

Choosing Your Courses for 2026-27

Some tips for fourth-year Geography students

WANT SOME HELP?

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 Geography's Teaching Committee:

Dr Ed Schofield

St Mary's G19 (ground floor, old part of building)

j.e.schofield@abdn.ac.uk

Dr Dmitri Mauquoy

St Mary's G23 (ground floor, old part of building)

d.mauquoy@abdn.ac.uk

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 (starting 14 September).

The [Course Catalogue](#) includes details of courses run by us and other departments. You may find the course overviews 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. If you think that MyCurriculum is blocking some choices which you believe are perfectly okay, or if you get stuck, or simply just want some help, then please ask (see above).

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1. MA and BSc Geography, single honours

- You should already have:
 - at least 240 credit points from Levels 1 and 2;
 - at least 120 credit points from Level 3. Assume you will pass the field course – GG3578 (Amsterdam) or GG3596 (the Alps) – and add those 15 credit points to your current total.

If you are short of credit points, you must make sure that you catch up by the end of Term 2 (May). If you think you may be short of credits then please ask if you need advice.
- You must take GG4023: Geography Dissertation (30 credit points). Note that your time and effort on this piece of work are to be concentrated during Term 1. We will ask for the dissertation to be submitted at the start of Term 2, allowing you maximum time between the terms to write-up the work.
- You choose further option courses to make your total at Levels 3 and 4 together up to 240 credit points, subject to the following restrictions:
 - You must have at least 90 credit points at Level 4 to obtain an honours degree.
 - You must take at least 210 credit points from honours courses in Geography. These are the Level 3 or 4 GG-coded courses in the catalogue.
- You are still welcome to choose up to 30 of your total 240 honours credit points from non-Geography courses, as long as:
 - the course(s) are at Levels 3 or 4
 - your course choices timetable satisfactorily (i.e. classes don't clash)
 - you hold any pre-requisite passes that are specified

2. MA joint honours

- You should already have:
 - at least 240 credit points from Levels 1 and 2;
 - at least 120 credit points from Level 3. If you took one of the field courses – GG3578 (Amsterdam) or GG3596 (the Alps) – assume you will pass it and add those 15 credit points to your current total.

If you are short of credit points, you must make sure that you catch up by the end of Term 2 (May). If you think you may be short of credits then please ask if you need advice.
- You must have at least 90 credit points at Level 4 in total (i.e. from Geography and your other subject collectively) to obtain an honours degree.
- You must take *either* GG4023: Geography Dissertation *or* the equivalent (i.e. the final year dissertation or project) in your partner subject. Note that your time and effort on the Geography Dissertation are to be concentrated during Term 1. We will ask for the dissertation to be submitted at the start of Term 2, allowing you maximum time between the terms to write-up the work.
- You must choose further courses to make your total of Geography courses across Levels 3 and 4 add up to 120 credit points. The honours courses in Geography are all the Level 3 or 4 GG-coded courses.
- You do not have to take 60 credit points of Level 4 Geography courses – although many of you will.

- 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 option course, the compulsory course takes precedence.

3. BSc Geoscience

- You should already have:
 - at least 240 credit points from Levels 1 and 2;
 - at least 120 credit points from Level 3. If you took the Physical Geography Honours Field Course (Alps; GG3596), assume you will pass it and add those 15 credit points to your current total.

If you are short of credit points, you must make sure that you catch up by the end of Term 2 (May). If you think you may be short of credits then please ask if you need advice.

- You will be automatically registered for GO4001: Geoscience Project A (30 credits), GO4002: Laboratory Data Acquisition and Analysis (15 credits) and GO4501: Geoscience Project B (30 credits). However, if you don't want to complete both of the projects (A & B) then there may be some flexibility with this; speak to a member of staff about this.
- You choose further option courses to make your total at Levels 3 and 4 together up to 240 credit points, subject to the following restrictions:
 - You must have at least 90 credit points at Level 4 to obtain an honours degree;
 - You must take at least 210 credit points from honours courses in Geoscience: these are any courses at Levels 3 or 4 prefixed with an AY, GG, GL, GO or GP code.
- 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 course choices timetable satisfactorily (i.e. classes don't clash)
 - you hold any pre-requisite passes that are specified

4. 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 also 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 'legal' going by 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 do something that you think looks fine but MyCurriculum doesn't like it, please check with us first.

5. Some general advice when building your curriculum

- Choose the courses that you think you will most enjoy, as you are likely to do well in these.
- As long as you have 90 credit points at Level 4 in total, you can also choose courses from Level 3 – from Geography or other subjects.
- For calculation of your Grade Point Average (GPA – which determines your degree classification), Geography weights your Level 3 GPA at 0.3 (30%), and your Level 4 GPA at 0.7 (70%). The same weighting also applies to the BSc Geoscience degree programme. We do this because we find that students' academic performance improves as they move through their

time at University; the extra weighting for Level 4 courses is a way to recognise and reward this. Please be aware that it is the *level* of the course, not the programme year in which you sit it, that determines the course weighting. A Level 3 course taken during Programme Year 4 will be weighted at 0.3.

- We (usually) recommend that students balance their workload by studying for 60 credit points in each term. 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 between terms, not 60:60, this is fine with us if you are happy with the asymmetrical workload. If you want to do this but MyCurriculum will not allow it, then please speak with us.
- If you did take an extra course last year, you may need approval to take fewer than 120 credit points this year. See the [MyCurriculum FAQs](#). If necessary, choose anything to make up 120 credit points for the year, and send us a [non-standard credit load form](#) so we can remove the unnecessary course.
- Similarly, if you are credit points short, you may need approval to take more than 120 credit points this year. See the [MyCurriculum FAQs](#). Choose 120 credit points for the year and bring us a [non-standard credit load form](#) so we can add an extra course.
- If in doubt, try different courses out. Staff are usually happy for students to sit in for the first week or two of the option courses to see if they like them, but note that you have just two weeks to register for (or change) courses *for that term* once the teaching has started.

6. Geography option courses available at Level 4 for 2026-27

- If no pre-requisite or co-requisite is shown, the course is open to any student in Programme Year 4.
- As long as you take and pass 90 credit points at Level 4, you can take Level 3 courses in Programme Year 4.

Code	Course Name	Notes/Pre- and/or Co-Requisites
TERM 1		
GG401A	H2O (15-credits)	New for 2026-27, this is a course that combines aspects of environmental hydrology and glaciology. It considers water in both its liquid and solid states, from ice sheets through to fluvial and catchment systems. GG3575 Techniques in Physical Geography is a pre-requisite.
GG401B	H2O (30-credits)	Similar content to above but expect to have to undertake more assessment to earn the additional credits. GG3575 Techniques in Physical Geography is a pre-requisite.
GG4073	Rural Geographies (15 credits)	This course considers social, demographic, economic and policy issues associated with the contemporary countryside at local, regional, national and international scales.
GG4083	Rural Geographies (30 credits)	Similar content to above but expect to have to undertake more assessment to earn the additional credits.
TERM 2		

Code	Course Name	Notes/Pre- and/or Co-Requisites
GG4571	Environmental Change (15 credits)	This course investigates the environmental and climatic changes that have occurred since the Oligocene (33.9 million years ago) with an emphasis on events during the Holocene epoch (the last c. 11,700 years). We will explore the evidence used to reconstruct past environments from proxy records and consider how people interacted with their environment in prehistory and early history. GG3575 Techniques in Physical Geography is a pre-requisite.
GG4579	Environmental Change (30 credits)	Similar content to above but with the addition of a two-hour written examination as part of the course assessment. GG3575 Techniques in Physical Geography is a pre-requisite.
GG4586	Globalisation (15 credits)	Examines key economic, social and political aspects of globalisation, providing an advanced understanding to our increasingly internationally-integrated and interdependent world. You cannot take this course if you took GG3576: Globalisation last year.
GG4587	Globalisation (30 credits)	Similar to above but expect to have to undertake more assessment to earn the additional credits. You cannot take this course if you took GG3576: Globalisation last year
GG451A	Geographies of Space and Place (15 credits)	New for 2026-27 and targeted primarily at human geographers, this course – taught in cohort with Archaeology – will consider (amongst other things) our understanding of landscape, space and place, building on content delivered in Approaches to Geography (GG3031/71).
GG451B	Geographies of Space and Place (30 credits)	Similar to above but expect to have to undertake more assessment to earn the additional credits.

7. Example course combinations

These are just to showcase what is possible. Note that other choices/combinations of courses are available.

Key to the tables below

Core course / neutral or mixed option	Human geog option	Physical geog option	Other subject
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For those wishing to **specialise entirely in human geography**, i.e. MA Geography (single hon), the following combinations will work.

PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GG4023: Geography Dissertation (30 credits)	GG4586: Globalisation (30 credits)
GG4083: Rural Geographies (30 credits)	GG451B: Geographies of Space and Place (30 credits)

For those wishing to **specialise entirely in physical geography**, i.e. BSc Geography (single honours), the following is likely to be possible in most cases:

PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GG4023: Geography dissertation (30 credits)	GG4579: Environmental Change (30 credits)
GG401B: H2O (30 credits)	*30 'outside' credits in another discipline (e.g. Archaeology, Geoscience, Geology)

*You are welcome to choose any course that timetables with your other classes and for which you possess necessary pre-requisites. Recommended options include: GO4501 Geoscience Project B, similar to a mini-dissertation, this would give you the full 30 credits; or GL4535 Geoscience and the UN Sustainable Development Goals – a course covering (amongst other things) geohazards (volcanism, earthquakes, etc.), geoheritage and geodiversity, the energy transition, and carbon capture and storage, and is weighted at 15 credits. If you take this together with AY4519: The Archaeology of East Asia: Rice, Rites and Sacrifice – which covers the archaeology of the title region from the late Pleistocene, through to the development of agriculture, and into the formation of States and Empires – the content should complement Environmental Change and (with GL4535) would give you the additional 15 credits you need.

It is also possible to build a **mixed curriculum** (i.e. incorporate aspects of both human and physical geography), dependent upon which courses you have taken previously (at Level 3). As an example;

PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GG4023: Geography dissertation (30 credits)	*GG4579: Environmental Change (30 credits)
*GG401B: H2O (15 credits)	GG4586: Globalisation (15 credits)
GG4073: Rural Geographies (15 credits)	GG451A: Geographies of Space and Place (15 credits)

*GG3575 Techniques in Physical Geography is a pre-requisite.

Joint honours degrees

Here's an example of a possible curriculum for any student on one of our **joint MA degree programmes** who is taking their dissertation in Geography:

PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GG4023: Geography Dissertation (30 credits)	GG4586: Globalisation (30 credits)
XX45yy (30 credit course in partner subject)	XX45yy (30 credit course in partner subject)

...whereas a joint honours MA curriculum *without* the Geography Dissertation might look as follows:

PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GG4083: Rural Geographies (30 credits)	GG4586: Globalisation (30 credits)
*XX40xx: Dissertation (or equivalent in partner subject)	XX45xx (30 credit course in partner subject)

*Note that some subjects run their dissertations in Term 1, whereas for others you sit the dissertation in Term 2. If unsure, check with your partner subject.

Here is an example curriculum for the **BSc Geoscience** programme with a more 'geographical' emphasis. Our colleagues in Geology and Archaeology are also able to offer you their advice on how the optional GG courses could be swapped out for GL or AY-coded courses in their discipline.

PROGRAMME YEAR 4	
GO4001: Geoscience Project A (30 credits)	GO4501: Geoscience Project B (30 credits)
GO4002: Laboratory Data Acquisition & Analysis (15 credits)	GG4571: Environmental Change (15 credits)
GG401A: H2O (15 credits)	GL4535: Geoscience and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (15 credits)

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