

Minor Specification

Geography (Physical)

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the minor and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

Awarding Institution	University of Southampton
Teaching Institution	University of Southampton
Name of minor	Geography (Physical)
FHEQ level of final award	As for the Major programme
QAA Subject Benchmark or other external reference	Geography
Faculty that owns the minor	Social, Human and Mathematical Sciences
Minor Leader	Dr Jo Nield
Date specification was written	25/11/2013

Overview of Minor

1 Brief outline of the minor

Geography is a subject that engages directly with important contemporary concerns – such as globalisation, climate change, environmental management and cultural transformation – while allowing you to acquire a range of skills that are highly valued in the marketplace. You will engage with cutting-edge debates during your studies, developing a thorough understanding of the processes that are shaping the future of our planet.

2 Learning and teaching

We employ a wide range of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, practicals and fieldwork.

Lectures are used as an effective method of passing on knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject and, through directed reading lists, act as a springboard for individual study. Class sizes range from around 200 for the largest first year units to about 40 for some specialist third year options. In classes of all sizes, there are opportunities for interaction, debate and discussion.

Seminars provide a forum in which you can discuss and explore key geographical issues and debates. They run alongside lectures and are an important context for the development of confidence, written and verbal communication.

As befits ongoing developments in geography, the acquisition of statistical, laboratory and computational skills is an important component of our undergraduate courses. Computer practicals enable you to develop skills in data analysis, quantitative modelling and Geographic Information Systems. Laboratory work introduces you to practical analytical skills.

3 Assessment

Geography modules are assessed in variety of ways, with the typical balance being 35% coursework and 65% examination. There is variation, however, with some fieldwork based units assessed 100% on the basis of coursework for instance. The different types of work you will complete include:

- essays and reports
- oral presentations
- practical exercises
- websites and research posters
- unseen written examinations

All students receive feedback on assessed work, thus facilitating your development and learning. Feedback is given through a University electronic system called e-assignment. The system keeps all pieces of feedback in one place, enabling students to easily return to marked pieces of work to view their feedback. Individuals who have specific learning differences, such as dyslexia, are able to access additional support in completing their work.

Educational Aims of the Minor

Geography and Environment has a vision of excellence and innovation in learning and teaching and we are committed to providing you with opportunities to enjoy an exciting, challenging and stimulating learning experience. Our teaching is embedded within a framework of a vibrant and active research environment, with content drawn from our five research themes, Earth Surface Dynamics; Economy Governance and Culture; Global Environmental Change and Earth Observation; Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory at the University of Southampton; and Population, Health and Wellbeing. The Minor is designed to provide you with a programme of study that enables you to develop as an independent and reflective geographer, with emphasis given to fostering the development of an enquiring and creative approach.

The aims of the minor are to:

- a) to enhance your enthusiasm for physical geography and its application to contemporary issues;
- b) to provide you with a basic understanding of the functioning and management of the physical environment, based on firm scientific foundations;
- c) to give you the opportunity to develop specialist knowledge and understanding in your chosen areas of physical geography, while ensuring that you maintain a broader view of the role of physical geographical processes in shaping the environment;
- d) to give you an appreciation of the importance of physical geography in different contexts;
- e) to sustain an exciting and enjoyable learning environment that stimulates your intellectual curiosity and enhances your achievement;

Learning Outcomes for the Minor

Knowledge and Understanding

Having successfully completed this minor you will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the nature of change in physical environments;
- the influence of spatial and temporal scale upon physical processes;
- the various approaches available for representing the physical world;
- the use of concepts of space and spatial variation in geographic analysis;
- the value and need for multi-disciplinary approaches in advancing knowledge.

Teaching and Learning Methods

To assist the development of your knowledge and understanding of physical geography, a wide range of teaching methods are employed. These include lectures (associated with both core and specialised optional modules), seminars (these are often student-led and frequently involve making individual or group presentations on selected geographical topics), practical classes and independent research. We also provide feedback on examinations and assignments.

Assessment methods

Assessment of your knowledge and understanding is undertaken throughout the minor using a combination of formative assessments (designed to provide you with constructive feedback to help develop your knowledge and understanding) and summative assessments (designed to measure your achievements). Formative assessment is delivered in part through informal assessment of work, for example staff members might provide informal feedback on a group project or presentation. Summative assessment contributes to your marks and usually involves a combination of unseen written examinations (at the end of each semester) and coursework (which includes essays, project reports, laboratory and computing practicals, etc.) Assessment of your knowledge and understanding is undertaken primarily via these summative assessment methods; in addition you will receive feedback on all formally assessed work.

Subject Specific Intellectual and Research Skills

Having successfully completed this minor you will be able to:

- analyse reflectively and critically literature in physical geography;
- assess the merits of contrasting geographical theories, explanations and policies;
- abstract and synthesise information from a range of different geographical sources;
- analyse, reflect on and critically interpret primary and secondary geographical data;
- structure conceptual and empirical geographical material into a reasoned argument.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Subject specific intellectual skills are embedded within the modules offered and many of the teaching methods used to develop these skills are common to those discussed above. Greater emphasis is placed on direct interaction with staff members during seminars and project work. Independent reading and study, as well as on-line search assignments and computational exercises, are other particularly important means by which you will develop these skills.

Assessment methods

Much of the assessment of subject specific intellectual skills is similar to the methods used to assess your geographical knowledge and understanding. However, greater emphasis is placed on formative assessment methods in years 1 and 2. Nonetheless, summative assessment remains a very important component of the way in which these skills are assessed.

Transferable and Generic Skills

Having successfully completed this minor you will be able to:

- pursue knowledge in an in-depth, ordered and motivated way;
- produce fluent and comprehensive written reports on complex topics;
- confidently use a range of relevant forms of IT software;
- marshal and retrieve data from library and internet resources;
- be aware of the role and importance of evidence-based research.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Generic skills are embedded throughout all modules offered. Communication skills are developed through written reports, and through individual and group presentations. Some modules specifically focus on IT skills (e.g. Geographical Information Systems (GIS)).

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Assessment methods

Assessment of generic skills is formative and summative, through coursework, and (in the case of written communication) written examinations.

Subject Specific Practical Skills (optional)

Having successfully completed this programme you will be able to:

- use appropriate techniques, including computer software, to produce clear diagrams and maps;
- collect, analyse and understand data in physical geography, using a range of techniques
- understand the ways in which geographical data of various types can be combined, interpreted and modelled;
- understand the importance of data integrity, quality assurance and archiving.

Structure of Minor

1 Typical content

Normally, full-time students will normally take five modules in Geography over the three years, with most modules worth 7.5 ECTS (15 CATS), made up of lectures, practicals, and, mostly, your own independent study.

2 Special Features of the programme

None

3 Details of the minor

You may not select modules that are incorporated as core or compulsory on your Major programme of study.”

Back Tracking and Forward Tracking: Back tracking and forward tracking by one level are allowed up to 15 ECTS/30 CATS.

Teaching is research led at all levels. As a result, the modules on offer vary from year to year as staff research interests and priorities develop and change. The following is an indicative list of the modules on offer to students wishing to study for the Minor.

Specific modules are subject to change each year.

	BSc Geography
Year 1	<i>Choose one from:</i> GEOG1001 The Earth System GEOG1002 Geomorphological Processes GEOG1011 Dangerous World
Year 2	<i>Choose two from:</i> GEOG2010 Introductory GIS GEOG2006 Quaternary Environmental Change GEOG2032 Global climate change: science, impacts and policy GEOG2007 Remote Sensing for Earth Observation GEOG2037 Global Water Resources GEOG2040 Coastal Landscapes and Human Interactions

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Year 3	<i>Choose two from:</i> GEOG3004 Arctic and Alpine Geomorphology GEOG3005 Reconstructing Palaeoenvironmental Change GEOG3006 Advanced GIS GEOG3020 Glaciers and Glaciation GEOG3023 River Basin Management and Restoration GEOG3047 Complex Social-ecological Systems GEOG3048 Desert Landscapes: Aeolian Processes and Change GEOG3057 Adapting to Climate Change and Weather Hazards GEOG3065 Terrestrial Ecosystems: Carbon Modelling and Monitoring GEOG3066 Experimental Geomorphology for Real World Challenges GEOG3067 Applied GIS: Using GIS in the Workplace GEOG3068 Biogeography GEOG3069 Water, People and Environment: Cambodia Field Course
Prerequisites	GEOG3006 Advanced GIS can only be selected if GEOG2010 Introductory GIS has previously been taken GEOG3067 Applied GIS: Using GIS in the Workplace can only be selected if GEOG2010 Introductory GIS has previously been taken GEOG3057 Adapting to Climate Change and Weather Hazards can only be selected if GEOG1011 Dangerous World and GEOG2032 Global climate change: science, impacts and policy have previously been taken
Recommended	For GEOG3005 Reconstructing Palaeoenvironmental Change , and GEOG3020 Glaciers and Glaciation it is recommended you have prior learning from GEOG2006 Quaternary Environmental Change .

Note: There are no prerequisites for modules in levels 2 and 3 (with the exception of Advanced GIS) but students should note that for some modules additional background reading may be required prior to undertaking the module and some level 3 modules have recommended level 2 modules. Students are advised to discuss this with module convenors prior to registering for the module.

4 Progression Requirements

The programme of which this Minor comprises a part follows the University's regulations for Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Undergraduate and Integrated Masters Programmes as set out in the University Calendar: <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/progression-regs.html>

In order to qualify for the Minor, students must pass all modules that make up the Minor. There is no provision for students to be referred in a Minor module solely for the purpose of qualifying for the Minor.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the Minor and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information can be found on the Minor website at: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/uni-life/learning-teaching/customise-your-degree/minors.page>.

Revision History

1. 22/07/2013
2. 25/11/2013
3. CQA team 28th April 2014
4. CQA team July 2015
5. CQA team July 2016
6. Jo Nield August 2017