

Choosing Your Courses for 2026-27

Some tips for third-year Geography students

Want some help? Please ask.

In the first instance, general enquiries about your curriculum can be addressed to the School Office (Meston G05H) from where they will filter down to the academic staff. Email: geography@abdn.ac.uk or geosciences@abdn.ac.uk.

Alternatively, you can reach out directly to your personal tutor or either of the following members of the Geography Teaching Committee:

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Some things may be better sorted out face-to-face (whether in-person or online) – especially as we cannot see how MyCurriculum works for individual students. We will be happy to see anyone in person (by appointment) during Welcome Week (starts 14 September).

The [course catalogue](#) includes details of courses run by us and other departments. The course overviews are useful.

You can use the [timetable clash checker](#) to find course timetable information on a week-by-week basis for the academic year. Please remember that all course choices are subject to availability, timetabling constraints, and passes in any pre-requisites specified. Some courses also specify co-requisites. You will be able to choose your courses for the new academic year using the online [MyCurriculum](#) widget. Before you do so, please read the information below. Note also that MyCurriculum may try to block some choices which are perfectly fine. If you get stuck, or want some help, please ask.

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1. MA and BSc Geography – single honours

- Your honours programme consists of 240 credit points from courses taken at Levels 3 and 4, split between Programme Years 3 and 4. You must pass at least 90 credit points of courses at Level 4 to get an honours degree.
- You must take at least 210 credit points from honours courses in Geography (GG-coded) across Years 3 and 4.
- You are welcome to choose up to 30 of your total 240 honours credit points from non-Geography courses, as long as:
 - the course(s) is/are at Levels 3 or 4
 - your choices timetable satisfactorily (i.e. classes don't clash)
 - you hold any pre-requisite passes that are specified

In Term 1 of Level 3, you must take:

- GG3031: Approaches to Geography (30 credits)
- GG3069: Remote Sensing & GIS (15 credits)
- One of the Data Analysis courses, *either* GG3094: Social Science Data and Analysis – with content tailored for human geographers – or GG3095: Physical Science Data and Analysis – with content tailored for physical geographers. Both courses are 15 credits.

In Term 2 of Level 3, you must take:

- One of the Research Design courses; *either* GG3573 (30 credits) *or* GG3574 (15 credits). For the 30-cr course you should expect to have to complete more assessment, although otherwise the academic content is broadly the same.
- One of the field trips; *either* GG3578 Human Geography: Honours Field Course (15 credits) *or* GG3596 Physical Geography: Honours Field Course (15 credits).
- If you are BSc Geography, you must take one of the Techniques in Physical Geography courses; *either* GG3575 (15 credits) *or* GG3585 (30 credits). For the 30-cr course you should expect to have to complete more assessment, although otherwise the academic content is broadly the same. If you are MA Geography but are still interested in pursuing some Physical Geography then you can choose to sit this course (either variant).
- Any remaining credits must be collected from other courses. See 'Example Course Combinations' at the end of this document.

2. MA Geography – joint honours programmes

- Your honours programme consists of 240 credit points from courses at Levels 3 and 4, split between Programme Years 3 and 4. Half of these credits (120) must come from Geography courses, with the other 120 credit from your partner subject. You must pass at least 90 credit points at Level 4 to get an honours degree.
- Honours courses in Geography are all the Level 3 or 4 GG-coded courses.
- In Term 1, you must take one of the courses in Approaches to Geography; *either* GG3031 (30 credits) *or* GG3071 (15 credits).
- In your final year of honours (Programme Year 4), you will have to write a dissertation. **If you want to do your dissertation in Geography, then you must take GG3574 Research Design in Term 2.** Your partner subject will provide you with an alternate course to prepare you for your dissertation if you intend to write your dissertation in a subject other than Geography.
- You must choose (at least) another two, or possibly three Geography courses, to take your credit total in Geography up to 60 for Programme Year 3. See the 'Example Course Combinations' at the end of the document.

- To study joint honours you must have met the honours entry/progress standards for *both* your subjects.
- The University endeavours to hold compulsory courses for joint degrees separate. However, we cannot prevent timetable clashes that involve option courses. If there is a clash between a compulsory course and an optional course, the compulsory course must take precedence.

3. BSc Geoscience

- Your honours programme consists of 240 credit points from courses at Levels 3 and 4, split between Programme Years 3 and 4. You must pass at least 90 credit points at Level 4 to get an honours degree.
- You must take at least 210 credit points from honours courses in Geoscience. These are:
 - all Level 3 or 4 GG-coded courses (courses offered by Geography)
 - many Level 3 or 4 GL- or GP-coded courses (courses offered by Geology)
 - any Level 3 or 4 AY-coded course (courses offered by Archaeology)
 - any Level 4 GO-coded course (cross-disciplinary courses)
- You are welcome to choose up to 30 of your total 240 honours credit points from non-Geoscience courses, as long as:
 - the course(s) is/are at Levels 3 or 4
 - your choices timetable satisfactorily (i.e. classes don't clash)
 - you hold any pre-requisite passes specified
- During Programme Year 3, from Geography's courses you must take GG3069: Remote Sensing & GIS and GG3575: Techniques in Physical Geography (both 15 credits).
- During Term 1 of Programme Year 4 you will need to conduct a major research project (similar to a dissertation) to satisfy the requirements for Research Project A (GO4001). This requires some forethought. If you intend to undertake a project on either a geographical or geological topic, then you must take GG3574 Research Design (15 credits).

4. Looking ahead; some important information about Geography in Programme Year 4

MA or BSc single honours

- In your senior honours year, you must take GG4023: Geography Dissertation which carries 30 credit points. You begin preparation for your dissertation in Research Design (GG3573 or GG3574), allowing you the summer ahead to conduct fieldwork, should you wish to do so. The dissertation is submitted at the start of Term 2 in Programme Year 4.
- You will then choose further optional courses worth 90 credit points to take your total at Levels 3 and 4 up to 240 credit points. These 240 credit points must include:
 - At least 90 credit points at Level 4, which you must pass to graduate with honours
 - At least 210 credit points of Geography courses.

MA joint honours – all variants

- You must do your dissertation in Geography if you do not do it (or the equivalent) in your other subject.

- You will then choose further optional courses worth 30 credit points to make your total of Geography courses at Levels 3 and 4 up to 120 credit points.
- You must take and pass at least 90 credit points at Level 4 overall.

BSc Geoscience

- In Programme Year 4, you must take GO4001: Geoscience Project A (30 credits), GG4002: Laboratory Data Acquisition and Analysis (15 credits), and GG4501: Geoscience Project B (30 credits).
- You will then choose further option courses worth 45 credit points to take your total at Levels 3 and 4 up to 240 credit points. These 240 credit points must include:
 - At least 90 credit points at Level 4, which you must pass to graduate with honours
 - At least 210 credit points of Geoscience courses, i.e. codes AY, GG, GL, GO, GP

Anticipated Level 4 options in Geography for 2027-28

We intend to run a selection of advanced option courses that draw directly on staff research specialisms. At present we plan to offer Level 4 courses as follows:

- In human geography:

Term 1: GG4073/4083 Rural Geographies (15 or 30 credits) *and/or* GG4092/4093 Land and Marine Conservation (15 or 30 credits).

Term 2: GG4575/4580: People on the Move: Dimensions of Global Migration (15 or 30 credits) *and/or* GG4586/4587 Globalisation (15 or 30 credits). We are also preparing a new course entitled 'Geographies of Space and Place' (code-GG451A/B) that we anticipate becoming available in 2027-28.
- In physical geography:

Term 1: GG401A/B H2O – which combines aspects of environmental hydrology with glaciology (15 or 30 credits).

Term 2: GG4571/79: Environmental Change (15 or 30 credits).

We recommend GL4535: Geoscience and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (15 credits) for any physical geographers looking to collect an additional 15 credits in physical science at Level 4.
- As long as you have 90 credit points at Level 4 in total, you will be able to choose courses from Level 3 – from Geography or other subjects – to complete your curriculum.

5. Regarding MyCurriculum

See the [information about MyCurriculum](#) provided by the University. MyCurriculum should be set-up with the correct specification of course prescriptions and pre-requisites. It should block *only* those course choices that do not timetable, or for which students do not have appropriate pre-requisite passes. Note that the system is set up for students to take exactly 120 credits points per year, split evenly with 60 in each half-session – although it is possible and perfectly okay according to the University's General Regulations for full-time students to take up to 75 credit points in any half-session, with approval – for which you must submit a non-standard credit load form. If you want to choose something that you think looks fine, but MyCurriculum doesn't like it, please check with us.

6. Some general tips

- When it comes to the award of your degree, Geography weights your Level 3 grade point average (GPA) at 0.3 (30%) for the purposes of degree classification, and your Level 4 GPA at 0.7 (70%). Therefore, the outcomes for courses taken at Level 4 impact your final degree classification more heavily than those results at Level 3. It is the *level* of the course that is important, not which *programme year* you take the course in. Level 3 courses are all coded GG30XX or GG35XX, whereas Level 4 courses are coded GG40XX or GG45XX.
- Choose the courses that you think you will most enjoy, as you are likely to do well in these.
- You are welcome to specialise in human geography, to specialise in physical geography, or to combine both according to your preferences. See below for examples.
- Think ahead. What you do in Year 3 has implications for what you (can) do in Year 4. Try to work out what the possibilities for Year 4 are now.
- As long as you have 90 credit points at Level 4 in total, you can take Level 3 courses in Year 4.
- We (usually) recommend that students balance their workload by studying for 60 credit points in each half-session. This is what MyCurriculum expects, but it is not obligatory. For example, if, as a single honours student, the courses that you most want to do split 75:45 or 45:75, not 60:60, this is fine with us if you are happy with the asymmetrical workload.
- The standard expectation is for full-time students to take 120 credit points in Programme Year 3 and 120 credit points in Programme Year 4. This is what MyCurriculum expects, but it is not obligatory. The best reason to take an extra course in Year 3 (i.e., 135 credit points) is because you really want to do it. If you do take (and pass) an extra course in Year 3 you will be able to take one course fewer in Year 4 (105 credit points, not 120 credit points). This can work out very well for some students (e.g. to free time up to work on a dissertation), but you must be sure that you do not block out other courses that you want to do. If you want to do an extra course, submit a [non-standard credit load form](#). If in doubt, come and ask.
- You cannot count more than 240 credit points (from approved Level 3 and 4 courses) towards honours classification. You can ask to take extra credits that do not count, e.g. if you wish to study a language.
- If in doubt about optional courses, try these out by going to the introductory lecture. Staff are usually happy for students to sit in for the first week or two of option courses. Note that you have just two weeks to finalise your curriculum *for the term* once teaching has started.

7. Regarding honours field courses

The human and physical geography (international) field courses are compulsory. The Human Geography field course will most probably go to Amsterdam. The Physical Geography field course is likely to go to the Italian Alps. More details will follow.

Note that:

- You cannot take both field courses; you must choose one.
- The trips run in early summer: usually early to mid-June. We will confirm the trip dates as soon as we can.
- Assessment concludes with submission of a trip report in September of Year 4; so unless you are prepared to delay your graduation, you cannot take either field course in Programme Year 4.

- State funding for higher education in Scotland makes no provision for fieldwork, so students are asked to make their own travel arrangements to and from the field trip venue and are also required to contribute towards the total costs of the field course. As a guide, we anticipate this contribution will be £500-£600 for either trip (excluding your flights).
- Past experience suggests that, for UK students in genuine need, some financial support for fieldtrips may be available from the University's [Discretionary Fund](#). If you are struggling financially to afford the trip then please discuss this with us so that we can explore alternatives.

8. Example course combinations for Geography honours programmes

Key to tables below

Prescribed course (neutral or mixed option)	Human geography option	Physical geography option	Other subject
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For students specialising in human geography (e.g. MA Geography)

PROGRAMME YEAR 3	
GG3031: Approaches to Geography (30 credits)	GG3574: Research Design (15 credits)
GG3094: Social Science Data and Analysis: unlocking NE Scotland (15 credits)	GG3578 Human Geography: Honours Field Course (15 credits)
GG3069: Remote Sensing and GIS (15 credits)	***Find a 30 credit course in, e.g. Business Management, History, Philosophy, Sociology and Spanish and Latin American studies
PROGRAMME YEAR 4†	
GG4023 Geography Dissertation (30 credits)	GG4587 Globalisation (30 credits)
GG4083: Rural Geographies (30 credits)	GG4580: People on the Move: Dimensions of Global Migration (30 credits)

† You can take Level 3 courses in Programme Year 4 as long as you take at least 90 credit points at Level 4.

*** You can take courses in other disciplines, as long as you take at least 210 credit points of Geography courses at Levels 3 and 4.

For students specialising in physical geography (e.g. BSc Geography)

PROGRAMME YEAR 3	
GG3031: Approaches to Geography (30 credits)	GG3574: Research Design (15 credits)

GG3095: Physical Data Science and Analysis (15 credits)	GG3596: Physical Geography: Honours Field Course (15 credits)
GG3069: Remote Sensing & GIS (15 credits)	GG3585: Techniques in Physical Geography (30 credits)
PROGRAMME YEAR 4†	
GG4023: Geography Dissertation (15 credits)	GG4579: Environmental Change (30 credits)
GG401A: H2O (30 credits)	***Find a further 30 credits in another discipline, e.g. Archaeology, Biology, Geology.

†You can take Level 3 courses in Programme Year 4 as long as you take at least 90 credit points at Level 4.

***You can take courses in other disciplines, as long as you take at least 210 credit points of Geography courses at Levels 3 and 4.

Example MA joint degree #1 (without the Geography Dissertation)

PROGRAMME YEAR 3	
GG3071: Approaches to Geography (15 credits)	GG3574: Research Design (15 credits)
GG3094: Social Science Data and Analysis: unlocking NE Scotland (15 credits)	GG3578: Human Geography: Honours Field Course (15 credits)
XX30xx (30 credits in partner subject)*	*XX35xx (30 credits in partner subject)*
PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GG4083: Rural Geographies (30 credits)	GG4587: Globalisation (30 credits)
XX40yy : dissertation in partner subject (30 credits) †*	XX45yy (30 credits in partner subject)*

* Our MA joint degree partners tend to work mostly (but not always) with 30 credit points courses at Levels 3 and 4.

– Here the student does their dissertation in their other subject (here in the first half-session).

† Remember that some subjects run their dissertations in the first half-session, others in the second half-session. Check with your partner subject if unsure.

Example MA joint degree #2 (with the Geography Dissertation)

PROGRAMME YEAR 3	
GG3071: Approaches to Geography (15 credits)	GG3574: Research Design (15 credits)
GG3094: Social Science Data and Analysis: unlocking NE Scotland (15 credits)	GG3578: Human Geography: Honours Field Course (15 credits)
XX30xx (30 credits in partner subject)	XX35xx (30 credits in partner subject)
PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GG4023: Geography Dissertation (30 credits)	GG4587 Globalisation (30 credits)
XX40yy (30 credits in partner subject)	XX45yy (30 credits in partner subject)

- In this example the student chooses to do their dissertation in Geography – a decision that must be made during Term 2 of Programme Year 3 (by March at the latest).

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