Visit days

bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/2021/geography/
The School of Geographical Sciences

You will thrive here if:

• you enjoy being challenged and you want a degree that requires you to be independent and creative.

• you want in-depth training in a range of geographical thinking, methods and practices and opportunities to apply these.

• you enjoy challenging your beliefs and preconceptions.

• you are interested in quantitative and computer-based work, and conceptual and theoretical work.

• you want to grapple with the latest research in geography.
Our teaching goals

- Our geography degrees are designed to develop independent, creative, and critical thinkers.

- Courses are built around progressive development of interdisciplinary geographical approaches to contemporary scientific, socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental concerns.

- Coherent and challenging curricula culminate in final year units at the leading edge of the discipline.
Pathways through the degree

Please note: unit choices are subject to change, please check online for latest options

bristol.ac.uk
Research-led teaching

- Geographical Sciences at Bristol is a rich and diverse integrative discipline that brings together the physical and human dimensions of the world in which we live.

- Our research is characterised by the global significance of the questions we ask.

- Our teaching programmes provide students with leading-edge, innovative courses taught by world leaders in their respective fields.
Geography teaching at Bristol

- **Lectures**: explanation of core topics, integrated readings.
- **Tutorials**: discussion, writing and presentation usually with 8-16 students
- **Practicals**: training in research methods, including hands-on exercises, computing and lab-work
- **Seminars**: discussion of ideas explored in the lectures and readings.
- **Fieldwork**: opportunities to put research skills to use in the field, collecting original data.

bristol.ac.uk
Contact hours

Typical contact hours per week in year one:
- 7-9 hours of Lectures
- 2 hours of Tutorials
- 2-4 hours of Practicals

May also have:
- Seminars
- Workshops

bristol.ac.uk
Example timetable for year one, week two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00-10.00</td>
<td>Key Concepts (physical) lecture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Geographical History, Thought and Practice lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00-11.00</td>
<td>Pastoral Tutorial</td>
<td>Quantitative Geography practical</td>
<td>No timetabled sessions on Wednesday afternoons - free for sport</td>
<td>World in Crisis lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-12.00</td>
<td>Key concepts (human) lecture</td>
<td>Geographical History, Thought and Practice lecture</td>
<td>Key Concepts practical</td>
<td>Key Concepts (physical) lecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00-1.00</td>
<td>Quantitative Geography lecture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Skills training tutorial - Reading for a degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-2.00</td>
<td>Open Unit lecture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00-3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Key Concepts practical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00-4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00-5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00-6.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

bristol.ac.uk
Final year example dissertation topics

Building a DEM-based model of the vulnerability of New York to inundation

Predicting the likely extent of inundation if Hurricane Sandy were to occur in 2100

Example of national prize-winning dissertation:
2019 History & Philosophy of Geography Research Group Dissertation Prize: Expanding the empirical repertoire of non-representational theory: a methodological reflection on creating a documentary film (Mitchell Wilson)
External Examiners’ Reports on our degrees

▪ “I have been highly impressed…by the high standards of work exhibited by the students – particularly some of the dissertations – and I suspect I have seen the work of some leading academic geographers of the future.”
  Prof. Chris Brunsdon (Nat. Uni. of Ireland)

▪ “I’ve gained a clear impression of excellent degree programmes, with coherent pathways taking students to very advanced research-led teaching, student work of very high standards…The best student work is outstanding including some dissertations that could form the basis of publications, and were a pleasure to read.”
  Prof. Mike Bentley (Durham)
Transferable skills – developed throughout your degree

- Independent, creative & critical thought
- Reading!
- High level writing and communication skills

- Quantitative & qualitative data analysis
- Interdisciplinary individual & group work
- Project design & execution

bristol.ac.uk
A high proportion of students obtain a ‘good’ degree (data for BSc Geography)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>First Class</th>
<th>2:1</th>
<th>Total students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016 / 17</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 / 18</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 / 19</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Royal Geographical Society accreditation

Bristol was in the first group of departments to be officially accredited by our professional body the Royal Geographical Society.

“… academically rigorous, research-led programme with a broad spectrum of geography and a variety of delivery and assessment methods. High standards are being maintained.”
Graduate employment

In 2016/17, 96% of our graduates were in work or further study (M.Sc. & Ph.D.) six months after graduating (95% in 2015/16). Of those in working, 80% were in professional/managerial roles.

Occupational Areas: Development Officer, Teacher, Lawyer, Researcher, Energy Analyst, Science Communicator, Medicine, Filmmaker, Risk Analyst, Policy Analyst, Environmental Auditor, Benefits Assistant, Marketing Trainee, Assurance Associate, Swine Flu Vaccination Co-ordinator, Graduate Planning Consultant, Graduate Trainee in Housing, Response Team Member, Claims Manager, Graduate Transport Planner, Business Development Consultant, Military, etc…
BSc Geography

Year 1

- An introduction to university-level physical and human geography for all students
- Open Units (choose one from several options)

- Tutorial System
- Group working and presentations
- Further skills development and feedback
- Pastoral care and student support – Academic assigned to each student throughout their degree.
Week one – Fieldtrip

- Three days immediately at the start of term
- Geography and social activities
Year one key concepts: Physical geography

The issues that will shape the future of our changing planet:
▪ How might ice sheets respond to a warming climate?
▪ Will we see more extreme events like flooding or droughts?
▪ How are life on Earth and the oceans contributing?

6 themes: Atmosphere, Freshwater, Ocean, Cryosphere, Biosphere, Geosphere

bristol.ac.uk
Year one key concepts: Human geography

Broad foundation in the key themes of Human Geography

▪ How can we understand current trends in migration?
▪ How have some countries gotten rich while others remain poor?
▪ How does culture shape everyday life?

4 themes: Historical, Cultural, Economical & Urban Geography
Year one: Introduction to quantitative methods

Numerical methods in Geography
- to introduce students to the distinctive nature of geographical data
- to introduce techniques, for the collation, analysis and display of geographical data
- to develop IT skills and to introduce IT facilities available in the School.
- weekly lectures and practical sessions.
Year one: Intro to geographical history, thought and practice


- Why Does Geography Do the Things it Does?
- What are the key ideas geographers use?
- What does it mean to do geography?

Two components:

- Word and World: A History of Geography, how it has been defined and practised, from Columbus to the Present.
- Devon Field course.
Year one: Fieldtrip to Devon

River flow gauging

Micro-Meteorology

Water quality an ecology
Year one: Skills programme

- Fortnightly skills sessions throughout Year one, including: reading and writing for a degree, graphics, study skills, exam preparation and scientific method.

- Delivered by special team of current Postgraduate Research Students and the Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies

- Taught in groups of approx 8-16

- Provides skills support for Geography assessments

bristol.ac.uk
Year two: Core methods and optional units

Philosophy
Geographies of Nature and Environment
State, Economy and Society

Core Methods Units

Fieldtrip (Arolla/Barcelona/Mallorca)
Group Research Project
Qualitative Methods
Spatial Modelling 2
Physical Geography Research Methods

Optional units – choose any 3, can mix human and physical

Floods & Flows
Fundamental Glaciology
Earth System

Please note: unit choices are subject to change, please check online for latest options
Year two: Floods, flows and erosion in river basins

Composed of:
1. Flood Hazards
2. Hillslope Processes

Taught by:
Lectures
Reading groups
Numerical modelling practicals
Lab experimental practical
Specialist tutorials

Main themes:
Flood inundation
Flood risk and hazards
Hillslope flow pathway generation
Hillslope topographic evolution

bristol.ac.uk
Year two: Fieldtrip to Arolla, Switzerland/Mallorca

Glacial Processes

Mountain Hydrology

Environmental Change

bristol.ac.uk
Year two: Fieldtrips to Barcelona/Krakow

Architecture and Place

Urban Agro-ecology

Island Geomorphology

bristol.ac.uk
Key themes you will have the option to study in year three

- How do food and energy production impact on air, soil, and water quality?
- How can we reduce human impacts on biodiversity and the services that ecosystems provide to society?
- What role do glacial systems play in the Earth system, how do they work, and how might they change?
- What causes drought, flooding and sea level change? How can we better predict future risk?
- How are cities formed and who do they work for?
- What impact does neighbourhood have on house prices?
- What role does food play in our understanding of the globalised world?
- Migration flows are increasingly evident between nations and regions. What really drives the movement of people?
Example year three optional unit

Ethnicity, Class, Housing and the City

- Interrogate the modern urban environment by understanding contemporary debates and historical developments
- Find out why segregation isn’t necessarily a bad thing
- How where you live effects who you are
- Why we misuse and misunderstand many of the environments we consume daily
- How to link your quantitative skills to empirical arguments
- Taught through a combination of lectures, active seminars and films.
Why choose Bristol for geography:

- Choice of physical, human or mixed at end year one
- Open units in year one
- RoleSCALE of dissertation
- Study Abroad and GSCE courses
- Research-led teaching
- Quantitative training throughout all three years
- Broad range of Geographical approaches in both Human and Physical Geography
- Core fieldtrip costs covered by fees (no hidden costs)
- We welcome students with post-school experience (deferred entry)
“[Bristol] Geography consolidated its position as the leader in its subject”

*Times & Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018*