

## GEOGRAPHY

<http://cos.gmu.edu/academics/undergraduate/majors/geography>

### **Name and description of the field**

Geography is the study of the earth as a total system, encompassing the physical environment and the human environment we have shaped. As a discipline, Geography bridges the gap between natural and social sciences and touches on the humanities. Its topics deal with the spatial aspects of physical environmental processes, and of human behavior and people's perceptions of and subsequent interactions with their total environment. Today's Geography major understands and is equipped to deal with complex problems of modern society, including population growth, resource depletion, natural hazards, international conflict, development of ghettos, location of shopping centers, and transportation problems.

### **What special skills or abilities are needed to succeed in this major?**

Geography teaches or reinforces manual, verbal, quantitative, analytical, leadership, intuitive, computer and creative skills with such courses as: aerial photography, cartography, Geographic Information Systems, computer cartography, conservation of resources and the environment, economic geography, spatial analysis, climatology, political geography, population geography, and urban geography.

### **If both B.A. and B.S. degrees are offered, what are the differences in career/graduate school opportunities?**

Both a B.A. and a B.S. are offered. See department for more information

### **Is it possible to minor in Geography?**

Yes, Geography minor complements many other fields such as Biology, Government, History or International Studies. A **Certificate in Geographical Information Systems** is also available.

### **What are recent graduates doing?**

A degree in Geography is appropriate preparation for students wanting to do graduate work in the following areas: Geography, Cartography, Environmental Management, Urban and Regional Planning, Remote Sensing Technology and Applications, Climatology and Geographic Information Systems.

The geography degree program is oriented to skill training of a specific nature. This training, however, can be applied towards a wide range of possible job titles, such as the following: Geographic information systems, hydrologist, imagery analyst, cartographer, land use planner, demographer, location or site analyst, photo/image analyst, interpreter, environmental scientist, photogrammetrist, Social Science Technician, geography teacher, political geographer, geographic information specialist/analyst, climatologist, geoscientist I, and transportation planner.

In planning course work in relationship to career goals, it is helpful to choose electives with some awareness of what supplemental skills they provide and how these skills will influence employability. Some elective courses which will assist in preparing Geography majors for a variety of employment opportunities are: computer science, technical and report writing, math and statistics, government, oceanography, physical geology, geomorphology, biology and ecology, anthropology, and economics.

### **Employing Organizations**

Federal Government:

Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of the Census, Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Mapping Agency, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, Library of Congress, National Mapping Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, Soil Conservation Service, State Department and National Oceanographic and Aeronautical Administration, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, National Park Service, and Topographic Engineering Center (US Army Corps of Engineers).

State and Local Government:

Education, environmental protection agencies, mapping agencies, and planning agencies.

Private Industry and Non-profit Organizations:

Boeing, GeoEye, AMEC, Cartographic firms, conservation societies, data analysis firms, engineering and urban development consulting firms, environmental management firms, geographic societies, libraries, industrial or commercial location firms, photo interpretation and photogrammetry firms, and travel and tourism planning companies.

## EXPLORING MAJORS

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### **Specific positions and the organizations hiring Recent Graduates include:**

**Organizations:** Apple Courier Inc, Cavalier Telephone, Environmental Security International, Whole Foods, SAIC, USGS, Lansing Bldg Products

**Positions include:** Bike Courier, Billing Clerk, Environmental Management & Security Associate, Floor Associate, GIS Analyst, GIS specialist, Operations Mgr

### **Resources for further information:**

A key element in effective decision making is having sufficient information about the major or career being explored. Sources of information include people in the field, professional associations relating to the field, faculty and your career services counselor. Below are additional resources to aid in exploration:

#### **Professional Associations:**

- National Geographic Society
- American Congress of Surveying & Mapping
- American Society of Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing
- Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division
- Association of American Geographers
- American Geographical Society
- Virginia Geographical Society
- United States Geological Survey

#### **Local Professional Associations:**

- **American Association for the Advancement of Science**- <http://www.aaas.org/>
- **Mason Student Clubs/Orgs/Societies Science and Technology Umbrella** - [http://sa.gmu.edu/student\\_orgs/orgs.php#stu](http://sa.gmu.edu/student_orgs/orgs.php#stu)

**Printed Resources** (Career Services Library, 348 SUB1) <http://careers.gmu.edu/careerlibrary/wheretostart/geog.pdf>

**Online Resources:** <http://careers.gmu.edu/onlineresources/geog.htm>

**Science Related Job/Internship Postings:** <http://cos.gmu.edu/students/careerservices> & <http://www.aaas.org/careercenter/>

**Networking Resource:** <http://www.mentornet.net/>

### **What kinds of practical experience are recommended to explore Geography further?**

See online and printed resources above. Also consult faculty, the Geography Website – (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/geog/Careers.html>) and department bulletin boards.

### **Whom should students contact for further information?**

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