

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:	Master of Geography Full-time and Sandwich
4.	Normal Duration:	Full time (4 years) and Sandwich (5 years)
5.	UCAS Code:	F810; F811

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The Master of Geography (MGeog) is an Integrated Masters course in geography that combines undergraduate and postgraduate study over four years with students graduating with a single Masters level degree. It is designed to provide students with the opportunity to study the subject in greater depth than would ordinarily be achieved during a standard three year undergraduate course. The MGeog is different from a standalone Masters course in that students are able to access funding under the same financial arrangements as their undergraduate studies for the extra year.

The MGeog adopts an integrated approach to studying both human and physical geography, with the consistent theme of the rapidly developing and exciting field of geospatial technologies present throughout the course. In the final year of the course students will explore developments and debates at the forefront of geography as a discipline including geospatial technologies (including GIS, remote sensing and UAVs) and their application within research, business, and in national and international disaster risk reduction and management.

A range of optional modules in years 2 and 3 offer the opportunity to specialise in areas of the subject that interest you along with the chance to explore your interests in greater depth during the Independent Study module in year 3 and the Research Project in year 4.

The course aims to produce well-rounded geographers with a lifelong passion for the subject who are well placed to gain employment or make the step up to a research career and a PhD. We aim to equip you with the knowledge and skills to make a contribution to society and to further your career by:

- Fostering an interest in the nature of geography as a discipline and the role played by geographers in informing and making vital decisions about some of the most pressing issues of our time
- Exposing you to a diverse range of approaches and techniques that can be used to explore geography and related subjects
- Giving you hands-on experience of the latest geospatial technologies, their applications and insights into current professional practice in this field
- Offering the opportunity to experience new human and physical environments in the UK and overseas by providing fieldwork opportunities throughout the course

- Ensuring that you have an innovative, creative and enterprising approach to solving problems
- Developing your ability and confidence in presenting yourself in a variety of different styles to different audiences
- Developing the broad range of skills and attributes that employers value in geography graduates – numeracy, teamwork, analytical and laboratory skills, flexibility, technical ‘savviness’, cultural sensitivity and a world view

Students will benefit from a broad grounding in geography that explores a series of themes drawn from across the discipline, but can also choose to follow a route through the course that allows them to specialise in physical geography should they wish. The MGeog shares its first and second years with our undergraduate degrees, BSc (Honours) Geography and BSc Geography (Physical) and following a common first year, you can opt to follow either of these routes through years two and three before the common final year of postgraduate study. At the end of your second year you can elect to switch to the relevant undergraduate course if you wish and graduate with an undergraduate degree instead, following successful completion of the third year of that course.

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

There are long-standing links with industry and staff are involved in external activities that underpin the curriculum. The course includes an optional sandwich placement of one year whereby you can be involved in working with a business, organisation or charity involved in activities related to the subject of geography. You will have the chance to present yourself, and your work, to geospatial professionals and employers and to receive their feedback.

You will benefit from being taught by experienced and well-qualified staff who are active in research and/or are practitioners in their field. The Brackenhurst campus offers an attractive environment ideal for studying geography, with the opportunity to live on site or have the city life in nearby Nottingham - the best of both worlds.

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. a) Display insight into the reciprocal relationships between, and the nature of change in, physical and human environments **(B)**
 - b) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of environments, environmental processes and the reciprocal relationship of these processes with human activities **(B)**
2. a) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the diversity and interdependence of places at various spatial scales and assess the significance of spatial and temporal relationships as influences upon physical and human environments **(B)**

b) Analyse the drivers of change in the natural world over space and time and the interactions between climate, ecosystems, and landscapes **(B)**

3. a) Evaluate the diversity of approaches to the generation of knowledge and understanding in geography and demonstrate a critical understanding of the subject **(B)**

b) Evaluate the ways through which knowledge and understanding in physical geography are advanced, adopting a systematic approach to accuracy, precision and uncertainty **(B)**

4. a) Demonstrate informed concern about the Earth and its people and awareness of the relevance of geographical concepts and techniques to problem solving, wealth creation, poverty reduction and improving the quality of life and well-being **(B)**

b) 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)**

5. Demonstrate systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of geography as a discipline **(M)**

6. Exhibit originality in the application of knowledge, together with a comprehensive and practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline **(M)**

a) Outcomes for Geography route through MGeog

b) Outcomes for Geography (Physical) route through MGeog

B = Driven by the 2014 QAA subject benchmark for Geography

M = Driven by the 2015 QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement

Skills, qualities and attributes

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

7. 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)**

8. Evaluate quantitative and qualitative approaches for the analysis of geographical information and data, demonstrating competence in the application of a range of these **(B)**

9. 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)**

10. 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)**

11. 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)**
12. Take responsibility for and reflect upon your learning whilst demonstrating motivation, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving and self-confidence
13. 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
14. Demonstrate a range of advanced skills in research and scholarship in geography, evaluate methodologies and, where appropriate, propose new hypotheses **(M)**
15. Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional level **(M)**

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, 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, guest speakers and projects linked to outside agencies.

9. Assessment methods

A range of assessment methods are used during the course including: a range of examination types (unseen, seen and open book); the Masters research project; individual and group projects; practical work in the field; essays; scientific reports; maps and other geospatial outputs; statistical analyses 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 of these Levels there is independent and group coursework that is used to encourage critical thought.

At Level 6 assessments involve a greater emphasis on independent research and critical evaluation and students will develop their research skills in the Independent Study module before the major research project undertaken the following year.

In Level 7 assessments are designed to both push students academically and give them the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills at the forefront of the subject and professional practice – particularly in the use of geospatial technologies. The individual research project gives students the opportunity to showcase their abilities in a topic of their own choice.

10. Course structure and curriculum

This course has the format of a typical Integrated Masters course. It takes four years to complete and leads to a Master of Geography degree. A sandwich option is also available allowing you the chance to spend one year working in industry, typically taken between Levels 5 and 6 (but potentially between Levels 6 and 7 as well). MGeog students have the opportunity to follow two routes through the course which are book-ended by a common Level 4 and Level 7. At Levels 5 and 6 students can opt for a broad curriculum in geography that mirrors BSc Geography or choose to specialise in physical geography with modules that mirror BSc Geography (Physical).

The following modules are used 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 core modules

Principles and Practice in Geography	(20 credits)
Geographical Information Systems and Spatial Analysis	(20 credits)

Optional modules to total 80 credit points

Sustainability	(20 credits)
Environmental Hazards and Disasters	(20 credits)
Fluvial Geomorphology and River Management	(20 credits)
Cities and Development in the 21st century	(20 credits)
Living with Climate Change	(20 credits)
Environmental Law and Policy	(20 credits)

Industrial Placement Option

36 weeks placement leading to *Diploma in Industrial Studies* taken between Level 5 and Level 6.

Level 6 core modules

Geographical Politics, Issues and Ethics	(20 credits)
Dissertation	(40 credits)
Applications of Remote Sensing	(20 credits)

Optional modules to total 40 credit points

Applied Hydrology and Water Resources	(20 credits)
Natural Resource Management	(20 credits)
Drylands	(20 credits)
Global Agriculture and Food Security	(20 credits)
Urban Environmental Transformations	(20 credits)
Independent Study	(20 credits)

Level 7 modules

Research Methods and Data Analysis	(20 credits)
Integrated Masters Research Project	(60 credits)
Advanced Geospatial Technologies	(20 credits)
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management	(20 credits)

The modules below form the alternative physical geography route through the course:

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)

Industrial Placement Option

36 weeks placement leading to *Diploma in Industrial Studies* taken between Level 5 and Level 6.

Level 6

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

Optional modules to total 20 credit points

Applied Hydrology and Water Resources	(20 credits)
Natural Resource Management	(20 credits)
Drylands	(20 credits)
Independent Study	(20 credits)

Level 7 modules

Research Methods and Data Analysis	(20 credits)
Integrated Masters Research Project	(60 credits)
Advanced Geospatial Technologies	(20 credits)
Disaster Risk Reduction and Management	(20 credits)

Sandwich Award

You have the opportunity of taking a placement for one year typically between Levels 5 and 6 with relevant employers. 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:

- (a) satisfactorily complete at least 36 weeks of supervised work experience;
- (b) receive satisfactory reports from the placement tutor and/or workplace supervisor in respect of the competencies or learning outcomes or experience gained; and
- (c) submit a satisfactory placement report.

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 Levels 4 and 5 there will be information on the module options available to you in the forthcoming year.

Students are able to access industry standard GIS software including ArcGIS Desktop for home use during their time at NTU at no additional cost.

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/

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 focus group 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. 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 geospatial companies, local authorities, government agencies (e.g. Environment Agency and English Nature), utility companies, teaching, environmental consultancies, Wildlife Trusts and other environmental charities. Graduates are also likely to progress to additional postgraduate study and research in geography or related fields.

Graduate unemployment amongst geography graduates is amongst the lowest rate of any subject (see HECSU *What do graduates do?*) with geography cited in the media as being one of the "top ten recession-proof degrees". Recent DELHE surveys have shown that 96% of NTU geography students are in employment or further study 6 months after graduating.

14. **Course standards and quality**

Course standards are monitored in a variety of ways:

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

Interim or Fall Back Awards and progression

At the end of Level 4 students completing all modules successfully, but not progressing further, are eligible for the Certificate of Higher Education. Those completing Level 5 successfully but not progressing further are awarded the Diploma in Higher Education.

Students who successfully complete Levels 4 and 5 of the course and 60 credit points at Level 6 are awarded an Ordinary degree.

The threshold grade for progression to the Master's award will be an aggregate of Low 2.1 or above at both Levels 5 and 6. Students who achieve an aggregate grade below a Low 2.1 at these progression points will be automatically transferred to the relevant Honours degree course or awarded a Bachelor qualification - in this situation, the final degree classification will be calculated using 20% of the aggregate mark for Level 5 and 80% of the aggregate grade at Level 6. Students enrolled on the MGeog who achieve an aggregate grade below Low 2.1 for Level 4 will also be counselled about the level of their performance and the option of transferring to an Honours degree course at that stage.

The final degree classification for the Masters award will be calculated using 20% of the aggregate mark for Level 6 and 80% of the aggregate grade at Level 7.

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:	
<p>Fieldwork</p> <p>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 Levels 4 and 6 and is optional at Level 5. 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.</p>	