

## Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

### Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences / Brackenhurst Campus
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	BSc (Hons) Geography (Physical) Full-time, sandwich
4.	Normal Duration:	Full time (3 years); Sandwich (4 years)
5.	UCAS Code:	F840; F841

### 6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

BSc (Hons) Geography (Physical) concentrates primarily on the nature of the Earth's surface, its spatial variation and its evolution over time. In addition to investigation of the physical and biotic aspects of the environment, the degree course includes consideration of how we relate to and manage the environment.

This course has been designed to enable students to acquire the skills to identify, monitor and manage environmental issues, as well as the scientific knowledge to understand and make predictions about these issues in a spatial context.

There are strong and well-established links with industry in the School and all staff are involved in activities that underpin the curriculum. The course includes an optional sandwich placement of one year whereby you can be involved in working with a company, organisation or charity involved in activities related to the subject of physical geography.

You will also benefit from staff members undertaking research, which provides the integration of research and curriculum delivery in this course provision. You will be able to benefit from access to current research data for use as case studies and in practical field work exercises.

Part-time routes are also available to allow for a flexible approach to learning.

The course aims are:

- To foster and develop students' knowledge and understanding of issues within the scope of physical geography.
- To enable students to develop a set of subject-related and technical skills, allowing them to collect, interpret and analyse information and to be effective in scientific research and the management of the environment.
- To encourage students to develop an innovative, creative and enterprising attitude to problem solving in physical geography.
- To encourage students to be proactive, develop the ability to conceptualise and to generate policy and management initiatives to deal with geographical issues.
- To provide focus upon the applied nature of physical geography, relevant to the changing needs of society and a broad range of employment opportunities.

- o To provide opportunity for flexibility and specialisation within physical geography sector through dissertations, projects, supervised work experience and optional modules.
- o To develop students' personal transferable skills set.

The course has a common first year with BSc Geography which provides a broad grounding in the subject and allows for transfer between the two courses; ensuring that you are on the course that is right for you. There is also the opportunity to transfer onto our MGeog (Integrated Masters) course at the end of your second year if you meet the requisite level of academic performance, meaning you could graduate with a postgraduate qualification after an additional year of study.

There is the opportunity to study abroad for half a year during your second year, with exchange opportunities available with universities in Canada, Australia, Sweden and across the European Union.

**7. Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

**Knowledge and understanding**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of environments, environmental processes and the reciprocal relationship of these processes with human activities. **(B)**
2. Analyse the drivers of change in the natural world over space and time and the interactions between climate, ecosystems, and landscapes. **(B)**
3. Evaluate the ways through which knowledge and understanding in physical geography are advanced, adopting a systematic approach to accuracy, precision and uncertainty. **(B)**
4. Analyse global, national, regional and local issues and propose ways of mitigating physical problems through the application of appropriate geographical concepts, techniques and expertise. **(B)**

**B** = QAA benchmark driven

**Skills, qualities and attributes**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

5. Evaluate and employ diverse techniques and approaches to generate, collect and record primary geographical data (emphasizing the essential context of field-based enquiry) and make effective use of appropriate secondary data sources. **(B)**
6. Evaluate quantitative and qualitative approaches for the analysis of geographical information and data, demonstrating competence in the application of a range of these. **(B)**
7. Plan, design, execute and report the findings of a piece of rigorous research with appropriate supervision, both independently and as part of a team. **(B)**
8. Communicate geographical ideas, principles, theories and differing views effectively, fluently and with confidence by written, oral and visual means appropriate to the intended audience, using a variety of styles and media. **(B)**

9. Recognise and understand the increasing importance of geolocated data and geospatial technologies in a digital world and apply skills in GIS, remote sensing and related technology. **(B)**
10. Take responsibility for and reflect upon your learning whilst demonstrating motivation, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving and self-confidence.
11. Demonstrate the skills and confidence to make an effective contribution to your chosen career by planning work, managing your time and working effectively as a leader or member of a team to achieve objectives.

**B** = QAA benchmark driven

#### **8. Teaching and learning methods**

The teaching and learning methods adopted in this degree include: Lectures, seminars, group work, field investigation, laboratory practical classes, self-directed learning, advanced computer-aided learning, library research and others where appropriate.

To develop knowledge and understanding of subjects, a variety of techniques are used which engage students in the learning process through experiences such as participation in field courses and discussion seminars at Level 4, progressing to the use of case studies to deliver principles at Level 5 and eventually there is an emphasis on project-based learning, developing reflective, autonomous problem-solving by Level 6.

Research skills and safe working practice are fostered through the three years by students taking part in fieldwork and writing risk assessments for their research studies.

The attribute of 'real-world' awareness is developed through links with many external organisations in teaching sessions, through speaker visits and projects linked to outside agencies.

#### **9. Assessment methods**

A range of assessment methods has been selected to allow you to demonstrate your level of attainment. Methods include: a range of examination types (unseen, seen and open book); dissertation; individual and group projects; practical work in the field; essays; scientific reports; analysis and presentation of numerical and graphical information.

Knowledge acquisition at Levels 4 and 5 is assessed partly through examinations and class tests, but at each Level there is independent project work to encourage critical thought.

At Level 6 assessments involve a greater emphasis on independent research and critical evaluation in order to develop research proposals and management recommendations. These are used to develop skills and to differentiate between the levels of attainment of individual students.

The research and field work skills are assessed through you undertaking primary research at Level 4 during Geographical Fieldwork, then at Level 5 in Quaternary Environments (Fieldwork) with an increasing level of autonomy and difficulty leading to the research project at Level 6 in the form of the Dissertation.

## 10. Course structure and curriculum

This course has the format of a typical honours degree course. It takes three years to complete (if taken full-time) and leads to a Bachelor of Science degree with Honours. A part-time route is available which normally takes 5 years to complete. A sandwich course is also available allowing you the option to spend one year working in industry, taken between levels 5 and 6.

The following collection of modules has been devised to enable students to achieve the course outcomes. The curriculum map identifies how each module contributes to the course outcomes.

### Level 4

Earth Surface Processes and Landforms	(20 credits)
Geographical Fieldwork	(20 credits)
Skills for Geographers	(20 credits)
Geographies of Global Change	(20 credits)
Introduction to Global Environmental Issues	(20 credits)
Landscapes and Land Use	(20 credits)

### Level 5

Environmental Hazards and Disasters	(20 credits)
Geographical Information Systems and Spatial Analysis	(20 credits)
Fluvial Geomorphology and River Management	(20 credits)
Quaternary Environments (Fieldwork)	(20 credits)
Living with Climate Change	(20 credits)
Principles and Practice in Geography	(20 credits)

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### Industrial Placement Option

36 weeks placement leading to *Diploma in Professional Practice* taken between Level 5 and Level 6.

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### Level 6

Geography Dissertation	(40 credits)
Geographical Politics, Issues and Ethics	(20 credits)
Glaciology and Glacial Geomorphology	(20 credits)

### Optional modules to total 40 credit points

Applications of Remote Sensing	(20 credits)
Applied Hydrology and Water Resources	(20 credits)
Natural Resource Management	(20 credits)
Drylands	(20 credits)

### Sandwich Award

You have the opportunity of taking a placement for one year between levels 5 and 6 with relevant employers such as the Environment Agency and environmental consultancies. The placements focus on developing employment skills and a deeper understanding of the chosen sector of industry. You will acquire employability skills through placement work, as well as the chance to achieve a professional development qualification.

Students who undertake the sandwich placement will be eligible for a Placement Diploma in Professional Practice award if they:

- satisfactorily complete at least 36 weeks of supervised work experience;
- receive satisfactory reports from the placement tutor and/or workplace supervisor in respect of the competencies or learning outcomes or experience gained;

c) submit all required tasks for the award

Students who satisfactorily complete between 6 and 35 weeks of supervised work experience and who satisfy points b) and c) above will be eligible for a Placement Certificate in Professional Practice.

These arrangements are consistent with the University's guidelines on the certification of placement activity.

#### 11. **Admission to the course**

##### **Entry requirements**

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the course information web page.

#### 12. **Support for learning**

The academic year begins with a pre-teaching "Welcome Week", which includes induction to the course at the start of the first year. This gives an overview of the way your course runs and includes introductions to IT and library resources and to the range of student support services. When fully enrolled you will have electronic access to the University's Virtual Learning Environment (NOW), which gives you access to comprehensive current information on both module support and University regulations. During the second half of Level 5 there will be information on the module options available to you in the final year.

You can seek academic support from your tutors both through electronic communication and during posted office hours, which allow one to one contact between you and your tutor. Study skills are fully integrated into the tutorials at each level, but in addition ARES operates a Study Skills Support process for all students. The University Student Support Services offer extensive advice and guidance on a range of issues, e.g. financial problems, dyslexia and disability and personal problems.

Student support is provided through the tutorial process for pastoral and academic support. The School has well established links with Student Support Services who have a centre based on the Brackenhurst campus. Additional learning support is provided for students with specific learning needs such as dyslexia. Effective links have also been established with the Widening Participation Scheme, particularly Study Skills Support for Level 4 students.

More information is provided at: [http://www.ntu.ac.uk/student\\_services/](http://www.ntu.ac.uk/student_services/)

You will be encouraged to enhance your skills for employment by the use of Personal Development Planning. This process will allow you to develop your study and communication skills through a structured process. Support will be given to enable you to access the online tools for this.

#### 13. **Graduate destinations/employability**

A survey of potential employers was used to establish the attributes of employees in the industry and this was used to formulate content. Industry representatives are consulted to ensure continued relevance of the course.

You will be encouraged to develop skills for work through the work-related activities in sessions and through the industrial placement opportunities between Levels 5 and 6. You are also encouraged to work in the industry during holidays and at weekends, either paid or voluntarily.

It is envisaged that career opportunities will be available with organisations such as local authorities, government agencies (e.g. Environment Agency and English Nature), water companies, leisure companies, environmental consultancies, Wildlife Trusts and other environmental charities. Alternatively graduates could progress to postgraduate study in physical geography or related field.

**14. Course standards and quality**

Course standards are monitored in a variety of ways:

- o A Course Committee which includes membership from undergraduate students at all levels of study, monitors student feedback about the course and individual modules.
- o Student evaluation of modules is sought through EvaSys module feedback questionnaires.
- o You will be provided with feedback for all assessed work.
- o The course has an External Examiner from another UK HE institution who submits annual reports on standards and quality of the course.
- o The Subject Benchmarks of the Quality Assurance Agency have been incorporated into the Course Learning Outcomes.
- o The University is subjected to institutional audits by the Quality Assurance Agency.

**15. Assessment regulations**

This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:

The award classification will be calculated using 20% of the aggregate mark for Level 5 and 80% of the aggregate grade at Level 6.

Students with a high aggregate grade at the end of Level 5 (Low 2.1 and above), and exceptionally at the end of Level 6, will be counselled as to the possibility of transferring to the MGeog (Integrated Masters) degree.

**16. Additional Information**

Collaborative partner(s):	The course participates in the University's study abroad programme and you will be encouraged to participate.
Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements:	Geography
Course recognised by:	Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)
Date this course specification approved:	May 2016
Any additional information:	

**Fieldwork**

Residential fieldwork is an important part of studying Geography and has been reemphasised in the latest QAA benchmark statement for Geography. Residential fieldwork is part of core modules at each level of the degree. These are vital as they

underpin some of the key outcomes of studying geography, notably an understanding of a sense of place, awareness of different environments, awareness of others and how they live and work. The University provides a substantial level of financial subsidy for fieldwork, but students are still required to make a small financial contribution towards the costs of these field courses. Residential fieldwork is often a memorable highlight of a student's university experience.