Admission Requirements

Geography (BSc)

Prerequisite Requirements for BSc:
- ENG4U, SCH4U or SPH4U, One 4U Math
- Recommended: MHF4U

Expected minimum admission average: high 70s – low 80s

If you major in Geography your courses in first year will probably be:
- Physical Geography
- Human Geography
- Calculus
- Computer Use
- One of: Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Earth & Atmospheric Science
- General Education Course

In second year you will probably take:
- The Hydrosphere
- Vegetation and Soils
- Geomorphology
- Statistical Methods
- One of: Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Earth & Atmospheric Science
- General Education Course
- Geography elective

Career options for Geography majors include:
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Terrain Capability Studies
- Resource Management and Conservation
- Integrated Ecological Planning
- Government – transportation, economics, atmospheric/water resources, environmental assessment
- Education – elementary, high school, college, university
- Geography – real estate, engineering firms, environmental groups, airlines, railways
- Postgraduate Studies/Academic Career
- Professional Schools – Law, Business, etc.

Courses you might take in upper years include:
- Hydrometeorology
- Northern Forest Environments
- Water Quality and Stream Ecosystems
- Geographic Information Systems
- Remote Sensing and Image Processing for Geographical Analysis and Environmental Monitoring
- Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Biogeography
- Climatology of High Latitudes
- Rivers: Environment and Process
- Dynamics of Snow and Ice
- Physical Hydrology and Water Resources
- Research Design and Field Studies
Why study Geography at York University?

Studying Geography at York enables you to discover the science of place and space at one of Canada’s largest and most vibrant university Geography departments. Geography is a vital and fast-growing scientific field, organized around Human Geography (the study of how people use, transform, and understand space and place) and Physical Geography (the study of natural systems such as geomorphology, hydrology, climatic patterns, and natural resources), and focusing on understanding how people interact with their environments. Your B.Sc. studies in Geography at York will help you develop a powerful knowledge of the domains and techniques of Physical Geography, preparing you for professional careers in crucial areas like environmental assessment and analysis, natural resource management, land use development, or land use planning, and for graduate study in the earth and environmental sciences.

Program Overview

The Physical Geography program at York combines classroom learning with practical field work at all levels of study, bolstering your solid training in Physical Geography with specialized skills in statistical analysis, geographical information systems, remote sensing, laboratory analysis, and research design. York’s emphasis on field work and laboratory experience ensures you regular opportunities for outdoor laboratory sessions and field trips, giving you the chance to explore geographic phenomena in local environments and to take field courses involving work in more challenging and remote locations across Canada. The program offers students the opportunity to utilize modern sophisticated equipment for taking environmental measurements.

York offers six B.Sc. degree paths customized to your academic and career interests in Geography. These include a three-year Bachelor B.Sc. degree in Geography, the four-year Specialized Honours B.Sc. in Geography, a Double Major Honours B.Sc. combining studies in Geography with equal focus in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences (in either the Earth Science Stream or the Atmospheric Science Stream), and Honours Major/Minor B.Sc. paths combining a Major in Geography with a Minor in another subject (or a Major in another subject with a Minor in Geography). In all of York’s Geography B.Sc. degree paths, introductory courses in physical and human geography will prepare you for advanced courses in subjects like:

- The hydrosphere
- Vegetation and soils
- Geomorphology
- Northern forest environments
- Plant geography
- Fluvial geomorphology
- Water quality and stream ecosystems

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing

To augment your B.Sc. studies in Physical Geography, York offers a popular and highly rated Certificate program in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing. Completing this Certificate concurrent with your B.Sc. studies in Geography will demonstrate your capabilities in the collection and management of geographically referenced information, as well as your command of skills such as computer cartography, statistical techniques, satellite image processing and remote sensing. Training in GIS and Remote Sensing helps make York’s Geography graduates desirable candidates for careers in specialized geographic fields such as geospatial database development, cartographic imaging, and project planning.
Facilities and Opportunities at York University and Beyond

As a Physical Geography student at York you will study with enthusiastic professors accomplished in a wide array of geographical areas, including faculty members who lead Canadian physical geography research in the fields of northern environments, biogeochemistry, and fluvial environments. The Physical Geography program at York supports well equipped research facilities and laboratories, including three geoinformatics research and teaching facilities, specialized laboratories for water and soil, plant geography, flume, hydrology, and climate research, and field preparation and demonstration. York also offers an outstanding map library and mapping support through the York University Cartographic Office.

Outstanding Physical Geography students also have opportunities to participate in the diverse research projects of our faculty members, who conduct research on Arctic climate hydrology and nutrient cycling, remote sensing in the Boreal forest, river flooding and erosion, and desert ecosystem biogeography. Students undertaking Honours BSc thesis research gain extremely valuable experience leading to careers in graduate research.

York’s Geography program rewards student excellence, offering a range of prestigious awards and prizes for highly achieving students, including the John Warkentin Bursary, the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Award, the Hans Carol Award, and a number of book prizes. The York Undergraduate Geography Students Association further enhances student life, working with the Geography department and the York Geography Alumni Association to create research linkages and explore career opportunities for York Geography graduates.

Your studies in Geography at York will expose you to the scientific study of the Earth’s surface processes. Combining classroom learning with regular field work experiences, offering opportunities to specialize in areas like biogeography hydroclimatology, geomorphology, and a chance to supplement your B.Sc. degree in Geography with a highly valued Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing, York’s Geography program will prepare you for fascinating and rewarding careers in a wide variety of areas, including geographic consulting, natural resources, land use planning, environmental policy and management, or education, as well as enabling you to enter graduate level and professional programs in a number of geographic and policy fields.