

Programme specification

BSc (Hons) Geography



| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>School:</i> | Humanities, Religion and Philosophy |
| <i>Entry in:</i> | 2017/8 in: September |
| <i>Awarding institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Teaching institution:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Delivery location:</i> | York St John University |
| <i>Programme/s accredited by:</i> | Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) |
| <i>Exit awards:</i> | Certificate of Higher Education Geography Diploma of Higher Education Geography BSc (Ord) Geography |
| <i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i> | FF84 |
| <i>Joint Honours combinations:</i> | Not applicable |
| <i>QAA benchmark group(s):</i> | Geography |
| <i>Mode/s of study:</i> | Full-time for 3 years Part-time for 6 years |
| <i>Language of study:</i> | English |

Introduction and special features

Geography has immediate relevance to the most pressing issues facing society in the twenty-first century. Concerns such as globalisation and its unequal impacts, growing population and resource imbalances, geopolitical instability, conflict and migration, and global economic change, ecological pressures, environmental hazards, climate change and how we should respond to it are central to the subject. The BSc (Hons) Geography offers a challenging and exciting curriculum that enables you to develop an in-depth, critical understanding of such issues, combined with the skills to aid future employment. The course is designed to ensure breadth of coverage across human geography and physical geography at all levels, yet build your specialist knowledge through the degree. Social geography, cultural geography, geomorphology and biogeography all feature, along with human/environment interactions, particularly in the form of environmental hazards and environmental sustainability.

This programme has been accredited by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). Accredited degree programmes contain a solid academic foundation in geographical knowledge and skills, and prepare graduates to address the needs of the world beyond higher education. The accreditation criteria require evidence that graduates from accredited programmes meet defined sets of learning outcomes, including subject knowledge, technical ability and transferable skills.

Teaching emphasizes real-world relevance, mixing class-based sessions with field trips, guest lectures from professionals in relevant fields, and opportunity to gain some professional experience for yourself. Fieldwork includes day visits in the City of York and further afield, as well as residential fieldwork at all three levels. The residential trips, which include UK and overseas destinations, are a core part of the curriculum, with transport and accommodation costs covered by your University tuition fees. (For students who are unable to participate in residential fieldwork, alternative activities and assessments will be available.) The *Geographers' Professional Practice* module provides a specific opportunity

for you to embark on an individual project or placement relevant to your anticipated career and interests.

While you are learning about the world through the subject content, you will develop a range of skills through the degree. These include geographical skills such as cartography, the use of Geographical Information Systems, skills in data analysis and interpretation, research and fieldwork. Generic/transferable skills are also important: critical thinking, constructing an argument, decision-making, time management, self-management and interpersonal skills are all developed through the course.

Geography is undoubtedly the 'subject for our times'. Retaining a balance between human and physical geography throughout your degree, you will develop a good sense of science, social science and humanities approaches to knowledge. Few other graduates possess that combination. As your degree progresses, you will increasingly be able to question the world around you, uniquely positioned to think through the issues facing global society for yourself.

A degree in geography opens the door to a wide variety of careers. Surveys consistently show that geography is one of the most valued degree subjects by employers because of the broad range of skills and experience that geography graduates can demonstrate.

Distinctive Features

- A balance of human geography, physical geography and human/environment interactions
- Residential fieldwork at all levels
- Extensive use of non-residential fieldwork in the city of York and surrounding area
- Guest lectures from planners and policy-makers in the City of York and wider region
- A major emphasis on developing personal, study and 'transferable' skills to prepare you for employment or postgraduate study
- This programme has been accredited by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study. In addition, you must have:

- A demonstrable interest in, and enthusiasm for, geography. An A' Level (or equivalent) in Geography is not essential requirement. You can use your UCAS personal statement to provide evidence of your interest in the subject, along with any relevant past experience.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aims

The BSc (Hons) Geography programme aims to enable students to develop:

1. An informed and critical understanding of physical environments and processes
2. An informed and reflective appreciation of human environments, and the importance of space, place and scale for understanding justice and difference in the contemporary world

3. A range of skills in the collection, interpretation and analysis of geographical data
4. A range of transferable skills to equip them for employment, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.

Programme learning outcomes

FHEQ L4

By the end of FHEQ Level 4 students will have:

1. Knowledge and understanding of physical environments and processes
2. Knowledge and understanding of space and place in relation to identities and inequalities
3. An appreciation of how places are influenced by global contexts
4. Knowledge and understanding of the geography of the local area
5. Skills in interpreting the characteristics of space, place and landscape in a fieldwork setting
6. Skills in communicating their understanding and ideas in a variety of ways
7. A range of transferable skills to equip them for further study and employment

FHEQ L5

By the end of FHEQ Level 5 students will have:

1. Knowledge and critical understanding of key themes and debates in geography
2. A detailed and informed understanding of the reciprocal relationships between society and the biophysical environment
3. An appreciation of geography as dynamic, plural and contested
4. An understanding of methodologies for collecting and analysing data, and the ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of individual methods
5. The ability to apply concepts, theories and ideas to different contexts (including, where appropriate, an employment context)
6. Effectively communicated information, ideas, arguments and interpretations in a manner appropriate to the task and audience
7. Furthered their transferable skills including organisation, time-management, decision-making and the ability to construct a coherent argument

FHEQ L6

By the end of FHEQ Level 6 students will have:

1. A systematic understanding and critical knowledge of specialist areas of human and physical geography, including an engagement with ideas that are at the forefront of the discipline
2. Capacity to develop their own understanding of complex issues, with a sensitivity to both local contingencies and broader (e.g. national or global) influences
3. An appreciation of diverse approaches to the generation of knowledge and understanding of the world around them
4. An ability to critically evaluate arguments, concepts and data, and communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions for a range of purposes and audiences
5. Transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares them for employment or further study

In addition to the above, Honours students will have:

6. Transferable skills to an advanced level that prepares them for employment or further study

Programme structure

The Geography programme is designed to ensure that you develop knowledge, understanding and skills across the breadth of the subject.

In Level 4 (year 1 for full-time students) you will take six 20-credit modules. Three of these introduce you to key ideas and debates in physical and human geography: *Ecosystems and Biogeography*; *Social & Cultural Geography*; and *Earth Systems and Geomorphology*. In the first semester you will take a module designed to introduce you to the norms and expectations of university-level study. This incorporates a residential field trip (UK based), so that you get to know the other geographers (students and staff) early in your degree. You also take a module focuses on developing your skills in mapping and cartography. Fieldwork is a central component of the year. Induction week includes fieldwork within the City of York, introducing you to each other and the city. During both semesters you will find yourself on day trips in the local region. The second semester then includes the *Geography Fieldwork Studies* module, through which you will learn more about geography's fieldwork traditions and further develop your own field research skills.

In Level 5 you again take six 20-credit modules. In the first semester you can choose between *Space & Society* (a social geography module) or *Culture & Landscape* (a cultural geography module), while also studying human/environment interactions through a module on *Environmental Hazards*. You can continue this theme in the second semester with *Sustainability: Global Environmental Challenges*, or *Cultural and Heritage Tourism* develops specialist knowledge on tourism. Alongside these modules there is an emphasis on developing your understanding of research and your own research skills. The *Student's Guide to Geographical Thought* module introduces you to a range of approaches to geographical research. The *Research Project* module involves residential fieldwork (in the UK or Europe) where you will work in small groups on a research project of your own design (under the guidance of a tutor). In the second semester you will undertake a period of professional practice with an appropriate geographical theme or setting (which you will be expected to arrange yourself, with the support and advice of a tutor), or a project related to professional geographical practice.

In Level 6 you take five modules. For the 40-credit *Geography Dissertation* you will work independently (guided by a tutor) on a piece of original research. *Cities in Transition* and *Habitat Management* develop your specialist knowledge in human geography and physical geography respectively. You also have a choice (in semester 1) between a module focusing on social & cultural understandings of 'nature' (*Nature/Culture*), and *Applied GIS*, which develops specialist technical skills and understanding of the applications of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to real-world problems and issues. Finally, you have a choice between residential fieldwork modules: the *International/Cross-Cultural Fieldwork* module has a human geography focus, while the *International/Environmental Fieldwork* module has an environmental focus. These involve residential fieldwork normally outside the UK. This is intended to be the culmination of your studies, enabling you to demonstrate a high level of skill in interpreting, understanding and representing contemporary environments and processes. (Alternative arrangements can be made for students who are unable to participate in international fieldwork.)

Modules for the Programme

| Code | Level | Semester | Title | Credits | Status of Module* |
|--------|-------|----------|--------------------------------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1GE303 | 4 | 1 | Mapping the Geographies of Yorkshire | 20 | C |
| 1GE302 | 4 | 1 | Ecosystems and Biogeography | 20 | C |

| | | | | | |
|--------|---|---------|--|----|----|
| 1GE304 | 4 | 1 | Critical Thinking and Academic Skills in Geography | 20 | C |
| 1GE305 | 4 | 2 | Social and Cultural Geography | 20 | C |
| 1GE307 | 4 | 2 | Earth Systems & Geomorphology | 20 | C |
| 1GE309 | 4 | 2 | Geography Fieldwork Studies | 20 | C |
| 2GE301 | 5 | 1 | Space and Society | 20 | O |
| 2GE302 | 5 | 1 | Culture and Landscape | 20 | O |
| 2GE304 | 5 | 1 | Environmental Hazards | 20 | C |
| 2GE305 | 5 | 1 | Geographical Thought | 20 | C |
| 2GE306 | 5 | 2 | Sustainability: Global Environmental Challenges | 20 | O |
| 2BMT02 | 5 | 2 | Cultural and Heritage Tourism | 20 | O |
| 2GE307 | 5 | 2 | Research Project | 20 | C |
| 2GE308 | 5 | 2 | Geographers' Professional Practice | 20 | C |
| 3GE302 | 6 | 1 and 2 | Geography Dissertation | 40 | CA |
| 3GE304 | 6 | 1 | Cities in Transition | 20 | C |
| 3GE306 | 6 | 1 | Nature/Culture | 20 | O |
| 3GE305 | 6 | 1 | Applied GIS | 20 | O |
| 3GE307 | 6 | 2 | Habitat Management | 20 | C |
| 3GE308 | 6 | 2 | International/Cross-cultural fieldwork | 20 | O |
| 3GE309 | 6 | 2 | International/Environmental Fieldwork | 20 | O |

***C**: Compulsory, **CP**: Compulsory for progression to the next level, **CA**: Compulsory for award, **O**: option or **E**: elective.

Teaching, learning and assessment

For all of our geography degrees, our aim is to get you *doing* geography for yourself from the outset: collecting and analyzing data, applying theories for yourself, and developing your skills and abilities – generating your own knowledge. We use a range of teaching styles and settings to support you in this. This includes lectures and seminars (small groups of students with a tutor), tutorials (one-to-one meetings with a tutor), fieldwork, ICT workshops, independent study outside of formal teaching sessions, collaborative learning (working with your fellow students) and using online resources through the university's Virtual Learning Environment. Teaching sessions include discussions, problem-solving exercises, group work, debates and data analysis exercises. Throughout your degree you are encouraged to take an active part in teaching sessions, rather than just being a passive receiver of information. Sometimes students are even asked to take the lead in sessions.

Assessment of this degree is entirely through coursework, with no exams. This is to ensure that the kinds of work you are doing through the degree reflect the kinds of work geographers undertake after graduation, in professional employment. You will encounter a wide range of assessment, including essays, reports (including fieldwork reports), verbal presentations and portfolios (potentially with some multimedia elements in them). Many modules are assessed through one piece of coursework, with development of this work supported throughout the course of the module. Feedback on assignments is designed to support you in your future learning, at the same time as assessing what you have already learned.

By your final year, you will be ready to take control of your learning for yourself. The dissertation involves you undertaking an independent research project (guided by a tutor) on a relevant topic of your choice, demonstrating self-reliance and developing skills of project management. The fieldwork module in your final semester brings together all that you will have learned through your degree, giving you plenty of scope to demonstrate your knowledge, abilities and creativity.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for undergraduate awards](#) apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography (revised December 2014)
- QAA UK Quality Code: Chapter A1

Further information

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

Date written / revised: 27/09/15 updated July 2017 to include accreditation detail and field trip info.

first delivery in 2016/7