



# **Subject Benchmark Statement**

## **Geography**

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## About this Statement

This document is a QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies. Subject Benchmark Statements also describe the nature and characteristics of awards in a particular subject or area. Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as a membership organisation on behalf of the higher education sector. A summary of the Statement is also available on the QAA website.

This Benchmark Statement for Geography expects the geography learning community to commit to equity, inclusive access, and practices that anticipate the diverse needs of their community members. This Benchmark statement asks the learning community to engage with social and environmental justice agendas across the entirety of the curriculum.

Key changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement include:

- a revised structure for the Statement which includes the introduction of cross-cutting themes of:
  - equality, diversity and inclusion
  - education for sustainable development
  - employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education
- a comprehensive review updating the context and purposes of Geography, including course design and content in order to inform and underpin the revised benchmark standards.

## How can I use this document?

Subject Benchmark Statements are often used by higher education providers in the design and development of new courses in the relevant subject, as they provide a framework for specifying intended learning outcomes in an academic or vocational discipline. They are also used as a reference point when reviewing or revalidating degree courses. They may be used by external examiners in considering whether the design of a course and the threshold standards of achievement are comparable with other higher education providers. They also provide professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and learned societies with the academic standards expected of students.

Subject Benchmark Statements provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with a course but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in course design within a framework agreed by the subject community.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of courses in Geography
- a prospective student thinking about undertaking a course in Geography
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of Geography graduates.

## Relationship to legislation and regulation

The responsibility for academic standards lies with the higher education provider which awards the degree. Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them by their relevant funding and regulatory bodies. This Statement does not interpret legislation, nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements.

The regulatory status of the Statement will differ with regard to the educational jurisdictions of the UK. In England, Subject Benchmark Statements are not sector-recognised standards as set out under the Office for Students' [regulatory framework](#). However, they are specified as a key reference point, as appropriate, for academic standards in Wales under [Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#) and in Scotland as part of the [Quality Enhancement Framework](#). Subject Benchmark Statements are part of the current quality requirements in Northern Ireland. Because the Statement describes outcomes and attributes expected at the threshold standard of achievement in a UK-wide context, many higher education providers will use them as an enhancement tool for course design and approval, and for subsequent monitoring and review, in addition to helping demonstrate the security of academic standards.

## Additional sector reference points

Higher education providers are likely to consider other reference points in addition to this Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing courses. These may include requirements set out by PSRBs and industry or employer

expectations. QAA has also published [Advice and Guidance](#) to support the [Quality Code](#) which will be helpful when using this Statement, for example, in [course design](#), [learning and teaching](#), [external expertise](#) and [monitoring and evaluation](#).

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in [QAA's Glossary](#). Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Statement where appropriate.

# 1 Context and purposes of a Geography degree

## Context

1.1 Geography occupies a distinctive place in the world of learning, offering an integrated study of the complex reciprocal relationships between societies and environments. Geographers study through the concepts of scale, place, space and time. They recognise the commonalities, differences and dynamics in populations and cultures, political systems, economies, landscapes and environments across the world, as well as the **interconnected** links between them **and to sustainability, inequalities and justice**.

1.2 Geography is an established subject within the UK higher education system. It attracts students from a wide range of intellectual backgrounds with diverse interests and experiences. BA and BSc degree courses (and also MA in Scotland) are prevalent, alongside integrated master's programmes. This reflects geography's sustained engagement with the natural and social sciences, the arts and humanities. The subject's breadth means that many of its core constituents may be approached through several routes.

## Purposes of a Geography degree

1.3 A major intellectual task within the subject is to encompass the diversity of contexts and the different types of knowledge that inform the study of environments and societies, and the interactions between the two, at a range of scales. Consequently, Geography courses encourage holistic thinking across social and natural sciences, arts and humanities. They provide the intellectual foundations, tools and practical experience to enable graduates to integrate and apply a variety of fields of knowledge and forms of enquiry and to gather and evaluate evidence in the creation of innovative, inclusive and equitable solutions. Geography courses also develop a range of personal attributes, geocapabilities and skills with applied, real-world relevance beyond higher education. Geography is both a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and a SHAPE (Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts) subject, and its courses develop graduates who use their skills to **identify and** lead the response to emerging strategic priorities **and take action for the betterment of their communities and the wider world**. As such, Geography courses develop graduates who are well placed to help

identify and address economic, environmental and social challenges **sustainably** and at a range of scales. The specialist research skills provided by Geography courses also make geographers adept at assessing risks **and uncertainty**, considering ethics and participating in civic engagement. This leads to a rewarding, self-determined professional life.

## Characteristics of a Geography degree

1.4 Geography is characterised by a breadth of subject matter which recognise the complex intersections **and interconnectedness** of society and environment relations. A valued feature of the subject is its diverse ways of knowing and understanding the world, as evidenced by the use of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The depth to which individual specialisms are studied varies according to the expertise of specific institutions. Fieldwork and experiential learning in the development of knowledge and understanding are essential aspects of geography. Laboratory study, spatial data analysis, modelling, information and communication technologies (ICT), geographic information science (GISci) and remote sensing are also key components of the subject's teaching, learning and research strategies. These approaches are underpinned by knowledge of, and skills in, the ethical, methodological and theoretical frameworks that inform their conduct.

## Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion

1.5 Geography, as an inclusive learning community, has a collective responsibility to embed equity, equality, diversity and inclusion within all institutions, processes, curricula, and pedagogies. This responsibility to go beyond the minimum expectations of equality ensures **an equitable community that recognises learners' difference in prior experience and opportunity and can help to remedy systemic disadvantages in the subject, for example: through widening participation agendas to ensure economic disadvantage does not hinder a student's access, experience or outcome; countering the under-representation of marginalised groups inclusive of, and beyond, those with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010; adopting a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment, including everyday microaggressions; anticipating access for neurodiverse community members; and closing structural awarding gaps**. All participants in the community will need to engage, reflect and change in order to uphold this responsibility and duty.



1.6 Contemporary geography draws from knowledge traditions formed through colonial enlightenment science. Geographical concepts and techniques contributed to the overseas expansion of British and European empires, which was justified using narratives of white, able and heteronormative superiority. Colonial and imperial geographies, and their contemporary legacies of systemic disadvantage, for example, racism, classism, ablism, homophobia and patriarchy, must therefore be acknowledged **in teaching and learning** and countered by **decolonising the curriculum, emphasising intersectionality, and** fostering an inclusive learning community encompassing a range of participants, such as students, academics, technicians, professional staff, visitors and external partners.

1.7 The following core values underpin geography's inclusive learning community: an ethics of **care towards inhabitants and environments** embracing and valuing plurality of knowledges and experiences; respect for alternative perspectives and lifestyles; attentiveness to the opportunities and challenges raised by decolonial imperatives; and **solidarity in recognising and addressing injustice. These values should be integrated throughout the curriculum and not be siloed** within individual modules and/or sub-disciplines. This will enhance the contribution that studying geography can make to realising **inclusive, transformative justice** across our human, biodiverse and geodiverse world.

1.8 The core values underpinning geography's inclusive learning community aligns with, and encourages, curricula design principles that stimulate critical **and systems** thinking informed by a variety of progressive theoretical perspectives. **These include, but are not limited to, intersectional theoretical perspectives from critical theory, critical race theory, decoloniality, disability studies, feminist, queer, and science and technology studies.** The application of critical theory is relevant to, and should be applied across, the geographical discipline. **Additionally, course design should incorporate critical perspectives on power, colonial legacies, and social justice ensuring that students develop a holistic and ethical understanding of geography's role in shaping human and environmental systems.** The core values also promote anticipatory design and practices, which are considerate of the particularities associated with sites of learning, for example, online, face-to-face, in the field or in the laboratory, paying close attention to those that may have historically been less inclusive, such as fieldwork sites and laboratories.

1.9 Effective anticipatory design and practice in geography acknowledges the importance of providing a supportive cultural and institutional context for teaching, learning and research, within which participants are encouraged to embrace intellectual, methodological and practical challenges. Effective

anticipatory design and practice also enhance the individual and collective capability to work with the discomfort associated with encountering alternative perspectives, learning new knowledge and gaining new skills. This requires geography's inclusive learning community to develop and promote techniques to care for the self and others, as part of a sustained consideration for emotional, mental and physical well-being.

## Sustainability

1.10 Sustainable development addresses social, economic and environmental concerns at local, regional and global scales to create a more just world. Geography's broad curriculum, subject content and focus on interactions and interconnections, and application of critical theory, make it well placed to support and enact diverse and alternative approaches to sustainable development. This is achieved through emphasis on the development of student values, and **multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary** geocapabilities, behaviours and attitudes, alongside traditional acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies. From Advance HE and QAA's [Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) Guidance](#), three core principles inform ESD in geography:

- 1 Introducing and generating spatial approaches to sustainable development that foster capabilities in systems, critical and integrative thinking about the complex relationships between societies and environments and **between the needs of those of past, present and future generations**. This enables geographers to **identify and** question norms, practises and ideologies; and develop inclusive, **representative** and equitable solutions to multidimensional challenges.
- 2 Developing a personal commitment to ethical practice. This aids geographers in developing key skills, including problem-solving, **systems thinking** and collaborating with others. These skills are essential to respecting difference and negotiating conflict.
- 3 Establishing learning environments that promote **active** global citizenship and sustainable development that are conducive to **principles** 1 and 2. This includes providing opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders working on sustainable development, such as movements working towards alternative futures and greater social, economic and environmental justice.

1.11 The geography curriculum develops **multidisciplinary** behaviours, attributes and geocapabilities that have a significant impact on society and the individual student through civic engagement, career advancement and values-led growth. The subject's conceptual and methodological breadth prepares graduates for changing **environmental**, economic, technological, and cultural conditions, and provides graduates with an acute awareness of the current drivers of economic change, such as climate change, net zero, the green economy and environmental management. It also provides scope to establish effective relationships between academic institutions and advocacy and activist groups, as well as organisations in the public, private and third sectors.

1.12 Geography graduates are able to collect, analyse and manipulate a range of quantitative and qualitative data. Their approach to spatial analytics is distinctive, and highly valued in the private, public and third sectors, because of their ability to transcend scales and integrate knowledge and geocapabilities across multiple disciplines, not only in the natural and social sciences, but also in the humanities and arts. Consequently, Geography graduates use their geospatial awareness and practical experience to **identify**, understand, and solve complex societal and economic challenges and know how to gather and evaluate evidence to inform innovation and decision-making. **Geography graduates also understand the intrinsic value of a range of alternative economies and entrepreneurial approaches, including, but not limited to, green entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship. As such, enterprise and entrepreneurship education in geography encompasses and goes beyond facilitating the creation of surplus economic value through an allied focus on social, cultural and environmental value.** A deeper generic analysis can be found in the QAA document, [Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education: Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers](#).

## 2 Distinctive features of a Geography degree

### Design

2.1 Geography degrees are designed to give students **a holistic and integrative education** in the discipline of geography. Courses should be built on progressively more complex learning outcomes which are aligned with teaching methods and assessment. Course design is led by experts and practitioners of the discipline, while also acknowledging the role of student engagement and co-production in evolving and reflective course design. Geography courses in the UK increasingly utilise mechanisms for student-centred learning.

2.2 Course design normally includes experiential as well as theoretical components, with a focus on both fieldwork and the 'spaces' and 'places' of the discipline. There are often overlaps with cognate disciplines. The discipline is uniquely holistic and integrative in its reach, but with a number of overarching concepts that define its boundaries. These include, but are not limited to, space, place, time, landscape, environment, scale, **sustainability, and the interconnected links between them**. Additionally, course design should incorporate critical perspectives colonial legacies and social justice, ensuring students develop a holistic and ethical understanding of geography's role in shaping human and environmental systems.

### Accessibility

2.3 Inclusive and equitable design is considered across all elements of geographical teaching, learning and assessment, and delivered through every interaction within the learning community. This includes, but is not limited to, classroom-based teaching, independent student work, field work, laboratory work, computer work, assignments, **synoptic assessments and other forms of assessment**.

2.4 The inherent value of live, experiential teaching and learning is central to the discipline. The value of blended learning in providing additional educational options to students is recognised. Pedagogic methods for teaching geography will generally reflect the needs of the student body, **with an inclusive curriculum that prioritises the accessibility, equity, appropriateness and resourcing of learning and teaching resources and materials being key**.

2.5 Enabling all members of the learning community to 'see themselves' in the curricula and find solidarity with other members **is key to ESD and** is recognised as a strategy for supporting students of diverse backgrounds and as a key approach to the equity agenda for the discipline. Distinct barriers to **representation and** learning are acknowledged for first-generation learners, international students and students from diverse backgrounds.

## Progression

2.6 Geographers employ an expansive **and critical** understanding of the field and require access to a variety of types of fields for fieldwork. While fieldwork is an essential part of the discipline, an awareness of the individual needs of the student body during fieldwork should also be recognised. **Leaders and coordinators of fieldwork are responsible for implementing anticipatory design to ensure field spaces are not exclusionary on the basis of all protected characteristics, class, gender identity and neurodiversity, and that sufficient facilities and resources exist for all individuals present. Equally, course designers need to take care to ensure learning experiences are not prohibitive on the basis of additional costs** associated with fieldwork and specialist clothing and equipment.

2.7 Progression within higher-level study of a subject such as geography is likely to involve some measure of specialisation. In the initial stages of a degree course, students achieve a basic knowledge and understanding of a range of different approaches across the breadth of the subject. Thereafter, progression and specialisation in a particular branch of the discipline informs critical reflection about both the subject's diversity and its unifying themes. By the end of a course, students are able to situate their chosen specialisms within a wider, **intersectional**, understanding of geography, its approach, history and theoretical underpinnings. Given the emphasis on diversity of programmes, it is important that potential students are fully informed of the particular nature and strengths of individual courses **but can also work across disciplines**.

2.8 As students progress, they are able to **identify** and evaluate evidence, knowledge, **risk and uncertainty** critically and make value judgements about the sources of information with increasing sophistication. Students will have opportunities to demonstrate increasing levels of **systems thinking**, critical reflection, and understanding as they progress through their studies. They will also demonstrate an increasing ability to undertake fieldwork or projects independently, using primary and/or secondary data.

2.9 As they progress, students should develop an increased understanding of the impacts of the epistemology of **representative** primary data collection, and its impacts on the ontological understanding we have of the world. Thus, they should have opportunities to develop an increased understanding of the nature of data as it pertains to the real world, and geographic knowledge as outlined below

2.10 Integrated Geography master's degrees (FHEQ Level 7; FQHEIS Level 11) typically comprise a four-year full-time course or a part-time course of not less than five and not more than eight academic years. Students exiting earlier may be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education, a Diploma of Higher Education or an honours degree depending upon the years of study completed to a satisfactory standard. Similarly, in a standard three-year undergraduate honours degree qualification, students may also exit earlier with a Certificate or Diploma, depending upon their achievements. Scottish bachelor's degrees with honours are typically designed to include four years of study, which relates to the structure of Scottish primary and secondary education.

## Flexibility

2.11 Flexibility in content, delivery mode and timing is an inherent characteristic of an accessible and inclusive Geography course. This may require potentially competing objectives to be balanced, for example responding to the needs of the student cohort as well as ensuring core learning outcomes are achieved.

2.12 A flexible course is one that accommodates the varying needs of both large and small group teaching, and integrates online and in-person teaching in a complementary way. It is also aware of the pedagogic implications of different delivery modes, which may allocate control to students over the pace and depth of their learning and engagement with content.

2.13 The provision of accessible, inclusive, and flexible material requires additional resources to ensure high-quality content and delivery. The design should also reflect diversity in students' access to technology, ensuring that the flexibility of design does not lead to unintended consequences.

## Partnerships

2.14 Partnerships within geography may be with external partners or brokered within institutions. External partnerships include internships, work or industry

placements, civic engagement projects and research placements, as well as contributions by industry professionals and experts in related fields. They facilitate the long-term progression of students beyond their degree into the wider world of work, **creating active global citizens**, increasing student experience, employability and enhancing their ability to see the place of geography outside academia and **the importance of sustainable action** in the wider world.

2.15 Institutions should ensure that equality of experience is given to all students in their ability to engage in partnerships, where appropriate. The facilitation of partnerships within institutions, such as student societies or interdepartmental working, are of equal value, giving students the opportunity to communicate, build networks and understand the context in which geography as a discipline operates. Partners become part of the geography learning community and have the responsibility to attend to the same principles of equity, equality, diversity, inclusion, **and intersectionality** in their interactions. Partners offer important opportunities to enhance the learning community's engagement with equity agendas.

2.16 Partnership activities can be at a variety of scales and sectors, for example cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, non-governmental organisations, industry, research, private and public. The activities may range from short-term activities to a long-term relationship and should be designed to be student-centred and to support the understanding of the subject beyond the academic experience.

2.17 Feedback from employers indicates that alongside core geographical skills such as data skills, fieldwork and an understanding of place, there are a set of transferable skills which are valued. These include the ability for critical thinking, **systems thinking**, personal reflection, building professional relationships, and working both within teams and independently **to take affirmative action**. Many of these skills can be enhanced through partnerships, as well as through experience within courses.

2.18 Institutions can take advantage of working with appropriate learned societies. This supports an understanding of professional careers within the discipline, and associated routes to accreditation where relevant, including the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) Chartered Geographer accreditation.



## Monitoring and review

2.19 A major feature of academic quality assurance and enhancement at a higher education institution is having in place monitoring and regular review processes for the courses it delivers. Degree-awarding bodies routinely collect and analyse information and undertake periodic course review according to their own needs. They draw on a range of external reference points, including this Statement, to ensure that their provision aligns with sector norms. Monitoring and evaluation is a periodic assessment of a course, conducted internally or by external independent evaluators. Evaluation uses information from both current and historic monitoring to develop an understanding of student achievement and inform future course planning.

2.20 Externality is an essential component of the quality assurance system in the UK. Higher education providers will use external reviewers as part of periodic review to gain an external perspective on any proposed changes and ensure threshold standards are achieved and content is appropriate for the subject.

2.21 External examination currently in use across the UK higher education sector also helps to ensure consistency in the way academic standards are secured by degree-awarding bodies. Typically, external examiners will be asked to comment on the types, principles and purposes of assessments being offered to students. They will consider the types of modules on offer to students, the outcomes of a cohort and how these compare to similar provision offered within the UK. External examiners produce a report each year and make recommendations for changes to modules and assessments (where appropriate). Subject Benchmark Statements, such as this one, can play an important role in supporting external examiners in advising on whether threshold standards are being met in a specific subject area.



### 3 Content, structure and delivery

#### Content

##### Subject knowledge and understanding

3.1 It is anticipated that single honours degree courses in Geography address the areas of knowledge and understanding described in the following paragraphs so that graduates are conversant with these aspects of the subject. Integrated master's courses in Geography also address the material covered in this document. Other degree courses containing geography address these areas proportionally according to the subject balance within, and goals of, such courses. As they progress, students develop a greater depth of knowledge and gain an understanding of the vital contribution made by research in their subject.

3.2 Geographers can articulate the knowledge, understanding, skills and approaches that characterise the discipline as a whole. They understand the place of their discipline in contributing a holistic perspective on natural and human worlds, interactions and processes that is distinctive compared with other disciplines. Geographers understand the complex relationships between natural, human, and historical aspects of environments and landscapes, including concepts such as the Anthropocene and its validity. They appreciate the geographical meanings of concepts that encompass:

- knowledge of environments as the result of natural processes and as a consequence of human activity
- intersectional approaches to sustainable development and environmental justice
- a critically informed understanding of ways of representing and interpreting the world
- appropriate multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills, attributes and values to examine how the world is, and how to shape a better, more socially just and sustainable world.

3.3 Geography graduates are able to demonstrate knowledge and explanations of spatial distributions in both physical and human phenomena. Geographers understand the dynamics and rates of change at different temporal and spatial scales and can evaluate the multivariate and interconnected processes shaping the geographies of the past, present and future. Geographers

have a critical awareness of the significance of spatial and temporal scale for natural processes, human processes and their interactions and analysis. They comprehend how such processes operate across local, regional and global scales to produce particular geographies. They are also aware of how the scale of study can impact upon the conclusions that may be drawn.

3.4 The ways in which the distinctiveness of a particular place is constituted and remade by physical and human processes is understood by geographers, as is the influence of place-specific characteristics on such processes and how these may change through time. Geographers demonstrate an awareness of the constitution of places, including and beyond their own immediate everyday experience. Fieldwork, an experiential form of learning, provides opportunities for geographers to **explore the culture-nature divide, and engage ethically, sustainably and respectfully** with places that are familiar and unfamiliar to them, gaining critical insights on the dynamics that shape differences and commonalities, local and global practices, the connections in between, and civic/planetary responsibilities.

3.5 Geographers are able to use a systems framework to critically conceptualise patterns, processes, interactions and change in the context of a human, biodiverse and geodiverse world, **for example, to examine resource-based vs ecosystem-based perspectives**. This acknowledges environmental impacts on human activity; human impacts on biophysical systems, on components of the climate system **and, consequently, on the wider world**; and the management of environments and landscapes.

3.6 Geographers demonstrate knowledge of the main dimensions and scales of economic, social, cultural, political and environmental patterns and are familiar with a range of interpretations of the processes that shape and sustain commonalities and differences. They are aware that the spatial scales at which these processes operate can be questioned, contested and politicised, and considered in relation to time. A **holistic and interconnected** concepts underlying development and sustainability needs to be an integral part of this knowledge base.

3.7 Geographers have a clear understanding of the drivers of change in environments over space and time, demonstrating knowledge of the interactions between climate, ecosystems and landscapes, **and the uncertainty in measuring these interactions**. They understand controls on fluxes of energy and matter within and between the Earth's surface and the atmosphere. They are aware of rates of

change, and of methods and approaches used to study change in the natural world. Concepts such as **feedback**, thresholds, intrinsic and extrinsic drivers, along with approaches such as biogeochemical cycles, sediment and water budgets and environmental reconstruction, underpin this knowledge of spatial and temporal change in biophysical environments.

3.8 Geographers have a critical understanding of the history of the subject, the social, cultural, economic, and political context of past and present knowledge production; and the people and forms of knowledge excluded. **Central to this is a critical awareness of the discipline's place within wider histories of colonialism and imperialism, meaning that geographers possess a critical and intersectional understanding of knowledge practices formed through colonial enlightenment science; the distinctive contributions the discipline made to this; related contemporary legacies of systemic disadvantage and injustice and the lived experience of this; and how the discipline can address these legacies and aid in the deconstruction of societal barriers.** A geographical education requires that learners examine their own place in the world and the responsibilities this entails, recognising injustices and reflecting on ways to build inclusive, transformative practices of solidarity and justice. Decolonial approaches and practice provide a way to support this learning and reflection and foster anti-racist praxis within the learning community when integrated across the entire curricula.

3.9 Geographers are increasingly aware of the impact of the diverse ways that societies and environments can be abstracted and represented, including during spatial data creation, and the mappings they support. They know how representational choices shape understandings and measurements of societies and environments, **and how they impact societal divides in local and global communities.** Such awareness is also important in an increasingly connected world, where many everyday transactions result in a digital record with some form of location attached which are subsequently rendered into maps and/or used to underpin spatial analysis. This is critical, as maps in particular play an important role in representing the world, and geographers are conversant with both the technical dimensions and the cultural politics of their production. However, geographers also have a similar depth of understanding of other representational forms, including texts, objects, visual images and digital technologies

3.10 Geographers have a firm grasp of the principles of **sustainable** research design, ethical and safety considerations, the main methodological strategies used in the analysis and interpretation of geographical information, and show a critical understanding of the appropriate contexts for their use. While there is

variation in the methodologies taught in different courses, geographers develop familiarity with a range of methodologies, including those used in data collection and analysis; data handling and management; field and laboratory work; process modelling; programming; social surveys; focus groups; interviewing; archival work; visualisation; discourse and textual analysis; ethnography, participant observation and creative making methods including, for example, performance, poetry, and craft.

3.11 Geolocated data and geospatial technologies are increasingly central to geography in a digital and data-rich world. Geographers study how digital worlds are created and analysed through the study of geographic information science (GISci) and apply that knowledge through the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing. Geographers require skills in the presentation, interpretation, analysis and consideration of quantitative data, including new forms of spatial data. They are familiar with a range of statistical techniques, including simple descriptive statistics, inferential tests, relational statistics and multivariate analyses. They are skilled in the retrieval and manipulation of secondary data sets and appreciate the ethical considerations of working with non-traditional spatial data sources, such as social media or linked administrative data. They are familiar with geospatial technologies such as digital cartography, GIS and remote sensing. They can apply spatial statistics and tools for handling spatial dependency and spatial autocorrelation in data as well as process spatial heterogeneity. They are aware of the effects of scale in their analyses.

3.12 Geographical knowledge and understanding inform concern about the Earth and its inhabitants; the subject is intrinsically global and international. Geographers compare and contrast processes occurring in different parts of the world. They critically analyse global, national, regional and local issues and their work proposes **holistic and inclusive** ways of mitigating human and physical challenges and identifies and addresses new ones. Geographers can take a global view but are able to inter-relate global and local perspectives. Geographers **can critically evaluate the anthropocentric mindset by recognising how other sentient non-human beings and life forms also inhabit the planet and can be harmed by unsustainable development, and are aware of the relevance of geographical concepts, techniques and expertise to creative problem-solving and decision-making, for example in addressing inequality, poverty reduction and improving the quality of life and well-being in the context of climate change, environmental and social injustice, environmental management and sustainable development.** However, awareness of this is balanced by recognition of limitations, a critical

understanding of broader social, economic, political, imperial, and environmental contexts and the ethical implications of applications.

## Fieldwork

3.13 Fieldwork is integral to all Geography courses. It provides geographers with a unique opportunity for experiential active learning that inspires students' practical engagement with the subject. It reflects that real-world learning and context-based applied learning is fundamental to understanding, and changing, our world.

3.14 Geographers employ an expansive understanding of the 'field' and require access to a variety of types of 'fields' in order to meet programme learning outcomes. This includes opportunities for all Geography students to engage with environments that are both familiar and unfamiliar. For example, they will require access to particular landscapes, ecosystems, urban environments, archives and digital spaces.

3.15 Fieldwork encompasses directed learning, peer-assisted learning and self-directed student learning and requires extended and in-depth time in the field, including multi-day trips and residential trips. Fieldwork is required throughout a Geography degree to enable progression in core skills and capabilities, often resulting in self-directed fieldwork by the end of a Geography degree. Fieldwork provides geographers with a unique opportunity for experiential learning; teamwork; problem-based learning; research design, planning and implementation; data collection, management and analysis; resilience, flexibility and coping with uncertainty and unfamiliar situations; and understanding and managing risks. It is a key means of delivery for specific skills that cannot readily be obtained in the classroom. Fieldwork also helps hone skills in group work, planning, sampling, research design and problem-solving. Finally, as nearly all data are spatial (they are collected somewhere), only fieldwork gives students experience and critical understanding of the link between the real world and measurement as captured in spatial data and place-based representations.

3.16 Fieldwork involves collecting primary and/or secondary data, which are then processed and analysed using qualitative and/or quantitative techniques. In order to meet programme learning outcomes, geographers require access to field equipment and other resources to collect data and information. Data processing and analysis requires access to a range of laboratories, and appropriate software

and hardware, such as geospatial, qualitative and quantitative analysis tools. This processing and analysis can be achieved independently or as part of a group.

3.17 Virtual fieldwork is increasingly important within geography, and providers are increasing resources for this model. Virtual fieldwork can help to meet course learning outcomes, help minimise the environmental impact of fieldwork and also scaffold and enhance pre- and post-fieldwork teaching. However, many types of fieldwork are immersive and/or cannot be replicated virtually, digitally or online

3.18 Fieldwork is an opportunity to reflect on sensibilities, such as the positionalities, responsibilities and relationalities of students and staff. Consequently, all fieldwork should be planned and conducted in a way that is **sustainable**, ethical, responsible, careful and safe, for students, staff, visited communities and all other stakeholders. **Field work practices should demonstrate a deep appreciation for protection of both ecological system and local communities, recognising their interconnected nature.** An ethics assessment and risk assessment should be undertaken prior to all taught fieldwork.

3.19 Fieldwork should be planned and conducted in such a way as to **be inclusive, accessible and flexible, considering the well-being of students and staff, including their mental and physical health, and all other protected characteristics.** Fieldwork opportunities should be fair and providers, to the extent possible, should consider the resourcing needed to overcome costs and other barriers that might impact a student's ability to participate fully. **An inclusivity impact assessment should be undertaken prior to all taught fieldwork.**

3.20 The environmental impact of fieldwork, its sustainability and its carbon footprint should be considered by conducting a carbon audit prior to all taught fieldwork. The choice of destination(s) visited and the mode of transport should be clearly justified by the programme learning outcomes. This justification should balance the environmental costs involved with the geographical learning, transferable skills, development of social and cultural capital and other educational benefits derived by learning experientially within specific environments.

3.21 Staff take on significant responsibilities in delivering taught fieldwork. Appropriate resourcing by the provider should ensure that staff are fully trained and supported to deliver high-quality field learning. Employers must also recognise that staff have differing capacities to lead and/or participate in geography fieldwork.



## Skills, attributes and geocapabilities

3.22 Geography students learn 'through' geography in addition to learning 'about' geography and graduates have the ability to work on a wide range of applied research, utilising both quantitative and qualitative analysis. They acquire **multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills**, subject-specific and wider intellectual and transferable skills that together provide the basis for academic achievement, career prospects and contributions to the wider economy and society. As they progress within their degree, geographers also acquire geocapabilities; that is, a set of subject-specific capabilities which include an understanding of the significance of **time**, place, space and scale, as well as landscape and nature, in the constitution and conduct of life on Earth; the ability to think spatially and explore places in a structured way; an awareness of complex reciprocal relationships between society, the environment **and earth systems**; expertise in the pattern and dynamic nature of spatial variation in Earth's surface, environmental and societal processes; a sensitivity to changes occurring over time, or the situated contexts of aspects of study; and the ability to think holistically, creatively and critically about themselves, **the context in which they exist and operate**, their societies and the world

3.23 Given the rich diversity of Geography degrees and the range of options in which students are able to specialise, it is unwise to be too rigid or prescriptive in setting out the skills that graduates are likely to possess. Nonetheless, in broad terms, they are able to demonstrate competence in most of the skills, capabilities and attributes itemised in this Subject Benchmark Statement.

3.24 While recognising and valuing the diversity of good practice, it is useful to emphasise some of the general principles underpinning successful acquisition of skills. The skills dimension is best planned in conjunction with the knowledge-based curriculum, so that the relationship between the two is given detailed consideration. Skills are taught, practiced and assessed within a curriculum framework that is balanced, coherent, inclusive and progressive, so that the level of challenge and achievement is gradually increased throughout, taking students to the frontiers of research.

### Subject specific skills

3.25 Geography enhances a range of intellectual skills and abilities that are acquired through use of its learning resources, frequent practise of its methods and immersion in appropriate research contexts. Some of these skills are subject-

specific, but all are relevant and transferable to other intellectual contexts. Geographers are adept at bringing together **and critically analysing** perspectives from multiple disciplines across STEM and SHAPE, thinking laterally across debates, synthesising materials, and holding ideas in creative tension.

3.26 Geographers **evaluate and** use a variety of sources of evidence and are able to apply appropriate forms of both quantitative and qualitative analysis, making informed judgements based on the **uncertainty and** evidence available. Geographers are numerate and able to establish the appropriate spatial and temporal scales for the purpose of their analysis.

3.27 Geographers are skilled in specific quantitative and qualitative techniques and understand the appropriate context of their use. They understand the complexity of the real world **and the importance of representative and inclusive data** and learn to interrogate multiple data sources and recognise gaps in the evidence base. They have an appreciation of situations when conclusions drawn from data are ambiguous or uncertain. Geographers are also skilled in issues of data ethics, both in the generation of data but also in the use and reuse of data to draw robust and reliable conclusions. As analyses of spatial data underpin all kinds of decision-making, from individual credit scores to large-scale policy decisions, geographers understand the importance of notions of openness, transparency and reproducibility (the duplication of results and inference).

3.28 Geography graduates are adept at **sustainable** research design and data collection; analysing, presenting, interpreting and communicating qualitative and quantitative data; retrieving and manipulating big geospatial data sets; using inferential and relational statistics; modelling and mapping geospatial events; coding; using geospatial technologies such as digital cartography, GIS and remote sensing; and deploying interpretative, creative and social survey methods. Consequently, Geography graduates are a crucial part of the multidisciplinary approach needed to tackle the big issues faced by the economy and society, leading **affirmative action on** ambitious environmental policies, supporting inclusive and sustainable communities and economies, and strengthening relationships and partnerships across the globe.

3.29 As nearly all data are spatial, geographers require resources for spatial data collection and handling and access to fieldwork sites, libraries, information systems, laboratories, equipment and technical resources is essential. Geographers take a critical spatial data science perspective and are familiar with open-source tools and software to support this.



3.30 A geographical education develops a range of subject-specific skills, including:

- spatial awareness and observation
- recognising the moral, ethical and safety issues involved in all aspects of geographical enquiry
- **in-depth investigation, analysis, interpretation or problem resolution of case studies**
- conducting fieldwork and data collection, assessing risk and their mitigation
- **utilising and comparing various co-creation and participatory research methods**
- employing a variety of interpretative methods, for example, participation observation, ethnographic interviews and auto ethnography
- employing a variety of social survey methods, for example, questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews
- employing a variety of science laboratory skills and methods, for example, soil, water and sediment sample preparation and analysis
- primary data generation, collection and recording, and the use of secondary data sets, both quantitative and qualitative
- critically evaluating, interpreting and combining different types of geographical evidence, for example, texts, visual and material culture, archival data, maps, digitised and laboratory data
- analysis and problem-solving through quantitative and qualitative methods
- applying methods for the collection and analysis of spatial and environmental information, for example, by using GIS, remote sensing, statistical and mathematical modelling
- preparing effective maps, diagrams and visualisations
- **using creative/cultural media, either individually or in collaboration with others, to explore and interpret geographical information, concepts, relationships and/or issues.**

## Generic skills and personal attributes

3.31 Geography fosters the development of a range of generic intellectual skills, generic skills and personal attributes.

3.32 Generic intellectual skills include:

- assessing the merits of contrasting theories and explanations
- an awareness of the social, cultural and political context in which knowledge is produced (epistemological hegemonies), the positionalities of the researcher and the researched alike, and the democratisation of knowledge production
- understanding the appropriate and ethical use of evidence and data
- planning, designing and executing a piece of rigorous research or enquiry, both independently and in groups, including the production of a final report
- numeracy and statistical literacy
- abstraction and synthesis of information
- developing a reasoned argument
- taking responsibility for learning and reflection upon that learning
- systems thinking

### 3.33 Generic skills include:

- learning and studying, developing autonomous learning and metacognition
- decision-making, time management and prioritising tasks
- record-keeping and archiving
- synthesising, contextualising and critically evaluating information of different styles and from different sources
- oral, written and graphical communication
- retrieval, handling and archiving of datasets
- an understanding of intellectual property and data privacy
- communication with a variety of audiences, employing formats appropriate to the audience
- the ability to work in groups and teams of diverse individuals and to recognise and respect the viewpoints of others
- the ability to take creative approaches to problem solving.

### 3.34 Personal attributes include:

- motivation
- innovation and creativity
- entrepreneurialism
- ability to work responsibly, autonomously and with others
- self-awareness, reflection, resilience, self-management and self-confidence

- empathy and insight
- intellectual integrity and ethical behaviour
- awareness of responsibility as a local, national and international citizen with a global perspective
- the skills to engage in lifelong learning
- flexibility and adaptability
- an understanding of intersectionality and identity
- understanding of environmental ethics and social responsibility in geographical practice.

## Teaching and learning

3.35 Geographers develop and use innovative teaching methods **which are accessible and inclusive**. The range of teaching and learning contexts is continually evolving, for example, with the development of flexible, virtual and distance-learning environments, work and community-based learning, and the increasing use of self-determined learning.

3.36 Courses enable students to experience active and reflective learning through exposure to a range of teaching approaches. For example: lectures; seminars; tutorials; supervisions or other small-group formats; directed self-study; reading and library use; laboratory practical classes, including the use of scientific laboratories and advanced computer facilities; fieldwork, both taught and self-organised; a range of student-centred learning opportunities, which might include virtual learning environments, self-directed study, simulations, problem-based learning, teamwork, volunteering, work-integrated learning and international exchanges; e-learning and distance learning.

3.37 An education in geography involves a considered engagement with the world. Fieldwork and experiential learning constitutes an essential aspect of this engagement and thus has a variety of roles in providing an opportunity to develop and apply theoretical, technical and scientific laboratory methods and findings to more complex, uncontrolled field environments; identifying problems and framing research questions, anticipating risks, testing hypotheses and designing **sustainable** research; **encouraging consideration of the ethical aspects of research processes; developing a sense of place, identity, awareness of difference, and sensitivity to others**; promoting generic skills such as teamwork and observation.

3.38 Within honours degree courses in Geography, it is anticipated that some form of independent research work is supported throughout the degree. Students experience the entire research process, from framing enquiry to communicating findings. Independent research is often communicated in the form of a dissertation presented in the later stages of the course. Other formats could include research posters, journal articles, vlogs or final reports and a choice of assessment format may be appropriate. Independent research may involve field-based data collection, or other forms of primary or secondary research, civic engagement or work placements. Regardless of the nature of the research, the student's learning requires critical reflection on the potential risks as well as the moral and ethical issues of the research project. On joint and combined honours courses, students still conduct independent research work, although this may be in an interdisciplinary context or outside geography.

3.39 The balance within a degree course of these teaching and learning styles and of the associated assessment methods will clearly vary from one higher education provider to another, consistent with the overall mission, aims and objectives of both the provider and the course. However, honours degree courses in Geography will characteristically have recourse to a wide range of learning and teaching styles, as befits the intellectual heritage of a discipline whose concerns are with both environment and society.

## Assessment

3.40 An assessment and feedback for learning strategy will allow all students to demonstrate their level of attainment, and reflect upon and discuss their progress. For each method of assessment, the aims, requirements and marking criteria are clearly defined and aligned, allowing appropriate progression throughout the degree course. Such a strategy reflects the variety of abilities and skills developed within the curriculum, the types of teaching methods and learning contexts used, and the learning outcomes of the degree course. Moreover, it recognises the value of formative assessment for promoting deep reflective learning. Students are given opportunities to take part in self-assessment and peer review, authentic assessments, and to work individually and in groups. Students are encouraged to demonstrate their full range of abilities, with providers offering a mix of assessment methods that are accessible to students from varying educational backgrounds and in different learning situations, in some cases offering a choice of assessment formats and authentic public-facing outputs.

3.41 Students of Geography are likely to encounter a variety of assessment methods in their degree course, where appropriate: written work of varying lengths (essays, reports, press releases, consultancy reports, briefing papers, annotated bibliographies, article critiques); the creation of digital resources (web pages, blogs, audio and video podcasts); oral presentations (debates, conference-style poster presentations, seminars); practical work (in the field, scientific and computer laboratories, and relating to quantitative and qualitative analyses); unseen and seen examinations with a range of types of questions/tasks; reflective learning journals; independent research dissertations and capstone projects (and proposals for these); work-integrated assessments.

## 4 Benchmark standards

### Introduction

4.1 This Subject Benchmark Statement sets out the minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Geography. Demonstrating these standards over time will show that a student has achieved the range of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of graduates in Geography.

4.2 The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and should refer to Annex D: Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees. This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours: 1st, 2:1, 2:2 and 3rd.

4.3 The performance of all honours graduates in Geography may be expressed with reference to the areas of achievement identified: knowledge and understanding; and intellectual, subject-specific, and generic skills (section 3).

4.4 The following **tables express** performance in terms of discipline-specific learning outcomes at the end of a bachelor's degree with honours or integrated master's degree. It is important to note that Subject Benchmark Statements are phrased in broad terms, to encourage higher education providers to develop diverse and innovative courses within the overall framework provided by this document. It is not intended that the benchmark standards are used in a prescriptive manner. Likewise, these descriptors are intended to aid the preparation of the curriculum and are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

4.5 **Threshold graduates** possess a basic knowledge and understanding of change within human and physical environments, of **interrelationships between these environments, of sustainability and sustainable development**, and of the interdependence of places at various scales. Their view of the subject and its methodologies is strongly influenced by formal teaching and has a limited critical perspective. Competence in essential subject-specific, intellectual and generic skills is demonstrated.

4.6 **Typical graduates** display a critical awareness of the scope and methodologies of the subject, based on a solid foundation of knowledge, consistently demonstrating a command of appropriate subject-specific and generic skills as well as proficiency in most of the higher-level intellectual skills. Typical graduates are also distinguished from the threshold level by a capacity for developing and applying personal perspectives critically to their studies.

4.7 Geography graduates that achieve **excellence** beyond the typical standard are wide-ranging knowledge of the various aspects of the subject. The strength of geography's methodological breadth is most clearly demonstrated in its best graduates, who bring originality, insight and superior critical and reflective abilities to bear upon this knowledge and have the capacity to link theory and practice in identifying and tackling research problems. This quality is evident across the spectrum of assessed work, but is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in independent work, especially dissertations, which may produce outcomes that are at or close to the levels of publishable research, and which represent an advance within subject knowledge.

4.8 In addition to the knowledge and understanding, subject-specific skills and generic skills outlined in the table below, successful graduates of bachelor's (and integrated master's) degrees with honours in Geography should have developed the ability to:

- collaborate equitably, and empathise and respect the views, perspectives and needs of others
- understand and reflect critically on the norms and values that underlie one's own and others' perspectives and actions
- work collaboratively with others offering different knowledge, views and experiences
- be aware of, and have an understanding of, the impact of their own, and others' emotional response and well-being.

4.9 All graduates, regardless of the classification of their degree, should have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to tackle the climate and ecological crisis on completion of their studies at university. All geography graduates should demonstrate insight into the importance of sustainability within their field and be able to identify the multivariate and interconnected ways of taking affirmative action for the climate. All geography graduates should demonstrate a critically informed understanding of the ways that climate change shapes ecosystems and

societies across spatial and temporal scales, and how the anthropocentric mindset impacts different communities.

	<b>Threshold</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	Describe and exemplify the nature of change and variability within societies and environments.	Demonstrate comprehension of the nature of change and variability within societies and environments.	Demonstrate critical insight into the nature and causes of change and variability within societies and environments.
	Describe and exemplify the reciprocal relationships between societies and environments at multiple spatial and temporal scales.	Demonstrate comprehension of the reciprocal relationships between societies and environments at multiple spatial and temporal scales.	Demonstrate critical insight of the complexity of the reciprocal relationships between societies and environments at multiple spatial and temporal scales.
	Describe approaches to sustainability and sustainable development in relation to the complex interactions between societies and environments.	Demonstrate comprehension of sustainability and sustainable development practices in relation to the complex interactions between societies and environments.	Demonstrate critical insight into sustainability and sustainable development practices in relation to the complex interactions between societies and environments.
	Describe the history of geography as a discipline and the relevant contexts of past and present geographical knowledge production, and	Demonstrate comprehension of the history of geography as a discipline and the relevant contexts of past and present geographical	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the history of geography as a discipline and the relevant contexts of past and present



	contemporary implications of this history.	knowledge production, and contemporary implications of this history, <b>including on society, study and the environment.</b>	geographical knowledge production, and contemporary implications of this history, <b>including on society, study and the environment.</b>
	Describe and exemplify the diversity and interdependency of places.	Demonstrate comprehension of the diversity and interdependency of places at various spatial scales.	Reflect on and appraise the reasons for the diversity and interdependency of places at various spatial scales.
	Describe and exemplify the diversity of approaches to generation of knowledge and understanding deriving from experience of the epistemologies of the natural and social sciences and humanities.	Evaluate the diversity of approaches to the generation of knowledge and understanding deriving from experience of the epistemologies of the natural and social sciences and humanities.	Critically appraise the diversity of approaches to the generation of knowledge and understanding deriving from experience of the epistemologies of the natural and social sciences and humanities.
	Carry out routine investigations as instructed.	Apply understanding of geographical concepts in different situations.	Apply reflective understanding of geographical concepts in different situations.
	Know the difference between accuracy and precision.	Apply a systematic approach to accuracy, precision and uncertainty.	Critically reflect on the accuracy, precision and uncertainty of research data.

	<b>Threshold</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Subject-specific skills</b>	Illustrate the issues involved in applying research design and execution skills within the specific context of field-based research.	Evaluate the issues involved in applying research design and execution skills within the specific context of field-based research.	Formulate a sophisticated and comprehensive analysis of the issues involved in applying research design and execution skills within the specific context of field-based research, including alternative options.
	Illustrate diversity of techniques and approaches involved in collecting geographical information (for example, instrumentation, remote sensing, cartographic surveying, social survey, observation and the use of textual and archival sources).	Evaluate the diversity of techniques and approaches involved in collecting geographical information (for example, instrumentation, remote sensing, cartographic surveying, social survey, observation and the use of textual and archival sources).	Critically appraise and reflect on use of the diversity of techniques and approaches involved in collecting geographical information (for example, instrumentation, remote sensing, cartographic surveying, social survey, observation and the use of textual and archival sources).
	Illustrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches for analysis of geographical	Evaluate both quantitative and qualitative approaches for analysis of geographical	Critically appraise and reflect on the application of quantitative and qualitative approaches for

	information and data and perform basic applications.	information and data, including competence in the application of a range of these approaches.	analysis of geographical data, including excellent and sophisticated application of a range of these approaches.
	Illustrate diversity of specialised techniques and approaches involved in analysing geographical information (for example, special techniques for the analysis of spatial information, GIS, laboratory techniques, qualitative and quantitative techniques).	Evaluate the diversity of specialised techniques and approaches involved in analysing geographical information (for example, special techniques for the analysis of spatial information, GIS, laboratory techniques, qualitative and quantitative techniques).	Demonstrate a mastery of techniques and approaches involved in analysing geographical information (for example, special techniques for the analysis of spatial information, GIS, laboratory techniques, qualitative and quantitative techniques) and very good judgement of their effectiveness.
	Summarise information and data and make accurate interpretations.	Synthesize information and data and make accurate interpretations in the context of current geographical knowledge.	Synthesize information and data and make accurate and critically reflective interpretations in the context of current geographical knowledge.
	Illustrate diversity	Evaluate the	Critically evaluate

	of specialised techniques and approaches involved in presenting geographical knowledge and information (for example, GIS, cartography and different textual strategies).	diversity of specialised techniques and approaches involved in presenting geographical information (for example, GIS, cartography and different textual strategies).	and reflect on the appropriate application of the diversity of specialised geographical techniques and approaches.
	Communicate geographical ideas, principles and theories by written, oral and graphical means.	Communicate geographical ideas, principles and theories effectively and fluently by written, oral and graphical means.	Communicate geographical ideas, principles and theories with flair, accuracy and sophistication by written, oral and graphical means.

	<b>Threshold</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Generic skills</b>	Communicate personal views about geographical issues.	Communicate and compare different views about geographical issues.	Critically reflect on a range of views about geographical issues and come to a reasoned evaluation.
	Demonstrate an awareness of their positionality and assumptions and the potential implications and consequences of them.	Recognise their positionality and assumptions and evaluate the potential implications and consequences of them.	Recognise their positionality and assumptions and critically evaluate the potential implications and consequences of them.
	Present material to support a reasoned argument	Synthesize material appropriately to support the	Synthesize complex information to support the

		presentation of a reasoned argument to the intended audience.	presentation of a reasoned argument to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
	Use communications and ICT to select, analyse, present and communicate geographical information.	Use communications and ICT effectively and appropriately to select, analyse, present and communicate geographical information.	Use communications and ICT with a high level of competence to select, analyse, present and communicate geographical information.
	Undertake independent/self-directed study/learning (including time management) within a supportive framework.	Undertake independent/self-directed study/learning (including time management) to achieve consistent, proficient and sustained attainment.	Undertake highly autonomous and well organised study/ learning and time management to achieve consistent, proficient and sustained attainment.
	Perform assigned tasks within a group setting and take part in group discussions.	Work as a participant or leader of a group and contribute effectively to the achievement of objectives.	Demonstrate group leadership and supportive participation of others within a group setting to achieve objectives.
	Describe the process of learning and present a basic assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses.	Analyse the process of learning and evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses.	Critically reflect on the process of learning, evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses and demonstrating an understanding of alternative

			strategies.
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## 5 List of references and further resources

[Annex D: Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours: 1st, 2:1, 2:2 and 3rd.

Advance HE and QAA (2021) Education for Sustainable Development Guidance <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/education-for-sustainable-development>

Guidance aimed primarily for staff involved in curriculum design and course management and delivery, to support them in designing ESD into their courses.

QAA (2018) Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education: Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaas/enhancement-and-development/enterprise-and-entrpreneurship-education-2018.pdf>

Guidance that aims to help academics, educators and practitioners who are seeking to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship across the curriculum and beyond. The guidance is not discipline-specific and should be read in conjunction with the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography.

Walkington H, Dyer S, Solem M, Haigh M and Waddington S (2018) A capabilities approach to higher education: geocapabilities and implications for geography curricula, *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 42:1, pp 7-24,

DOI: [10.1080/03098265.2017.1379060](https://doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2017.1379060)

A consideration of the broader purposes and values of disciplinary teaching in contributing to individual human development, while also developing a set of discipline-specific capabilities that contribute to a graduate's future learning and experience.

Chartered Geographer (CGeog)

[www.reg.org/professionals/chartered-geographer](http://www.reg.org/professionals/chartered-geographer)

Information on where to access resources and guidance on obtaining Chartered Geographer accreditation

RGS-IBG accreditation

[www.rgs.org/research/programme-accreditation](http://www.rgs.org/research/programme-accreditation)

The Royal Geographical Society (RGS) (with the Institute of British Geographers) provides a voluntary accreditation scheme for undergraduate and master's programmes in Geography across the UK in line with the QAA

Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography. The scheme defines what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the knowledge, understanding, skills and approaches they have gained.



## 6 Membership of the advisory group for the subject benchmark statement for geography

### Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography (2022)

Dr Graham Bird (Chair)	Bangor University
Georgia Clarke	QAA Coordinator
Professor Alexis Comber	University of Leeds
Dr James Esson	Loughborough University
Liz Fox-Tucker	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
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Professor Jenny Pickerill	University of Sheffield
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Dr Catherine Souch	Royal Geographical Society
Professor Simon Tate	Newcastle University
Professor Nicola Thomas	University of Exeter
Professor Helen Walkington	Oxford Brookes University
Professor Jeff Warburton	Durham University
Rebecca Would	University of Southampton

QAA would like to thank Professor Elizabeth Cleaver, Professor Michael McLinden and the Disabled Students' Commission for the valued contributions to the development of the Statement.

### Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography (2019)

The fourth edition, published in 2019, was revised by QAA to align the content with the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published in 2018. Proposed revisions were checked and verified by the Chair of the review group of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography from 2014.

Professor David Thomas  
Dr Andy Smith

University of Oxford  
QAA

## Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography (2014)

Details provided below are as published in the third edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement.

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Professor Mike Heffernan	University of Nottingham
Dr Jennifer Hill	University of the West of England, Bristol
Gill Miller	University of Chester
Professor Jo Sharp	University of Glasgow
Dr Catherine Souch	Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)
Dr Helen Walkington	Oxford Brookes University
Professor Katie Willis	Royal Holloway, University of London
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Janet Bohrer	QAA Officer
Brigitte Stockton	QAA Officer
Angela Baker (CGeog)	EuroGeographics
Mr Hemish Goodeal (Student reader)	King's College London, Institute of Education

## Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Geography (2007)

Details below are as published in the second edition of the Subject Benchmark Statement.

Dr Lorraine Craig	Imperial College – formerly with the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)
Professor Ian Simmons	University of Durham
Dr Catherine Souch	Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)

# Membership of the Advisory Group for Geography (2000)

Details are as published in the original Subject Benchmark Statement.

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