Pathway Title | Geography
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Host institution | University of Oxford and the Open University
Host faculty | Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Key words | Academic staff in Geography at the Open University: [http://fass.open.ac.uk/people/department/geography](http://fass.open.ac.uk/people/department/geography)

Pathway highlights

Geography pathways at the Open University offers opportunities for comprehensive postgraduate-level training in social sciences. This training is enriched by the expertise in space and power, culture and practice, and environment and politics at the Open University. The students will benefit from transdisciplinary research culture fostered by Open Space Research Centre attracting interest from a wide variety of disciplines in sciences, social sciences and humanities.

Overview

Geography pathway at the Open University provides comprehensive PhD-level training to address societal and environmental problems. Geography is hosted within the School of Social Sciences and Global Studies. It is a small, distinctive group of academics with a strong research culture whose work has shaped key debates in the discipline through the exploration of notions of space and place.

The group has an international reputation for its work on space and power – rethinking the politics of place, scale and territory - and for its work on culture and practice – rethinking the ways in which relations between and among humans and technologies come together to make up places. These innovations in geographical understandings of space have been built on a blend of conceptual endeavour and empirical rigour, and have fed into the development of an evolving area of work on environment and politics. Research in environment and politics has focused on innovative conceptual understandings of natural resources and environmental governance and is distinctive in enhancing cultural understandings of the environment.

Training and skills

As an inherently interdisciplinary subject, the Geography pathway is uniquely placed to provide comprehensive social sciences research training. In addition to online training in basic qualitative and quantitative research methods, Geography provides advanced postgraduate-level research methods training in Social Sciences. The Open Space Research Centre in Geography also offers interdisciplinary seminar series fostering interdisciplinary research on geography and the environment, and attracting interest from sciences, social sciences and humanities.
Structure

The Geography pathways at the Open University offers: 1+3 route (based on an MSc course at Oxford providing comprehensive research methods training followed by a 3-year PhD at OU); 2+2 route (based on MPhil at Oxford providing comprehensive research methods training followed by PhD at OU); +3 route for students who have had relevant research methods training at MSc level; or +4 route for students with Master’s degrees that do not fulfil ESRC’s 2015 Training Guidelines. OU has provision for both FT and PT routes.

Knowledge exchange, internships and careers

Students have access to teaching opportunities with the Brilliant Club and opportunities to participate in online distance-learning and face-to-face teaching. Students are encouraged to form research partnerships with international NGOs and research collaborations with the universities overseas.

Further reading

- Open Space Research Centre: [https://www.geography-matters.org/](https://www.geography-matters.org/)

Further details:

Prospective students should have a strong background in one or more of the following: Area Studies, Cultural Studies, Development Studies, Environmental Studies, International Studies, and Urban Studies.

The supervisory expertise and interests in Geography are:

- Culture and the environmental change in the Anthropocene
- Finance, space and power
- Global environmental governance and policy
- Migration and mobilities
- Place, space and belonging
- Visual and sonic cultures: theory and method

Please contact: Pathway lead, Dr Gunjan Sondhi ([gunjan.sondhi@open.ac.uk](mailto:gunjan.sondhi@open.ac.uk))

Applying for a studentship:

- Applications should include a cover letter outlining why the project is an important area of study, how your background relates to the proposed research topic and why you wish to study at the Open University;
- An outline research proposal of no more than 2,000 words, covering research topic and methodology. General advice on the proposal can be found here: [http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply/mphil-and-phd-application-process](http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply/mphil-and-phd-application-process)
- an academic CV that includes contact details of three referees, of which at least two should be academic;
• an Open University application form, downloadable from http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply/mphil-and-phd-application-process
• A DTP application form, downloadable from: http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/prospectus/research/how-to-apply/doctoral-training-partnership-studentships/social-science

Applications should be sent to FASS-PhD-Applications@open.ac.uk by 17:00 on 8th January 2020.