



# Geography

## People, Places and the Environment

"The thing I like about geography is that it isn't narrow in its outlook. It acknowledges that politics, economics, history and culture play a role in any aspect that you are studying."

Saira Omar BA (Hons)  
Geography

Geography is a blend of social and environmental sciences concerned with the study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and of human activity as it affects and is affected by these.

By studying Geography you could, for example, become involved in anything from designing new parks and gardens to monitoring changes in glaciers, mapping natural hazard developing strategies for the tourism industry.

A geography degree at Otago will equip you with sought-after skills in information gathering, data analysis and critical assessment, which will serve you well no matter the career you choose.

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## Why study Geography?

Geography provides a bridge between the arts and the sciences, addressing issues at the regional, national and global scale. With a Geography degree at Otago you're out in the field from the very start, getting practical experience in the environments you study. Geography papers fit well into almost any degree and the department has strong links with many other disciplines including; geology, surveying, tourism and sustainability research (Centre for Sustainability).

The mix of analytical and communication skills combined with practical experience make Otago Geography graduates highly sought-after in a wide range of industries.

## Background required

There are no subjects you have to have done in order to study Geography - you don't even need to have studied it at school.

## Career opportunities

Geography Graduates enjoy an unusually large number of career options, for example:

- There are opportunities in Central Government for geography graduates across a wide range of ministries and departments, including researching and writing reports and developing and monitoring policy in areas such as environment, agriculture, tourism and the economy.
- Roles in Local Government in areas such as planning and conservation, environmental monitoring, natural hazards or identifying new areas for business development.
- Private sector jobs in marketing, tourism and transport, planning and resource consultancy.

## Geography at Otago

At Otago, Geography may be taken as the major subject for the Bachelor of Arts (BA) or for the Bachelor of Science (BSc). In addition, many students enrol for undergraduate papers in Geography while pursuing other studies, including Law, Commerce, Botany, Geology, Surveying, Physical Education, Tourism and Education.

The undergraduate programme in Geography provides a firm grounding in the social, economic and physical aspects of the environment. The study of Geography falls into three main areas:

**Human Geography** in which students study theoretical frameworks and contemporary issues surrounding economic, social, cultural and political geography, as shown in urban, rural development and regional contexts.

**Physical Geography** in which students study various environmental topics, which together make up the fundamentals of this branch of the discipline: geomorphology, climatology, biogeography, hydrology and soil science. Each is investigated in terms of process, resource potential and sensitivity to human interference.

**Environmental Management** in which students gain a theoretical and practical understanding of environmental processes such as climatology, geomorphology, biogeography, hydrology and soil science. This area incorporates sustainable development, integrated resource management and environmental planning and policy.

Both BA and BSc Geography students can mix papers from across the discipline to build an applied environmental management programme within the Geography degree. It is also possible to take Environmental Management as a Bachelor of Applied Science (BAppSc) degree. Graduates go on to work in district and regional councils, and elsewhere. Some enter the Master of Planning programme and qualify as professional planners.

Geography papers are taught in a range of ways. Students attend lectures, tutorials and labs, and also gain hands on experience through fieldwork and practical courses in research methods.

## Further study

The Geography Department offers an Honours programme. Postgraduate studies include the Master of Planning, Master of Arts, Master of Science, postgraduate diplomas, and a strong PhD programme.

## More information about Geography

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## PROFILE Renee Murrell

BSc Geography

After completing a BSc in Geography, Renee Murrell was offered a job as a graduate environment officer at Fonterra Edendale in Southland.

"The role was hugely varied as we had to manage and control all potential areas of environmental impact from the manufacturing of milk products. A typical day could include educating operators on the impact of a spill through to liaising with community groups on how we could help improve their surrounding environment – like the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust!

"I stayed with Fonterra and moved into a team lead role which added managing staff into the mix. No one day was ever the same. I now run my own environmental contracting business to give myself more flexibility.

"Studying a Bachelor of Science in Geography at Otago paved the way for me because the degree is diverse, kept me interested and was a sought after and well-known qualification. It included everything I needed to know, from environmental legislation, right through to hands on experience gauging the flow of a river, measuring air quality and taking a soil sample."



For questions about  
Geography  
[otago.ac.nz/geography](http://otago.ac.nz/geography)