Programme Specification

Geography [Frenchay]

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Contents

Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Geography [Frenchay]

Highest award: BSc (Hons) Geography

Interim award: BSc Geography

Interim award: DipHE Geography

Interim award: CertHE Geography

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Teaching institutions: UWE Bristol

Study abroad: No

Year abroad: Yes

Sandwich year: Yes

Credit recognition: No

School responsible for the programme: CATE School of Architecture and Environment, College of Arts, Technology and Environment

Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies:

Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)

Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)

Royal Geographical Society

Modes of delivery: Full-time, Sandwich

Entry requirements:

For implementation from: 01 September 2025

Programme code: FF8900

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: This programme examines the physical environment and its management by society. It studies the structures present within the natural world and the processes responsible for shaping them. Based on this understanding of environmental structures and processes, this programme identifies human impacts upon the environment and ways in which these can be managed sustainably. Students face contemporary environmental issues from local to global scales, focusing on the strategies and agencies involved in appropriate environmental management.

Features of the programme:

Educational Aims: The programme has the following aims:

To develop knowledge and understanding of the structures and processes associated with the natural environment and how human actions impact upon these.

To encourage a critical understanding of theories and philosophies that are used to explain how the natural environment functions.

To foster geographical thinking with its appreciation of spatial enquiry, areal differentiation, scale and system dynamics.

To produce graduates that can make informed judgments on the most appropriate means of managing the natural environment.

To produce graduates who have the analytical and communication skills necessary to be successful in a range of graduate employment positions.

Programme Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Knowledge and Understanding

A1. Natural processes responsible for shaping different aspects of the physical environment

A2. Challenges for how human society interacts with the natural environment

A3. Issues and challenges encountered by a globalised society

A4. How the natural environment, and the way it is managed by human society, varies over a range of temporal and spatial scales

A5. Appropriate strategies and techniques for managing different aspects of the natural environment

A6. Processes involved in performing research in physical geography

A7. The skills and actions necessary to acquire graduate-level employment

A8. Theoretical concepts behind the functioning of geographical information systems

Intellectual Skills

B1. Organize and carry out data collection and analysis to solve problems related to geography

B2. Construct arguments (using evidence from the academic geography community) capable of withstanding rigorous intellectual challenge

B3. Analyse arguments logically, identifying any flaws in reasoning and contrasting their merits

B4. Make informed decisions concerning appropriate environmental management techniques and strategies

B5. Carry out rigorous and original research to produce reliable answers to scientific research questions

B6. To think and learn creatively, prosecuting original ideas and identifying preferred learning styles

Subject/Professional Practice Skills

C1. Collect data in a range of laboratory and fieldwork environments, using a range of equipment

C2. Employ a range of techniques for analysing and interpreting data

C3. Design and execute an original and rigorous research project

C4. Make judgments on the suitability of different strategies and techniques for managing natural environments

C5. Operate geographical information systems in an informed and critical manner

C6. Write coherent and well supported academic essays

C7. Write rigorous scientific research reports

C8. Write appropriate environmental management reports

C9. Effectively deliver presentations with a combination of verbal and visual media

C10. Work in a range of natural environments with due regard for health and safety, risk assessment and ethics

C11. Submit competitive applications for graduate employment positions

Transferable Skills and other attributes

D1. Complete a range of, sometimes complex, tasks independently by thinking logically, demonstrating resilience and solving problems where necessary

D2. Work effectively within groups, with an ability to respect and understand other people's perspectives

D3. Effectively communicate knowledge through a variety of media including reports, essays and oral presentations

D4. Extract, process and present qualitative and quantitative information for a given purpose

D5. Demonstrate proficiency in transferable professional skills such as literacy, numeracy, graphicacy, computer literacy and cartography

D6. Manage own time and workload

D7. Take responsibility for own learning

D8. Reflect on own performance and respond positively to feedback

D9. Work flexibly across a wide range of topics

D10. Develop a strong sense of self and the life-long learning skills to make an ongoing contribution to society

Assessment strategy: The programme encompasses a range of assessment methods. The QAA Code of Practice on Assessment of Students identifies general principles that must be addressed at programme level:

Principles, procedures and processes of all assessments should be explicit, valid and reliable:
All assessments comply with the University Academic Regulations and Procedures. Principles, procedures and processes of assessment are described in module handbooks that are distributed to students at the start of each module.

The scheduling and amount of assessment is consistent with an effective and appropriate measurement of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes:
The programme team reviews assessment across each Level of the programme to prevent the submission of multiple assessments on the same submission date. Assessment submission dates are provided to students at the start of each academic year.
Appropriate measurement against learning outcomes is achieved by internal and external scrutiny of assessment, consistent with University Academic Regulations and Procedures.

Appropriate feedback is provided that promotes learning and facilitates improvement:
The nature of feedback varies according to the work undertaken. It includes: detailed comments on scripts, model answers and verbal feedback. Marking criteria are distributed to students when assessments are set. All procedures for setting, collecting, marking and returning students' assignments conform to the University' Academic Regulations and Procedures.

At all Levels, students may be assessed by a mix of coursework and examinations. Across the range of Level 1 modules, the coursework provides a variety of opportunities for students to demonstrate their abilities in both individual and group settings, whilst examinations test their abilities to articulate clearly and accurately the concepts and frameworks that are fundamental to their area of study. At Level 2, the coursework and examinations reflect the curriculum strategy of exploring concepts and developing skills. The assessments enable students to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge and the sophistication of their thinking. At Level 3 the coursework requires students to produce substantial, detailed and sophisticated pieces of work that reflect a wide range of reading and a high level of independent thought. The examinations test students' depth of knowledge, critical thinking and ability to sustain credible arguments.

These approaches are in keeping with the range of module learning outcomes and the diversity of student needs. Emphasis is placed on application of knowledge to investigate real-world problems and this is achieved via laboratory classes, computer-based learning, fieldwork, and group-based problem-solving activities. This approach requires them to think on their feet and to challenge their existing preconceptions, promoting adaptability and flexibility in seeking and receiving information, and preparing them for the likely way in which they will have to apply their knowledge in their professional careers.

Most Level 2 modules cannot be studied until a proportion of Level 1 modules specified in the curriculum have been successfully completed. These earlier modules are known as "pre-requisite" modules and they are specified to ensure a sound academic progression from broader knowledge into more applied subject areas.

Assessment of the teaching and learning within modules at all Levels is broadly divided into formative assessment and summative assessment. These include written assignments, reports, case studies, presentations, individual and group projects, examinations, and portfolios of competencies. This range of assessments is designed to:
Identify students' learning strengths and weaknesses and continuing performance

needs.
Expose students to a variety of assessment methods in order to promote inclusive learning.
Test students' ability to integrate theory and practice. allow students to demonstrate the learning achieved as measured against learning outcomes, QAA benchmarks, and professional competency. Encourage students to develop a deep approach to learning.

Through the use of reading strategies students are encouraged to progressively broaden their subject-specific knowledge. Formative and summative assessments are designed to promote a deeper understanding of material and, at Level 3, to facilitate application to professional practice.

The degree programme assesses students' achievement of the learning outcomes in each of the four areas of learning using the following methods:

A. Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific):

Student knowledge and understanding is assessed in a variety of coursework assessment methods, including essays, practical portfolios, environmental management plans, research proposals, research projects, poster presentations and verbal presentations.

Essays and practical activities are also undertaken under controlled examination conditions. These are largely in response to unseen papers, but some seen questions are also used.

B. Intellectual Skills (generic):

Coursework assessment of intellectual skills includes essays with formative and summative written feedback.

Presentations enable students to offer, test, modify and argue their point of view.

The professional presentation of management plans allows communication of personal views and the prosecution of original and creative ideas.

Research proposals and projects assess logical argumentation and critical reflection.

Essays to demonstrate intellectual skills are also undertaken under controlled examination conditions. These are largely in response to unseen papers, but some seen questions are also used.

C. Subject/Professional/Practical Skills (subject specific):

The coursework based assessment of practical skills occurs through a variety of mechanisms. These include practical portfolios, presentations describing practical work, and reports describing and critiquing the outputs from practical activities.

Field exercises and presentations, research proposals and research projects test the design and execution of geographical enquiry.

Practical skills are also tested under controlled conditions within practical exams.

D. Transferable Skills and other attributes (generic):

Students engage in a range of student-led activities that encourage them to work independently, notably their final year project.

Students engage in a range of modules that cover a range of geographical topics.

Along with specific training on separate communication skills, students are given formative feedback on their ability to communicate via a range of media.

Students work in groups to complete a range of different activities. This takes place

in the class-room, in the field and in students' own time.

Students receive training in a range of literacy, numeracy, graphicacy and computer literacy skills. In addition they receive formative feedback to help develop those skills.

Student support:

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1
Full time and sandwich students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Full Time and Sandwich)
Full time and sandwich students must take 120 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Full Time and Sandwich).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMA1-15-1	An Introduction to Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing 2024-25	15
UBGLYD-30-1	Dynamic Earth 2024-25	30
UBGLXD-30-1	Environmental Challenges 2024-25	30
UBGMVN-15-1	Field Study in Physical Geography 2024-25	15
UBGLXU-30-1	Geographies of Globalisation 2024-25	30

Year 2
Full time and sandwich students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 2.

Year 2 Compulsory Modules (Full Time and Sandwich)
Full time and sandwich students must take 60 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Full Time and Sandwich).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit

UBLFN9-15-2	Applied Geographic Information Systems (GIS) 2025-26	15
UBGMJ6-15-2	Professional Development 2025-26	15
UBGLYG-30-2	Researching Physical Geography 2025-26	30

Year 2 Optional Modules (Full Time and Sandwich)
Full time and sandwich students must take 60 credits from the modules in Optional Modules (Full Time and Sandwich).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMRR-15-2	Climate Change: Challenges for the 21st Century 2025-26	15
UBGMH3-15-2	Ecology 2025-26	15
UBGMKA-15-2	Environmental Assessment 2025-26	15
UBGMWN-15-2	Meteorology 2025-26	15
UBGMLE-15-2	Understanding Coastal Dynamics 2025-26	15
UBGMLV-15-2	Understanding River Dynamics 2025-26	15

Year 3
Full time students must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 3.
Sandwich students must take 15 credits from the modules in Year 3.

Students on the sandwich delivery can undertake a work placement year or a study abroad year. Students undertaking the work placement year take UBGLVX-15-3 Placement. Students
undertaking the study abroad year take UBGLWC-15-3 Study Abroad

In accordance with University academic regulations, to undertake the work placement or study abroad year students must obtain a minimum of 200 credits, at least 90 of which are at Level 2 or above. To undertake a work placement year, the student must be in approved employment for a minimum of 1000 work hours. To undertake a study abroad year, the student must be in approved study at an international institution and be enrolled for a minimum of 30 ECTS. Both the work placement and study abroad years must be authorised in advance by the programme leader.

Students who take UBGLVX-15-3 or UBGLWC-15-3 must take UBGMVD-15-3 (Independent Project) instead of the longer UBGMQD-30-3 Extended Independent Project.

Year 3 Compulsory Modules (Sandwich)
Sandwich students must take 15 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Sandwich).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGLVX-15-3	Placement 2026-27	15
UBGLWC-15-3	Study Abroad 2026-27	15

Year 3 Compulsory Project Modules (Full Time)
Full time students choose projects from Option A or Option B.

Year 3 Compulsory Project Modules (Full Time) - Option A
Full time students may take 30 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Full Time) - Option A.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit

UBGMQD-30-3	Extended Independent Project 2026-27	30

Year 3 Compulsory Project Modules (Full Time) - Option B
Full time students may take 30 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Full Time) - Option B.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMVD-15-3	Independent Project 2026-27	15
UBGMYQ-15-3	Professional Experience 2026-27	15

Year 3 Optional Modules (Full Time)
Full time students must take 90 credits from the modules in Optional Modules (Full Time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMJC-30-3	Advanced Geographical Expedition 2026-27	30
UBGMJT-30-3	Biogeography and Conservation 2026-27	30
UBGMSU-30-3	Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing Applications 2026-27	30
UBGMQR-30-3	Hazard and Disaster Management 2026-27	30
UBGMXD-30-3	Managing Rivers and Coasts 2026-27	30
UBGMME-30-3	Water and Energy Futures 2026-27	30

Year 4
Sandwich students must take 105 credits from the modules in Year 4.

Year 4 Compulsory Project Module (Sandwich)
Sandwich students must take UBGMVD-15-3 Independent project.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMVD-15-3	Independent Project 2027-28	15

Year 4 Optional Modules (Sandwich)
Sandwich students must take 90 credits from the modules in Optional Modules (Sandwich).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMJC-30-3	Advanced Geographical Expedition 2027-28	30
UBGMJT-30-3	Biogeography and Conservation 2027-28	30
UBGMSU-30-3	Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing Applications 2027-28	30
UBGMQR-30-3	Hazard and Disaster Management 2027-28	30
UBGMXD-30-3	Managing Rivers and Coasts 2027-28	30
UBGMME-30-3	Water and Energy Futures 2027-28	30

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

This programme examines the physical environment and its management by society. It studies the structures present within the natural world and the processes responsible for shaping them. Based on this understanding of environmental structures and processes, this programme identifies human impacts upon the environment and ways in which these can be managed sustainably. Graduates from this programme can make informed judgments on the most appropriate means of managing the natural environment and have the analytical and communication skills necessary to be successful in a range of graduate employment positions.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

The structure and content of this award have been informed throughout by a number of key reference points:

QAA Benchmark statement for Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies (2007)

This document provided guidance for articulating the nature of the programme and specifying learning outcomes. It was used to establish the academic standards of the award learning outcomes with specific reference to knowledge and understanding, discipline specific skills, intellectual skills and key skills. In addition, the teaching/learning assessment strategies adopted on the award are consistent with those defined within the benchmarking statement.

QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) (2008)

QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Students with Disabilities (1999)

University Teaching and Learning Policies: University of the West of England Learning and Teaching Strategy (2007-2010)

Disability Discrimination Act (1999)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA - 2001)

Institution of Environmental Sciences: accreditation guidelines

Geography in the National Curriculum
Environmental issues have been embraced by the National Curriculum as geography teaching has evolved from pure thematic content towards application. Understanding key problems in the natural environment today and making informed judgements about its use and stewardship have become increasingly sophisticated as the curriculum progresses. This award provides the opportunity for students to develop further their understanding of the physical environment and to heighten their sensitivity to environmental issues.

Staff research interests and expertise
Programme content is founded upon the strengths of active staff research. This has allowed emphasis to be placed upon contemporary issues in physical geography.

These include natural hazards and their management, modeling and managing environmental change, and assessing environmental criticality and marginality through cultural-physical geography.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.

Section 3: Programme Design and Philosophy

Knowledge, Understanding & Skills Development

This Section provides information about the nature of the learning students can expect to engage with on this programme and the pedagogic considerations underpinning these.

Part A: Enhancement Framework

Learning and teaching methods: The degree programme provides support for students to achieve the learning outcomes in each of the four areas of learning using the following methods:

A. Knowledge and Understanding (subject specific):

The required knowledge and understanding is primarily taught through lectures and seminars embedded within modules.

Lectures provide a central core of factual and theoretical information covering a range of themes.

Students undertake active exercises in seminars to enhance interest and factual retention. Assigned readings with group discussion and research-based projects solidify knowledge and deepen understanding. Formative and summative presentations promote independent learning through research, delivery and peer debate.

Laboratory classes and fieldwork revise and consolidate knowledge via practical

application.

Across all modules, the learner is encouraged to undertake independent reading following specified reading lists, both to supplement and consolidate what is being taught/learnt, and to broaden their individual knowledge and understanding of the subject.

B. Intellectual Skills (generic):

Keynote lectures introduce and define the nature of intellectual skills.

The majority of the teaching of intellectual skills is within interactive, small-group workshops. These workshops encourage 'on-the-spot' thinking and learning, enable guidance/feedback on directed learning and formative exercises, and provide a forum to identify key areas of contested knowledge. Short projects are set, which encourage students to access a range of sources and to familiarise themselves with key texts, journals, databases and websites. Group discussions and presentations promote peer debate and highlight geographical subjectivity. Seminars introduce concepts from which students are expected to develop their own interpretations and learning styles.

C. Subject/Professional/Practical Skills (subject specific):

Keynote lectures introduce and define the concept and nature of geographical skills.

Field visits and laboratory classes allow the practical application of subject skills. Field work requires students to collect research data and articulate their findings. Laboratory classes require students to apply knowledge to solve simple practical problems.

Computer based seminars develop 'hands-on' experience with computers and topic-related software packages. IT skills, related to spatial enquiry, are applied to

environmental management scenarios.

Research skills are fostered through lectures, seminar discussion, field exercises, specifically designed coursework and dissertation supervision.

Students are expected to undertake a proportion of self-directed independent study. At various points students will need to negotiate access to facilities according to the nature of their project work.

D. Transferable Skills and other attributes (generic):

Students engage in a range of student-led activities that encourage them to work independently, notably their final year project.

Students engage in a range of modules that cover a range of geographical topics.

Along with specific training on separate communication skills, students are given formative feedback on their ability to communicate via a range of media.

Students work in groups to complete a range of different activities. This takes place in the class-room, in the field and in students' own time.

Students receive training in a range of literacy, numeracy, graphicacy and computer literacy skills. In addition they receive formative feedback to help develop those skills.

At UWE, Bristol there is a policy for a minimum average requirement of 12 hours/week contact time over the course of the full undergraduate programme. This contact time encompasses a range of face:face activities as described below. In addition a range of other learning activities will be embedded within the programme which, together with the contact time, will enable learning outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated.

On the BSc Geography programme teaching is a mix of scheduled, independent and placement (optional) learning.

Scheduled learning includes lectures, seminars, tutorials, project supervision, practical classes and workshops; fieldwork. Scheduled sessions may vary slightly depending on the module choices made.

Independent learning includes hours engaged with essential reading, case study preparation, assignment preparation and completion. Scheduled sessions may vary slightly depending on the module choices made.

Placement learning: may include a practice placement, other placement, year abroad.

Part B: Assessment Map

Module number: Short name	Brief outline of assessment type(s) to create a map of assessments across the programme and where relevant indicate using (T) if they require timetabling and invigilation by CETTS.	Assessment weighting %	UWE Week
Year 1			
Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Full Time and Sandwich)			
UBGMA1-15-1 An Introduction to Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing 2024-25			
UBGLYD-30-1 Dynamic Earth 2024-25			
UBGLXD-30-1 Environmental Challenges 2024-25			
UBGMVN-15-1			

Field Study in Physical Geography 2024-25			
UBGLXU-30-1 Geographies of Globalisation 2024-25			
Year 2			
Year 2 Compulsory Modules (Full Time and Sandwich)			
UBLFN9-15-2 Applied Geographic Information Systems (GIS) 2025-26			
UBGMJ6-15-2 Professional Development 2025-26			
UBGLYG-30-2 Researching Physical Geography 2025-26			

Year 2 Optional Modules (Full Time and Sandwich)			
UBGMRR-15-2 Climate Change: Challenges for the 21st Century 2025-26			
UBGMH3-15-2 Ecology 2025-26			
UBGMKA-15-2 Environmental Assessment 2025-26			
UBGMWN-15-2 Meteorology 2025-26			
UBGMLE-15-2 Understanding Coastal Dynamics 2025-26			
UBGMLV-15-2			

Understanding River Dynamics 2025-26			
Year 3			
Year 3 Compulsory Modules (Sandwich)			
UBGLVX-15-3 Placement 2026-27			
UBGLWC-15-3 Study Abroad 2026-27			
Year 3 Compulsory Project Modules (Full Time)			
Year 3 Compulsory Project Modules (Full Time) - Option A			
UBGMQD-30-3 Extended Independent Project 2026-27			
Year 3 Compulsory Project Modules (Full Time) - Option B			
UBGMVD-15-3			

Independent Project 2026-27			
UBGMYQ-15-3 Professional Experience 2026-27			
Year 3 Optional Modules (Full Time)			
UBGMJC-30-3 Advanced Geographical Expedition 2026-27			
UBGMJT-30-3 Biogeography and Conservation 2026-27			
UBGMSU-30-3 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing Applications 2026-27			
UBGMQR-30-3			

Hazard and Disaster Management 2026-27			
UBGMXD-30-3 Managing Rivers and Coasts 2026-27			
UBGMME-30-3 Water and Energy Futures 2026-27			
Year 4			
Year 4 Compulsory Project Module (Sandwich)			
UBGMVD-15-3 Independent Project 2027-28			
Year 4 Optional Modules (Sandwich)			
UBGMJC-30-3			

Advanced Geographical Expedition 2027-28			
UBGMJT-30-3 Biogeography and Conservation 2027-28			
UBGMSU-30-3 Advanced GIS and Remote Sensing Applications 2027-28			
UBGMQR-30-3 Hazard and Disaster Management 2027-28			
UBGMXD-30-3 Managing Rivers and Coasts 2027-28			
UBGMME-30-3			

Water and Energy Futures 2027-28			