



Your Programme

MRes Human Geography

Human Geography is the study of the spatial differentiation of human activity and the interaction between people and the physical environments.

This degree programme, **ACCREDITED BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL**, provides students with a thorough grounding in generic and subject specific research skills whilst commencing work on their own research project. Most students following this degree programme, in its entirety or only the components leading to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods in Human Geography, do so during their first year as a doctoral research student. Successful completion of the programme (or part of it if you have been exempted from some courses) is a pre-requisite for progression to year 2 of the PhD.

Staff in Geography & Environment at the University of Aberdeen are at the forefront of national and international research in a range of fields within Human Geography, including environmental management, regional and economic policy, rural development and transport planning.

The Programme holds full postgraduate research training recognition from the Economic and Social Science Research Council. Students intending to take the MRes as a direct bridge to PhD research are welcome to discuss possible applications to the ESRC for "1+3" fees and maintenance funding. Students who successfully complete the MRes and wish to begin a PhD will be helped to apply to the ESRC for "+3" studentships covering 3 years fees and maintenance.

Programme Aims

The main aim of the programme is to prepare students for a research degree in Human Geography, broadly defined, while providing a comprehensive introduction to social sciences research strategies. The interdisciplinary nature of Human Geography means that subject specific training incorporates a wide range of philosophies, epistemologies, concepts and methods. These subject-specific components combine the expertise of staff who represent various research specialisms within the discipline. Students are introduced to the diverse ways of currently doing Human Geography by researchers who work in fields including rural and regional development and policy, uneven development economic restructuring, transport and mobility, environmental management and policy. The complementary social sciences training delivered by the School of Social Science exposes students to the research of staff and peers from cognate disciplines (e.g. Sociology, Anthropology, Politics and International Relations).

Students completing the degree programme should be adequately prepared either to undertake further research towards a PhD, or to enter employment as researchers in fields outside the academy, such as government, non-governmental organisations, environmental consultancy and branches of the media, where knowledge and skills cultivated by the programme are in demand.

Programme Details

Students take a combination of subject-specific (Human Geography) modules and Social Science modules. A research-based dissertation is a requirement of the programme and admission to the programme includes the approval of a short research proposal.

Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, along with intellectual, practical and transferable skills in the following areas:

Knowledge and understanding of:

- current debate and research in human geography;
- principles of research design and strategy, including applying theory in grounded practice, and selecting methodology appropriate to evidence;
- the relationships between, and rationale for, particular qualitative and quantitative research methods; and their epistemological implications;
- the critical use, interpretation and presentation of techniques for data collection and analysis;
- the need for a reflexive understanding of the ethical, legal and political dimensions of research.

Intellectual skills. On completion of the course students should be able to:

- reason critically;
- apply concepts from human geography and cognate disciplines;
- apply different research methods in appropriate settings;
- complete various research projects, including a dissertation, having devised an appropriate methodology.

Practical skills. On completion of the course students should be able to:

- identify and use library, web-based and other bibliographic sources;
- employ word-processing and other basic computing skills;
- employ statistical methods and use statistical analysis packages;
- present and promote the results of their research to academic and non-academic audiences.

Transferable skills. On completion of the course students should be able to:

- present work to peers and build research networks;
- apply social science survey, statistical and interviewing techniques;
- practise the key skills of writing, presentation and dissemination;
- manage a major research project, including defining research targets, time-management schedules and resource budgets;
- work collaboratively alongside others, or as a member of a team;
- exercise critical and flexible judgement;
- take responsibility for the management of their future career.

Methods of Delivery and Assessment

A variety of teaching methods and modes of assessment are employed across the modules which comprise the programme; lectures, student-led seminars, workshops and tutorials. These formats provide students with a formal introduction to specific topics and an opportunity to debate issues arising from the lecture with their peers, an approach well suited to small group teaching and to encouraging students to engage critically with a wide range of theoretical, methodological and professional development topics.

The Master of Research Programme is assessed wholly by continuous assessment. Assignments include essays, group reports and presentations. The assessment strategy is designed to evaluate, for individual students, their intellectual development and the development of transferable skills such as written and verbal communication, team work skills and information retrieval skills. The dissertation provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate that they can apply the skills acquired in the taught modules they have completed. All assessed work is collated for inspection by the external examiner who offers guidance on the academic standards to be attained in the programme. The subject-specific taught courses and the dissertation are assessed by two markers appointed from within the outlet, with the external examiner fulfilling a moderating role.

Entrance Requirements

Students are required to have a good upper second class honours degree (or equivalent) in Geography or a cognate discipline.

Further Information

Graduate School Admission Unit, College of Physical Sciences, University of Aberdeen, St Mary's Building, Elphinstone Road, Aberdeen, AB24 3FU

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How to Apply

Please visit www.abdn.ac.uk/sras/postgraduate/apply for details on how to apply.