



Durham
University



Geography

Postgraduate study opportunities 2012/13

World-class taught and research degrees to PhD

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Complete University Guide 2012.*



One

of the leading geography departments in the world, with an international reputation for excellence.

Geography

The Department of Geography is one of the leading centres of geographical scholarship in the world and has an international reputation for excellence. When you join us you will benefit from a vibrant research culture and be inspired by the work of some of the best researchers in their field.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

In the recent 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, 30% of Department research was graded as 'world-leading' (4*). This places the Department equal first in a ranking of institutions on the same criteria. Overall, the Department produced the highest volume of world-leading (4*), internationally excellent (3*) and overall international quality research of any geography programme in the country. We conduct internationally recognised research on a wide range of cutting edge issues in human and physical geography, supported by major investments in infrastructure, state-of-the-art IT and laboratory facilities.

The Department has over 120 research and taught postgraduates working across the full spectrum of human and physical geography, and every postgraduate is assisted in developing a tailored portfolio of training and support.

There are 58 lecturing staff, around 30 research staff, 21 professional support staff and 32 administrative and technical staff. Affiliated with the Department are six research centres and units, including the Centre for Social Justice and Community Action, the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience (IHRR), the International Boundaries Research Unit (IBRU), International Landslide Centre, Nomis, and the Sea Level Research Unit.

Our aim is to create and sustain a world-class research and teaching environment with top class laboratories and IT facilities in a supportive and collegial atmosphere. We organise our work through a series of research clusters and research institutes that focus upon themes of work rather than people, allowing us to transcend traditional sub-disciplinary divisions, in both human geography and physical geography.

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

- Lived and Material Cultures
- Politics-State-Space
- Social/Spatial Theory
- Geographies of Health and Well-being (GoHWell)
- Urban Worlds.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

- Catchment, River and Hillslope Science
- Quaternary Environmental Change.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

The following degrees are currently offered:

- PhD
- MPhil
- MSc
- MA.



MAIN RESEARCH AREAS

Quaternary Environmental Change

The Quaternary Environmental Change research group specialises in research into Quaternary environmental change. The group has two core research themes that complement and overlap each other – Sea-level Research and Ice Sheets and Glacier Dynamics – as well as interests in Quaternary landscape evolution, fluvial archives, and ocean-climate interactions in mid and high latitudes. A particular strength of our work is the integration of field-based research with numerical modelling of ice sheets, oceans and the solid earth. www.durham.ac.uk/geography/qec

Catchment, River and Hillslope Science

The Catchment, River and Hillslope Science research group seeks to advance scientific understanding of landscape systems and practical use of this understanding. This involves research into the dynamics of fluid and material movement close to the land surface; development and application of techniques for quantifying surface form, material properties, vegetation cover and how they vary spatially and over time; development and application

of predictive models for processes and their consequences; and policy advice in relation to environmental hazards, pollution, and other public or commercial concerns. Topics include: catchment-scale hydrology, water quality and sediment transfer; materials and earth surface deformation; flow and sediment transfer processes in rivers; interactions between catchment processes, river channel processes and aquatic ecology; and technical aspects of earth surface systems analysis.

Hazard and Risk Research

Research in hazard and risk is championed by the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience which harnesses the capacity of researchers from across Durham University to make a difference to how we live with emerging hazards and risks. Making a difference means moving beyond what we already do, to challenge the core assumptions, scientific, economic and social, about how we live with hazard and risk. This can only be done through critical engagements that bring together researchers from across the Natural and Social Sciences, Engineering, Health and Humanities. This involves key

research programmes in hazards, vulnerability and frontier knowledge. Topics include: understanding the production of risk and vulnerability; resilience and response; knowledge generation and mediation; emerging technologies, risk and social change. www.durham.ac.uk/ihrr

Lived and Material Cultures

This cluster brings together work on: national identity, ethnicity and belonging; the practices of everyday life; mediated experience and aspects of socio-economics. These strands intertwine through a shared use of ethnographic and performative understandings of social action to form a perspective based on ecologies of practice. Work has developed and pioneered a range of qualitative methods, including the use of visual ethnographies and visual art. www.durham.ac.uk/geography/lmc

Politics–State–Space

This cluster brings together work on: theories of state and sovereignty; politics of space and spatiality; questions of citizenship, identity and belonging; borders, boundaries and the

politics of territory; the geopolitics of development and post-coloniality; urban geopolitics and new urban violences; governance and the politics of scale; technologies and architectures of security; politics of policy and expertise; spatialities of war and terror; politics of visual culture; and questions of state, space and resistance. The interwoven strands represent highly mobile bodies of work that shift over time to form new collaborations and discussions. www.durham.ac.uk/geography/pss

Social/Spatial Theory

Social/Spatial Theory provides a forum to think through what theory is and does following Geography's encounter with post-positivist continental philosophies. It gathers together theoretical work from across the other human geography research clusters in relation to three closely linked themes: history of geographical thought; new spatial grammar; and ethics and politics of engagement. www.durham.ac.uk/geography/sst

Geographies of Health and Well-being (GoHWell)

GoHWell comprises researchers concerned with the ways in which health and well-being may both constitute and result from inequalities in wealth, health, living conditions and life-chances. Although all GoHWell researchers are based in the Department of Geography, many work within the Institute for Hazard, Risk and Resilience (Science Site, Durham), the Centre for Medical Humanities and/or the Wolfson Research Institute (Queens Campus, Stockton). The cluster is therefore very interdisciplinary and cluster activities occur across both sites. www.durham.ac.uk/geography/gohwell

Urban Worlds

Urban Worlds was formed in 2009 to reflect the Department's international standing in cutting-edge urban research. Its purpose is to provide a forum that brings together existing urban research within the Department and to generate new lines of inquiry. www.durham.ac.uk/geography/urban_worlds

RECENT THESIS TITLES

- “City-to-city co-operation and the realisation of urban sustainability”
- “Cities of refuge asylum and the politics of hospitality”
- “Modelling shallow landslides: The importance of hydrological controls and lateral reinforcement”
- “Interactions between coarse sediment transfer, channel change, river engineering and flood risk in an upland gravel-bed river”
- “British and Fennoscandian Ice Sheet interactions during the Quaternary”.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT FACILITIES

As a postgraduate in our Department you will have access to multi-media facilities for social geography, excellent laboratories for GIS and Remote Sensing and state-of-the-art physical geography laboratories. There is also access to departmental vehicles, where necessary, for research. These are all of the facilities you would expect from one of the leading geography departments in the world.



The Department has a lively research culture with an active research seminar series of outside speakers as well as more informal weekly seminars. Students are positively encouraged to attend these events. You are also encouraged to attend and assist with the organisation of workshops and conferences that take place in the Department. Informal discussion is encouraged in the departmental common room.

SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

All research students have either two or three supervisors. Supervisors are permanent members of the academic staff of the University; one is named as the main supervisor and will be a member of the Geography Department. They will liaise with the Research Office and the Graduate School in relation to your progress. Supervisors will have relevant knowledge and/or experience of the topic and will be research-active in the proposed research field.

DEPARTMENT RESEARCH FACILITIES

As part of the Department's successful Science Research Infrastructure (SRIF) Bid for £1.4 million and the development of the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, we have undertaken a major refurbishment of our laboratories and field and laboratory equipment. This gives us a state-of-the-art suite of facilities which are amongst the best available in any UK geography department. We have recently opened a suite of brand new purpose-built climate-controlled laboratories as part of our new Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience. This suite includes a Class-1000 clean room that houses our ICP-MS & GC MS and a geotechnical booth with ultra-tight temperature and humidity control.

Research activities are supported by over 20 technical and support staff including: digital cartographers, a photographer, and reprographics staff providing a full service for the preparation of graphic work; plus specialist laboratory technicians; and computing staff. In addition to general support human geography research is supported by two departmental research associates.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information technology underpins every aspect of our research activity from the formulation of grant proposals to the publication of results. We provide state-of-the-art IT facilities and specialist computing facilities including a suite of high performance work-stations and a dedicated laboratory for Remote Sensing and GIS research.

EQUIPMENT

We have one of the best equipped geography departments in the country. This includes a wide range of field survey equipment including differential GPS, terrestrial laser scanners; ground penetrating radar; an inshore survey boat and two smaller inflatables; river survey equipment; coring equipment and a drill rig; and an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) for acquisition of low level aerial photography.

LABORATORIES

Our laboratory facilities include:

- Enhanced Microscope Room
- Gamma Spectroscopy laboratory
- Class-1000 clean room
- Analytical laboratory
- Geomorphology laboratory
- Geotechnical laboratory
- Semi-class 1000 Geotechnical lab.

SUPPORT

The Geography Department is able to provide support and assistance with the technical aspects of both physical and human geography research projects, e.g. textual analysis; multimedia data analysis; wearable GPS. In addition, the University IT Service provides a foundation level of IT support. As well as generic helpdesk support, there is also the provision of support for University-provided software packages.

TYPICAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

- Bachelors degree – normally an upper second class degree or equivalent in a subject relevant to the proposed course of study is required. International students should consult the University's International Office web page for country-specific information on entry requirements: www.durham.ac.uk/international/countryinfo

ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

An average no lower than 6.5 in IELTS, with no test under 6.0 and a writing score of 7.0. If students achieve a 6.5 average but less than 7.0 in writing then they may be asked to complete a pre-sessional course in the Language Centre. A score of 600 or above in TOEFL will also be accepted, as will an equivalent qualification.

We welcome applications from holders of international qualifications. For advice on the equivalency of international qualifications and further information on English language requirements, please contact our

“I looked at the Department of Geography's website and saw that they were actively looking for research to be undertaken in the area of north-south relations. I contacted a number of staff members within the Department who were working in the areas, as I was interested to see how I may become involved in their work. I met with one of my current supervisors who explained the work of the Department in more detail and suggested a funding submission with one of the agencies I had worked for which was thankfully funded.

The academic staff clearly know their subject areas and are attentive and responsive, and the breadth of research interests within the Department has meant regardless of what academic issue I have needed to speak to someone on there has been someone qualified, experienced, and importantly willing, to offer guidance.”

Clare Collingwood-Esland
PhD Geography.



International Office on
international.office@durham.ac.uk
or visit our website at
www.durham.ac.uk/international

TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

MA in Geography (Research Methods)

The MA in Geography (Research Methods) gives a broad training in social science research methodology, as well as more specific training in the approaches used in human geography and offers a balance between theory and practical application.

This programme forms part of a recognised pathway for human geography within the ESRC-funded North East Doctoral Training Centre. As such, UK/EU candidates who complete this programme are eligible to apply for funding for '+3' awards to support doctoral study. Alternatively these candidates may apply through an annual competition to undertake this MA on a funded basis as part of 1+3 award (covering both the initial research training Masters programme and a PhD).

The course also offers a sound grounding in research methodology forming the basis for a range of other careers in academic and non-academic research.

The MA in Research Methods for Geography is made up of core modules (including a dissertation on any relevant topic), and one optional module. Teaching takes place not only within the Department of Geography but in conjunction with other Durham departments, and some modules are in conjunction with the Geography Department at Newcastle University.

Masters in Risk

We are at the forefront of interdisciplinary scholarship and research on risk. As part of this we are able to offer three taught Masters programmes in risk:

- MSc in Risk and Environmental Hazards
- MA In Risk, Health and Public Policy
- MA in Risk and Security.

These unique taught Masters programmes, led jointly out of the Department of Geography and the Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, are designed to provide critical training in core methodologies and to offer in-depth analysis in one element of contemporary risk. They are targeted at a wide range of potential students, including professionals seeking training

for career advancement and those wishing to pursue research degrees. We are committed to developing new ways of understanding and managing risk, bringing together disciplines and approaches in novel ways, and increasing resilience and well-being in the face of adversity. Further details can be found at

www.durham.ac.uk/geography/postgraduate/riskmasters

TYPICAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

- Normally at least an upper second class degree (2:1).

International students should consult the University's International Office web page for country-specific information on entry requirements: www.durham.ac.uk/international/countryinfo

ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

An average no lower than 6.5 in IELTS, with no test under 6.0 and a writing score of 7.0. If students achieve a 6.5 average but less than 7.0 in writing then they may be asked to complete a pre-sessional course in the Language Centre. A score of 600 or above in TOEFL will also be accepted, as will an equivalent qualification.





We welcome applications from holders of international qualifications. For advice on the equivalency of international qualifications and further information on English language requirements, please contact our International Office on international.office@durham.ac.uk or visit our website at www.durham.ac.uk/international

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT AND RESEARCH STUDENTS

- ESRC Doctoral Training Centre
- AHRC
- NERC
- EPSRC
- Commonwealth Scholarships.

Details of funding opportunities within the Department of Geography can be found at www.durham.ac.uk/geography/postgrad

The University also has a range of funding opportunities for postgraduate students. To find out what support you could be eligible to receive see our online funding database at www.durham.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/fees/search

CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

For further information on career options and employability, including the results of the Destination of Leavers survey, student and employer testimonials and details of work experience and study abroad opportunities, please visit www.durham.ac.uk/geography/postgraduate/employability

KEY INFORMATION

The Department has over 120 research and taught postgraduates working across the full spectrum of human and physical geography. There are 58 lecturing staff as well as around 30 research staff.

Postgraduates in Geography go on to a number of different careers including academic research and teaching, working for government organisations such as the British Antarctic Survey and the Environment Agency, town planning, and local authorities.

“Durham University has enabled me to mix with a different set of people – mostly a few years younger – that still have enthusiasm and spirit in abundance. I hope this qualification will widen the career paths I am able to pursue and help me combine my interests and ambition to work in a university setting.”

Clare Collingwood-Esland
PhD Geography.

Name:
Natasha Barlow

Home Country:
UK

Postgraduate Course:
PhD Geography

I studied for my undergraduate degree at Durham University and loved it here so much that I decided to stay and study for a postgraduate degree. My PhD builds on the areas I was interested in, namely reconstructing past environments and particularly relative sea level change.

Durham's excellent reputation, particularly in Geography, brings you so many opportunities, some of which you would not expect. I've completed three separate month-long field seasons in Alaska, and had the opportunity to meet a wide range of leading academics from both Durham and around the world. There have been many highlights during my time at Durham including the close-knit, inclusive research atmosphere and the fact there is a large and very friendly postgraduate community.

Once I've completed my PhD I'm hoping to be able to work for a while as a postdoctoral research assistant and progress towards securing a lectureship in Physical Geography.



Contact details

For further information on research degrees contact:

Postgraduate Office for Geography

Tel: +44 (0)191 334 1851

Email: geog.pgadmissions@durham.ac.uk

Department of Geography
Durham University
Science Laboratories
South Road
Durham DH1 3LE
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)191 334 1851

Fax: +44 (0)191 334 3505

www.durham.ac.uk/geography

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