

Geography

Degree conferred

Master of Science in Geography

Options

Two options available:

- Dynamics in Glaciology and Geomorphology
- Nature, Society and Politics

Languages of study

Study in English

Commencement of studies

Commencement of studies in the Autumn Semester (September) or in the Spring Semester (February)

Access to further studies

Ph.D.

Tuned to current environmental issues, this master programme enables students to understand and assess environmental systems and the relationship between nature and society. After studying a common module which addresses environmental issues from the perspective of human and physical geography, students choose a specialisation: either physical geography, which covers topics such as the cryosphere, glaciology or alpine geomorphology; or human geography, which explores subjects such as political ecology and management of natural resources along with their political and social dimensions.

Students have a broad choice of seminars and conference cycles, as well as field work. The students also participate in research teams, notably in the context of their master's thesis. The Unit of Geography is of human dimensions, which means that it is able to offer quality teaching and mentoring, with a genuinely professional qualification as the outcome.

Profile of the study programme

The Unit of Geography, part of the University of Fribourg Department of Geosciences, offers a master's degree that focuses on current environmental problems and encompasses physical and human geography. This study programme gives students the means of understanding and analysing the socio-environmental issues at stake, such as the consequences of climate change, urbanisation and the growing scarcity of natural resources. The course is based on the complementarity between the approaches and methods used in the natural and social sciences. Throughout the programme, students are taught the theoretical and

methodological approaches that are required to assess the environmental issues at stake and thus acquire a genuinely professional level of training. All the teaching is delivered in English.

Integrative, interdisciplinary geography

Reflecting the team which makes up the Unit of Geography, the master programme is integrative and interdisciplinary. Besides providing integrative training, it also gives students the chance to specialise either in physical geography – **Dynamics in Glaciology and Geomorphology** option –, on topics related to the cryosphere, glaciology or alpine geomorphology, or in human geography – **Nature, Society and Politics** option –, on topics of political ecology, management of natural resources (water, land, renaturation and landscapes). This integrative approach is a great aid to understanding and assessing complex environmental systems and the relationship between nature and society. During their course in Fribourg, with a view to their master's thesis the students are assigned to research teams and take part in current research projects. The human dimensions of this unit (around 30 research scientists) and the drive of the research groups provide a supportive, quality environment for all the students.

Structure of classes and lectures

The teaching is structured into four modules and is delivered through a combination of lectures, seminars, field work and conferences. The core module teaches the conceptual and theoretical bases of geography. Students are taught the different approaches to human and physical geography, as well as methods of collecting and analysing data. Three cycles of internal conferences offer students a chance to gain more in-depth knowledge of current research topics. A supporting module allows students to personalise their programme at the same time by pursuing courses related to their specialisation, either within the Unit or Faculty or externally, which are complementary to their discipline or interdisciplinary choices. Students conclude their studies with a master's thesis under the supervision of a professor. A field trip is organised every year in one of the teams' research regions.

Career openings

This study programme offers diverse career openings: teaching, research, administration and public institutions (local, cantonal, federal, international), urban and regional planning, environmental engineering consulting, sustainable development, regional development.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

120 ECTS credits, 4 semesters

Curriculum

<http://studies.unifr.ch/go/vBvMa>

Admission

Master's degree programmes are built on the knowledge and abilities that were acquired when obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university are admitted to a master's degree programme without any preconditions if they have earned 60 or 90 ECTS credits – depending on the chosen master's degree programme – within the corresponding discipline. However, additional requirements can be required. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss or a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg, who do not fulfil this condition can be admitted to a master's degree programme with preconditions (which must be successfully completed before starting the master's degree programme) and/or additional requirements (which can be completed during the master's degree programme). The preconditions and/or additional requirements may not exceed 60 ECTS credits in total. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university of applied sciences, according to existing agreements.

The respective conditions of admission for each master's degree programme are reserved.

Alternatives

Also offered as a minor study programme (30 ECTS credits) as part of the Diplôme d'Enseignement pour les Ecoles de Maturité (DEEM)/Lehrdiplom für Maturitätsschulen (LDM).

Contact

Faculty of Science and Medicine
Department of Geosciences
Dr Luc Braillard, study advisor
geo-scimed@unifr.ch
<http://studies.unifr.ch/go/en-geosciences>