

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	Cert HE Planetary Science with Astronomy (Level 4)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	N/A
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School/other teaching departments	School of Natural Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London/online
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Part-time (2 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	N/A
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	N/A
Birkbeck Course Code	UCHPSAST_C
HECoS Code	101103 100414
Start date of programme	Autumn 2003/4
Date of programme approval	Summer 2003
Date of last programme amendment approval	7 Nov 2022
Valid for academic year and cohorts	2023/24
Date of last revision to document	8/11/2022

Admissions requirements

We welcome applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements based on judgement of academic potential.

Course aims

This programme will introduce you to the wide range of geological processes that have shaped planetary bodies within the Solar System, and provide a grounding in the wider astronomical context. You will receive a basic training in Earth sciences, coupled with a strong emphasis on using the results of recent planetary exploration to understand the nature of other terrestrial bodies within the Inner Solar System (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Moon) and the rocky/icy satellites of the giant planets. In addition, the course will include introductory modules in astronomy and astrobiology (i.e. the search for life in the universe).

The programme will help students develop their intellectual abilities and confidence in critical reasoning and in their ability to synthesize information from a variety of sources. Given the interdisciplinary nature of planetary science, the programme will also help students relate specific knowledge to a broader context.

Distinctive Features

The programme will involve part-time, evening, face-to-face study, provision of lecture notes and videos of lectures on-line, and practical sessions.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Part-time – 2 years					
Year 1					
4	SCES060S4	Earth as a Planet	30	Comp	1
4	SCES071H4	Introduction to Planetary Science and Space Exploration	15	Comp	1
4	SCES001H4	Foundations of Astronomy	15	Comp	2
Year 2					
5	SCES072S5	Geology of the Solar System	30	Comp	1
Plus 30 credits of options as follows					
4	SCES062S4	Introduction to Field Geology	30	Option	3
OR					
5	EASC064H5	Introduction to Astrobiology	15	Option	2
5	SCES073H5	Planetary Exploration Analogue Mission	15	Option	3

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment.

As described above, 15 and 30 Credit modules are examined through a variety of combinations of exams (face-to-face or online), assessed work, and student presentations. All assessments are to be completed by the end of each term.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate understanding of the basic geography of the Solar System and the techniques of planetary and space exploration.
- 2) Demonstrate understanding of the formation and geological evolution of the planets and moons of the Solar System.
- 3) Demonstrate understanding of the wider astronomical context of the Solar System.
- 4) Demonstrate a range of practical skills in geology and planetary science.
- 5) Have a broad range of transferable skills including technical, IT, computing, communication, organisational and research skills.

Careers and further study

The Certificate of Higher Education in Planetary Science with Astronomy may help prepare students for further study (e.g. B.Sc. degrees) in Planetary Science and related subjects.

Additionally, it will provide scientific background that may be helpful in other areas of employment, such as education, museum and library work, and publishing and broadcasting.

You will complete this course with a set of valuable attributes, for example:

- The ability to work as part of a team and/or as an individual
- High-level oral and written communication skills in English, computer numerical skills and computer graphics skills
- Research skills
- Skills in evaluating and assessing types of information
- The ability to present yourself and an argument

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

You will have access to a course handbook on Moodle and this will outline how your course is managed, including who to contact if you have any questions about your module or course.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

We can offer some financial support in the form of small bursaries to help fund fieldwork and study materials, facilitated by financial contributions from alumni.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our

Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is [available online](#).

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