



Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences



Handbook for Distance Learning Students 2016-2017

This pamphlet should be read in conjunction with the College Prospectus and Departmental Handbook

Welcome to the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Birkbeck College, University of London. This leaflet contains information about Distance Learning. It should be read in conjunction with information available in the College Prospectus, the Department's "Description of Courses" and the Department's "Information for students" pamphlets as well as the Department handbook. These publications are available on the College and School web-sites (www.bbk.ac.uk/es/) or from the School Administrator.

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What is Distance Learning at Birkbeck?

Distance learning is a way to study for a University of London qualification in Earth Sciences, using material that is available through the Bloomsbury Learning Environment (BLE). Courses for distance learning are available on the BLE, a web-based environment where students can access course materials and where lectures are video recorded. There is also interaction with tutors by e-mail. It is specifically designed for people living in the UK and overseas who are unable to attend our face-to-face lectures. In order to study by distance learning at Birkbeck, you will need a computer, an internet connection, and a valid e-mail address.

The study material that is sent to you is identical to that given to our face-to-face students (who are all part-time, mature students who study with us in the evenings). You will be encouraged to see yourself as part of a wider group of students including other distance learners and face-to-face students. You will be welcome to attend classes, weekend field classes, social events, Easter field courses, student society events, staff-student committee meetings, and other aspects of normal university life.

We will expect you to keep in contact with the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences by e-mail and by checking the Department website frequently. Important information regarding all aspects of the course will be sent to you by the Department Administrator by e-mail. You can also use electronic means to send your assignments to your tutor for marking (although you can also use the postal service if you prefer).

What kind of qualification can I get?

Distance Learners can enrol for an undergraduate (BSc) degree, a College Certificate of Higher Education, or a College Advanced Certificate. These are explained below.

Non-degree students

Occasionally a student wishes to study only one module and be examined on it. This is possible for someone who is interested only in taking one or two modules, but it is not possible to undertake an entire degree or certificate in this piecemeal fashion. In order to obtain a BSc degree you have to be registered as a degree student for 4 years (this ensures that the Department receives Government funding for your studies).

College Certificates/Advanced Certificates

If you complete and pass 4 modules from the 1st and 2nd year courses, you will be eligible for a "Certificate in Geology", "Certificate in Planetary Science with Astronomy", "Certificate in Environmental Geology", "Certificate in Mineralogy and Volcanology" or "Certificate in Palaeontology and Earth History", according to the particular modules you have studied. A College Certificate in Field Geology is also available for students who are able to attend Easter Field Classes. Information specific to each of these Certificates is available on the School website. If you are uncertain which Certificate you should register for, discuss your application with Dr Vincent Tong, the admissions tutor. If you wish to register for the Certificate in Planetary

Science with Astronomy, contact Dr Ian Crawford (i.crawford@ucl.ac.uk). A distance learner who registers for a College Certificate programme can transfer to a Degree programme at any time, but should discuss this change with the Admissions Tutor.

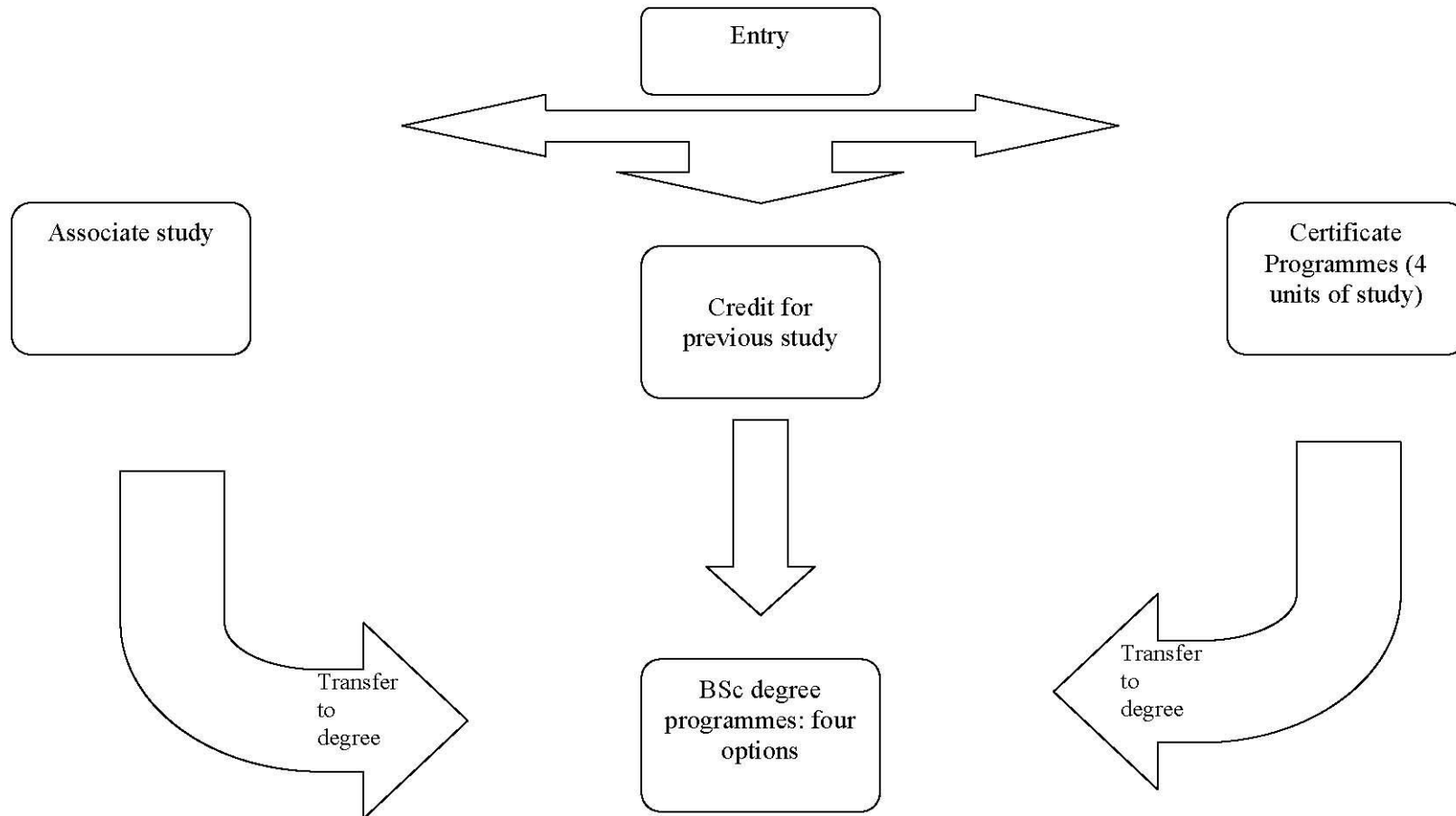
Students who complete and pass 3 modules from the 3rd/4th year courses will be eligible for an Advanced Certificate in Geology or Environmental Geology.

University of London undergraduate degrees

Distance Learning students who wish to obtain a BSc honours degree must take 12 modules (or the equivalent number of half modules) over a period of 4 years, taken from the selection available in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. Of the 12 modules, 5 must be at an Advanced level (i.e. subjects taught in the 3rd and 4th year).

Passing 12 modules will lead to the BSc honours degree. This degree will be in Earth Sciences if you have not completed any fieldwork component. If you complete the half-modules in Assessed Field Techniques, plus a “Map and Thesis” or “Project”, you will be eligible for the BSc degree in Geology or Environmental Geology. If you decide to change your degree programme, once you have been accepted, you should discuss this change with the Admissions Tutor Steve Hirons, via e-mail s.hirons@bbk.ac.uk

The following two pages show a flowchart outlining possible progression routes through the various study programmes toward completion. Below you will find more detailed information about requirements for BSc degrees and Certificates.



**BSc programmes:
options**

BSc Earth Sciences

12 full modules
(5 at advanced level)
with no fieldwork
requirement. Usually
taken by distance
learning students

**BSc Geology
(an accredited degree)**

(3 years full-time (UCAS),
4 years part-time or 6
years (decelerated))
12 full modules
(at least 5 at advanced
level 6), including
Assessed Field
Techniques, Map and
Thesis/ Field-based
Project

**BSc Environmental
Geology**

12 full modules
(5 at advanced level)
including Assessed
Field Techniques, an
Environmental
Project, and 105
credits of
Environmental
Geology modules

**BSc Planetary
Sciences with
Astronomy**

(3 years full-time,
(UCAS), 4 years part-
time
12 full modules
(at least 5 at
advanced level 6)
including a
Planetary Science
Project

2016/17 TIMETABLE BIRKBECK, DEPARTMENT OF EARTH AND PLANETARY SCIENCES

YEAR		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
1	AUTUMN	EASC042H4 15 credits - Level 4 INVERTEBRATE PALAEOONTOLOGY Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM CJU</i> 6-9pm ROOM 612	SCES010H4 15 credits - Level 4 GEOLOGY OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM 1 Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM IAC</i> 6-9pm Room 612	EASC038H4 15 credits - Level 4 INTRODUCTION TO GEOCHEMISTRY Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM KHE</i> 6-9pm Room 623b	EASC001S4 30 credits - Level 4 INTRODUCTION TO GEOLOGY Weeks 1-22 <i>AUTUMN TERM SD</i> <i>SPRING TERM SD</i> 6-9pm Room 623a
	SPRING	SCES001H4 15 Credits – Level 4 FOUNDATIONS OF ASTRONOMY Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM IAC</i> 6-9pm ROOM 42 South Wing UCL	EASC050H4 15 credits - Level 4 EARTH HISTORY Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM PH</i> 6-9pm ROOM 612	SCES01H5 15 credits – Level 5 GEOLOGY OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM 2 Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM PMG</i> 6-9pm ROOM 612 <i>UCAS students in Year 1;</i> <i>Non-UCAS students in Year 2.</i>	EASC057H4 15 credits - Level 4 FOUNDATIONS OF MINERALOGY Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM SH</i> 6-9pm Room 623b
2	AUTUMN	SCES005H5 15 credits - Level 5 IGNEOUS PETROLOGY Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM HD</i> 6-9pm Room 623a	EASC011H5 15 credits - Level 5 STRUCTURAL GEOLOGY I Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM GPR</i> 6-9pm ROOM 623b	EASC064H5 15 credits - Level 5 ASTROBIOLOGY Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM IAC</i> 6-9pm ROOM 612	
	SPRING	EASC074H5 15 credits - Level 5 FORENSIC GEOLOGY Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM KH-E</i> <i>Distance learning only</i>	SCES006H5 15 credits - Level 5 METAMORPHIC PETROLOGY Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM SH</i> 6-9pm Room 623a	SCES008H5 15 credits - Level 5 PRINCIPLES OF SEDIMENTOLOGY Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM CSB / AC</i> 6-9pm Room 623a	EASC005H5 15 credits - Level 5 GEOPHYSICS Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM JH</i> 6-9pm ROOM 612
3	AUTUMN	SCES037H6 15 credits - Level 6 METAMORPHIC PROCESSES Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM SH</i> 6-9pm ROOM623b	SCES004H6 15 credits - Level 6 CHEMISTRY AND POLLUTION OF WATER, AIR AND SOIL Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM KH-E</i> 6-9pm ROOM 44 South Wing UCL	SCES035H6 15 credits - Level 6 REMOTE SENSING AND PLANETARY SURFACES Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM PMG</i> 6-9pm 623a	EASC044H6 15 credits - Level 6 GEOLOGICAL HAZARDS Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM</i> 6-9pm <i>CSB / GPR</i> ROOM 44 South Wing UCL
	SPRING		EASC048H6 15 credits - Level 6 EARTH'S RESOURCES AND RAW MATERIALS Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM</i> <i>AB / KH-E</i> 6-9pm ROOM 623b	EASC039H6 15 credits - Level 6 PALAEOECOLOGY Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM</i> <i>CJU</i> 6-9pm ROOM 623b	SCES019H6 15 credits - L6 SCIENTIFIC COMPUTING AND DATA MODELLING Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM JH</i> 6-9pm ROOM 623a <i>UCAS Plan Sci students in Year 2;</i> <i>Non-UCAS Plan Sci students in Year 3/4.</i>
					SCES002H6 15 credits - Level 6 COMETS, ASTEROIDS AND METEORITES Weeks 1-11 <i>AUTUMN TERM HD</i> 6-9pm ROOM 612
					EASC072H6 15 credits - Level 6 ADVANCED TOPICS IN PLANETARY SCIENCE Weeks 12-22 <i>SPRING TERM</i> <i>IAC</i> 6-9pm ROOM 623b

Lecturers: *AB* = Dr Andrew Beard; *CSB* = Prof Charlie Bristow; *HD* = Prof Hilary Downes; *IAC* = Prof. Ian Crawford; *GPR* = Prof Gerald Roberts; *KH-E* = Prof Karen Hudson-Edwards; *CJU* = Dr Charlie Underwood; *AC* = Prof Andy Carter; *SH* = Mr Steve Hirons; *PH* = Dr Philip Hopley; *PPVS* = Dr Philip Pogge von Strandman; *PMG* = Dr Peter Grindrod; *SD* = Dr Simon Drake; *JH* = Dr James Hammond

What Course Units are available for Distance Learners?

We anticipate that the above courses will be available for the 2016/2017 academic session.

Details of some of the courses are available from the School's Description of Courses booklet and on the School's web-site (www.bbk.ac.uk/es/).

Advanced course units may be subject to change depending on the research interests of academic staff members.

The following two course units have been prepared for distance learners over the next two years: "Earth's Resources and Raw Materials" (15 CATS); "Geological Hazards" (15 CATS).

You can also take "Assessed Field Techniques" (4 x 15 CAT Points), and "Map and Thesis" (60 CATS) or "Project" (60 CATS), all of which require undertaking extended fieldwork.

What is the deadline for applications?

Mid to late September is the deadline for applications from students wishing to begin their studies in the upcoming October session. Distance Learning students applying after this deadline may be admitted under exceptional circumstances but they should be aware that this could cause problems with enrolment and affect their access to online materials.

How much does it cost?

The latest fees information can be found on the Birkbeck College website at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/finance/fees-information>. There are arrangements for students to pay by Government loan, instalments and by direct debit. Contact the College fees office Tel: 020 7631 6295/6526/0885. Overseas students can pay by cheque or credit card over the telephone, or use the online payment facility. <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/finance/fees-information/contact-us>

Accessing Your Student Information and Profile

My Birkbeck helpdesk

Our helpdesk is your first point of reference for support during your studies with us - with a team of friendly and helpful staff on hand to provide the information and advice you need.

If you need more specialist advice, our team will be able to refer you to the right person for more in-depth professional support, as well as book you an appointment with an advisor. [Please drop by or contact us.](#)

My Birkbeck website

On this website, you'll find a range of information, from:

- [Student guides](#): these guides are designed for different groups of students so whether, for example, you're a certificate-level student, a PhD student or studying in Stratford, you can use these guides to find the information most relevant to you.
- [Course administration](#): all the procedural information you need, from application, enrolment and registration, to exams and assessment.
- [Student support](#): we offer you a range of student support services, including learning support and skills training, careers advice, computing and IT support and library services.
- [Get Ahead: Stay Ahead](#):
Whether you are thinking about starting a course at Birkbeck, have already applied or have already started your course - the Get Ahead: Stay Ahead section of the website provides you with a range interactive tutorials designed to help you find out what studying at Birkbeck is like and equip you with the support and study skills information you need to succeed on your course.
- [About you](#): get information on your student records, student card(s), getting proof that you're a student and other personal information.
- [Forms and cover sheets](#)
- [Rules and regulation](#)

Orientation and induction events

To help our new students settle into Birkbeck, we offer [orientation and induction events](#) at the beginning of each academic year.

Induction events are also held across the College which provide more specific information about your course or if you are studying in Stratford or if you are an international student.

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/>

Government Loans

Part-time undergraduate students, will not have to pay for their course upfront if they meet certain criteria. Most students who have not already received an undergraduate degree and are listed as Home or EU students may be eligible for the new loans.

Government loans to cover tuition fees are available for people studying an undergraduate degree or Certificate of Higher Education for the first time if they are classified as a Home/EU student.

Please go here for more information:

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/prospective/undergraduate/fees>

In addition, you will need to budget for books, field equipment, field courses (if you are taking them), and examination fees (if you are sitting examinations outside London). You do not need to pay any additional examination fees if you are already registered for a module and can attend for the examination in London. Field equipment includes warm waterproof clothing, sturdy boots, a waterproof notebook (available from the Department), a hand-lens and a compass/clinometer (also available from the Department). Contact Maz Iqbal for a list of prices and recommendations (m.iqbal@ucl.ac.uk). Field equipment can be posted to you or picked up from the Department (or brought to the field class by the tutor).

Is there any financial assistance?

Birkbeck College has been working hard to improve the financial support available to its students. Information on sources of funding can be found on the College website at <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/finance/studentfinance>

Field Work

All students are required to read the Birkbeck College Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences Fieldwork Safety Code of Practice and sign the attached declaration at the end of the booklet before they can attend a field class. A copy of this document is available on the School's web site www.bbk.ac.uk/es

What will I need in order to study?

You will need a computer that is connected to the internet, and a valid email address. We strongly recommend that you have broadband access as videoed lectures require fast connection. All students have webmail accounts provided by the College Computing Service, and accessible via the internet. To obtain your account you will need to log on to the College Computing system with the username and password provided when you enrol. All email correspondence will be sent to your Birkbeck email address, and you are required to check your account on a regular basis. It is possible to forward emails from your Birkbeck account to other personal email accounts.

When can I study my modules?

Distance learning students are required to study their modules at the same time as the face-to-face students. This will ensure that you receive all the additional material (e.g. essay topics, deadlines, additional background reading recommendations, up-to-date information, videos of lectures, information about field classes associated with the module) at the same time as the face-to-face students. In many cases a demonstrator will be available for you to contact. You should therefore feel more engaged with the other students on the module and will also have a larger cohort of fellow students to contact via email.

The academic year runs from October to the end of June. It is divided into three terms of 11 weeks duration each: an “Autumn Term” from October to mid-December, a “Spring Term” running from January to March, and a “Summer Term” from the end of April until the end of June. Information about the precise dates of academic terms is available on the main Birkbeck website. Half modules, such as “Invertebrate Palaeontology” run for 11 weeks during either the Autumn Term or Spring Term. Full modules such as “Introduction to Geology” run for 22 weeks during the Autumn and Spring Terms.

All 1st and 2nd year modules are available every year - 3rd and 4th year modules alternate so they are only available every other academic year. Information about the Department’s timetable (i.e. whether a module runs in a particular term or a particular academic year) is on the Department website. 3rd and 4th year modules are subject to change, depending on the research interests of academic staff members.

How much contact should I expect?

It is essential that you check your Birkbeck student e-mail account regularly (e-mail from this account can be forwarded easily to another e-mail address if this is more convenient for you to check). Module tutors will keep in contact with their distance learning students via e-mail. At the beginning of the module, the tutor will send you a ‘welcome’ e-mail. This will contain general information about the module, its structure and communication with the tutor. It will also ask you if you are prepared to have your e-mail address distributed to other students on the module. Please note that some tutors and demonstrators prefer to use their “home” e-mail address rather than a College one. Also, note that some staff have “bbk” addresses, whereas others have “ucl” addresses. This is purely an administrative convenience, and does not in any way relate to staff being members of University College London.

Students are encouraged to contact their tutor early in the module to introduce themselves.

The welcome e-mail will also include information about the demonstrator on the module, with whom you can also correspond by e-mail. The demonstrator is usually a PhD student and often a former Birkbeck undergraduate. The module tutor will set up an e-mail group list, and will encourage students to communicate with each other by e-mail. If you have not received any e-mail from the module tutor within the first 2 weeks of the start of a particular class, please contact the tutor directly. You should find the tutor’s

name and e-mail address on the Department website.

Module tutors will encourage you to submit work for assessment and feedback. If you do not hand in work, the tutor will send reminders. Remember, some work is intended to give you feedback, whereas other pieces of work are for formal assessment. In the latter case, a tutor may wait until all of the students have submitted the coursework before marking it. In most cases, you will receive the coursework back after the end of the examinations (or before the examinations if the work is for feedback). Do not expect to receive e-mail confirmation of receipt of work. If you are worried, however, feel free to contact the tutor to find out if work has been received.

How should I study?

We encourage distance learners to join in the face-to-face activities as much as possible. This is sometimes known as “blended learning”. You will find that attending lectures or field classes whenever possible, coming to Saturday sessions, revision classes and making other visits to the School (e.g. for social events and Student Geol-Soc lectures), will give you a much greater sense of belonging to the School.

Start your studies by reading the “Introduction to the Module” (“Read-Me files”), and looking carefully at the list of topics that will be covered in the module. Check whether the module has deadlines for pieces of set work and put these in your diary. Make sure you know when the module is being taught to the face-to-face students, and set time aside to work on the course material during that term. Make sure you understand how the module will be assessed (a single examination, a combination of theory and practical examinations, a combination of assessed work and examination). Make sure you know how much assessed work will be set. Organise your study diary accordingly.

Find a time of the week that suits you (some students like to work late at night, others set aside a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon). Each lecture/practical in a module takes 3-6 hours of study, depending on the extent of the practical work. Remember, if you are taking more than one module unit, you need to find an appropriate amount of time for each module. Try to find a studying environment that suits you (preferably quiet and without distractions). Work methodically and frequently. Monitor your own progress by completing any set work and submitting it for assessment. When you reach the end of a module, schedule time for your revision. Wherever possible, obtain copies of recent examination papers from the College Library website and assess whether you could answer them. Try to attend revision sessions with face-to-face students (some of these are held on Saturdays, specifically to enable distance learners to attend).

Remember that you are registered as a student in the University of London. We expect you to take charge of your own learning experience. You are responsible for getting work to the tutor on time. If you realise you cannot meet a deadline for set work, contact the tutor well in advance to explain your difficulties and discuss your options.

What if I find it's too much for me?

The “normal” load of a face-to-face student is 2-3 modules per year. If you find that this is too demanding, you should contact the Department (either via the Distance Learning

Tutor Stev Hirons or the Department Administrator) so that someone is aware of your problems and can discuss them with you. You may also wish to discuss dropping a module (or half module) with the tutor.

How do I enrol and re-enrol?

Once you have been interviewed and have received a conditional or unconditional offer from the Department, The Registry department will formally email you the offer which you accept. The enrolment process is mainly completed online however there is an option to complete the process by post – Please note completing your enrolment by post will add an extra 1 to 2 weeks to your enrolment. You complete the enrolment process which is online you will be an official student of the department. Details will be sent to you about how to set up your Birkbeck email, join the library and access your My Birkbeck account which will have details of your timetable and the modules you are studying. It is important to check your registered email account – once you have your Birkbeck email account you can choose the email you want all Birkbeck and Departmental missives to be directed to.

If you're new to Birkbeck: Once you have accepted your [offer of admission](#), and there are no outstanding offer conditions, you will be sent an email inviting you to enrol online.

The email will state that you are now eligible to enrol and will contain your new username and password which you will need to enrol online and access Birkbeck's online facilities. If you have not received this email, you will not be able to enrol.

To enrol online for your chosen programme of study, you will need to set up your payment plan for that year, either by paying in full (by credit or debit card), by setting up a direct debit mandate to enable you to pay in instalments, or for those students who are eligible, by agreeing to apply for a government fee grant. You will also be able to pay further instalments or check your tuition fee account at any time via your [My Birkbeck profile](#), accessed with your username and password.

Once you have been admitted to the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, you should receive enrolment papers from the College Registry. It may take some time for the Registry to process your application, so don't expect to receive these papers before September. You should also receive a request for fee payment. If you do not receive these items before the end of the first month of the academic year (i.e. October 31), it may be that College has an incorrect address for you or has failed to process your application. You should contact the Department to let us know you have not received your papers.

Please go to

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/enrolment/degree-enrolment>

for full details on how to enroll and

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/enrolment/enrolment>

Do I have to attend field classes?

Distance learning students are strongly encouraged to take part in field classes, if they are able to do so. Field classes will give you an opportunity to meet staff, other distance learners, and face-to-face students. However, the BSc degree in Earth Sciences is intended for students (particularly overseas students or those with disabilities) who are unable to attend field classes or undertake fieldwork. There are two kinds of field classes: weekend/day ones that are “add-ons” for specific modules, and extended ones that are assessed as half modules in “Assessed Field Techniques”.

Weekend and day field classes

Many modules have weekend or day field classes associated with them. Attendance at these is not compulsory, but it is highly recommended that you attend if you can. Information about such field classes will be distributed as soon as it is available, via the class tutor. Contact your module tutor to find out if there is a field class associated with your module.

“Assessed field techniques”

There are four extended (10-12 day) field classes, usually held in the Easter vacation in March/April. Each counts as a half module in Assessed Field Techniques.

The first year class is usually held in Pembroke (west Wales). Accommodation (dinner, bed and breakfast) is usually about £500 for the 10-day class. Transport from the Department to Pembroke will be provided. Students can also make their way to Pembroke by their own transport. Information about this field class will be distributed during the “Introduction to Geology” module. It will be sent to you by e-mail. If you wish to attend this field class, but have not received any information about it (e.g. if you are not taking “Introduction to Geology”), please contact the Department Administrator, who will forward your e-mail to the appropriate tutor.

Although all the Field Classes are subsidised by the Department it is necessary to make a charge for the field class, to help cover the costs. This must be paid by cheque (made out to “Birkbeck College”) and sent to Maz Iqbal in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, with a note clearly stating your name and explaining that the cheque is the deposit for the field class.

Information and prices of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year field classes will be sent to you by the tutors in the Autumn term before the field class is held. These classes are usually held overseas (e.g. Greece, Spain, Morocco and Wales) and again require a contribution from students to help defray our costs. The cost of transport and accommodation for these modules varies from one year to the next. If you wish to receive information about one of these classes, and have not heard directly from the field class tutor, please contact the Department Administrator who will forward your e-mail.

Who is responsible for administration?

Your first point of contact should be the Team Leader, Stephen Jenkins (s.jenkins@bbk.ac.uk). Peter Gaunt is the part-time programme administrator for the course (p.gaunt@bbk.ac.uk). Diane Calliste (d.calliste@bbk.ac.uk) is the Assistant

School Manager for the Department.

All departmental notices and other information will be posted on the departmental website, www.bbk.ac.uk/es as well as being posted to the Virtual Learning Platform used for the course – Moodle. Important/urgent announcements will be sent by individual tutors to students by e-mail. You will also receive the “School Newsletter” three times a year by e-mail.

Information regarding your timetables, modules enrolled on, fees, exams will be shown on your My Birkbeck profile account which is accessed here: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/>

You will need your student username and password to login to your account. These are sent once you have finished the enrolment process.

Examinations are organised by Dr Phil Hopley (p.hopley@bbk.ac.uk), although you may also receive information from the College Examinations Officer Ms Jackie Barnes (j.barnes@bbk.ac.uk).

Field work for “Map and Thesis” or “Field Project” units is arranged individually with tutors. Contact Steve Hirons (s.hirons@ucl.ac.uk) if you want to take either of these modules. Field work for “Environmental Geology Project” is arranged by Professor Karen Hudson-Edwards (k.hudson-edwards@bbk.ac.uk). For the Planetary Science and Astronomy project, please contact Professor Ian Crawford (i.crawford@ucl.ac.uk).

Enrolment is the responsibility of the Registry, whereas fee payment is arranged by the Fees Office. Both of these are central College administrative departments, which are not part of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. You may need to contact administrative staff in these departments directly.

When and Where are Examinations held?

Examinations are usually held in late May and early June, for all modules. You will need to book time off work during the examination period. The College Registry is responsible for organizing the examinations for distance learning students. Students who live in the UK will normally be expected to come to London to sit the examinations with the face-to-face students in Birkbeck. Under exceptional circumstances, local centres can be arranged. Non-UK students will sit their examinations at a centre in arrangement with the Registry (e.g. British Council office).

The students are responsible for identifying a suitable local examination centre, paying examination fees and for their transport to the examination centre. You must make sure you have an appropriate examination centre organised well before the examination period starts (this needs to be organised in February, to ensure that there are no problems!).

You will receive an examination entry form in February available from your my Birkbeck account. Please read the instructions carefully and complete the module confirmation and exam entry process following the directions given on your My Birkbeck account.

Don't forget to include "Assessed Field Techniques 1" if you are attending the 1st year field class. Also, remember to include the course units that you will be taking in the second term (Spring Term). It is your responsibility to ensure that you have filled in and completed your exam entry form via your my Birkbeck profile.

Dr Phil Hopley (p.hopley@bbk.ac.uk) is the examinations officer for the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences. You should contact her if you have any problems. She may refer your problem to the College Examinations Officer (j.barnes@bbk.ac.uk). You will receive an examination timetable in March/April. Details will be posted to your my Birkbeck account. Read this carefully and make sure that you know when and where your examinations are being held. Pay particular attention to whether the exam is being held in the morning or the afternoon. Theory examinations are usually held in the main College building in Malet Street, whereas practical examinations are held in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences (in the South Wing of University College on Gower Street). Arrive early and make sure you know where your exam room is. Maps of College are available on the College website. You will be able to access your exam entry number (candidate number) on your 'My Birkbeck' web profile, which you need to note down and to bring with you to the examination. If you do not receive such a number (or forget to bring it with you), attend the examination anyway and we will try to sort out this problem for you afterwards.

What happens if I fail an examination?

If you sit an examination and fail it, you can retake the entire module again the next year (assuming it is running for face-to-face students) and retake the examination in the following year.

You CANNOT retake an examination if you have passed the module (e.g. to increase a poor mark). The pass mark is 40%. All examinations take place in May/June (even for modules that run in the Autumn Term).

If the module you wish to retake is not being run for face-to-face students, you should contact the tutor and ask for advice. You may be the only person studying the module that year. This only happens in advanced (3rd and 4th year) modules. In this case, the tutor may set special essays or other pieces of work to help you in your studies.

However, you should not expect the same level of tuition support as you receive when the course is being taught to face-to-face students. Please also refer to the Departmental Handbook which has more details about the Examination and resulting process for students.

Capping of Re-assessed Exams and Modules (2015/16)

This academic year (2015/16) Birkbeck will introduce a new policy on the re-assessment grading of coursework and exams. **All re-assessed work will be capped at 40% (max) in line with other universities.**

From 2015/16 the College Common Awards Scheme regulations will be changed to include an amendment to the regulation of reassessments.

From 2015/16 any reassessment awarded will be subject to a cap at the pass mark (40% undergraduate and 50% postgraduate) except where mitigating circumstance have been accepted on the failed assessment, and students will be permitted to re-submit without penalty.

- Students who fail an assessment in 2015/16 and awarded a reassessment opportunity will have their reassessment subject to a cap.
- Any student awarded a reassessment opportunity in 2014/15 or before will not be subject to a cap for a reassessment taken in 2015/16.
- The cap does not apply to a retake of a module

More Information is provided on the Regulations webpage of the My Birkbeck website here: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules>

Can I use the College library?

Yes, Distance Learning students within the UK have the same borrowing rights in the BBK library as face-to-face students, but you will have to join a postal scheme in order to have a book posted to you or to obtain a photocopy of a journal article. Details of this scheme called "LAMP" are available on the Library website: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/welcome.html>. All Distance Learning students have electronic access to the Library, for which they need to obtain an Athens username and password (see library website for details). Birkbeck is also a member of "UK Libraries Plus", which means that you may be able to join a local university library near to your home. Again, details are on the Birkbeck Library website.

All Birkbeck students have access to many useful Earth Science journals via electronic means. You should also be aware of "online" bookstores that may be able to supply you with textbooks and second-hand bookstores (e.g. abebook.co.uk).

Who do I speak to if there's a problem?

If you have a problem with a particular module (e.g. the set textbook is out of print; you cannot get hold of background information), you should contact the module tutor or the demonstrator and explain the nature of your problem.

If you have a question about an administrative item like examinations, fees, registration or enrolment, first check this pamphlet and the Department or College website. If this does not clarify the situation, contact the Department Administrator, by e-mail, phone or post. If he cannot solve the problem, he will pass your correspondence on to the appropriate member of staff.

If you have a more general issue that you would like to have discussed at the Staff-

Student exchange committee, you should contact the Department Administrator who will place your issue on the agenda.

If you have a major complaint, or if you are unhappy with aspects of administration or specific modules, please contact the Head of Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Professor Gerald Roberts (gerald.roberts@ucl.ac.uk).

You will be sent a "Module assessment form" at the end of each module, in which you can write your comments about the module. The form should be sent directly to the Department Administrator, and NOT to the module tutor. This information is treated anonymously (you should NOT sign the form) and will be collated with responses from other students. The results of this assessment are discussed by the Head of Department with each tutor at the end of the academic year. We value your comments and try to take them into account in subsequent years. In this way you can have an influence on the teaching of modules in the future.

STUDENT CHECKLIST

Have you received the course material?

IF NOT

Contact Department
Administrator

*If the administrator cannot solve the
problem he/she will pass your
correspondence on to the
appropriate member of staff.*

Stephen Jenkins
(s.jenkins@bbk.ac.uk) or 0203
073 8032 or Peter Gaunt on
020 7631 6665
(p.gaunt@bbk.ac.uk)

Does the course material work on your PC?

Contact Maz Iqbal
m.iqbal@ucl.ac.uk
or 0203 073 8031

Is your student computer account working?

Contact ITS
ITS Helpdesk and Reception for
general advice and Registration or
username/password problems.
**Tel: 0207 631 6543 Email: [its-
helpdesk@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:its-helpdesk@bbk.ac.uk)**
In person: Ground Floor, Malet
Street Main Building, **Open 9:00am
to 8:00pm Monday to Friday in
term time, 9:00am to 6:00pm
during vacations.**
<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/contact/>

Have you sent an introduction email to your tutor? -do so

Do you know who to contact as your first Department Administrator point of
reference?

Stephen Jenkins (s.jenkins@bbk.ac.uk) or 0203 073 8032
Peter Gaunt (p.gaunt@bbk.ac.uk) or 020 7631 6665