Earth Sciences (Geology) Information Sheet for entry in 2020

Earth Sciences is the study of the planet we live upon. The rapidly-changing scope and nature of the subject is reflected in the course at Oxford, which provides sound and broadly-based scientific training.

We combine physics, chemistry and biology with geology, geography and palaeontology to answer fundamental questions about the origin, development, and future of the Earth. You will be trained in the skills required for the interpretation of rock materials and geological phenomena as well as applying theory and techniques from other disciplines to the study of the Earth and the environment.

You will be given the opportunity to learn about how our planet works, and address some of the major issues of our times: from the origin of the solar system, the Earth and life, to the climate system and the fate of glaciers and ice sheets. The diverse range of courses 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 its surface.

The department has an international reputation, and houses state-of-the-art laboratories and computing facilities. Students and academic staff mix and work together. Offices and teaching labs are close together creating an atmosphere in which students not only focus on their course, but also get a feel for the discoveries emerging from current research.

Fieldwork/work placements/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.

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. Students will find that their scheduled teaching time breaks down *approximately* as follows for each year:

- Year 1: Lectures 55%, Practicals 45%
- Year 2: Lectures 55%, Practicals 45%
- Year 3: Lectures 60%, Practicals 40%
- Year 4: Project 50%, Seminars 50%

Students are expected to spend at least 40 hours a week studying, including the scheduled teaching, so a good portion of students' time should be spent on private study. 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.

Other than the field courses, all teaching takes place in the department and 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

YEAR 1	

COURSES
• Students take all courses in five parallel streams:
  ○ Planet Earth
  ○ Fundamentals of geology I
  ○ Fundamentals of geology II
  ○ Physics, chemistry and biology for Earth Sciences
  ○ Mathematics for Materials and Earth Sciences
 	
• Field courses
  ○ Pembroke field course (pre-session)
  ○ Arran field course (introduction)
  ○ Local field courses
	ASSESSMENT
	First University Examinations: Theory and Practical

YEAR 2	

COURSES
• Students take all courses in five parallel streams:
  ○ Earth deformation and materials
  ○ Palaeobiology
  ○ Petrology
  ○ Geochemistry and ocean chemistry
  ○ Mathematical and geophysical tools
 	
• Field courses:
  ○ Dorset field course
  ○ Assynt field course (mapping)
	ASSESSMENT
	Part A1 Examinations: Theory and Practical

YEAR 3	

COURSES
• Students take a combination of core and optional papers from the following:
  ○ Natural resources
  ○ Sedimentary basins
  ○ The oceans
  ○ Climate
  ○ Seismology and earth structure/Vector calculus
  ○ Geodynamics and continental deformation
  ○ Volcanology, igneous processes and petrogenesis
	ASSESSMENT
	Part A2 Examinations: Theory, Practical for field course: BA (Geology)

○ Evolutionary turning points/Vertebrate palaeobiology ○ Earth materials, rock deformation and metamorphism • Field courses: ○ South-east Spain field course • Independent field mapping project (conducted over summer break between Years 2 and 3) • Extended essay	
YEAR 4	
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.	**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 2020.

Fee status	Annual Course fees
Home/EU	£9,250
Islands (Channel Islands & Isle of Man)	£9,250
Overseas	£36,065

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

Please note that the course fees you pay include your fees for both University and college services and are divided between the University (including your department or faculty) and your college on a formula basis. More information is provided in your 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 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 £1,135 and £1,650 per month in 2020-2021. 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.

Living costs breakdown

	Per month		**Total for 9 months**	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£270	£385	£2,430	£3,465
Accommodation (including utilities)	£630	£760	£5,670	£6,840
Personal items	£130	£245	£1,170	£2,205
Social activities	£45	£110	£405	£990
Study costs	£40	£95	£360	£855
Other	£20	£55	£180	£495
Total	**£1,135**	**£1,650**	**£10,215**	**£14,850**

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 2020-21, you should allow for an estimated increase in living expenses of 3% each year.