



Earth Sciences (Geology) Information Sheet for entry in 2019

The Earth Sciences are changing rapidly in scope and nature. The course at Oxford reflects these changes, and provides sound and broadly based scientific training. Students are trained in the skills required for the interpretation of rock materials and geological phenomena as well as applying theory and techniques from physics, chemistry, materials science and biology to the study of the Earth and the environment.

The department has an international reputation, and houses state-of-the-art laboratories and computing facilities. Students, teachers and visitors mix and work together. Offices and teaching labs are close together but with plenty of shared open space, so you will become part of a vibrant community. This creates an atmosphere in which a student does not only learn the basics, but also gets some feel for the discoveries emerging from current research.

The diversity of the subject is reflected in the range of courses which cover processes from the Earth's interior, as mapped by seismic waves, to the evolution of the Earth's crust documented in the rocks at the surface, to ocean and atmospheric circulation, through to the evolution of life on Earth.

Fieldwork/international opportunities

The Earth Sciences course includes several excursions. These link closely to material covered in lectures, and convey the practice of geology, geophysics, geochemistry and palaeontology in the field environment. This work culminates in an independent project to study and map an area chosen by the student. Many of the field excursions take place out of term time, so students must be available outside term.

A typical week

During years 1–3, your work is divided between lectures, tutorials, and practical classes. In year 4 you have the opportunity for independent work on special topics or in a research laboratory. Tutorials are usually 2-4 students and a tutor. Class sizes may vary depending on the options you choose. There would usually be no more than around 20 students though classes for some of the more popular papers may be up to 40 students.

Most tutorials, classes, and lectures are delivered by members of the Earth Sciences Department. All are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research. Some teaching may also be delivered by postdoctoral researchers from the department who are experts in their area of research. Postdoctoral researchers and postgraduate students from the Department will also assist in practical sessions and on field courses.

To find out more about how our teaching year is structured, visit our [Academic Year](#) page.

Course structure

1st year	
<p>Courses Students take all courses in five parallel streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planet Earth • Fundamentals of geology I • Fundamentals of geology II • Physics, chemistry and biology for Earth Sciences • Mathematics for Materials and Earth Sciences <p>Field courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pembroke field course (pre-session) • Arran field course (introduction) • Local field courses 	<p>Assessment First University Examinations: Theory and Practical</p>
2nd year	
<p>Courses Students take all courses in five parallel streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earth deformation and materials • Palaeobiology • Petrology • Geochemistry and ocean chemistry • Mathematical and geophysical tools <p>Field courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dorset field course • Assynt field course (mapping) 	<p>Assessment Part A1 Examinations: Theory and Practical</p>
3rd year	
<p>Courses Students take a combination of core and optional papers from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources • Sedimentary basins • The oceans • Climate • Seismology and earth structure/Vector calculus • Geodynamics and continental deformation • Volcanology, igneous processes and petrogenesis • Evolutionary turning points/Vertebrate palaeobiology • Earth materials, rock deformation and metamorphism <p>Field courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South-east Spain field course <p>Independent field mapping project (conducted over summer break between 2nd and 3rd years)</p> <p>Extended essay</p>	<p>Assessment Part A2 Examinations: Theory, Practical for Field course: BA (Geology)</p>

4th year

Research

Students choose four options (out of eight to ten), generally two in each term:

- Anatomy of a mountain belt
- Planetary chemistry
- Structure and dynamics of the Earth's mantle
- Records of major environmental change in Earth's history
- Palaeobiology
- Environmental, rock and palaeomagnetism
- Topics in oceanography
- Topics in volcanology

Field courses

- Optional field courses as announced each year

Independent work

- Research project over 2.5 terms

The options listed above are illustrative and may change. A full list of current options is available on the Earth Sciences website.

Assessment

Part B Examination: (Theory)
MEarthSci (Earth Sciences)

The University will seek to deliver each course in accordance with the descriptions set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after registration. For further information, please see the University's Terms and Conditions.

Fees

These annual fees are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2019.

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home/EU	£9,250
Islands (Channel Islands & Isle of Man)	£9,250
Overseas	£34,678

Information about how much fees and other costs may increase is set out in the University's Terms and Conditions.

Additional Fees and Charges Information for Earth Sciences (Geology)

Students are required to undertake field work in every year of this course: two trips in the first year and another two in the second year, then one trip in the third year and one more in the fourth year. Costs for these trips will be covered by the department.

You will also need to undertake a field mapping project in the vacation between the 2nd and 3rd year. The department will contribute £400 to each student, which is considered to be the minimum amount needed to do the project, probably based here in the UK. You are very welcome to go further afield if you prefer but you would need to find or raise any additional funding that you need.

Thanks to external donations, the department provides all field and safety equipment free of charge. The department will also provide first aid kits and additional safety equipment for the mapping project, for a small deposit which is returned to you when you return the equipment.

Living costs

Your living costs will vary significantly dependent on your lifestyle. These are estimated to be between £1,058 and £1,643 per month in 2019-20. Each year of an undergraduate course usually consists of three terms of eight weeks each but you may need to be in Oxford for longer. As a guide you may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs.

	Per month		Total for 9 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£265	£371	£2,387	£3,342
Accommodation (including utilities)	£566	£739	£5,093	£6,655
Personal items	£122	£271	£1,098	£2,435
Social activities	£42	£126	£380	£1,138
Study costs	£40	£88	£359	£788
Other	£23	£48	£208	£432
Total	£1,058	£1,643	£9,525	£14,790

In order to provide these likely living costs, the University and the Oxford University Students' Union conducted a living costs survey to complement existing student expenditure data from a variety of sources including the UK government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey and the National Union of Students (NUS). The likely lower and upper ranges above are based on a single student with no dependants living in college accommodation (including utility bills) and are provided for information only.

When planning your finances for future years of study at Oxford beyond 2019-20, you should allow for an estimated increase in living expenses of 3% each year.