



# Geography and Environmental Science



# School of Geography and Environmental Science

The School of Geography and Environmental Science at Monash is one of the largest and most highly regarded in Australia.

## What does geography and environmental science involve?

The School of Geography and Environmental Science represents a grouping of people who enthusiastically research and teach in physical and human geography, people-environment interactions, environmental management, and Australian indigenous archaeology. The school prides itself on offering to students a diversity of interests that reflect its multi-disciplinary nature and on the benefits that come from its unique perspective on the problems and challenges of the world around us. Field trips and field instruction are key elements of many of its courses. Study in this school, therefore, equips students for a wide range of worthwhile careers.

Physical geography focuses on the natural environment in all its aspects. Natural processes, the history and evolution of landscapes, and the nature of environmental change are important themes. Many people are drawn to physical geography because they appreciate and enjoy the outdoors and want greater understanding of their natural surroundings.

Major areas of activity include research into past environments, especially Quaternary (last two million years) ecology and the roles of aboriginal people; geomorphology, especially of rivers and arid landscapes; climatology, especially the influence of climate on pollution, bushfires, and global and regional environmental change; soils and land management, and biogeography.

Human geography is an integral component of social sciences. The study of human geography exposes the fascinating mosaic of human experience, exploring cultural and economic geography, geographies of space, place and identity, gender, political ecology, international development, urban and regional studies (with an emphasis on planning



and policy), governance of labour markets and of ethical and sustainability behaviours.

Studies of people-environment interactions are components of the school's undergraduate and postgraduate programs. Major areas of interest include environmental policy, governance and management, environmental history, community-based conservation, sustainable development and social change for sustainability.

Indigenous archaeology studies focus on the evolution and movement of humans across the globe from two million years ago. Research activities in indigenous archaeology examine oral traditions, cultural history, heritage management and anthropology of indigenous places.

The School houses a Centre for Geographical Information Systems (GIS). GIS methods support the mapping and interpretation of geospatial data of all kinds, relating to both natural and built environments. Skills in GIS are highly sought-after by employers, and



students can undertake training in this area from undergraduate to PhD level.

The school offers postgraduate programs including diplomas, masters coursework with research components, as well as research masters and doctoral degrees. School staff have close links with related researchers in other areas of endeavour, including mathematics, biology, chemistry, politics, sociology, womens' studies, engineering and earth sciences.

The School of Geography and Environmental Science contributes to programs in other faculties, such as the environmental science and atmospheric science programs within the Faculty of Science, and the environmental engineering program with the Faculty of Engineering. The diversity of research interests in geography and environmental science is reflected in its wide-ranging grants and publications. Undergraduates are involved in research and fieldwork, while postgraduates develop their own research projects.

## A student comment:

“The lectures stirred my emotions and made me angry about what we are doing to our planet.

It seems to me that the majority of the population has no idea of the dire situation the globe is facing and unless they do a subject such as this, they will never know.”

## A student comment:

“The practical classes and tutorials were extremely good, allowing for class participation and feedback to students.”



## Our undergraduate teaching program:

At first-year level, students take one or more of our three units *Natural Hazards and Human Vulnerability*, *Australian Physical Environments: Evolution, Status, and Management*, and *The Global Challenge*. These units provide wide-ranging introductions to geographic knowledge, and lay the foundations for later year study.

At second and third year levels, our teaching program has been framed to focus on the concept of *sustainability*, as it relates to the environment and to human settlement. Sustainability is a field of enquiry that is ever more important in the face of population growth, resource use, and environmental change. A sustainability component features in all of the areas of study listed below.

Second-year units have as their focus **creating sustainable societies** (largely the social and human geography units) and **creating sustainable environments** (largely the physical geography units).

Third-year units focus on **creating sustainable futures**, and examine the trends in areas such as urban growth, changing resource availability and consumption, and climate change.

Students can build a disciplinary major, for example in 'land and water management', that reflects their own particular interests. A major is comprised of an approved program of 48 credit points in one of the following areas of study:

- Conservation of Biological Diversity and Cultural Heritage
- Climate Change
- Urban, Regional and International Development
- Land and Water Management
- Geography and Environmental Science
- Sustainability, environment and society
- Geographical Science



## Honours and higher-degree programs in the School

After three years of study, undergraduate students may qualify for entry to an honours year. This option gives able students the opportunity to develop valuable new skills by designing and undertaking their own research project. This is carried out under supervision, and written up as a formal dissertation.

Higher degrees can also be taken in the School. We offer both coursework programs, and higher degrees by research.

Our coursework programs are available to graduates from any disciplinary background,

and include the following (refer to separate brochure for additional detail):

- Master of Environment and Sustainability (ME&S)
- Master of International Development and Environmental Analysis (M IDEA)
- Master of Corporate Environmental and Sustainability Management (M CESM)

Research programs in the School include a number of Master degrees by research, as well as the PhD degree. The PhD is the highest degree routinely awarded, and follows a three-year program of research under the guidance of a panel of expert supervisors.

## Admission requirements

### **Bachelor of Arts**

VCE prerequisites: Units 3 and 4 – a study score of at least 25 in English (any), and a study score of at least 20 in any three other VCE studies.

### **Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Environmental Science**

VCE prerequisites: as for BA (above).

Though not required, studies such as biology, chemistry, geography, mathematical methods, specialist mathematics or physics should be taken.

*For other degree courses, consult the relevant university handbook.*

## Further information

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## Websites

Information about Monash and the school can be found at the following URLs:

[www.monash.edu](http://www.monash.edu)  
(the Monash University home page)  
or the school's own illustrated home page  
[www.arts.monash.edu/ges](http://www.arts.monash.edu/ges)

A member of the academic staff will visit schools to speak about courses and careers upon request to the Head of School.