

# BA (Hons) Geography



# Contents

<b>About this Handbook</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The Programme Team</b>	<b>4</b>
Your Programme Leader	4
Your Guidance Tutor	4
Teaching Team	5
<b>Your programme of study – BA (Hons) Geography</b>	<b>8</b>
Programme Aims	8
Programme Learning Outcomes	8
Programme Structure and Progression Programme	9
Delivery: Learning and Teaching Strategy	12
<b>Learning, Teaching and Assessment</b>	<b>13</b>
Approaches to Study and Work Ethos	13
Assessment	14
Returned Work and Feedback	14
Deadlines	14
Late Approvals (LAs) and Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs) Books & Equipment	14
Backing up your work	15
Timetable Overview	15
Calendar and Important Dates	15
Assessment Processes	16

# About this Handbook

## Welcome to the Department of Geography at Northumbria University

This handbook is designed to provide a guide to your chosen programme of study: BA (Hons) Geography at Northumbria University. It does not provide all of the information that you will need – there is simply too much to include here whilst retaining some hope that you might read it! It accompanies the Student Faculty Handbook and University Handbook of Student Regulations. These three handbooks will direct you to where most of that information is to be found.

Much of the information that you will need can be found in comprehensive and definitive forms on the Northumbria website. A key page is titled 'MyNorthumbria'. You can access it by clicking on 'MyNorthumbria' ([northumbria.ac.uk](http://northumbria.ac.uk)).

The 'MyNorthumbria' page contains a full menu of further information. When summary accounts of regulations and procedures are provided in this handbook, students must be aware that these are not the regulations and definitive versions can be found elsewhere.

## The Programme Team

Students reading Geography as well as Environmental Management, Environmental Health or Geography and Environmental Management, will find that a great deal of teaching is shared between staff in the areas of Geography and Environmental Management. Each degree has a programme leader who is ultimately responsible for its smooth running and organization.



The programme leader for BA Geography is John Clayton ([john.clayton@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:john.clayton@northumbria.ac.uk), 0191 227 4260). His office is located in Ellison Building, D Block.

## Your Programme Leader

The Programme Leader is the operational manager of the degree. Your Programme Leader will provide you with details about the course and will answer any programme-related questions you have. Your Programme Leader is responsible for telling you about the University's assessment policies and procedures (which is also covered in this handbook) so that you know what the ground rules are. Your Programme Leader is committed to helping you get the most out of your studies and where appropriate, will liaise with your other tutors to make sure that they are aware of your needs and of how you are progressing in general.

## Your Guidance Tutor

You will be allocated a Guidance Tutor (a member of academic staff listed below) who has the duty of providing you with advice on academic, procedural and (where desired and appropriate) personal matters. Where possible, you will retain the same Guidance Tutor throughout your time at Northumbria.

You will be expected to consult with your Guidance Tutor during Induction Week and regularly thereafter, including whenever module or progression results are available and whenever option choices have to be made. You may in addition, ask for a meeting with your Guidance Tutor at any time.

## Open Door Policy

We have an open door policy which means that you can call in and talk to a member of staff whenever they are available in their office. However, as academic staff teach on many modules/ programmes, it is advisable to make an appointment if you wish to be sure to see them. Occasionally, you may be able to have an immediate appointment but do not be disappointed if you are asked to return at a mutually convenient time. Please contact staff to cancel if you are unable to make the arranged appointment.

## Teaching Team

Here is an outline (in alphabetical order) of who is who in the Department, their main roles and backgrounds. Most of the staff below will be in charge of some of the modules that you are taking or will be taking.

Department of Geography	Room	Tel	@northumbria.ac.uk
<b>Dr Ben Brock, PhD (Cambridge)</b> <i>Reader in Remote Sensing Physical Geography</i>	EBA216	227 3225	benjamin.brock
<b>Alistair Bulloch</b> <i>Environmental Health, Health and Safety, Risk Management</i>	EBD209	243 7571	alistair.bulloch
<b>Dr Bruce Carlisle</b> <i>Geography &amp; Environmental Management, Remote Sensing, GIS, Environmental Change</i>	EBD206	227 3888	bruce.carlisle
<b>Dr Kathryn Cassidy</b> <i>Political and Social Geography, Borders, Eastern Europe</i>	D208	227 4777	kathryn.cassidy
<b>Dr John Clayton</b> <i>Programme Leader for BA (Hons) Geography</i> <i>Social Geography, Migration, Identity and Inequality</i>	D219	227 4260	john.clayton
<b>Prof Andrew Collins, BSc, PhD (London)</b> <i>Geography of Health, Third World Sustainable Development and Disaster Management</i>	EBD205	227 3754	andrew.collins
<b>Dr David Cooke</b> <i>Environmental Organic Chemistry</i>	EBD206	227 3879	david.cooke
<b>Dr Emily Cooper</b> <i>Lecturer in Human Geography</i> <i>Sex Work, Social Exclusion, Deviance, Urban and Liminal Spaces</i>	EBD213	349 5897	emily.e.cooper
<b>Dr Mike Deary</b> <i>Environmental Health</i>	EBA216	227 3593	michael.deary
<b>Lesley Dunlop</b> <i>Physical Geography, Hydrology and River Channel Change</i>	EBA202A	n/a	lesley.dunlop
<b>Dr Jane Entwistle, BSc, PhD (Aberystwyth)</b> <b>Head of Department of Geography</b> <i>Physical Geography, Soil Scientist: Land Contamination, Geoarchaeology and Environmental Change</i>	EBA206	227 3017	jane.entwistle
<b>Dr Vasile Ersek BSc, PhD (Oxford)</b>	EBA212	227 3344	vasile.ersek
<b>Dr Maureen Fordham</b> <i>Disaster Management, Gender and Development, Heritage</i>	EBD220	227 3757	maureen.fordham

<b>Dr Peter Glaves</b> <i>Enterprise Fellow</i> <i>Landscape, Policy and Planning and Conflict Management</i>	EBA204	227 3733	peter.glaves
<b>Simon Griffiths BSc(Hons) DiploA MSc DIC CMCIEH MCIWM</b> <i>Programme Leader - Environmental Health</i> <i>Environmental Health, Air Quality, Resilience, Housing, Public Health, Risk Management</i>	EBD209	243 7644	simon.griffiths
<b>Dr Emma Hocking, BSc, PhD (Dunelm)</b> <i>Physical Geography, Coasts, Sea-level and Environmental Behavior</i>	EBA212	243 7838	emma.hocking
<b>Dr Mike Jeffries, BSc, PhD (York)</b> <i>Geophotography, Research Design, Ecology and Conservation</i>	EBD206	227 3755	michael.jeffries
<b>Derek Johnson</b> <i>Programme Leader for Crime Science</i> <i>Geospatial Analysis</i>	EBD219	243 7812	derek.johnson
<b>Dr Samantha Jones</b> <i>Environmental Management, Sustainable Development</i>	EBD210	243 7217	samantha.jones
<b>Dr Helen King, PhD (Dunelm)</b> <i>GIS, Landscape and Environment</i>	EBD210	243 7155	helen.m.king
<b>Richard Kotter</b> <i>Human Geography, Economic and Political Geography</i>	EBD204	227 3262	richard.kotter
<b>Dr Paul Mann BSc, PhD (Newcastle)</b> <i>Anniversary Research Fellow</i> <i>Physical Geography, Arctic Biogeochemistry</i>	EBA216	243 7644	paul.mann
<b>Ms Helen Manns BSc, MSc (Bangor)</b> <i>Student Experience &amp; Enhancement</i> <i>Environmental Management and Policy</i>	EBA206	227 4551	helen.manns
<b>Dr Tony Mellor, BSc, PhD (Hull)</b> <i>Physical Geography, Geology and Soil Science</i>	EBD204	227 3758	antony.mellor
<b>Graham Mowl, BA (Dunelm)</b> <i>Director of Programmes</i> <i>Human Geography, Social Geography, Leisure and Tourism</i>	EBD212	227 3746	graham.mowl
<b>Dr Geoff O'Brien, BA MBA (Dunelm)</b> <i>Environmental Economics and Planning, Business and Sustainable Development</i>	EBD207	227 3747	geoff.obrien
<b>Prof. Phil O'Keefe, BA, PhD (London)</b> <i>Energy and Environment, Development and Sustainability</i>	EBD207	227 3747	phil.okeefe
<b>Dr Matthew Pound PhD (Leeds)</b> <i>Palaeontology, Geology and Climate</i>	EBA216	227 4410	matthew.pound

<b>Dr Nick Rutter, BA PhD (Oxon)</b> <i>Programme Leader BSc Geography Physical Geography, Snow and Ice Hydrology, Hydrometeorology, Modelling</i>	EBA212	243 4735	nick.rutter
<b>Dr Ulrich Salzmann</b> <i>Paleoecology and Biogeography</i>	EBD214	243 3874	ulrich.salzmann
<b>Dr Jon Swords BA, PhD (Newcastle)</b> <i>Economic Geography, Visualisation, Creative and Cultural Industries</i>	EBD213	243 7942	jon.swords
<b>Prof Peter Taylor</b> <i>World Cities, Globalisation</i>	EBD207	243 7641	peter2.taylor
<b>Catherine White BA, M Litt. (Newcastle)</b> <i>Human Geography, Geography of Retailing, Geography of Europe</i>	EBD208	227 3811	catherine.white
<b>Prof John Woodward, BSc, MSc, PhD (Leeds)</b> <i>Director of Research Physical Geography, Glaciology and Geophysical Investigation of Glacial and Fluvial Geomorphology</i>	EBD101	227 3048	john.woodward
<b>Dr Leanne Wake BSc, PhD (Durham)</b> <i>Anniversary Research Fellow Sea Level Change and Cryosphere</i>	EBA216	227 4739	leanne.wake
<b>Dr Felicity Wray</b> <i>Economic Geography, Entrepreneurship, Local and Regional Development</i>	EBD217	227 4549	felicity.wray

## Programme Administration

Each programme has a dedicated programme support team who are responsible for the administration of your programme. Your Programme Support Coordinators are located in room B201 in Ellison Building and can be contacted on 0191 227 4722.

Academic and administration staff on the list above can be contacted in a variety of ways. Firstly, you can request to make an appointment to see them in person (most staff should have a note on their doors indicating their availability). Secondly, you can contact them by telephone by using their extension number listed above. Thirdly, you can contact them via email which is probably the best option.

Please do not expect an immediate reply – remember that staff keep normal working hours e.g. 9am–5pm Monday to Friday. Some staff will have an out of office reply if they are on annual leave or engaging with research activity. Please make sure that when contacting a member of staff you provide as much information as possible i.e. your degree programme, what year you are in along with the issue you need help with.

# Your programme of study –BA (Hons) Geography

There is a national requirement that all programmes of study have a publicly available 'Programme Specification'. The Programme Specification provides an account of the 'Learning Outcomes' of a programme of study (broadly, what your discipline considers your capabilities will/should be on completion of the programme) and how these are to be achieved in a structured way by progression through the programme. This section of the handbook is based on the BA Geography Programme Specification. The full and definitive version can be found at: [www.northumbria.ac.uk/programmespecs/](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/programmespecs/)

## Programme Aims

Geography is a wide ranging discipline. Its main value and distinctiveness lie in the framework it provides for the integration of different perspectives on the problems and issues surrounding people in relation to place, space and their environments. The aims of the BA (Hons) Geography degree are to provide such an academic education in geography, combined with intellectual and practical skills of relevance and application beyond geography.

### The programme specifically aims to:

1. Enable students to develop their knowledge and understanding of the field of geography and appreciate the relevance of a physical and/or human geographic perspective in the analysis of real world problems.
2. Critically examine economic, political, social and environmental issues of contemporary concern and relevance through a combination of theoretical and practical investigation and in so doing, engender an informed concern about the earth and its peoples.
3. Develop understanding, through the study of geography at a variety of spatial scales, of the dynamism and interdependence of local, national and international processes of change.
4. Introduce students to the philosophy, methods and techniques of geography and cognate physical and social sciences.
5. Critically review the wide variety of forms of explanation within human geography and recognize the dynamic, plural and contested nature of the discipline.
6. Give students a choice of options and emphasis in their study that reflects areas of current relevance and ongoing development in the discipline.
7. Develop practical, subject specific and intellectual skills to equip students with the necessary tools for geographical investigation.
8. Promote student employability and lifelong learning through the development of transferable key skills and personal attributes.

## Programme learning outcomes

On completion of the programme you will have achieved a number of learning outcomes, specified in terms of 'performance capabilities' and which are identified under four key headings: Knowledge and Understanding; Intellectual Skills; Practical Skills; Transferable/Key Skills:

### Knowledge and Understanding

#### *You will be able to:*

1. Examine the dynamic nature of the spatial variation in patterns and processes associated with physical and human phenomena particularly the ways in which economic, social, and political activity reflect, reproduce and remake social relations.
2. Recognise and explain the reciprocal nature of relationships between physical and human aspects of environments and landscapes.
3. Critically examine the distinctiveness of place and the processes through which that distinctiveness is developed.
4. Evaluate the significance of spatial and temporal scale on physical and human processes.
5. Critically assess the ways in which geographical data can be acquired, analysed and interpreted.
6. Evaluate the diverse manners of representation of the human and physical worlds.
7. Demonstrate informed concern about the earth and its people through the application of appropriate geographical concepts, techniques and expertise.
8. Examine the nature of difference within the human world and the processes creating geographies of difference and inequality.
9. Demonstrate a critical and reflexive sense of the nature of the discipline as dynamic, plural and contested.



## Intellectual Skills

You will be able to:

1. Critically interpret, judge and evaluate evidence, text and data.
2. Research and assess the merits of contrasting theories, paradigms, explanations and policies.
3. Take responsibility for your own learning and develop habits of reflection upon that learning.
4. Demonstrate your analytical and problem-solving abilities within appropriate geographical contexts.
5. Make informed decisions through abstraction and synthesis of appropriate geographical information, develop reasoned argument and challenge assumptions.

## Practical Skills

You will be able to:

1. Plan, design, execute and communicate a sustained piece of independent academic research.
2. Demonstrate competence in a range of field data collection techniques, including sampling and survey design, data analysis and interpretation.
3. Demonstrate awareness of health and safety and moral and ethical aspects of field investigation.
4. Make effective use of IT for data collection, sourcing, recording, analysis, summary and presentation.
5. Make appropriate use of different literature and data sources, including correct citation and referencing.

## Transferable/Key skills

You will be able to:

1. Demonstrate effective communication and presentation skills.
2. Interpret and use numerical and non-numerical sources of information.
3. Use information technology effectively for research, analysis and presentation.
4. Demonstrate interpersonal and group skills.
5. Exhibit motivation, self-awareness, self-management and intellectual curiosity, facilitating lifelong engagement in learning and critical thinking by applying knowledge and executing practical skills.
6. Demonstrate problem-solving skills.
7. Demonstrate personal attributes of autonomy, flexibility, creativity and adaptability in applying knowledge and executing practical skills.

## Programme Structure and Progression

Each level (or year) of the programme is made up of modules of study spread across two 15-week semesters. Modules are usually worth 10 or 20 credits so that at the end of each year, you should accumulate 120 credits in total. Failure to do so will normally result in a non-honours/ordinary degree, or lesser award. The programme is designed to provide a sound foundation of geographical knowledge at levels 4 and 5 as well as a broad range of specialism at level 6. Therefore, the programme consists of a mixture of compulsory core modules and option modules. Option choices for the following year are made in the middle of Semester Two, when you can look at the Module Descriptors online (<http://nuweb.northumbria.ac.uk/live/webserv/mod.php>) to help you to make an informed choice. You are also encouraged to discuss your option choices with your Guidance Tutor, Programme Leader and appropriate Module Tutors should you require further information. It should be noted that exceptional circumstances sometimes necessitate the withdrawal of option modules from the programme. Should this occur, you will be advised of the situation as far in advance as possible to enable you to consider alternative option choices.

### Level 4 (Year 1):

Provides you with a broad foundation in Geography. Basic principles and concepts in both human and physical geography are taught at Level 4, giving you the flexibility to choose either a physical (BSc) or human (BA) degree pathway at the end of Year 1. Human and physical issues are considered together in the Geography of Development module and basic research skills and methods are also taught in the Skills and Fieldwork modules. More generic study skills are taught and developed throughout the year on the Personal Tutorial module. Emphasis is generally placed on the development of practical experience and application and you will develop a range of transferable skills including literacy, numeracy, IT, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), teamwork and the ability to communicate effectively; all of which are of value to society and prospective employers. These skills are also fostered in part through fieldwork programmes.

### Level 5 (Year 2):

Builds upon the foundations laid down in Level 4. This level allows you to specialise more clearly in the Human Geography degree pathway. You will begin to develop experience in research methods and project design that will lead into the final year Dissertation. The BA field week in Andalucía focuses upon applying knowledge from the core courses 'in the field' by designing and implementing independent group research projects. The Global Environmental Issues maintains the academic breadth within our Geography curriculum by focusing on a range of key

environmental issues in which the human and physical interaction is emphasized and exemplified. Alongside core modules in social and economic geography, the focus of the BA degree in Level 4 are the economic, political and socio-cultural aspects of contemporary global change and their impacts at different scales on people and places. All students can choose 20 credits of options from a broad range of BA and BSc Level 4 options (see option grids).

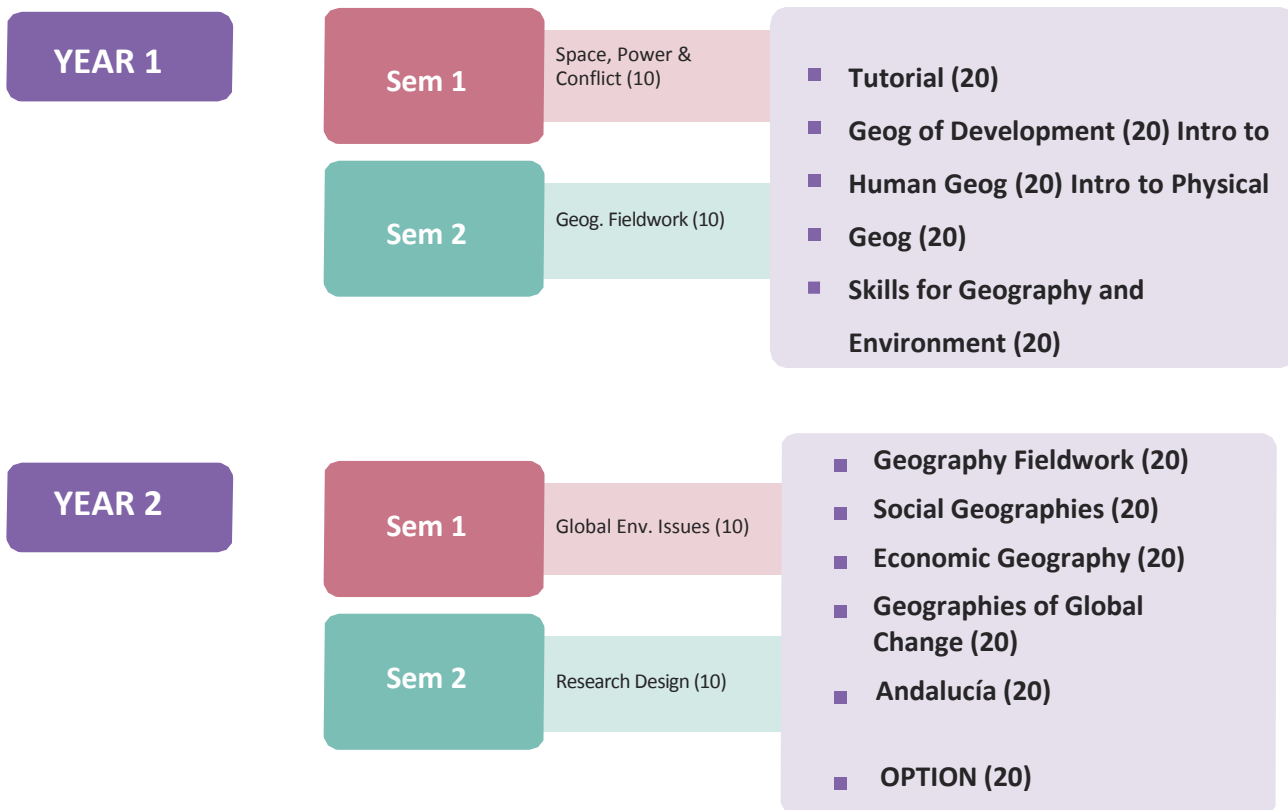
**Level 6 (Year 3):**

Builds on the systematic material covered in Level 5 and is focused almost entirely on specialist options (80 out of 120 credits for BA students), with a highly flexible programme of choices in both physical and human geography. All options relate to the active research interests of staff, thereby reflecting trends and developments in the broader context of the discipline. In addition, you will select a dissertation topic (30 credits) in any aspect of

geography relevant to your BA degree programme. This consists of an independent research project chosen by you and supervised by a member of staff. The final component of the core modules provision at level 6 for BA students only (10 credits) is the module entitled Geographical Thought. This focuses on philosophical issues within and around the discipline, aiming to bring together your knowledge of geography accumulated over the programme and to further develop intellectual reasoning, critical thought and debate. Level 6 also has a more applied and case study emphasis and provides an opportunity for you to tailor your final degree to fit your future career aspirations and ambitions.

There will be an opportunity to take part in a Year Abroad Exchange programme with Frostburg University, MD, U.S. ([www.frostburg.edu/dept/geog/](http://www.frostburg.edu/dept/geog/)) between either your first and second year or your second and third year. Further details will be made available to you during the course of the year. If you think you might be interested then please speak to your Programme Leader.

**Programme Grid: BA (Hons) Geography**





## LEVEL 5

### OPTION MODULES (20 credits from):

(GE0138) Earth Observation and GIS (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0140) Sustainable Development in Africa (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0330) Sustainable Development in Africa (10 credits, Sem 1)  
 (GE0232) Geography in Education (10 credits, Sem 2)  
 (GE0255) Geographical Concepts in Crime Science (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0324) Energy and Climate Change (20 credits, YL)  
 (BE01358) Urban Planning and City Development (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0284) Geography Study Abroad (120 credits YL)  
 Placement year

(GE0251) Geography and Environmental Management Work Placement (20 credits YL)  
 (GE0280) Critical Local and Regional Development Studies (10 credits, Sem 1)  
 (GE0288) Crime Prevention (20 credits, YL)  
 Students into Schools Modules  
 (GE0314) Geographies of War, Conflict (Resolution) and Peace (10 credits, Sem 2)  
 (GE0315) GIS Applications (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0342) Geographies of B/ordering (Eastern European fieldtrip) (20 credits, Sem 1)

## LEVEL 6

### OPTIONS MODULES (80 credits from):

(GE0192) Geographies of (P)leisure, Tolerance and Disgust (Amsterdam)(20 credits, Sem 1)  
 (GE0191) Geographies of (P)leisure, Tolerance and Disgust (20 credits, Sem 1)  
 (GE0245) Geographies of Retailing and Consumption (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0212) Housing, Space and Society (20 credits, YL)  
 (BE0109) Urban Regeneration (10 credits, Sem 1)  
 (GE0158) Applied Remote Sensing (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0142) Development and Disasters (20 credits, YL)  
 (GE0105) Water Management (10 credits, Sem 2)  
 (GE0223) Asia and Development (10 credits, Sem 2)  
 (GE0224) Geophotography (10 credits Sem 2)  
 (GE0242) Geopolitics of Ethnic Identities (20 credits, Sem 2)

### In order to qualify for a BA (Hons) degree, BA (Hons) Geography students must take the following:

- **60 credits BA 'core options' at level 5 (\*on the programme grid/options lists over the next two pages)**
- **At least 40 BA 'core options' at level 6 (\*on the options lists)**
- **A dissertation on an appropriate topic for the BA degree**

You can find the programme structure and detailed module descriptors at [www.northumbria.ac.uk/programmespecs](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/programmespecs). Options are subject to change.

## Programme delivery: learning and teaching strategy

The programme is delivered over two 15-week semesters per level (or academic year) during which formal class contact takes place during the first 12 weeks of each semester only; the remaining weeks (13–15) are reserved for assessment/examinations. Programme delivery involves a variety of formats depending on the nature of the subject material covered by the various modules of study and your learning outcomes. The department prides itself in the diversity of modes of course delivery, the main examples of which include:

**Lectures** – these usually involve large student groups in a lecture theatre or large classroom. Although this is a largely passive learning activity, in which you will probably listen and take notes, some lectures are interactive with questions and group activities. Handouts are usually provided to direct student learning via follow-up questions or reading. Most lectures are about one hour in length. If they are longer than this, a break will usually be provided.

**Seminars** – these involve smaller, more informal student groups where emphasis is placed on the presentation and sharing of ideas, often through student-led discussion. Seminars are sometimes used to follow-up ideas raised in lectures in more detail. In most cases, seminars require you to undertake preparatory work beforehand. Most seminars are about one hour in length.

**Tutorials** – these involve either very small group or individual meetings with your guidance tutor. They are used as a support framework for learning and, if necessary, to help you deal with any personal difficulties they may have. Group tutorials are about one hour in length, although individual tutorials are usually considerably shorter than this.

**Laboratory practicals** – these involve working in a science laboratory environment and cover a range of activities including, for example, analysis of soil, water and sediments. Working in a laboratory environment requires you to be fully aware of appropriate health and safety regulations. Laboratory practicals are usually two to three hours in length, although a break is usually provided.

**IT Workshops** – these usually involve working in a computer laboratory and cover a range of activities, including word processing and use of spreadsheets, and more specialist tasks such as statistical analysis, processing of remotely sensed data and spatial analysis using Geographical Information Systems (GIS). Workshops can be from one to three hours in length, although a break is usually provided in the longer sessions.

**Fieldwork** – this is perhaps one of the most enjoyable of student learning experiences and involves participation in both local and residential trips. Local trips usually last for a half or full day, whilst residential trips may last up to one week. Most of the work on field trips revolves around student-centred research projects. Field trips are not optional extras. They form a substantial part of several core modules. If you do not attend a field trip you will probably not be able to pass that module. If you have valid extenuating circumstances for not attending a field trip (such as medical reasons), you **MUST** contact your programme leader and/or the field trip leader as soon as possible.

### Residential fieldwork

#### (Provisional dates):

Level 4: Edinburgh weekend  
Thursday 9 October – Friday 10 October 2014  
(*residential*)

Skills project week  
March 2014  
(*non-residential, dates to be confirmed*)

Lakes/Tummel  
(*Residential, dates to be confirmed*)

Level 5: Spain or UK  
(*Residential, dates to be confirmed*)

Level 6: Amsterdam (option)  
(*Residential, October dates to be confirmed*)

**Directed learning** – this usually takes the form of follow-up questions from classes, together with a diet of prescribed reading. It may also include preparatory work for seminars, tutorials and assignments.

**Independent learning** – this takes the form of undirected study, usually through reading. Most class handouts contain reference lists that should be followed up at the earliest possible opportunity after the class, while the material is fresh in the mind. As a guide, you should spend about four or five hours per week of independent study for each module on top of the timetabled class contact time, in order to reach your full potential.

**eLearning Portal (Blackboard)** – all modules and programmes have their own web-based Blackboard sites which can be accessed by all enrolled students through the internet either on campus or elsewhere. All modules should have a full set of documentation available through Blackboard including, module guides, assessment details, module reviews from previous years, reading lists, and lecture outlines or PowerPoint slides if available. It is advisable to log on to your module Blackboard sites regularly as staff will often be adding new information throughout the duration of the course.

In addition to academic scholarship and learning, the department places great emphasis on **transferable or key skills** that are of value to prospective employers and to society in general. These skills include the ability to communicate, both orally and in writing; the ability to work as part of a team; the ability to solve complex problems and take appropriate decisions; the ability to work effectively using a variety of IT packages; the ability to undertake independent research and to think critically; and the ability to process and interpret numeric information. Rather than developing these skills in isolation of the academic subject content, the department attempts to foster your development by integrating them into its modules of study, thus providing a strong academic context to their delivery. Awareness of key skills development is promoted largely through the department's guidance tutorial system.

## Learning, teaching and assessment

### Approaches to study and work ethos

The department's main wish is that by the end of the course, you will be able to achieve your full potential by taking a professional attitude to scholarship and learning. We hope that you will aim high and take pride when you achieve good marks in your assessments. By the same token we hope that you will learn from your mistakes and take a constructive approach to your improvement and progress. It is particularly important to get into this mode of thought early in level 4 where there is sometimes a tendency for students to under achieve. One of the main reasons for under achievement is that level 4 does not 'count' towards the degree classification. Consequently, some students become complacent and only aim for a basic 40% pass, often relying heavily on their experience from previous school or college courses. There are three main concerns here: first, if you aim for 40%, you may well get less than 40% and thus fail, and second, a 40% pass is not a very strong foundation from which to progress to second year. Therefore, under achievement at first year often leads to under achievement at levels 5 and 6 that determine degree classification. Third, a mark of 60% is required in order to obtain your bursary in level 5.

For each single semester module studied, the notional student workload is 100 hours. Consequently, the full semester quota of six modules equates to a total workload of 600 hours, or 40 hours per week (600 divided by 15 weeks). On

average, you will have approximately 15 hours of timetabled class contact per week. The department therefore anticipates that, in order to reach your full potential, you will spend the remaining 25 hours per week on directed and independent learning which equates to approximately four hours per week for each module. It is recognised that you will need to spend more time than this on your studies, particularly when assignments are due for submission and in preparation for examinations. It is equally recognised that on other occasions, you will spend less time than this on your studies due to commitments outside the University.

In some cases, you may need to undertake paid work in order to support yourself at University. If this is the case, you should attempt to find a balance between your studies and outside work activities. You are advised that classes could be timetabled at any time between 9.00 am and 6.00 pm on weekdays and until the timetable is finalised you should keep these times free for study. It should be noted, however, that Wednesday afternoons are usually kept free of teaching. It is important that you get into a fairly routine weekly work pattern as early as possible in each semester. This will enable you to identify blocks of free time that could be used for study, sport or other activities. The guidance tutor system is designed to help you in level 4 with time management issues early in your academic career.

Timetables are produced centrally within the University and become available to you at the start of Semester One. The Semester Two timetable are normally published in January. Timetables are difficult to interpret to begin with because some classes, particularly seminars and tutorials, do not run every week. Consequently, it is worth spending some time interpreting your timetable until the weekly routine becomes clear. You are advised to check the appropriate noticeboards every day to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with events and minor changes that occur from time to time.

As students on all programmes undertake field and laboratory work, they are advised that the department has a **Health and Safety Policy**, a copy of which is given to all students at the beginning of their course. You are asked to read the policy carefully and sign the **code of practice declaration** at the back of the booklet. This must be returned to the Programme Team (located in B201, Ellison Building) before you are allowed to participate in field and laboratory activities.

If you are likely to be absent from classes, you should phone the Absence Report Line on 0191 243 7910 or email [bne.sst@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:bne.sst@northumbria.ac.uk). You should also contact your guidance tutor if you need advice or support. Unauthorised absence will result in contact from the Student Support Team and programme leader.

## Assessment

The department takes pride in the diversity of modes of assessment used across its modules of study. The assessment strategy for each module is determined by the team of staff who deliver the module and is designed to test the learning outcomes for that module as comprehensively as possible. Over the three years of the degree course students will experience a very wide range of assessment formats including: seen and unseen examination papers, essays, data response questions, projects, oral presentations, posters, portfolios, reflexive journals and a final year dissertation. On most of the department's programmes, the balance of course work assignments to examinations is approximately 70:30. For individual modules, the pattern of assessment varies from 100% coursework to 100% examination.

How individual modules are assessed is provided on module descriptors, and in material provided by the modules tutor in week one. The number of pieces of coursework for 10 and 20 credit modules vary due to the differing nature of the material being taught. There is also a noticeable change from level 4 through to level 6. Refer to information provided by module tutors for full details of the work involved and submission dates.

### Returned work and feedback

In the Department of Geography and Environment we believe in the value of timely and effective feedback in order to enhance your learning. Marked work with an attached feedback sheet is usually returned to you via the Student Support Team in the 'Hub' office within 20 working days (not including vacation times). At busy times of the year when a lot of assessments are due in at the same time (e.g. at the end of Semester One and Two) this timescale for returning work to you may not be achievable but the member of staff concerned should let you know when you can expect to receive feedback on your work. Some work may also be returned to you in class as part of an interactive feedback session (e.g. Human Geography Semester One exam) or in some instances you may be asked to collect your marked work from a member of staff.

If you require more feedback on your work you should never be afraid to arrange a meeting with the member of staff who has marked it who will usually be happy to go through the work with you in more detail.

### Deadlines

It is strongly recommended that at the start of each semester you produce a schedule of assignment submission dates for all modules so you can plan your workload over the semester. Coursework assignments are set early in each semester and include a guidance sheet which specifies the aims of the assignment, the characteristics of a good answer and, if

appropriate, a word limit. Please note that students should provide a word count with each assignment – this should be exclusive of tables, figures and bibliography.

## Late Approvals (LAs) and Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs)

If you have a valid reason for not being able to submit a piece of coursework on time, you will need to contact the Student Support Team in B201 Ellison Building to request an extension. IT problems are not valid reasons for missing a deadline ("my printer ran out of ink", "my computer got a virus" and "my memory stick broke" are NOT valid reasons). In most cases the Student Support Team will be able to arrange a later deadline and complete a Late Approval form. For some situations a late approval will not be appropriate/possible. In this case, the student may need to complete a PEC form – see your Student Guide, Student Support Team or programme leader for further guidance on the PEC procedure.

When it gets close to PEC deadlines expect an email from the student support team.

## Books and equipment

At the start of each module and at classes during a module, staff will recommend books and journals for reading. Module descriptors state a few key texts. Students are not expected to buy all of the books recommended, and should in any case await the advice of module tutors whose recommendations may change from year to year. All recommended literature should be available from the library or electronically on the web. Newcastle upon Tyne is well provided with bookshops. The 'Blackwells' bookshop in the Students' Union will be able to supply most of your module texts. The largest bookshops in the City are Blackwells (at the Haymarket) and Waterstones (at the Monument).

Students will need an electronic calculator with basic trigonometric and statistical functions (such as the calculation of standard deviations). Students will have access to the University computer systems for statistical analysis, graphics and word-processing and your memory stick or writable CDs can be used for storing files. Students will need suitable warm and waterproof clothing and footwear for fieldwork, and a laboratory coat and goggles for laboratory practical work. Lab coat and goggles can be bought from the University – details will be provided by your programme leader.

### External Examiners

In its latest Quality Code for Higher Education published in October 2011, the Quality Assurance Agency requested details of external examiners be published in our documentation. Listed

below is an outline of external examiners currently in place:

Name	Job	Mike McGibbon
Title		Reader
Company		University of Greenwich

## Backing up your work

Section 4.3 stated that IT problems were not valid reasons for getting an extension to coursework deadlines. There are widely available computing facilities for you to use – they will not all break down at the same time! And loss or corruption of data files is avoidable by keeping two or more copies of all your work. The University provides you with the student U drive space, a memory stick and PCs with CD rewriters. You

may well have your own PC/laptop, an external hard drive, or a web data storage service. Always, ALWAYS keep at least two copies of everything.

## Timetable overview

At the first class for each module you should receive information on exact times, locations and activities for each week of the semester. The tutorial module is not included on your timetable provided electrometrically – each tutorial group meets once a fortnight.

Full personal timetables are available on MyNorthumbria.

## Calendar and important dates

Semester 1		Semester 2	
Week 1–8: Summer vacation		Week 27: 18 Jan First week of teaching	See timetable for scheduled classes
Week 9: 14 Sep Induction week		Week 28: 25 Jan	
Week 10: 21 Sep First week of teaching	See timetable for scheduled classes	Week 29: 01 Feb	
Week 11: 28 September		Week 30: 08 Feb	
Week 12: 05 Oct Berwick 08–09 Oct Level 4 field study		Week 31: 15 Feb	
Week 13: 12 Oct		Week 32: 22 Feb	
Week 14: 19 Oct		Week 33: 29 Feb	
Week 15: 26 Oct		Week 34: 07 Mar	
Week 16: 02 Nov		Week 35: 14 Mar	
Week 17: 09 Nov Dissertation Presentations		Weeks 36, 37 & 38: 21 March to 8 April Spring Break	
Week 18: 16 Nov		Week 39: 11 April	
Week 19: 23 Nov		Week 40: 18 April	
Week 20: 30 Dec		Week 41: 25 April	
Week 21: 07 Dec		Week 42: 02 May Assessment/exam	
Week 22, 23, 24: 14 Dec – 03 Jan Student self-directed time Winter break	Week 43: 11 May Assessment/exam		
Week 25 and 26: 04 Jan to 15 Jan Assessment week	Week 44: 18 May Assessment/ exam or Field Trip		
	Summer vacation 23 May		
	Mid July Informed of any resits and provided information for coursework reassessment		
	LATE August Reassessment period for exams*		

\*If you fail any modules during your first year you will be required to take resits. You are informed of this by letter.

This is especially important for working out the timing of any holidays over the summer as they usually take place during the last week in August.

## Assessment processes explained

### Why are assessments necessary?

Assessment makes an essential contribution to your education. It acts to motivate you to focus and reflect on your learning and to apply and synthesise your knowledge. It also permits you to gauge your progress and act to address any weaknesses. Assessment methods are therefore an integral part of the learning process. From the University's perspective, it enables your tutors to monitor your progress, measure your attainment, maintain standards on the programme, and determine your final degree classification.

### How can you be sure that the assessments are appropriate and relevant?

The mix of assessments across each programme is carefully selected to enable students to demonstrate a range of skills and knowledge which become progressively more challenging level-by-level. Assessment techniques are chosen to fit the subject discipline and reflect the expectations of employers and accreditation bodies. Each assessment task is aligned with module and programme learning outcomes and contributes in part to the development of discipline-specific knowledge and understanding, academic, practical or transferable skills.

### How can you be sure that the assessments which are set are fair?

Individual assessment tasks are written by Module Leaders and are subject to peer-review by other staff in the Department before they are agreed and distributed to students. In addition, External Examiners, who are colleagues from other Universities and (for professionally accredited programmes) from industry, are appointed to ensure that the standards at Northumbria are appropriate, and a key role is to review the assessment questions and marking schemes.

### How do we inform you about the criteria we use to judge your work?

Generic grade descriptors by level of study are supplied within your handbook. These reflect the increasing demands and expectations of standards as students' progress through their programme. In addition, you are supplied with specific assessment criteria at the module level as part of your coursework specifications.

### How do we undertake marking?

Marking involves staff allocating marks according to defined marking criteria that have been approved in advance. Assessments may be marked by a single staff member or a team of markers (depending on the size of the module). These are invariably the staff who delivered the module and their expertise in the subject discipline is assured. If the work is marked by a team, initial meetings and sample marking is undertaken to establish common expectations in relation to the marking criteria to minimize variations across markers.

### How do you know that marking is fair?

Once all the marking has been completed for an assessment, a sample of the work is selected for 'moderation'. The sample size is

proportional to the number of scripts and is selected from the whole range of marks. Student work is anonymous during the marking and moderation process and your name will only be revealed once all the marks have been agreed following the sample check. Prior to the Examination Board, the External Examiner also verifies the appropriateness of the marks awarded within the sample, and it is only at the Exam Board stage that the marks are fully approved. If there are disparities between markers during the moderation process, then additional work may be sampled and third markers may be called upon to resolve any differences. By the end of the whole process the Exam Board must report that it is satisfied that the marks that have been awarded are a true reflection of the quality of the work.

### Why does it take four weeks to mark your work?

Although 20 working days (four weeks) may seem to you like a long time for work to be marked and returned to you, it is important that we allocate sufficient time for staff to carefully consider the work, so that the mark allocated fairly reflects the quality of your submission. Tutors' marking workloads have to be considered in relation to the other academic duties they have to perform. We estimate that, on average, each assessment takes approximately 20-30 minutes to mark and provide feedback. In addition, once marked, all assessments have to be moderated (see above) to ensure fairness and consistency.

### What level of feedback should you expect?

Feedback is a vital part of your learning process and will occur throughout your engagement with academic staff. Informal levels of feedback will often occur in lectures, seminars, lab work and project activities, and through the use of in-class activities and questioning. More formal feedback occurs during the assessment process and usually involves staff writing comments on scripts that are returned to students. Whilst there will invariably be differences in the styles that individual staff members adopt to provide feedback, their comments should serve three main purposes: (1) to explain the mark awarded; (2) to identify strengths within the work; and (3) to indicate areas that could be improved on for future work.

### What should you do with the feedback you receive?

It is imperative that you collect all your assessment scripts so that you benefit from the feedback comments provided by the tutors. Your feedback provides you with the key opportunity to use assessment to improve your learning. Hence, if you have any problems understanding the feedback on your work, you should arrange a meeting with the staff member to clarify their comments.

It is important to review the comments you have received on all your work to identify any consistent issues that have arisen across several pieces of assessment.

This will help you formulate an action plan to deal with recurring weaknesses affecting your attainment. The Skills Plus programme managed by the University Library is an extremely valuable resource for students who require general advice such as 'Writing Assignments', 'Preparing for Exams' or 'Thinking Critically'.



## Library

The libraries at City Campus and Coach Lane provide access to a wide range of print and electronic resources including over half a million print books, over 700,000 eBooks and more than 50,000 electronic journals. More details can be found on the University Library website:

<http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/home>

**City Campus Library** (number 14 on City Campus map) is housed near the Student Union building (number 30 on City Campus map).

**Coach Lane Library** is situated on the East Side of the Campus, in F Block (number 16 on Coach Lane Campus map).

City Campus library is open 24/7 during term time and from 9am to midnight during vacation times. Coach Lane library is open 7am until midnight (Monday to Friday), 9am until midnight (Saturday and Sunday). Opening hours are prominently displayed in the foyers of the library buildings, any changes are advertised on the Library website and on social media. Opening hours vary during bank holidays and are subject to change, so please check before you travel.

You will need to keep your smartcard with you to gain access to and leave the libraries. Your Smartcard is a universal card which not only gives access to the Libraries and other University buildings, but it also allows you to print, copy, scan, borrow books and make cashless payments.

The Library Catalogue can be accessed on and off-campus through the University Library website and the dedicated catalogue computers on each floor of both Libraries. The catalogue can be used to search for books and eBooks located in the University Library. It is quick and easy to use and will give you the information you need to locate the material on the shelves or read online. eBooks can be read on and off-campus, anytime, anywhere. NORA can be used to search for, and retrieve, up-to-date scholarly materials including articles, reports and statistics that are relevant to your studies. You can browse through all the online resources relating to your subject in one place including databases, journals and websites.

Students are entitled to borrow up to 15 items at any one time. Items can be issued using the self-issue machines on the ground floor of City and Coach Lane Libraries. You can renew your library books online through the MyLibrary section of MyNorthumbria or via the Library Catalogue.

Northumbria students can use other libraries such as the Robinson Library at Newcastle University and Newcastle City Library using the SCOUNL access scheme. For more information see the Library SCOUNL information page: <http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/sconul-holiday>

The Northumbria Skills Programme is a comprehensive skills programme designed to develop the key skills you need to succeed at university and beyond provided by the Library. It runs throughout the year and provides classroom style skills sessions on many topics including academic writing skills, giving accomplished presentations, and referencing your work correctly, as well as regular drop in surgeries. Some sessions are bookable; simply consult the timetable on the Northumbria Skills Programme website: <http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/skillsdev-nsp>

Skills Plus is the Library's collection of online learning materials, with a focus on digital literacy and study skills that can be accessed on and off-campus. Using these resources is an excellent way to develop your skills through a range of online tutorials with quizzes, video demonstrations and printable help guides. <http://nuweb2.northumbria.ac.uk/library/skillsplus/topics.html?l3-0>

If you need help or advice, on or off campus, you can contact Ask4Help. The Ask4Help service provides you with help and support to access a range of University services including Library, Disability Support, Student Finance and Careers. The quickest way to find answers to some of the most popular questions asked by students is to look at Ask4help online. You can also contact us by phone and speak to a member of our dedicated enquiry team or email us your questions.

[www.northumbria.ac.uk/ask4help](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/ask4help)

[ask4help@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:ask4help@northumbria.ac.uk)

0191 227 4646

## Northumbria Students' Union (NSU)

Northumbria Students' Union (NSU) is here to make sure you have the best experience possible. NSU is one of the largest and most exciting Unions in the country and that's all because of YOU. We represent you, the student, on all levels, on the issues students are concerned about; receiving a great academic experience, being very employable when you graduate, being safe on campus and in the city and having a fantastic time while a student.

NSU is run by students for students. You can have your say in what NSU does and how it is run, by contacting your [Sabbatical Officers](#) or by coming along to [Student Council](#)

**MEMBERSHIP:** As a student of Northumbria University you are automatically a member of the Students' Union. We also sell NUS Extra Card from the Students' Union at both [Coach Lane](#) and [City Campus](#) giving you discounts in shops and online, but you don't need one to use any of our services.

**DIVERSE:** Your Students' Union is a place which brings together students from all walks of life, all parts of the country and the world and many different cultures. NSU provides lots of opportunities for you to [Get Involved](#), make lasting friendships, increase employability and have FUN!

**INDEPENDENT:** NSU is independent of the University, with its own staff, services and decision-making structure. Run by students for students, providing the best services and opportunities for students we push for change from the University to deliver for students. Find out more at our [You Said, SU Did](#) page. If you need advice about academic appeals or other issues, we can help. Check out the [Advice Page](#).

**VALUE:** Your NSU offers the best value for money, and everything you spend goes straight back into the Students' Union to fund all the activities that we run for you.

If you would like more information check out the website [www.mynsu.co.uk](http://www.mynsu.co.uk) or come and see us at our [offices](#) in City, Coach Lane and London.