuss the progress of your project. Co-supervision normally entails input to the project from all supervisors.

Applicants may indicate a preference for the supervisory team on their application form, but the names will not be confirmed until a formal offer is made. In some cases, the composition of a supervisory team may change as the research project evolves and in response to other circumstances.

## Programme Structure

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Unlike undergraduate study, the open-ended nature of research means it is not possible to always predict the structure of a programme of study leading to a thesis. The following is an indicative list for those in full time registration. Where there is a definite requirement to undertake a certain activity this is stated. Part time registration events are listed in brackets.

### Year 1

By the end of three months you should have completed your training needs assessment and highlighted any modules or training that should be attended to enhance your studies, confirmed your full supervisory team and written an outline of the motivation for your research, together with a plan of work for year 1. It is expected that you will take a mixture of substantive, technical and skills training courses throughout the year to develop the skills that you need for the whole PhD process.

Throughout the year you will be expected to develop knowledge in your chosen area of research through reading and developing a review of previous work in the area. You will also be developing your research questions for your research and starting to conduct analyses, where appropriate. The relative timescales for these tasks will be discussed with your supervisors.

At the end of your first year there will be a review meeting conducted by at least one of your supervisors and an independent assessor. This is to ensure that the research is progressing well and on target, and provide an opportunity for issues to be raised about the programme or the supervisory arrangements.

Students have the opportunity to meet regularly with the Graduate School (which comprises an academic representative from each Academic Unit as well as the Director of Graduate School) at a mixture of training and networking meetings, this gives ready access to an independent and impartial source of advice about any issues a PGR may be having during their studies.

### Year 2

Training requirements for year two will be discussed in the review meeting conducted at the end of the first year and this training will be followed up throughout the year.

In this year you are expected to expand on the work started in year 1 and to enter fully into the analysis of the research questions.

Between months 18 and 24 of your candidature (months 36 to 42 for part time students) it is expected that you will submit an upgrade/transfer thesis.

If you meet the requirements for upgrade you will be transferred onto the PhD programme, otherwise you may either be transferred to an MPhil, or be given further time to upgrade

### Year 3

Evidence of continued progress is provided by publications and presentations in a suitable venue (e.g. an international conference). It is unlikely that further major training will be needed at this stage. The target date for submission of your thesis is normally at the end of year 3 as this may coincide with the end of any supporting studentships.

### Year 4 (and higher for part time).

For students in full time registration, the final thesis (whether MPhil or PhD) must be submitted *at the latest* by the end of the 48<sup>th</sup> month (excluding periods of suspension) unless special dispensation is granted by the Graduate School. (For candidates in part time registration the deadline for submission is 84 months). The latter will only be granted rarely, in the case of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.

## Progression Requirements

The programme follows the University's Higher Degree Regulations as set out in the University Calendar.

Monitoring is undertaken by the University online PGRTracker System.

**Academic Needs Analysis** (within 3 months of commencement of study).

**Annual Progress Reports** (on the anniversary of commencement of study). Such reports are expected to be approximately 2-3 pages long and are submitted to the Assessor through the PGR Tracker system.

Students will be required to complete a progress report form that details:

- Plans for research for the forthcoming year
- A reflection on the achievements of the past year
- An analysis of learning needs for the coming year
- Identification of training requirements to fulfil these learning needs

The student will be required to submit all documentation online for their supervisor(s) and an independent assessor, and then attend a meeting with them during which the ability to orally defend work already conducted will be assessed, together with the ability to demonstrate the academic merit and feasibility of future plans. The decision on whether students are allowed to proceed in their studies will be based on a report (provided to the student) that summarises the supervisory team's assessment of the student's performance.

### Upgrade to PhD:

Students are initially registered on an MPhil/PhD degree. After 18-24 months (36-48 for students in part time registration), students must submit an upgrade report. This will be accompanied by an Upgrade viva examination involving the supervisors and an independent assessor. Together, the quality of the report and the viva will determine whether the student is ready to be upgraded to PhD candidature. At the Upgrade viva, students must demonstrate a familiarity with the literature on their research topic, successfully defend a completed piece of research work, and provide a clear and detailed plan for the rest of the PhD. Formal outcomes for the Upgrade viva can be found in the Faculty Handbook. (Include link below.)

More detail on the Upgrade process can be found in your Faculty Handbook and [here](#).

**Thesis Submission and Examination:** The maximum length of candidature for MPhil or PhD degree is 48 months for full time registration (84 months for part time registration). Candidates who fail to submit a thesis by this time will be deemed to have withdrawn. The maximum length of a thesis is 75,000 words in the case of a PhD, or 50,000 words in the case of an MPhil.

The thesis is considered by at least one internal and one external examiner and a *viva* held. Both the written thesis and the performance of the candidate at the viva are assessed independently. Examiners make independent and joint reports to the University. The examiners may make one of the following recommendations:

- that the degree be awarded;
- that the degree be awarded subject to minor corrections to the thesis (normally within one month);
- that the degree be awarded subject to modest corrections to the thesis (normally within three months);
- that the candidate be required to attend a further oral examination;
- that the candidate be required to resubmit a revised thesis one (and only one) further time for further examination within twelve months;
- that, in the case of submission for a PhD, the candidate be permitted to resubmit the thesis for an MPhil;
- that the degree be not awarded and that resubmission of the thesis be not permitted.

For the award of PhD, research students must have demonstrated:

- a. the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship, or of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
- b. a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or an area of professional practice;
- c. the general ability to conceptualize, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- d. a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

**MPhil Thesis Submission:** In some cases, students may not or cannot continue through to completion of the PhD. Students may make such decisions for themselves, or it can be based on unsatisfactory performance at one of the formal milestones described above.

For the award of MPhil, research students must have demonstrated:

- a. a systematic understanding of knowledge and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice;
- b. originality in the application of knowledge together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- c. conceptual understanding that enables the research student to:
  - evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
  - evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses;
- d. a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.

## Opportunities to Teach

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Students may have the opportunity to develop their careers through applying to take on some teaching or demonstrating duties. Students who undertake such duties must successfully complete [ITSPG1](#) and [ITSPG2](#) or, for laboratory-based activities, an Introduction to Demonstrator Training. Module leaders will also be expected to provide additional training on the particular teaching required. The availability and precise nature of the teaching opportunity may vary from semester to semester. Some remuneration may be available.

All students are emailed during the preceding summer, and through the first few weeks of semester 1, to alert them to available demonstrating positions. Students are asked to contact the module convener to ascertain suitability for the post before confirming the position with the Graduate School. In some cases the module convener will approach individuals who they know to be particularly suitable for their particular module.

## Support for student learning and development

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There are facilities and services to support your learning some of which are accessible to students across the University and some of which will be geared more particularly to students in your particular Faculty or discipline area.

The University provides:

- library resources, including e-books, on-line journals and databases, which are comprehensive and up-to-date; together with assistance from Library staff to enable you to make the best use of these resources
- high speed access to online electronic learning resources on the Internet from dedicated PC Workstations onsite and from your own devices; laptops, smartphones and tablet PCs via the Eduroam wireless network. There is a wide range of application software available from the Student Public Workstations.
- computer accounts which will connect you to a number of learning technologies for example, the Blackboard virtual learning environment (which facilitates online learning and access to specific learning resources)
- standard ICT tools such as Email, secure filestore and calendars.
- access to key information through the MySouthampton Student Mobile Portal which delivers timetables, Module information, Locations, Tutor details, Library account, bus timetables etc. while you are on the move.
- IT support through a comprehensive website, telephone and online ticketed support and a dedicated helpdesk in the Student Services Centre
- Enabling Services offering assessment and support (including specialist IT support) facilities if you have a disability, dyslexia, mental health issue or specific learning difficulties
- the Student Services Centre (SSC) to assist you with a range of general enquiries including financial matters, accommodation, exams, graduation, student visas, ID cards
- Career Destinations, advising on job search, applications, interviews, paid work, volunteering and internship opportunities and getting the most out of your extra-curricular activities alongside your degree programme when writing your CV
- a range of personal support services : mentoring, counselling, residence support service, chaplaincy, health service
- a Centre for Language Study, providing assistance in the development of English language and study skills for non-native speakers.
- a Researcher Development and Graduate Centre, which provides professional development and skills training
- An appropriate research environment, as set out in the Code of Practice

The Students' Union provides

- an academic student representation system, consisting of Course Representatives, Academic Presidents, Faculty Officers and the Vice-President Education; SUSU provides training and support for all these representatives, whose role is to represent students' views to the University.
- opportunities for extracurricular activities and volunteering
- an Advice Centre offering free and confidential advice including support if you need to make an academic appeal
- Support for student peer-to-peer groups, such as Nightline.

Associated with your programme you will be able to access:

- research infrastructure
- support of supervisory team
- A Research Training and Support Grant of at least £750 per annum for up to 3 years (FT) £375 for up to 6 years PT) – change for Education.
- Access to appropriate desk space and computing facilities (as per Faculty policy).
- A supervisory team consisting of at least two members of staff.
- The Graduate School Office for the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences
- Finance- for details of your personal RTSG subproject code and claims