

Programme Specification

Award and title: BSc (Hons) Environmental Geography

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Geography
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2023/24
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers)
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Geography Diploma of Higher Education Geography BSc (Ord) Environmental Geography

UCAS code / GTTR / other:

Joint Honours combinations: N/A

QAA subject benchmark statement(s): Geography

Mode/s of study: [Undergraduate periods of study](#)¹ for full time / part time

Language of study: English

Paired with Foundation Year Yes

Study abroad opportunities: Yes

Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity: Yes

Introduction and special features

The major global issues facing the world, from the climate and biodiversity crises to waste, water resources and soil degradation, cannot be tackled by either physical geography or human geography approaches alone. Environmental Geography lies at the intersection of the two, encompassing any kind of geography that considers society and nature in relation to each other. Our BSc (Hons) Environmental Geography degree addresses human/environment interactions from many different angles. You will find yourself learning about ecosystems and river systems, nature conservation policy, sustainability, cultural geographies of nature, and environmental remote sensing. Develop the range of skills characteristic of any geography degree, with a focus entirely on the natural environment and human/nature relations.

At York St John University (YSJU), geography is characterised by a strong sense of community between students and staff. Our emphasis on 'real world' learning gets you applying geographical concepts and methods for yourself in a range of contexts, to develop your confidence and independence. Field trips offer experiential learning, and guest lectures from professionals in relevant sectors give you insights into issues

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

'on the ground'. Your assessments are entirely through coursework, developing and demonstrating the skills and capacities you may need in graduate employment.

At level 4 (year 1 of full-time study), our three geography degrees share the same curriculum. This provides you with a good sense of the discipline as a whole and a strong set of skills, with flexibility to change between the degrees if you wish to at any time in level 4. Our semester 1 modules incorporate support for your transition into studying at university. A short residential field trip involves activities relevant to all three modules and helps build a sense of community early in your degree. The *Maps, Mapping and GIS* module introduces you to industry-standard Geographical Information Systems software. In semester 2, two 'methods' modules give you a firm foundation of research and analysis skills to apply throughout the rest of your degree and beyond.

In the rest of the degree, a variety of optional modules allow you to tailor your degree to your particular interests. Through these modules you could find yourself writing a hazard management plan or conservation action plan, assessing the processes that shape landforms, analysing the assumptions and values embedded in environmental policies, detecting land cover change from satellite data, and thinking about your own actions in relation to sustainability. A small number of compulsory modules that are shared by all three degrees support the advancement of your research skills and career-ready development. The final-year dissertation is an opportunity for in-depth research on a topic of your choosing, supported by a tutor.

The degree programme includes opportunity for residential fieldwork at all three levels of study (subject to any travel restrictions). The cost of these field trips is covered by your tuition fees even for the optional modules, reflecting York St John University's commitment to social justice.

More broadly, the values and ethos of York St John University intersect well with the interests of environmental geography students, with sector leading environmental sustainability and biodiversity initiatives on campus as well as close attention to social justice.

Distinctive features:

- At the intersection of human and physical geography, addressing human-environment relations from a variety of perspectives;
- Extensive use of fieldwork in the city of York and surrounding areas;
- Residential fieldwork opportunities at all three levels of study (paid for by the University);
- Guest lectures from professionals working in relevant fields;
- A strong sense of community between students and staff;
- Assessment entirely by coursework.

Geography at York St John University (YSJU) is characterised by a strong sense of community between students and staff. Our emphasis on 'real world' learning gets you applying geographical concepts and methods for yourself in a range of contexts, to develop your confidence and independence. Field trips offer experiential learning, and guest lectures from professionals in relevant sectors give you insights into issues 'on the ground'. Your assessments are entirely through coursework, developing and demonstrating the skills and capacities you may need in graduate employment. As you progress through your degree we help you understand how your knowledge, skills and attributes are relevant for your future. We provide structured opportunities to reflect on your own professional development, working with the University's Careers and Placements team to help you articulate your strengths to future employers.

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.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage.

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.yorksj.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 [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Applicants who do not meet the minimum entry requirements for this programme may be eligible to apply for entry to the Environmental Geography with Foundation Year, completing the Liberal Arts Foundation Year prior to joining the Environmental Geography degree.

Programme aim(s)

1. To enable you to develop a comprehensive understanding of environmental geography concepts and theories, with ability and confidence to apply these for yourself;
2. To support you in the development of subject-specific and general skills relevant to successful study and the contemporary workplace;
3. To provide a supportive and inclusive, yet intellectually challenging, learning environment for all students.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the nature and scope of human, physical and environmental geography;
- 4.2 Evaluate evidence and arguments from a range of sources;
- 4.3 Observe and interpret places and environments in a fieldwork setting, applying relevant module concepts;
- 4.4 Analyse geographical data to develop arguments and communicate evidence-based conclusions;
- 4.5 Discuss the implications of different ways of representing societies and environments;
- 4.6 Display, process and analyse spatial data following principles of cartography;
- 4.7 Work both independently and collaboratively with others.

Level 5

- 5.1 Appraise human and environmental processes and change through space and time;
- 5.2 Apply a critical understanding of geographical theories and concepts in a variety of contexts;
- 5.3 Discuss the diversity of approaches to developing geographical knowledge deriving from science, social science and humanities traditions;
- 5.4 Articulate the relevance of geographical concepts and techniques to problem-solving and decision-making in the pursuit of a more just, sustainable world.;
- 5.5 Apply established techniques of enquiry and analysis to novel contexts, demonstrating an understanding of research design;
- 5.6 Interrogate data from multiple sources, including the field and/or science laboratory, recognising ambiguity or uncertainty in evidence and the limits of their knowledge;
- 5.7 Exercise personal responsibility and decision-making in their learning, and articulate goals for personal and professional development.

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate advancement of their own specialist environmental knowledge through independent enquiry; gathering, abstracting and synthesising data, text and information from a variety of sources using well developed skills of information literacy and numeracy;
- 6.2 Critically assess environmental patterns, processes and change at a variety of spatio-temporal scales;
- 6.3 Deploy techniques of data collection, processing, and analysis in the field and laboratory, and through geocomputation;
- 6.4 Apply a systematic understanding of environmental geography to develop proposals for future action and enquiry;
- 6.5 Communicate issues and ideas relevant to environmental geography to diverse audiences;
- 6.6 Conduct independent research and enquiry in a responsible, ethical and safe manner, to develop a reasoned argument;
- 6.7 Demonstrate self-awareness and responsibility in their work.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
GEO4013M	4	1	Exploring Human Geography	20	C	X
GEO4015M	4	1	Maps, Mapping & GIS	20	C	X
GEO4014M	4	1	Earth Systems	20	C	X
GEO4016M	4	2	Quantitative Methods in Geography	20	C	X
GEO4017M	4	2	Qualitative Methods in Geography	20	C	X
GEO4018M	4	2	Environmental Geography Concepts and Practice	20	C	X
GEO5015M	5	1	Geographical Thought	20	C	X
Choose two 20 credit modules from the three options below:						
GEO5012M	5	1	Applied GIS	20	O	X
GEO5013M	5	1	Global Ecosystems & Biogeography	20	O	X
GEO5014M	5	1	Earth Surface Processes & Landforms	20	O	X
GEO5018M	5	2	Research Project	20	C	X
GEO5019M	5	2	Geographers' Professional Practice	20	C	X
Choose one 20 credit module from the two options below:						
GEO5016M	5	2	Environmental Hazards	20	O	X
GEO5017M	5	2	Sustainability: Global Environmental Management	20	O	X
GEO6013M	6	1&2	Geography Dissertation	40	C	NC
Choose two 20 credit modules from the three options below:						
GEO6017M	6	1	Environmental Remote Sensing	20	O	X
GEO6018M	6	1	River Management	20	O	X
GEO6015M	6	1	Human Geographies of Nature	20	O	X
Choose two 20 credit modules from the three options below:						
GEO6020M	6	2	Social Justice in the Anthropocene	20	O	X
GEO6021M	6	2	Habitat Monitoring and Management	20	O	X
GEO6023M	6	2	Advanced Environmental Fieldwork	20	O	X

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Across all of our geography degrees, our aim is to get you *doing* geography for yourself from the outset: collecting and analysing data, applying theories and concepts for yourself, developing your skills and abilities, and ultimately generating your own knowledge. Geography is about the world around us and our place in it, and so is very much a 'live' discipline, its concepts and techniques being relevant to making sense of current affairs from global to local scales. As such, we want students to be actively involved and engaged in your learning. Teaching is designed to support you become increasingly independent and self-directed as you progress through the degree.

You will encounter a range of teaching styles and settings in your time with us. Timetabled sessions include lectures and seminars (smaller groups of students with a tutor), fieldwork and ICT workshops. Activities will include discussions, problem-solving exercises, debates, group work, data collection and analysis exercises, using online resources, and a range of collaborative learning activities (working with other students). Alongside these, you will need to undertake independent study, making use of academic textbooks and research articles, alongside policy documents and official reports, to develop your knowledge.

Assessment is entirely through coursework, with no exams. This is to ensure that the kinds of work you are doing through your degree reflect the kinds of work geographers undertake after graduation, in professional employment or further study. You will encounter a variety of assessment formats, including essays, reports, verbal presentations and portfolios, with scope for multimedia elements. Many modules are assessed through a single piece of coursework, with development of this work supported throughout the course of the module. This includes through formative assessment activities such as in-class quizzes, practice presentations, and feedback on essay plans or research plans. Our assignments give you a framework within which to work, but often allow scope for you to shape the focus in some way for yourself, developing your personal academic interests as you progress through the degree. Feedback on assignments is designed to support you in your future learning.

By your final year, you will find yourself taking more control of your learning. The dissertation involves you undertaking an independent research project (guided by a tutor) on a relevant topic of your choice, demonstrating self-reliance and project management skills. The optional fieldwork module at the end of your degree is an opportunity to bring together all that you have learned, with plenty of scope to tailor your project to suit your interests and 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 as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
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Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: