Welcome

Welcome to Birkbeck University of London, School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy, the Department of Geography.

The Handbook for Postgraduate students is designed to orientate you to Birkbeck College as you begin this journey. It contains information on the many resources to help you find advice and make good choices.

The Handbook clarifies the essential details of the curriculum and what is required from you in order to successfully complete your study, the values and standards we hold as a community and that we expect you to honour in your conduct as a student in the College.

As you read this Handbook, you will identify who to contact in the Department and elsewhere in the College if you have questions relating to programme administration, academic roles and responsibilities, the postgraduate programme structure, timetabling and attendance, regulation and assessment of coursework and exams, useful information, career development and finally My Birkbeck Student Services.

Life at the College, as anywhere, can be confusing and feel overwhelming. Remember that there are many people available here to help you work through these moments and think through your choices, both academic and otherwise.

We hope that you will read this Handbook carefully and use it to find the support you need.

If there is anything we in the Department of Geography can do to help you better navigate your College life, please let us know. Our teaching and administrative staff look forward to welcoming you on one of our many programmes.

We wish you a happy, healthy, and fruitful time of study with us.
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The Department

The Department of Geography
With over 20 fulltime academic staff and many more researchers, professional and support staff, the Department is a lively and stimulating environment in which to study.

We have a vibrant and supportive research environment and most staff are involved in critical research, working towards social and environmental justice.

Visit our website www.bbk.ac.uk/geography for the latest news and events, browse the full list of courses, meet our staff, check out our academic research and much more.

Professional Support Staff
The Administrative Team provides operational support of processes and procedures related to your programme. All programmes are made up of modules. Each administrator supports a range of modules from different programmes, therefore your programme administrator and module administrator may vary. Your programme administrator will contact you at the start of the academic year. Details of your module administrator are available in your module outline (see Module Tutor).

If you require general support or advice please contact us at geography@bbk.ac.uk or telephone +44(0)20 3073 8000.

Our office hours are Monday to Friday 10:00 to 18:00 (excluding bank holidays)

Programme Directors
Programme directors oversee the Department’s academic content of postgraduate degrees.

International Development
Dr Jasmine Gideon
+44 (0)20 3073 8368
j.gideon@bbk.ac.uk

Environment & Sustainability, Climate Change
Dr Aideen Foley
+44 (0)20 3073 8393
a.foley@bbk.ac.uk

GIS
Dr Shino Shiode
+44 (0)20 3073 8455
s.shiode@bbk.ac.uk

Geography
Dr Kezia Barker
+44 (0)20 3073 8442
k.barker@bbk.ac.uk

Children, Youth & International Development
Dr Karen Wells
+44 (0)20 3073 8387
k.wells@bbk.ac.uk

Social & Cultural Geography
Dr Melissa Butcher
+44 (0)20 3073 8456
m.butcher@bbk.ac.uk

International Development & Social Anthropology
Dr Penny Vera-Sanso
+44 (0)20 3073 8445
p.vera-sanso@bbk.ac.uk
Module Tutor
If you wish to discuss or find out more about the content or assessment of any module you should contact the module tutor. This is the lecturer teaching your module. Your module tutor will provide you with a module outline before the start of each academic term which the tutor will upload onto Moodle. A module outline has full details of the module content, module tutor and module administrator.

Personal Tutor
Your personal tutor is a member of academic staff who is your first point of contact for both pastoral and academic support beyond module-specific queries. Personal tutors are there to listen to your challenges which may have an impact on your academic performance. Your personal tutor is unlikely to provide answers or solutions to your personal challenges but will be able to refer you to the appropriate support service in the university. Your personal tutor details can be found in the ‘My Birkbeck’ student profile under the tab ‘study support’.

Postgraduate Degrees
Click the links below to view the online course listings for each postgraduate degree within the Department. By clicking the ‘course structure’ dropdown menu you can view a breakdown of the programme structure and links to each module.

- Children, Youth and International Development (MSc)
- Climate Change (MSc)
- Climate Change (Postgraduate Diploma)
- Climate Change (Postgraduate Certificate)
- Environment and Sustainability (MSc)
- Environment and Sustainability (Postgraduate Diploma)
- Geographic Information Science (MSc)
- Geographic Information Science (Postgraduate Diploma)
- Geographic Information Science (Postgraduate Certificate)
- Geography (MSc)
- Geography (PG Dip)
- Geography (PG Cert)
- Global Environmental Politics and Policy (MSc)
- International Development (MSc)
- International Development (Postgraduate Diploma)
- International Development (Postgraduate Certificate)
- International Development and Social Anthropology (MSc)
- International Development and Social Anthropology (Postgraduate Diploma)
- Social and Cultural Geography (MA)
- War and Humanitarianism (MSc)

Postgraduate Programme Structure
All degree programmes offered as part of the Common Awards Scheme will consist of modules, each of which will be “credit-rated”. In order to achieve your award you will need to gain the following, meeting the requirements outlined in your programme specification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Credits Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>180 level 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>120 level 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
<td>60 level 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Common Awards Scheme for postgraduate programmes offers modules at 15 credits (CATS), 30 credits (CATS) or 60 credits (CATS).
The detailed requirements for each degree programme are published in the relevant programme specification. Each module on a programme is designated as one of the following:

- **Core**
  The module must be taken and passed to allow the student to complete the degree.

- **Compulsory**
  The module must be taken and the programme regulations stipulate the minimum assessment that must be attempted.

- **Option**
  A student may choose a stipulated number of modules from a range made available to them. Option modules are clearly identified in programme regulations.

Modules may also be designated as **prerequisite** modules, meaning they must be taken and passed to allow for progression to a specified follow-up module.

**Timetable**
You can view your modules online in your personal timetable using [My Birkbeck Profile](https://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/student-attendance-framework).

**Attendance**
Birkbeck, University of London expects you to consistently attend all timetabled sessions, including lectures, seminars, group and individual tutorials, learning support sessions, workshops, laboratories, field trips, inductions and demonstrations.


All Birkbeck students are issued with student ID cards. Students are expected to take them to classes and to assessment venues and to present them to a member of staff if requested. This is for the purpose of identifying Birkbeck students and to record attendance.

In most Birkbeck rooms, at Friends House and University Square Stratford, ‘touching’ your Birkbeck student card ID card against a reader records your attendance. Your attendance will be recorded by a member of teaching staff in rooms without card readers.

![eRegisters](https://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/student-attendance-framework)

Students can view their attendance data using the eRegisters option on [My Birkbeck Profile](https://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/student-attendance-framework).

Classes normally run 18:00 to 21:00. Some may finish earlier to give you time to visit the library and some practical classes may continue to 21:30. Weekend attendance is also required for some modules, including fieldwork.

**Safety and Ethics**
Health, safety and risk assessment are of paramount importance both in the laboratory and the field. Please follow the information given to access the necessary steps you must take.
Ethical issues may also arise when conducting fieldwork, therefore students are strongly advised to familiarise themselves with, and observe, the code of conduct and ethical principles www.bbk.ac.uk/sshp/research/sshp-ethics-committee-and-procedures.
Coursework, Exams and Assessment

Coursework
Coursework is submitted during and after completion of a module. Your coursework must be submitted by the published deadline or your mark will be capped if the deadline is not met.

All our postgraduate students submit their coursework electronically and anonymously. Online submission allows you to submit your coursework from anywhere with an internet connection with no need to print or physically submit your essays. Additionally, you will receive your marks and feedback using Moodle. Some module tutors also require you to submit hard copies of your work in addition to electronic submission, e.g. dissertation modules require hard and electronic copies. Check your module outline for further information.

For further information on submitting assignments online please visit Moodle support.

Coursework Submission Deadlines (Department of Geography)
Deadlines for coursework may differ between programmes and Departments. Make sure you understand what your deadlines are for each module.

Submission dates can be found on your module outline through Moodle.

- Your coursework must be submitted by the published deadline in order to be eligible for full marks.
- If your coursework is submitted after the published deadline but before the final deadline (the final deadline is four weeks after the published deadline) your coursework will be capped with a maximum mark of 50% unless mitigating circumstances are accepted (see below).
- Work submitted after the final deadline will be given a mark of zero for non-submission and will count as your first attempt.

Feedback and Release of Marks to Students
Your provisional marks and comments on the assessment are released on Moodle 4 weeks after the published deadline. Marks remain provisional until they have been approved by a Board of Examiners.
You will be informed by the module convenor if special circumstances cause the feedback release date to change.
Further feedback is available upon request. Please contact the module convenor via email to request further written feedback or schedule an appointment.

Late Submissions
College policy dictates how the Department treats work that is due for assessment but submitted after the submission deadline.

Late submissions received after the published deadline but before the final deadline (the final deadline is 4 weeks after the published deadline) will be capped (if passed) at pass mark (40%) and will be classed as a first attempt, unless mitigating circumstances (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/MitCircs.pdf) are accepted.

Where an assessment has not been submitted by the final deadline and no application for consideration of mitigating circumstances has been accepted a mark of zero will be awarded. As a courtesy, you should tell your module tutor if you are going to submit an assessment late. However, staff cannot give extensions.
**Mitigating Circumstances**

Mitigating circumstances are unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt your academic performance, such as an illness or bereavement.

A Mitigating Circumstances claim should be submitted if valid detrimental circumstances result in:
- a) the late or non-submission of assessment;
- b) non-attendance of examination(s);
- c) poor performance in assessment.

Students are encouraged to submit their claim for mitigating circumstances in advance and at the earliest opportunity. The final deadline for submission of a claim is 2 weeks after the assessment date or assessment deadline for the element of assessment to which the claim relates.

If you wish mitigating circumstances to be taken into consideration, you must complete a mitigating circumstances form and submit it, together with documentary evidence as appropriate, to your programme administrator. Please note that any claims submitted without relevant independent documentary evidence to support statements may be rejected. See the mitigating circumstances policy for guidance on documentary evidence. The final deadline for submission of a claim is 2 weeks after the assessment date or assessment deadline for the element of assessment to which the claim relates. Claims relating to missed attendance of taught sessions should be submitted within 2 weeks after the end of the term in which attendance was affected.

If submitted within 2 weeks of the relevant deadline, the claim will be considered by the Mitigation Circumstances Panel of the relevant Board of Examiners. This is in confidence and you may request that only the Chair of the panel has sight of your form.

Submissions received after 2 weeks will be automatically rejected by the Mitigation Circumstances Panel. Students wanting to pursue those claims must do so by following an appeal process. For information on appeals, see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/quick-guide-appeals.pdf. Appeals must be submitted studentappeals@bbk.ac.uk within 6 weeks from the receipt of notification of rejection.

For more information and download the MC claim form, the Mitigating Circumstances Policy, Procedure and Guidance document available at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/documents/MitCircs.pdf.

**Examinations**

Exams are normally held in January, April, May and sometimes the first week of June. At the end of the Spring Term Registry publish examination details including Admission Notice (EANs), candidate number, the dates, times and location of all your examinations, which are available via your My Birkbeck Profile page. Please ensure you print off your ENA and bring this, along with your Birkbeck Student ID card to each of your examinations.

You must not annotate the EAN as this could constitute an Examination offence. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are able to attend examinations. Holidays are not accepted as mitigating circumstances for nonattendance at examinations.

For general guidance on exam support, procedures and timetable information please visit www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/exams.
**Passing a Module**
To pass a module you must obtain an overall mark at or above 50%. The overall module mark is the result of the combined weighted mark awarded for each piece of assessment within the module. Assessment patterns vary from module to module. You can find specific information on module assessment patterns in the online module outline or in the module documentation (module handbook) in Moodle.

**Failing a Module**
Your programme administrator will notify you if you have failed an assessment and confirm the resubmission deadline shortly after the Department’s Sub Board of Examiners meeting. You may have the opportunity to resubmit your assessment or retake the module. For guidance please visit www.bbk.ac.uk/student-services/exams/coursework-deadlines.

**Reassessment**
Reassessment is subject to a cap at the pass mark 50% for postgraduate students, unless mitigating circumstances are accepted.

**Criteria for Assessing Coursework**
Please visit the website www.bbk.ac.uk/geography/current-students/guidelines-and-marking to find the assessment guidelines for marking or Marking Your Work.

**Assessment Offences and Common Award Scheme Regulations**
For full details please visit www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/regulations.

**Plagiarism and Referencing**
Plagiarism, the act of taking somebody else’s work and presenting it as your own, is an act of academic dishonesty and Birkbeck takes it very seriously. Many potential problems relating to plagiarism are eliminated if sources of information are always properly cited in your work and listed with full details in a bibliography or reference list at the end. Guidance on referencing can be found at www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/about/learn/citing. The College makes strenuous efforts to detect plagiarism, including the use of Turnitin web based software, which can provide clear evidence of copying of sources without attribution. If you are in any doubt as to what constitutes acceptable conduct you should consult your module tutor. The College has a wide range of sanctions that it may apply in cases of assessment offences, including the termination of a student’s registration in the most serious cases.

Read our advice on how to avoid plagiarism.

**Break in Studies**
If necessary, you can suspend studies for up to two years during your programme of study. This may either be for a period of two years or non-consecutive shorter periods that add up to a total of two years or less (although applications for a break in studies of less than one term will not be considered). Please visit www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/break-in-studies for further information. Please submit your request through your My Birkbeck Profile.

**Deferring your Dissertation**
Students with permission to defer their dissertation until the next academic year will be charged one third of the programme annual fee, as a dissertation only student.

**Withdrawing from your Programme**
If for any reason you decide to withdraw from your programme, we hope you will talk to us first. Students choose to withdraw for a wide range of reasons and it may be that we will be able to make arrangements to help you complete your programme. Please visit our website for advice before making a decision www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/withdrawing.
**Degree Classification**
Your official result will be made available to you via your My Birkbeck Profile. Results are not confirmed until ratified by the appropriate Birkbeck Board of Examiners. You can read the Common Award Scheme regulations at www.bbk.ac.uk/registry/policies/regulations.

**Student Feedback to Staff and Module Evaluation**
The department greatly values feedback from students on its modules. This is summarised by the module tutors and discussed in both meetings of academic staff and in the relevant Exchange Committees and is used to improve the module for future years. At the end of each module you will be given a standard module evaluation questionnaire (either on paper or online) to complete. You are asked to take this task seriously and complete the forms as fully as you are able so that problems with the module can be identified and corrected.

The department welcomes informal evaluation of how a module is progressing at any time. This can be done in the form of informal conversations during module sessions, or email exchange and/or meetings with either module tutors or programme directors. You should contact your module tutor to give feedback on general module issues or your programme director for wider programme matters.

You can also provide feedback via your student representative, who attends regular staff-student exchange meetings with academic staff. For more information, see www.bbk.ac.uk/geography/current-students/student-staff-forum.
Student Services

Birkbeck offers a comprehensive range of Student Services, offering all the support and assistance you need.

If you would like to talk to someone or get face-to-face advice, please contact our Student Advice Service or visit the Student Advice Service at our Central London Campus.

ASK a Question or Call 020 3907 0700

Follow us

www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck your gateways to student support services.

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- Birkbeck graduate research school (bgrs)

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- Study skills tutors
- Disability and dyslexia service
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Exams and assessment

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Graduation

- Graduation

Please visit www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck your gateway to the many student support services available to you.
Useful Information

Getting Started
We have provided you with the following guides to help you settle in. We also recommend you attend the orientation events Orientation 2017.

- Get started
- Study support
- Student services

If you want talk to someone, please contact the My Birkbeck helpdesk where a member of staff will be able to advise you or point you in the right direction for help.

Birkbeck Library
Library tours will run during the first few weeks of the new academic year. To find our more visit www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/about/userinfo.

For information on other Libraries you can access as a Birkbeck student visit www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/otherlibs.

For more in depth information, please telephone Noemi Defossez, Department of Geography Subject Librarian on +44 (0)20 7631 6063 or email n.defossez@bbk.ac.uk.

The Library website has individual subject guides. They each have information about the different books, journals and databases that the library owns for each subject.

- www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/subguides/subject-guides

Please ensure you bring your ID card with you every time you visit the Library to activate the turnstile at the entrance.

Computing and IT Support
Access to College IT facilities and services is controlled by a username and password.
IT Services (ITS) usernames and passwords are allocated to registered students of Birkbeck College. Once you are accepted on your programme, you will receive your login details from ITS for the purpose of online enrolment. Following completion of enrolment, registered students will be able to access the full range of IT Services. Returning students should continue to use the same account they were previously allocated.

IT Service Desk
If you are experiencing computing problems, please contact our Service desk staff located on the Ground Floor, Malet Street www.bbk.ac.uk/maps. Telephone +44 (0)20 7631 6543 or email its@bbk.ac.uk. Staff offer help with access to IT services, including wireless, desktop PCs and Moodle.

Please visit www.bbk.ac.uk/its to see the full range of IT services and support Birkbeck provide.

Moodle
Moodle support for students is designed to enhance your learning by allowing you to view programme materials and learning resources online. You can also use it to talk online with your lecturer or other students about the programme using discussions, chat or email.

For more information please visit My Birkbeck/services/facilities.

Turnitin
Turnitin is an online submission tool within Moodle. It provides tools to check originality and aid online marking.

- If your module tutor has set up an online assignment submission link in your module on Moodle this will usually be found under the heading assignments. Your tutor will tell you if you should be submitting assignments online through Moodle.

- Click on the assignments link within the course module.

- You will then see the Summary page with “start date, due date and postdate”.

- Click on My Submissions tab and enter a title and browse for the file you want to submit on your computer. Always confirm that this submission is your own work by ticking the box.

- Click on Add Submission.

**Study Support**
Academic skills workshops are available for postgraduate students in the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy study-support-workshops.

Academic skills are crucial to your success in your studies. They help you to become an efficient and effective learner. These workshops will introduce you to the academic skills that are expected of you as an postgraduate student.

Birkbeck offers a range of academic development courses and workshops, guides and interactive tutorials to help you consider how you can achieve your goals, find out what studying at Birkbeck is like and improve your academic skills.

If you are enrolled on a programme in Stratford you can also get study support in Stratford.

**Disability and Dyslexia Support**
At Birkbeck we welcome students with disabilities. Our commitment is to help you meet the challenges and seize the opportunities that study at Birkbeck presents. We aim to provide all of our students with a study environment that enables them to participate fully in our programmes. These pages (please contact us) describe what support we can provide and who can help you.

If you want to talk to someone or make an appointment with the Disability Office, please telephone +44 (0)20 7631 6316 or email disability@bbk.ac.uk.

**The Student Union**
The Birkbeck Students Union provides a host of student welfare services, clubs and societies and a student bar. For more information visit the website, email info@bcsu.bbk.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0)20 7631 6335.

**Sports and Social Life**
Our Central London Campus is located in the heart of historic Bloomsbury, an area of leafy squares and parks steeped in intellectual history. Bloomsbury remains a hub of cultural heritage and education. Surrounded by bars, restaurants and galleries and within walking distance from the West End cinemas, theatres, clubs, popular shopping areas such as Oxford Street and Regent Street and Covent Garden with all of its cafés, market stalls and street performers. This central location offers an extensive and developed transportation network which includes both private and public services.
Our Stratford Campus, close to the Olympic Park, has undergone extensive refurbishments offering purpose built facilities and a brand new £15 million library. Stratford has a thriving town centre, including Westfield Stratford City, the largest indoor shopping mall in Europe, providing a vast range of shops, cafés, bars and restaurants. In addition, Stratford has two multi-screen cinemas, a famous theatre, an arts centre and much more, as well as excellent transport links.

To find out more about sports and social life at Birkbeck visit Student Life at Birkbeck or www.studentcentral.london
Career Development

Getting Graduates into Careers

Most students are interested in developing their careers, either within their current field of work or in a completely new direction. The Careers Group offers expertise and experience in working with students and graduates of all ages and at all stages of career development.

www.thecareersgroup.co.uk

The Careers Group
University of London
Stewart House
32 Russell Square
London WC1B 5DN

+44 (0)20 7863 6030
sics@careers.lon.ac.uk

Birkbeck Careers Service
If you wish to address your career, CV, interview skills, then get in touch with Birkbeck careers service who provide comprehensive careers advice, events and information services for Birkbeck alumni, and current students. Visit the Careers Service webpage to see all the services provided and book a one to one meeting.

We hope you enjoy studying at Birkbeck. Please feel free to let us know if there are any ways in which the programme can be improved for the benefit of future students.

Good luck with your studies!