

GEOSCIENCES, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The geosciences are concerned with understanding Earth processes and the evolutionary history of the Earth. Geoscientists work to discover and develop natural resources such as groundwater, metals, and energy sources; to solve technology-generated environmental problems such as acid mine drainage and waste disposal; to predict geological events, such as the occurrence of earthquakes and volcanism; and to solve fundamental questions concerning the origin and evolution of Earth and life. The Bachelor of Arts degree program stresses data collection; investigation, analysis, and synthesis of information related to complex natural problems; rigor of thought; and clarity of oral and written expression. The B.A. provides a basic education in geosciences, and is designed for students who wish to prepare themselves for careers that interface among science, social science, and business. Examples of these careers include environmental law; national and international planning or resource management; and K-12 teaching.

What is Geosciences?

Geoscientists want to know more about the big picture of Earth and why it exists the way it does today. They investigate natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanoes, they explore life in extreme environments such as hydrothermal vents or in far-removed caves, and they examine processes such as water treatment and carbon cycling. This work involves understanding how geology, chemistry, physics, and biology intersect, both today and throughout the Earth's history. Geoscientists piece together a picture of both Earth's past environments and life throughout time. This can involve field work, laboratory work, or a combination. Ultimately, geoscientists seek to understand how our Earth developed into the way it is today, which can help us understand what we can expect in the Earth's future.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are fascinated by volcanoes, earthquakes, rocks, glaciers, climate change, fossils, tectonic plates, or the evolution of life.
- You like big picture thinking and want to explore the Earth's developmental processes.
- You enjoy understanding how organisms and species existed in past ecosystems.
- You are analytical and like to piece together clues to paint a picture of past life.
- You love physical science but struggle with calculus/physics.
- You would like to pursue a second B.A.