

BSc Geography (Physical)
For students entering Part 1 in 2011/2

UCAS code: F840

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Geography
Faculty:	Science Faculty
Programme length:	3 years
Date of specification:	15/May/2013
Programme Director:	Dr Steve Musson
Programme Advisor:	Dr Steve Musson
Board of Studies:	Geography and Environmental Science
Accreditation:	None

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide undergraduate students with both subject-specific knowledge and general skills. It aims:

- To give students a thorough insight into the importance of a geographic perspective on physical processes, including the manner in which these processes operate at global, regional and local scales
- To impart knowledge of the theory and practice of physical geography, together with an ability to integrate different perspectives
- To encourage students to make appropriate use of theories and research findings from the physical sciences in understanding spatial phenomena
- To develop students' skills in applying theoretical concepts, knowledge and philosophies to the understanding of particular environments, spatial differences and to decision-making
- To develop understanding through fieldwork and other forms of experiential learning
- To develop skills in how to interpret, analyse and tackle geographical issues
- To develop interdisciplinary aspects of knowledge
- To promote students' ability to engage in lifelong learning.

Transferable skills

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to career management, communication, information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and the use of information technology and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside their curriculum.

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills in line with the University's Strategy for Learning and Teaching. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to communication, interpersonal skills, learning skills, numeracy, self-management, use of IT and problem solving, and encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside the curriculum.

Programme content

The profile which follows states which modules are compulsory, together with lists of optional modules from which the student must make a selection in consultation with their programme adviser. Students must take a combination of compulsory and optional modules making a total of 120 credits in each Part of the programme. The number of credits for each module is shown after its title. At Part 1 students may take all their modules in Geography or opt to take modules in other departments. In Part 2 students take a combination of core compulsory and optional modules. Part 3 students write a dissertation (40 credits) and select from a list of Geography modules that are approved each year. The actual list of modules available may vary from year to year according to staffing.

Part 1 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

<i>Code</i>	<i>Module title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GG1GT	Geographical Techniques	20	4
GG1C	Climatology	10	4

GG1D	Hydrology	10	4
GG1GS	Geomorphology	10	4
GG1EI	Environmental Issues	10	4
ES1F2	Biogeography and Soils	10	4

Optional modules (50 credits):

GG1SC	Social and Cultural Geography	10	4
GG1HGE	Geography and the Global Economy	10	4
GG1HPP	People and Places in the Global Economy	10	4
GG1HGT	Human Geography Skills and Concepts	20	4

Plus approved modules from other departments

Part 2 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

<i>Code</i>	<i>Module title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GG2RTG	Research Training for Geographers	20	5
GG2CDS	Career Development Skills	10	5

Students must select one of the following field classes (20 credits):

GG2FP	Physical Geography Field Class	20	5
<i>or</i>			
GG2FC	Crete Field Class	20	5
<i>or</i>			
GG2FC2	Crete September Field Class	20	5
<i>or</i>			
GG2FSE	South-East England Field Class	20	5

Optional modules (70 credits):

GG2WP	Web Page Development	10	5
GG2SDA	Spatial Data in the Digital Age	20	5
GG2H1	Geographies of Development	10	5
GG2CIP	Culture, Identity and Place	10	5
GG2ER	Energy Resources	10	5
GG2GRO	Growth, Degrowth and Sustainability	10	5
GG2MES	Monitoring the Earth from Space	20	5
GG2P1	Geomorphological Hazards	10	5
GG2BC	Biogeography and Conservation	10	5
GG2P3	Human Activity and Environmental Change	10	5
GG2P5	Hydrological Processes	10	5

Plus up to 20 credits of approved modules from other Departments, including the Institution Wide Language Programme

Part 3 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

Compulsory module

<i>Code</i>	<i>Module title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
GV3D	Dissertation	40	6
<i>Or</i>			
GV3DSA	Dissertation (Study Abroad Students)	40	6

Optional modules (must total 80 credits)

GV344	Culture and Development in Africa	20	6
GV3RSD	Resilience and Sustainable Development	20	6
GV3NRR	Neighbourhood Renewal and Regeneration	20	6
GV321	Work, Employment and Development	20	6
GV362	Water Resources	20	6
GV361	Aquatic Environments: Problems and Management	20	6
GV342	Environmental Modelling	20	6
GV3AP	Air Pollution, Effects and Control	20	6
GV3CC	Climate Change	20	6
GV340	Biodiversity and Conservation Field Class	20	6
GV3ER1	ERASMUS Exchange Programme	20	6
GV3ER2	ERASMUS Exchange Programme	20	6
GV3ER3	ERASMUS Exchange Programme	20	6
GV3ER4	ERASMUS Exchange Programme	20	6

Alternatively, you may take up to 20 credits of other modules in the University, subject to availability and following consultation with your Personal Tutor or Programme Advisor. This includes the Institution-Wide Language Programme.

Progression requirements

To gain a threshold performance at Part 1 a student shall normally be required to achieve an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1, and a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits. In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student shall normally be required to achieve a threshold performance at Part 1 and achieve an average mark of 40% across the modules GG1C, GG1D, GG1GS, GG1SB and GG1EI.

To gain a threshold performance at Part 2 a student shall normally be required to achieve: an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2, and a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits. In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student shall normally be required to achieve a threshold performance at Part 2.

Assessment and classification

The University's honours classification scheme is:

<i>Mark</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
70% - 100%	First class
60% - 69%	Upper Second class
50% - 59%	Lower Second class
40% - 49%	Third class
35% - 39%	Below Honours Standard
0% - 34%	Fail

For the University-wide framework for classification, which includes details of the classification method, please see: www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/Policies/exa-class.aspx

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is

Three-year programmes

Part 2 one-third
Part 3 two-thirds

There are a whole variety of teaching and assessment methods used in the degree programme modules. A typical module would involve lectures and either seminars or practicals. Many of the modules are assessed with some continuous assessment and a written exam. However, a number of modules are totally continuously assessed or totally written exam.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:
Grade C or better in English Language and Mathematics in GCSE/O Level
UCAS Tariff: 320 points, 100 points in Geography.
Total points must include at least 2 A2 passes.
Total points exclude Key Skills and General Studies.
International Baccalaureate: 31 points including 6 in Geography
Irish Highers: BBBB

We welcome deferred-entry applications from those wanting to take a gap year between school and university, and from mature students and students with special needs, for whom we may take a broader view of entry requirements. For those with special needs we are happy, when necessary, to take a flexible approach to field-work and practical work requirements, and to make appropriate arrangements for note taking and examinations.

Admissions Tutor: Dr G Griffiths

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see www.reading.ac.uk/student

Career prospects

A Reading geography degree is designed to assist graduate employment in three ways:

Firstly, it provides a basis for employment in fields directly or indirectly related to the content of the degree course, though this often involves a post-graduate qualification. Examples are jobs in teaching (in universities, colleges, schools and field centres), regional and economic planning, computing, transport management, conservation, land evaluation, civil engineering.

Secondly, a Reading geography degree enhances employment prospects because of the rigorous academic training regardless of the subject matter. Again, most other jobs usually involve further (in-service) training. Examples of such careers include insurance, banking, accountancy, civil service, armed forces and commercial management.

Thirdly, employers are attracted by the impressive quantitative/numeracy skills acquired in the degree programme, together with their experiences in computer usage, field projects (at home and abroad) and the planning/execution of the major dissertation research programme. Employers are seeking the flexible, skilled and adaptable geography graduates produced at Reading.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

As part of the Part 3 programme, students can spend one term, either term 7 or term 8, studying at a European University under the ERASMUS exchange scheme. Study undertaken abroad substitutes for study in Reading.

There is a well-established and active programme in Human Geography with the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Links have also been established with the University of Trier Germany. There are Physical Geography links with the University of Aarhus (Denmark). The Erasmus programmes are co-ordinated by Dr S Lloyd-Evans.

Employability

This degree programme offers placement opportunities for students. Additionally, we support those who wish to arrange placements of their own. Established opportunities include the University of Reading UROP scheme, where students work alongside research staff during the summer vacation. Students also act as Community Service Volunteers, as Royal Geographical Society Geography Ambassadors have visited local schools as part of the AIM Higher scheme. In collaboration with CAS, we support students who wish to arrange their own placements at all points in their degree programme. This includes prospective graduate employers, such as industry, schools, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations. It is also possible to use the ERASMUS European exchange scheme to undertake a work placement in another European country. Students may draw directly on staff contacts, or call upon knowledge of possible opportunities, gained by working with similar organisations. Students are encouraged to incorporate their placements into their undergraduate dissertations where appropriate.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. Processes, concepts and techniques in physical geography
2. The nature of change and the significance of spatial relationships within human and physical environments
3. Fundamental concepts of physical geography, such as processes operating in the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, pedosphere and biosphere
4. Geographic perspectives on physical processes and their interaction at global, regional and local scales.
5. Geographic perspectives on social and physical processes and their interaction at global, regional and local scales.
5. The main methodological strategies used in the analysis of geographical information.
6. The application of geographical concepts, techniques and expertise to problem solving.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Most of the knowledge required for the basic topics is discussed in formal lectures supported by smaller group discussions and practicals

At Part 2 knowledge is also gained through a 1-week fieldclass and practical work.

In Part 3 the specialised option modules include writing detailed assessments of set topics, making oral presentations and joining in group discussion.

Assessment

Most knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework and unseen formal examinations. Oral presentations also contribute.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - able to:

1. Think logically
2. Develop a reasoned argument
3. Organise tasks into a structured form
4. Abstract and synthesise information
5. Critically judge and evaluate evidence
6. Assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and policies
7. Transfer appropriate techniques and knowledge from one subject area to another
8. Organise and reflect upon their own learning
9. Recognise the moral and ethical issues involved

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The need to think logically and analytically permeates the compulsory modules in the course. Skills 2-7 are developed in essay writing, and continuously assessed project work and the dissertation. 8 is developed throughout the entire programme. 9 is developed both in discussion groups, readings and written work.

The more specialist topics provide many opportunities to apply and develop these skills through the analysis of a range of problems in a

in academic and policy debates.

C. Practical skills - able to:

1. Present a chain of reasoning
2. Apply theoretical concepts and knowledge to the understanding of particular environments and spatial differences and to decision-making
3. Analyse geographic problems using a variety of techniques and principles
4. Evaluate policies from a geographic standpoint
5. Communicate both orally and in writing critical analysis of geographic and environmental issues
6. Plan, organise and write a report on an independent project
7. Plan and undertake field surveys
8. Analyse data gathered from the field and be aware of its limitations

D. Transferable skills - able to:

1. Use IT (word-processing, spreadsheets databases, email and www))
2. Apply skills of numeracy, graphicity and computation to data analysis
3. Communicate ideas in a logical way in both writing and speech
4. Give oral presentations
5. Contribute to group discussions of a geographic problem
6. Use library resources both on- and off-line
7. Manage time
8. Plan career strategy.

wide variety of contexts.

Assessment

1-6 are covered extensively in the core modules; 7-9 are given wide scope in the optional modules.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Modules concentrate on formal geographic reasoning. Problem solving forms an important part of class work especially in Parts 2 and 3.

In geography the ability to use all these skills is developed through essay writing, practicals, field work and small group discussions.

The assessed work in the specialised options involves writing detailed assessments of set topics.

Assessment

All skills are tested through a combination of coursework, including both problem solving and essays, and through unseen examinations. 6 is assessed directly by means of the large number of essays prepared in Parts 1, 2 and 3. It is also assessed in Part 2 projects and the Dissertation.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The use of IT is initiated in the Part 1 IT and Statistic module and further developed in the Part 2 Geographical Techniques module. Word processing is required throughout the degree programme

Seminars in Parts 2 and 3 involve group discussions and oral presentations. Part 2 work includes preparation of group projects

Library and internet resources have to be used continuously in the preparation of essays and project work

The highly structured system of deadlines for assessed work requires good time management

Career planning is taught through a Part 2 Career Management Skills course with lectures and self paced computer-based assignments. Also, one-to-one meetings with career staff can be arranged.

Assessment

IT skills are assessed directly at Part 1. Most skills are tested indirectly through the preparation of course and project work.

Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to

modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.