

Geographic Information Systems by Online Distance Learning *Study for a PG Certificate, PG Diploma or Masters, full-time or part-time*

With over 20 years' experience of teaching GIS, and 15 years teaching via online distance learning, Ulster University's School of Geography and Environmental Sciences has a significant track record in GIS education. We offer a broad-based fully online postgraduate course in the principles and practice of GIS, covering core principles and concepts and providing hands-on training in a variety of software. Our extensive experience in online course delivery means high student satisfaction levels and very positive graduate feedback.

Why Study GIS?

In recent years the benefits of using geo-spatial data have become more widely understood within both government and business. In parallel, the need for GIS professionals has grown steadily across a wide range of sectors. Moreover, gaining GIS knowledge and skills is increasingly seen as an essential part of preparing for other types of employment, for example in the environmental sector.

Our students fall into two broad groups:

- people who want to enter GIS-related employment for the first time, or to add GIS to their skill-set to enhance their employability (often new or recent graduates, but also including people wanting to change career);
- people already in GI-related employment who want to broaden and deepen their GIS knowledge and skills with a view to making better use of GIS or improving career and promotion prospects.

Student feedback tells us that our course caters very well to the needs of both groups.

Why Study with Us?

- Established course with excellent reputation and feedback
- Flexibility of location – you can study from almost anywhere and there is no need to travel to classes
- Study part-time or full-time and choose the times you study each week to suit yourself
- Support and advice from experienced lecturers, tutors, librarians, e-learning and IT staff
- Access a wide range of online resources such as e-books, digital lectures and podcasts, discussion boards and video-conference tools all within a dedicated e-learning platform
- Strong focus on employable and professional skills and extensive hands-on practice with key software.
- Free student copies of GIS, remote sensing and statistical software
- Two intakes per year for the part-time course (September and January)
- Entirely assessed by coursework – no formal examinations
- Fees can be paid by instalments
- Relevant work experience may be accepted in place of standard entry requirements
- Study for a Master's degree, a PG Diploma, PG Certificate or enrol for individual modules



The Course

Modules are taught online via the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment, through which you can access your lectures, practical exercises, reading and additional study materials. Communication tools (discussion boards, video-conferencing and email) are integrated within Blackboard and all modules are supported by experienced lecturers and tutors. Course content includes the acquisition, management, analysis and display of spatial data, concepts and applications of remote sensing, spatial databases, web-GIS and GIS in the commercial environment. Optional modules focused on spatial analysis and modelling, GIS in the workplace, GIS for environmental management, and customising GIS are available. Students gain extensive practical experience using a variety of software, including ArcGIS, ERDAS Imagine, Excel, IBM-SPSS and a number of GIS extensions, plug-ins and open source applications such as OpenLayers, GeoServer, PostgreSQL and PostGIS. The award of MSc requires the completion of an independent Masters research project in addition to the taught PG Diploma modules.

Core Modules

- Principles of GIS
- Spatial Data Management
- Remote Sensing
- GIS Databases
- GIS in Business and Society
- Web-based GIS

Optional Modules

- Spatial Analysis and Modelling
- GIS for Environmental Management
- Customising GIS
- GIS Work Experience / GIS Workplace Project
- EIA / Biodiversity (*varies by year*)

The award of PG Dip requires you to complete eight modules (or you can qualify for the PG Cert with four). For the MSc, you must complete the PG Dip and then undertake the Masters Project module.

Course Duration

- The PgCert takes 3-4 months full-time / 8 months part-time
- The PgDip takes 8 months full-time / 2 academic years part-time
- The MSc takes 12 months full-time / 3 academic years part-time



Entry Qualifications

Applicants are generally expected to have a minimum 2(ii) Honours degree with a substantial component of Geography, Environmental Science or Computing or related disciplines, but candidates with qualifications in other relevant subjects and those without the standard academic qualifications will also be considered on an individual basis, based on significant relevant work experience.

What are the employment prospects for GIS graduates?

GIS and geospatial technologies underpin a rapidly growing, multi-billion dollar industry, and are becoming increasingly mainstream within both the public and private sectors, resulting in a need for graduates who have a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. We place strong emphasis on helping our students develop and improve their academic and professional skills to enhance their employability and career progression. Our graduates have a very high success rate in securing GI-related employment, and students already in GIS jobs, many of whom are sponsored by their employers to take the course, frequently comment on how useful they find it within their day-to-day work.

Our graduates have secured employment in a variety of roles worldwide, in GIS positions including technicians, analysts, scientists, surveyors, data specialists, mapping officers, consultants and project managers, development, sales and marketing, customer support, GIS training, lecturing and research. The breadth of potential uses of GIS ensures a great diversity of job opportunities, within, for example, mapping agencies, GIS, SatNav and technology companies, GIS and environmental consultancies, renewable energy companies, local government, forestry, fisheries, environmental agencies, town planning, housing, health and emergency services, countryside recreation, rural development, retail analysis, utilities and infrastructure, mining, the oil industry and Further and Higher Education, among others. Knowledge and experience of geo-spatial data are also increasingly required in a variety of jobs outside of the GI profession, making a GIS qualification a valuable asset enhancing employability in a range of fields.

What our students say: feedback from students consistently shows that they find the course both challenging and enjoyable. The fact that many new students join the course on the recommendation of previous ones testifies to the satisfaction levels of our graduates. *“The course met my expectations and more. I was put out of my comfort zone a lot with learning new areas... but thoroughly enjoyed every minute. Doing this course has already had a positive impact on my career and a big thank you to all the staff and fellow students who helped with great support. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.”*

Fees

Fees for students from the UK, Ireland and EU (2018/19 entry) are £5,500 for the Masters; if you only wish to study for the PG Dip, the fees are £3,667 (or £1,833 for the PG Cert). Fees can be paid by instalments. Further details of fees, instalment plans and discounts for Ulster alumni can be found at www.ulster.ac.uk/apply/fees-and-finance.

Further Information

Go to www.ulster.ac.uk/ges and follow the Study Opportunities link for the postgraduate prospectus.

You can apply online at www.ulster.ac.uk/apply.

If you have any additional queries relating to any aspect of the course, please contact the Course Administrator Niamh McInerney (n.mcinerney@ulster.ac.uk, +44 (0)28 7012 4401) or email the Course Director Dr Sally Cook (s.cook@ulster.ac.uk).

