



Module Handbook

[Modules are available to students coming on the following incoming programmes:
non-European exchange; European exchange; full-year fee-paying study abroad]

Incoming Students

2026/2027

Earth Sciences

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A: THE DEPARTMENT

Earth Sciences is a multi-disciplinary subject, drawing upon elements of chemistry, physics, mathematics, biology and physical geography. You can study the past to understand the present and, possibly, to predict aspects of the future. You can look at climate changes, the formation of the oceans, the death of the dinosaurs, the nature of rocks and minerals, structure and chemistry of the Earth and the Earth surface processes. Indeed, the subject embraces the entire planet from the surface to the core. Earth Sciences also contributes to our understanding of other planets and moons in our solar system. The Department of Earth Sciences is very proud of its high-quality teaching underpinned by internationally recognised research.

The Department of Earth Sciences is recognised across the University for its excellent teaching and friendly atmosphere. In the recent National Student Survey, we scored the top marks for student satisfaction in the Faculty of Science. All our undergraduate degrees are taught on the university's main campus in Durham. All of our students benefit from an integrated, research-led curriculum and are taught by international leaders of their fields.

The Department of Earth Sciences is located on Lower Mountjoy in the Arthur Holmes Building situated directly behind the Calman Learning Centre.

The department's contact details are:

Department of Earth Sciences
Durham University
Arthur Holmes Building South Road
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DH1 3LE
Tel: +44 (0) 191 334 2300
Email: earth.ugadmin@durham.ac.uk

Further information for incoming exchange students can be found via University International Office link: [Incoming Opportunities - Durham University](#)

We look forward to welcoming you to the Department!

A1: Exchange Coordinator

Prof David Selby (include Janice Oakes in any communication email below)
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Additional Learning and Teaching staff may be able to assist you. Contact:
earth.ugadmin@durham.ac.uk

B: DEGREE STRUCTURE

All undergraduate degrees at Durham have a *modular* structure, consisting of 120 credits of modules each academic year for three or four years. Modules are usually studied over all three terms of the teaching year. The terms at Durham are: **Michaelmas** from October to mid-December (10 weeks of teaching), **Epiphany** from mid-January to mid-March (10 weeks of teaching), and **Easter** from the end of April to mid-May (2 weeks of teaching).

Modules are examined or assessed in the year in which they are taught, during the year and/or during a dedicated exam period that takes place from May to June. At the end of the first year there are preliminary examinations that do not contribute to the final degree class, however students must attain a pass in each module to continue to their second year. The final degree class is determined by the assessments and examinations taken only in the second and third and fourth year of study.

Incoming European students often choose to study at Durham for one term – usually Michaelmas or, in some cases, Epiphany. Assessments for modules will sometimes be modified from those given to our full-year students to suit the length of your programme of study and the material that you will cover during your one-term exchange. However, you will have some form of assessment, and the marks will be passed on to your home university a few months after you leave.

Other students opt to study at Durham for a full academic year and, if this is the case, are expected to submit the same assessments and sit exams in May-June, like all full-time Durham students. These marks will be conveyed back to your home institution after the Board of Examiners meets in the middle of June. The marks will be processed first by the department and then the university's central administration, after which they will be sent to you (approximately 1-2 months later).

C: REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

**This section contains important information for setting up your academic programme at Durham University.
Please read through this section carefully before considering your modules and filling in the Learning Agreement!**

C1: General

Choice of Modules

At Durham University European agreements are signed by individual university departments and are not university-wide agreements. This means that, in general, students will have to choose modules (courses) within the Durham University department through which the European agreement with their home university has been signed (students should check with the Exchange Coordinator in their university if they are not sure which department this is). Modules offered by other departments are subject to availability and can only be taken with prior consent from the relevant department. *Incoming students must take at least 50% of their modules in the host department and can take modules outside in no more than two additional departments.* Certain restrictions may also apply to courses in some departments and students need to follow the advice below carefully before completing their application form.

Please clearly indicate the modules you wish to take in the application form for approval by the respective department(s). Before completing your application form, it is very important that you read carefully the relevant departmental section(s) of the Module Handbook to check which modules are available to you and any restrictions which may apply. It is imperative that a properly completed application form is submitted. Only complete applications can be processed.

Section *D: Module Details* provides a list of modules available for European students in the department where the agreement has been established (receiving department) as well as a list of modules available for students coming in through other departments (external departments). Please choose from these modules only!

To find out about the details for each module (teaching methods and contact hours, prerequisite academic background, method of assessment, content, etc.) please refer to the Faculty Handbook online under:

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/faculty.handbook/>

C2: Departmental Requirements and Restrictions

The Department has no specific requirements for incoming exchange students, but we will assess every application individually.

When choosing modules you need to be aware that some have a mathematical content and some a chemistry content. Also, when wishing to study second or third year modules, you will need to have knowledge of the relevant Science at the introductory level.

If the Exchange Coordinator has concerns about the modules you choose to study at Durham, you might be contacted directly to discuss your choices. New choices can be made upon your arrival, but it is preferable to avoid this if at all possible. However, it does happen and we can accommodate new choices if your interests have changed or you find timetabling conflicts.

D: MODULE DETAILS

This section contains a list of modules incoming exchange students can choose from. Please only select from the modules listed in sections D1 or D2 in this Module Handbook!

To find further details for each module (teaching methods and contact hours, prerequisite academic background, method of assessment, content, etc.) please refer to the Faculty Handbook online under: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/faculty.handbook/>.

D1: Modules available to European students coming on a departmental link

YEAR 2

MODULE CODE	MODULE TITLE	DURHAM CREDITS
GEOL2031	SEDIMENTARY ENVIRONMENTS	20
GEOL2081	GEOPHYSICAL METHODS	20
GEOL2171	ISOTOPES IN ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE SCIENCES	20
GEOL2191	FIELDWORK (GEOLOGICAL) (includes residential field trips)	20

GEOL2201	FIELDWORK (ENVIRONMENTAL) (includes a residential field trip at Easter)	20
GEOL2231	IGNEOUS AND METAMORPHIC PROCESSES	20
2XX1	RESEARCH SKILLS FOR GEOSCIENCE	20
2XX1	EARTH SYSTEMS MODELLING AND ANALYSIS	20
2XX1	ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPHYSICS	20
2XX1	LITHOSPHERIC STRUCTURE AND IMAGING	20

YEAR 3

MODULE CODE	MODULE TITLE	DURHAM CREDITS
GEOL3022	DISSERTATION	40
GEOL3041	ENVIRONMENTAL GEOCHEMISTRY	20
GEOL3XX7	VOLCANOLOGY AND MAGMATISM	10

YEAR 3 continued

MODULE CODE	MODULE TITLE	DURHAM CREDITS
GEOL3477	ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT	10
GEOL3467	THE GEOCHEMICAL EVOLUTION OF THE EARTH	10
GEOL3491	EARTH STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS	20
GEOL3357	TECTONIC PROCESSES AND RENEWABLE GEO-RESOURCES	10
GEOL3377	MONITORING THE OCEANS: GEOHAZARDS & CLIMATE CHANGE	10
GEOL3437	POLAR QUATERNARY ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES	10
GEOL3387	ATMOSPHERIC CIRCULATION AND DYNAMICS	10

D2: Modules for European students coming on an external link (through a different department)

For students with no prior knowledge of Earth Sciences, there are eight Year 1 modules available.

Students who already possess a background in Earth Sciences should refer to section D1 for a more appropriate choice of modules. Although these Year 1 modules below can also be made available to students with some background, this is only in the instance where the subject area is not taught at the student's home institution.

YEAR 1

MODULE CODE	MODULE TITLE	DURHAM CREDITS
GEOL1021	EARTH MATERIALS	20
GEOL1051	FIELD STUDIES (includes one-day field trips during term and at the start of the Easter break)	20
GEOL1061	MATHEMATICAL METHODS IN GEOSCIENCES	20
GEOL1081	FURTHER MATHEMATICS FOR GEOSCIENTISTS	20
GEOL1101	UNDERSTANDING EARTH SCIENCES	20
GEOL1151	INTRODUCTORY DATA SCIENCE FOR GEOSCIENTISTS	20
GEOL1XX1	ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY	20