

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BSc Geology (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE Geology Cert HE Geology
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year?	No
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home Department/other teaching departments	Earth and Planetary Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London and Online
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years); Part-time (4 years); Part-time (6 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	The Geological Society
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences and Environmental Studies
UCAS code	F600
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBSGLGY_C (full-time, 3 years) UBSGLOGY_C (part-time, 4 years) UBSGLOGD_C (part-time, 6 years)
HECoS Code	100395
Start date of programme	Pre 1980
Date of programme approval	Pre 1980
Date of last programme amendment approval	November 2022
Valid for academic year and cohorts	2023-24
Date of last revision to document	16/06/2025

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

UCAS tariff: 96-120, A level CCC-BBB

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides a tariff calculator for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

Audience

The BSc aims to attract:

- a) UCAS students who require training and an accredited BSc to take up a career related to Geology and also those seeking to gain a broadly based BSc in science, plus applicants who wish to study geology for the purposes of intellectual endeavour without the desire to forge a new career or change to a new career;
- b) Part-time students who require training and an accredited BSc to take up a career related to Geology and also those seeking to gain a broadly based BSc in science, plus applicants who wish to study geology for the purposes of intellectual endeavour without the desire to forge a new career or change to a new career;
- c) Overseas students who require training and an accredited BSc to take up a career related to Geology and also those seeking to gain a broadly based BSc in science, plus applicants who wish to study geology for the purposes of intellectual endeavour without the desire to forge a new career or change to a new career.

Course aims

Main Aims

BSc Geology will provide a broadly based and research-led introduction across the entire discipline of geology.

Consistent with the general aim of the teaching provision within the College to provide higher education both for (a) people otherwise engaged during the day, through flexible teaching contact hours and location, and (b) through UCAS admission, and in line with the benchmark statements for Earth Sciences (ES3), our BSc Geology aims to:

- Provide research-based teaching to enable students to gain a multi-disciplinary understanding of geology, both in theoretical terms and in terms of practical training in field geology.
- Widen admission, in particular through distance learning, to include those with genuine ability and enthusiasm, but lacking traditional academic qualifications;
- Foster independent and critical thought so that students can reach appropriate conclusions based on relevant evidence;
- Provide general skills in learning, information technology, data processing and communication appropriate to any subsequent employer;
- Provide research skills and a knowledge base that would allow graduates to proceed to masters and PhD programmes in the UK and abroad.

Distinctive Features

The BSc is taught face-to-face either full- or part-time in the evenings. Additionally, the BSc can be taken entirely by online distance learning via live streaming. The course provides both a theoretical overview of geology and practical training in field geology. We also provide virtual field classes that can be studied in exceptional circumstances (including disability and other issues that may hinder participation in the field). The BSc programmes include routes through Cert HE Geology and Dip HE Geology.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Status	Teaching term(s)
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1 [120 credits]					
4	SCES060S4	Earth as a Planet	30	Comp	1
4	EASC050H4	Earth History	15	Comp	1
4	EASC042H4	Life and the Fossil Record	15	Comp	2
4	SCES061S4	Planetary Materials	30	Comp	2
4	SCES062S4 or SCES063S4	Introduction to Field Geology or Introduction to Field Geology (Virtual) <i>in exceptional circumstances only</i>	30	Comp	3
Year 2 [120 credits]					
5	SCES005H5	Igneous Petrology	15	Comp	1
5	SCES006H5	Metamorphic Petrology	15	Comp	1
5	SCES008H5	Sedimentary Petrology and Stratigraphy	15	Comp	1
5	SCES064S5	Planetary Geophysics	30	Comp	2
5	EASC011H5	Structural Geology and Tectonics	15	Comp	2
5	SCES065H5 or SCES066H5	Preparation for Map and Thesis or Preparation for BSc Research Project (depending which will be taken in year 3)	15	Comp	3
5	EASC054H5 or SCES067H5	Field Mapping Training or Virtual Field Mapping Training <i>in exceptional circumstances only</i>	15	Comp	3
Year 3 [120 credits, no more than 60 credits per term]					
6	SCES069S6 or SCES070S6	Map and Thesis or BSc Research Project	30	Comp	1-3
6	SCES050H6	The Vertebrate Fossil Record	15	Comp	2
6	EASC044H6	Geological Hazards	15	Comp	2
6	EASC041H6	Global Tectonics (Level 6)	15	Comp	1

6	Plus 45 credits chosen from the level 6 options listed below		45	Options	1,2 or 3
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1 [90 credits]					
4	SCES060S4	Earth as a Planet	30	Comp	1
4	SCES061S4	Planetary Materials	30	Comp	2
4	SCES062S4 or SCES063S4	Introduction to Field Geology or Introduction to Field Geology (Virtual) <i>in exceptional circumstances only</i>	30	Comp	3
Year 2 [90 credits]					
4	EASC050H4	Earth History	15	Comp	1
4	EASC042H4	Life and the Fossil Record	15	Comp	2
5	SCES005H5	Igneous Petrology	15	Comp	1
5	SCES006H5	Metamorphic Petrology	15	Comp	1
5	SCES008H5	Sedimentary Petrology and Stratigraphy	15	Comp	1
5	EASC054H5 or SCES067H5	Field Mapping Training or Virtual Field Mapping Training <i>in exceptional circumstances only</i>	15	Comp	3
Year 3 [90 credits]					
5	SCES064S5	Planetary Geophysics	30	Comp	2
5	EASC011H5	Structural Geology and Tectonics	15	Comp	1
5	SCES065H5 or SCES066H5	Preparation for Map and Thesis or Preparation for BSc Research Project <i>(depending which will be taken in year 3)</i>	15	Comp	3
6	SCES075S6 or various	Advanced Field Geology or 30 credits of optional Level 6 modules from list below	30	Option	T3 T1,T2
Year 4 [90 credits, no more than 45 credit per term]					
6	SCES069S6 or SCES070S6	Map and Thesis or BSc Research Project	30	Comp	3
6	SCES050H6	The Vertebrate Fossil Record	15	Comp	2
6	EASC044H6	Geological Hazards	15	Comp	2
6	EASC041H6	Global Tectonics	15	Comp	1
6	Various	1 x 15 credit option from level 6 list below	15	Option	1,2 or 3
Part-time - 6 years					
Year 1 [60 credits]					
4	SCES060S4	Earth as a Planet	30	Comp	1

4	SCES062S4 or SCES063S4	Introduction to Field Geology or Introduction to Field Geology (Virtual) <i>in exceptional circumstances only</i>	30	Comp	3
Year 2 [60 credits]					
4	SCES061S4	Planetary Materials	30	Comp	2
4	EASC050H4	Earth History	15	Comp	1
4	EASC042H4	Life and the Fossil Record	15	Comp	2
Year 3 [60 credits]					
5	SCES005H5	Igneous Petrology	15	Comp	1
5	SCES006H5	Metamorphic Petrology	15	Comp	1
5	SCES008H5	Sedimentary Petrology and Stratigraphy	15	Comp	1
5	EASC054H5	Field Mapping Training*	15	Comp	3
*In exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the Programme Director, this module may be substituted with: SCES073H5 Planetary Exploration Analogue Mission.					
Year 4 [60 credits]					
5	SCES064S5	Planetary Geophysics	30	Comp	2
5	EASC011H5	Structural Geology and Tectonics	15	Comp	2
5	SCES065H5 or SCES066H5	Preparation for Map and Thesis or Preparation for BSc Research Project (depending which will be taken in year 3)	15	Comp	3
Year 5 [60 credits, with no more than 45 credits in any one term]					
6	EASC041H6	Global Tectonics	15	Comp	1
6	SC0S050H6	The Vertebrate Fossil Record	15	Comp	2
6	SCES075S6 various	Advanced Field Geology or 30 credits of level 6 options from list below	30	Option	3/ T1, 2 or 3
Year 6 [60 credits]					
6	SCES069S6 or SCES070S6	Map and Thesis or BSc Research Project	30	Comp	3
6	EASC044H6	Geological Hazards	15	Comp	2
6	Various	1 x 15 credit option from level 6 options list below	15	Option	1 or 2
Indicative Level 6 Options					
6	SCES047H6	Planetary Interiors	15	Option	1
6	EASC059H6	Volcanism in the Solar System	15	Option	1
6	EASC048H6	Earth's Resources and Raw Materials	15	Option	3
6	SCES035H6	Comets, Asteroids and Meteorites	15	Option	2
6	SCES075S6	Remote Sensing and Planetary Surfaces	15	Option	2
6	SCES075S6	Advanced Field Geology	30	Option	3
6	SSGE125S6	Climate and Society: past, present and future	30	Option	3

Core:	<i>Module must be taken and passed by student</i>
Compulsory:	<i>Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)</i>
Option:	<i>Student can choose to take this module</i>

Organisation of the material

The material is organised into both 30 credits and 15 credits modules that build towards the 360 credits required to complete the BSc. The material is delivered over Terms 1, 2 and 3 (Term 1 October-December; Term 2 January-March; Term 3 May-July), and the final project or Map and Thesis also include independent work during the summer between your penultimate and final years. Delivery of modules occurs as follows:

- i) During the evenings from Monday through to Friday from 6.00-9.00pm, through face-to-face attendance in central London, or via live-streamed video. A 15 credit module would typically be completed in a single term of 11 weeks, with 10 weeks of teaching and a final exam week.
- ii) Residential field classes occur in three 10-day blocks located either in the UK or overseas. They occur in Term 3. These field classes are intended for face-to-face participation at the chosen field location, however we also offer a different suite of virtual field classes intended for asynchronous participation in the case of exceptional circumstances (including disability and other issues that may hinder participation in the field).
- iii) 15 and 30 Credit modules are examined through a variety of combinations of exams (face-to-face or online), assessed work, and student presentations. All assessments are to be completed by the end of each term.

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find extensive information on the virtual learning site, Moodle (see Academic Support below), about each of your modules. This will include what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed, etc. Additionally, video recordings of all class sessions are collected in Moodle for catching up if you miss a class session and/or for later revision.

Teaching is through a combination of classroom and field teaching that are designed to build up your skills and train you to carry out independent work and independent research during your Project or Map and Thesis. The ability to conduct independent work and research will facilitate transition to employment in industry, study at masters or PhD level (subject to final classification), and your your personal intellectual endeavours.

Students on the distance learning (fully-online) route through the programme equally are supported via the resources on Moodle, as described above. Instead of attending classes on-site, if you have chosen to study by distance learning, you will “attend” virtually, through live streamed lectures and practicals. This offers real-time Q&A interaction with the lecturer and with classmates. Beyond the scheduled, virtual class sessions, lecturers are available during published office hours to discuss lecture content via email, telephone, or, if appropriate, live video link.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

As described above, 15 and 30 credit modules are examined through a variety of combinations of exams (face-to-face or online), assessed work, and student presentations. All assessments are to be completed by the end of each term.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Identify and understand the formation and significance a wide variety of geological, mineralogical and palaeontological materials.
- 2) Understand the geological settings of a wide variety of geological, mineralogical and palaeontological materials, and interpret geological histories and geological scenarios from this relevant to industry and research.
- 3) Carry out practical skills in field geology relevant to industry and research.
- 4) Have a broad range of transferable skills including technical, IT, computing, communication, organisational and research skills.

Careers and further study

You will find Geology and Earth Science graduates in the following kinds of roles, as described in detail by the Geological Society, London (see <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Geology-Career-Pathways/Careers/Job-Sectors>), who accredit the BSc Geology:

- Mining and quarrying;
- Energy industries;
- Engineering Geology;
- Environmental Geology and contaminated land;
- Hydrogeology;
- Natural Hazards and Risk;
- Education;
- Museum and library work;
- Publishing and broadcasting;
- Financial management of resources and risk.

Birkbeck's BSc Geology graduates will complete with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- The ability to work as part of a team and/or as an individual
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English, computer numerical skills and computer graphics skills
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and an argument

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services.](#) This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

We can offer some financial support in the form of small bursaries to help fund fieldwork and study materials, facilitated by financial contributions from alumni.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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