University of BRISTOL

School of Earth Sciences

Important Information for New Undergraduate Students 2026/27

Version 1: August 2026

EARTH SCIENCES

www.bristol.ac.uk/earthsciences

Contents

Before You Arrive 3
- Important Dates 3
- Forms 4
- Additional Study Support 4
- Computers and Laptops 5
- Clothing 5

When You Arrive 6
- Induction and Welcome Week Activities 6
- Fieldwork Equipment 6

Beginning your studies 7
- First Year Units 7
- First Year Book Lists 7

Other Useful Information 10
- Student Societies 10
- Useful Contacts 10
- Checklist 10

Before You Arrive

Important Dates

Please pay particular attention to the mandatory field course dates. We work hard to schedule fieldwork during term-time but this is not always possible so some fieldwork can take place during vacation periods. You must ensure that you are able to attend.

Dates	Activity
14 to 18 September 2026	Welcome Week
21 September to 18 December 2026	Teaching Block 1 (Weeks 1 - 12)
14 to 18 December 2026	Teaching Block 1 Assessment Period (exams) There may be other forms of assessment and workshops in this period too.
21 December 2026 to 8 January 2027	Winter Vacation
11 to 15 January 2027	Teaching Block 2 Preparation Week Use this time to check Blackboard courses and revise material from Teaching Block 1 so you're ready for teaching. There may also be activities across the University planned for this week before teaching starts.
18 January to 30 April 2027	Teaching Block 2 (Weeks 13 - 24)
12 to 23 April 2027	You will attend fieldwork during this period including a two-night residential which may be held over weekends. Please do not make any plans during this period so that you can attend.
22 March to 9 April 2027	Spring Vacation
4 to 21 May 2027	Teaching Block 2 Assessment Period (exams)

Dates	Activity
20 to 30 July 2027	Resit and supplementary assessments You must pass all your first-year units to progress to the second year. In the event of you having failed units at the end of your first year or having been unable to complete assessments because of illness, you will need to take exams and/or submit coursework during this time. It is unwise to book holidays in the run-up to or during this period.
September 2027	There is a **mandatory** field course **prior to the start of your second year** for all Year 2 students. **Your dates will be made known as far as possible in advance, but you should be aware of this now and not plan any holidays in September 2026 before you return for Year 2.** Allocation of field course dates is dependent upon programme of study and thus a choice of dates cannot be offered.

Important dates, including term and vacation dates, can also be found on the University website.

Forms

All students need to complete the Student Declaration Form by **2pm on Friday 28 August.**

The School has a strict safety and behaviour policy in place to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all participants on field trips; it applies to **all** field trips. A copy of the policy is on the new student webpage, and you should read it before signing the declaration form.

Additional Study Support

You may have had study support at school, for example (but not limited to) extra time in exams. For this to continue at University you **must** contact the Disability Services team as soon as possible to discuss a Study Support Plan (SSP). See the disability website for more information and contact details. The School Disability Officer is happy to arrange orientation hours and question and answer sessions for students with a disability before Welcome Week, when the campus is quiet, for any who would find this helpful.

Computers and Laptops

You will find it invaluable to have your own laptop which you can bring to lectures and practical classes. Guidance on what to buy and how to set it up can be found on the IT webpages.

Either MacOS or Windows laptops can be used and the quoted minimum specifications on the University IT guidance page (16GB RAM, 500GB+ HDD) are adequate for use in Earth Sciences courses. We do use specialist software, but this will be provided at the point of need.

Tablets are not appropriate stand-ins; on screen keyboards are not viable for note taking or document preparation, and tablets are not able to run various software used in the course.

Clothing

You should make sure that you have warm outdoor clothing, walking boots with ankle support and a full set of waterproofs with you for day trips and residential field courses – the first of these will be in Week 7. We have a small amount of second-hand field clothing and also offer grants to students in receipt of a bursary to help cover costs if required. Contact fieldwork-earthsci-geog@bristol.ac.uk for more information.

When You Arrive

Near the start of term you will be given access to your teaching timetable and student handbook, which will give you all the information you need about the School and the first year of your programme.

Induction and Welcome Week Activities

Please see the welcome week timetable on the new students webpage for all activities. Please note that most activities are mandatory including the school inductions.

Fieldwork Equipment

As an Earth Science undergraduate, you will be undertaking a variety of practical and fieldwork classes throughout your studies. There are several items of equipment which you will need to enable you to participate in your programme, as indicated in the list below.

The School will provide the equipment for the duration of your studies with us free of charge, however you will be asked to pay the cost price of replacement for any losses. A new field notebook will be supplied when you present a full, or almost full, one. If you already have some of the items on the list we will provide the remainder.

Your equipment pack will be provided before your first field class. All equipment, except for your notebook(s) and whistle, must be returned when you leave the School.

Fieldwork equipment list

- ☐ Acid dropper bottle
- ☐ All weather writer
- ☐ Birefringence chart (Liverpool)
- ☐ Card - Grainsize
- ☐ Card - Igneous rocks
- ☐ Card - Sedimentary rocks
- ☐ Card - Metamorphic rocks
- ☐ Compass / clinometer
- ☐ Hand lens (Chrome x 10) Viking
- ☐ Hard hat
- ☐ High visibility vest
- ☐ Field notebook
- ☐ Safety goggles / spectacles
- ☐ Tape measure
- ☐ Whistle

Beginning your studies

Teaching is face-to-face, with lectures, tutorials, practicals and field classes. Attendance is monitored.

First Year Units

Each academic year, students take and are required to pass 120 credit points (cp) worth of units. Students are expected to undertake 100 learning hours for every 10cp (this includes lectures, practicals, fieldwork, independent work and revision). Mandatory units are core units that students must take in order to be eligible for the programme award. All units are mandatory in Year 1. You can find out more about the units in the programme and unit catalogue.

Environmental Geoscience BSc, Environmental Geoscience MSci, Environmental Geoscience with Study Abroad MSci
Geology BSc, Geology MSci, Geology with Study Abroad MSci

EASC10006 Physics and Chemistry for Earth Scientists (20cp)
EASC10010 Environmental Sustainability and Resources (20cp)
EASC10011 Dynamic Earth (20cp)
EASC10012 Earth's Evolution (20cp)
EASC10013 Skills for Earth Scientists (20cp) (includes day and residential field courses)
EASC10014 Our Habitable Planet (20cp)

Palaeontology and Evolution BSc, Palaeontology and Evolution MSci

Earth Sciences unit codes begin with EASC and Biology unit codes with BIOL.

EASC10006 Physics and Chemistry for Earth Scientists (20cp)
EASC10011 Dynamic Earth (20cp)
EASC10012 Earth's Evolution (20cp)
EASC10013 Skills for Earth Scientists (20cp) (includes day and residential field courses)
BIOL10010 Diversity of Life Part A (20cp)
BIOL10007 Diversity of Life Part B (20cp)

First Year Book Lists

You do not have to buy the textbooks listed. Most books are available to borrow from the Earth Sciences library and most can also be viewed online. If you wish to buy anything before you arrive, you should choose from the essential or recommended lists.

Physics and Chemistry for Earth Scientists (taken by all students)

Custom material will be provided online. Two optional textbooks are available in the library to support mathematics covered in the course.

Dynamic Earth and Earth's Evolution (taken by all students)

Recommended:

- Benton, M.J. & Harper, D.A.T. An Introduction to Palaeobiology and the Fossil Record (2nd ed.). Wiley Blackwell, 2020
- Henderson, P. and Henderson, G.M. The Cambridge Handbook of Earth Science Data. Cambridge; University Press, 2009
- Marshak, S. Earth: Portrait of a Planet. W. W. Norton & Co, 2015
- Grotzinger, J. & Jordan, T. Understanding Earth (7th ed.). Freeman, 2014
- Nichols, G. Sedimentology and stratigraphy. Wiley Blackwell, 2009
- Woodcock N.H. and Strachan R.A. Geological History of Britain and Ireland (2nd ed.). Wiley, 2012
- Barnes, J.W. & Lisle, R.W. Basic geological mapping (4th ed.). Wiley, 2013. (for mapping classes)

Background reading:

- Bennison, G.M., Olver, P.A., Mosely, K.A. An introduction to geological structures and maps. Hodder Education, 2011
- Butler, B.C.M., Bell, J.D. Interpretation of geological maps. Longman Scientific & Technical, 1988
- Fortey, R.A. The Hidden Landscape: a journal into the geological past (2nd ed.). The Bodley Head, 2010.
- Park, R.G. Foundations of Structural Geology. Routledge, Taylor and Francis. 1997 (reprinted 2005)
- Spencer, E.W., Geologic maps: a practical guide to the interpretation and preparation of geologic maps. Macmillan 1993
- Stanley, S.M. Earth System History, W. H. Freeman, 2015.
- Tucker, M.E. Sedimentary petrology: an introduction to the origin of sedimentary rocks. (3rd ed.). Blackwell, 2001. E-book available.

Our Habitable Planet (taken by Environmental Geoscience and Geology students only)

Essential:

- Bryants, E. Natural Hazards. Cambridge University Press, 2005
- Kump, L.R., Kasting J.F. & Crane, R.G. The Earth System. Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2013

Recommended:

- Henderson, P. and Henderson, G.M. The Cambridge Handbook of Earth Science Data. Cambridge University Press, 2009

Background reading:

- Alexander, D. Natural disasters. UCL Press-Chapman and Hall, 1993

Environmental Sustainability and Resources (taken by Environmental Geoscience and Geology students only)

There is no single essential textbook; useful background reading is listed below.

Background reading:

- Bennett, M.R. & Doyle, P. Environmental Geology: Geology and the Human Environment. Wiley, 1997
- Henderson, P. and Henderson, G.M. The Cambridge Handbook of Earth Science Data. Cambridge University Press, 2009
- Miller, G.T. Jr. Living in the environment: principles, connections, and solutions (16th ed.). Brooks/Cole, 2009
- Robb, L. Introduction to Ore-Forming Processes. Blackwell Science Ltd., 2005

Biology units (taken by Palaeontology and Evolution students only)

Please contact the School of Biological Sciences – biologydept@bristol.ac.uk

Other Useful Information

Student Societies

Our societies are organised by students to bring Earth Sciences undergraduates, postgraduates and staff together through social events, fieldtrips and sporting activities. Find out about all student societies through the Students Union.

- Dino Soc - the student palaeontology society
- BUGGS - the Bristol University Geology & Geoscience Society

Useful Contacts

For all students

General queries: Magda Magro and Bec Vickery
earth-undergrad@bristol.ac.uk

Fieldwork and field equipment: Siân Jones
fieldwork-earthsci-geog@bristol.ac.uk

Disability Coordinator for Earth Sciences: Dr Mary Benton
earth-disability@bristol.ac.uk

School of Earth Sciences telephone number: +44 (0)117 455 1841
Please note you are advised to use email to contact us.

For Palaeontology and Evolution students

General enquiries about studying units in Biological Sciences
biologydept@bristol.ac.uk

Checklist

- ☐ Remember to complete and submit the online student declaration form by 2pm on Friday 28 August (see page 4)
- ☐ Remember to contact Disability Services if you need to arrange study support (see page 4)

We look forward to welcoming you to the School of Earth Sciences very soon!