Courses

Single Honours
BSc Environmental Geoscience three years F640
BSc Geology three years F600
BSc Geophysics three years F661
BSc Palaeontology and Evolution three years CF17
MSci Environmental Geoscience four years F641
MSci Environmental Geoscience with Study Abroad four years F644
MSci Geology four years F603
MSci Geology with Study Abroad four years F609
MSci Geophysics four years F662
MSci Geophysics with Study Abroad four years F663
MSci Palaeontology and Evolution four years CF16

Why study earth sciences at Bristol?

Earth scientists study the solid Earth, its atmosphere and hydrosphere, structure, processes, history, materials and the evolution of life upon it. Earth sciences at Bristol encompass geology, environmental geoscience, geophysics and palaeontology, and have strong links with chemistry, physics, mathematics, geography and biology. It is an excellent subject to study if you enjoy a holistic approach to science. The whole earth is our laboratory and fieldwork is an integral part of our teaching.

The school has around 260 undergraduate and 120 postgraduate students who are taught and supervised by 35 academic staff members, the majority of whom have high international research profiles in the fields of volcanology, deep earth processes, palaeobiology, geochemistry, climate change, geophysics and tectonics. Teaching is cutting edge and our students are problem solvers, with quantitative skills much sought after by employers.

‘Bristol’s School of Earth Sciences has world-leading researchers across all subject fields and staff are always keen for undergraduates to get involved. I have had the opportunity to work with and get to know many faculty members which has opened doors for my life after university. The staff and students love their work so it is a very positive atmosphere.’

Sam (MSci Geology with Study Abroad)

This leaflet contains information for students planning to start university in autumn 2018. We have made every effort to ensure all details are correct at the time of going to press (June 2017). However, since this information is subject to change, you are advised to check the University’s website, bristol.ac.uk/ug-study, for the latest updates.
Our four degree streams – geology, geophysics, environmental geoscience, and palaeontology and evolution – can be studied as a BSc in three years, or as an MSci in four years. The MSci courses in geology, geophysics and environmental geoscience can also be studied with a year abroad.

Geology degrees deal specifically with the solid earth, its physics and chemistry, and ultimately, life on Earth through time. Environmental geoscience investigates the solid earth and how it interacts with the atmosphere, hydrosphere and biosphere. It also deals with issues such as global climate change and remediying damage caused by human activity and industry.

Geophysics teaches you about the history, structure and dynamics of the earth system and how the inaccessible parts of the earth can be studied through remote sensing techniques such as seismology.

Geology and geoscience students have a common first year that lays firm foundations for progressing through the course, covering mathematics, physics and chemistry, and introducing computer programming and fieldwork skills. Following year one, some units are specific to your subject, while some are common to all our degree streams. Imaging and Mapping the Earth, for example provides an introduction to satellite remote sensing, applied geophysics and geographical information systems. It demonstrates how to use advanced geophysics and remote sensing to survey both Earth’s surface and subsurface, monitor natural hazards, prospect for natural resources, and help archaeological and engineering site investigations.

In year three, you can choose 60 per cent of your course content. In year four of an MSci degree you will devote half your time to an advanced research project, the subject of which is a guided choice. In this unit you will work closely with established researchers in the school in order to design and plan an individual experimental project that may be largely field- or specimen-based or of a theoretical character. Projects will provide an insight to the research approach and allow you to place your results in the context of existing work, as well as presenting and discussing the results of your findings so they cross the gap between merely reading what others have said and contributing your own observations and ideas to the scientific world. These projects are frequently of publishable standard and give students an immediate trajectory into a research career or industry.

Our palaeontology and evolution degrees are the same for the first three years. In year one, you will spend one third of your time studying biology and two thirds studying geology. From year two onwards, you will take a small number of mandatory units with many optional units to choose from. One unit unique to this subject stream is Mesozoic Stratigraphy and Palaeontology Fieldwork. This is devoted to palaeontological, sedimentological and stratigraphic observations of terrestrial and marine environments on the Dorset Coast and Isle of Wight. It allows you to develop the field skills necessary for depositional and palaeoenvironmental contextualization, interpreting phenomena such as fossilisation (taphonomy), palaeoenvironmental assessment and stratigraphic correlation through use of depositional, cyclic and bio-stratigraphic tools.

Teaching is through a mixture of lectures, laboratory practical classes, tutorials and field classes. We are a small school, with an undergraduate student: staff ratio of 8:1, so we get to know our students well. You can expect an average of 20 contact hours per week. Assessment is through a combination of coursework and examination.

93% of students were satisfied with the overall quality of the course.
National Student Survey 2016, BSc Environmental Geoscience.
Careers and graduate destinations

Our graduates have excellent career prospects and an outstanding reputation among employers in the sector. Some graduates move out of the subject area and join diverse graduate schemes, or go on to further study; our MSci graduates usually win funded PhD positions both here and in other universities with ease.

A science degree from a top-ranking university is an excellent investment both for students and for employers. Our geology, environmental geoscience and two of our geophysics degrees are accredited by The Geological Society of London, our professional body. The MSci in Geophysics with Study Abroad is in the process of undergoing accreditation. An accredited degree can be counted towards the requirements for becoming a chartered geologist or scientist.

Many of our recent graduates contribute to our careers programme by coming back to talk about their jobs, their research and their companies.

Making your application

Typical offer for BSc/MSci Geology and BSc/MSci Environmental Geoscience*

For other qualifications visit bristol.ac.uk/ug18-geoscience and bristol.ac.uk/ug18-geology which includes more information on BSc/MSci Palaeontology and Evolution.

A-levels AAB (contextual ABC†) including AB in a core science and a science subject, or ABB in three core sciences.‡

IB Diploma 34 points overall (contextual 31†) with 17 at Higher Level (contextual 15†) including 6, 5 at Higher Level in a core science and another science in any order or 32 points overall with 16 at Higher Level including 6,5,5 in three core science subjects.¶

English Language Profile C††

GCSEs English Language or Literature and Mathematics at grade B.

Typical offer for BSc/MSci Geophysics*

Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug18-geophysics for other qualifications.

A-levels AAB (contextual ABC†) including A in Mathematics and B in Physics.

IB Diploma 34 points overall (contextual 31†) with 17 at Higher Level (contextual 15†) including 6 in Mathematics and 5 in Physics at Higher Level.

English Language Profile C††

GCSEs English Language or Literature and Mathematics at grade B.

‑Core science subjects include Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Physics. Science subjects include Environmental Science, Geography, Geology and Psychology.

††For details of English language profiles, visit bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

Selection UCAS or Common Application.

Deferred entry Welcomed, but please seek advice about maintaining relevant skills.

*The typical offer is indicative only and the University accepts a wide range of qualifications. The information is correct at the time of printing (June 2017); however, we recommend you check the University’s website for the most up-to-date information: bristol.ac.uk/ug-study.

The University of Bristol has one of the best employment records in the UK. We are rated sixth in the UK in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2016/17 and are the third most targeted university by top UK employers (High Fliers Research, 2017).
Contact us

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If you have any questions about courses, applications or any aspect of being a UK or international student at Bristol please contact the Enquiries Team.

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University guide to the city of Bristol
bristol.ac.uk/citybristol

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