



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY – STRATEGY PLAN, 2019 – 2025:

INTRODUCTION

Geography is a discipline that explores the spatial organization of society and interactions between people and environments, and provides knowledge about planning, management and development processes in society. These are all key areas in the development of solutions to some of the most important challenges that we face today, including those related to climate change, migration, urbanization, and economic change.

Geography has a broad interface with other related disciplines in the social sciences and the natural sciences. Both the discipline and the Department are characterized by interdisciplinarity, which constitutes a strength when we address complex societal challenges and aim to find solutions to them. Additionally, it contributes to ensuring social, environmental and economic sustainability.

The Department will continue to offer exciting, challenging and work-relevant courses. Geography has a strong tradition of fieldwork and field courses are an integral part of many of the taught courses. The teaching is closely linked to the Department's research activities. Research will continue to be socially relevant and internationally recognized.

Geographical methods taught include visualization and analytical tools such as geographical information systems (GIS), numerical modelling and field-based methods, in addition to more conventional quantitative and qualitative methods.

THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY HAS FOUR THEMATIC PRIORITY AREAS, REFLECTED IN BOTH ITS TEACHING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:

- **Natural hazards and effects of climate change**
- **Nature, resource management and landscape**
- **Globalization, mobility and citizenship**
- **Innovation and regional changes**

Photo: Elin Iversen / NTNU

Field course for students at Ilsvika, Trondheim, spring 2019.

NATURAL HAZARDS AND EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change increases the likelihood of natural hazards occurring in many areas, which thus makes different communities' vulnerability and ability to cope with such incidents highly relevant. When focusing on the links between the physical and social world, we use both physical and human geography methods and approaches to understand what makes individuals and societies vulnerable or resilient, and hence their ability to adapt to changes in their physical and social conditions.

In order to investigate the possible effects of climate change, especially sea level rise, and of the pollution of coastal landscapes in Norway, the Arctic and elsewhere, the research focuses particularly on geological measurements of historical mean water levels and mapping microplastics in coastal zones. It also focuses on collaboration with local actors to identify and visualize urgent environmental problems, as well as to increase our collective understanding of how they can be solved.

MAJOR THEMES WITHIN THE PRIORITY AREA:

- *Effects of climate change and their visualization through geographical information systems (GIS)*
- *Increased understanding of urgent environmental and climate-related problems, and how they can be solved*
- *Vulnerability, resilience and adaptation*



Photo: Markus Spiske / Unsplash

NATURE, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LANDSCAPE

This priority area will develop new knowledge about how people and communities conceptualize, manage and use nature, resources and landscapes. The area includes research on how nature and natural resources are defined and conceptualized in different ways and different contexts, and how this forms the basis for often contradictory and conflicting discourses and practices. The research approach is political, in that we seek to understand the consequences of such discourses and practices for equitable distribution and inequality, processes of social and economic change, and vulnerability and social protection. The priority area also includes courses on rights-holders' roles and participation in both formal and informal decision-making processes related to the management and use of biodiversity, oil, and water, as well as nature as an arena for recreation. Research is carried out both in the Global South and the Global North.

MAJOR THEMES WITHIN THE PRIORITY AREA:

- *Use, distribution and conceptualization of nature and natural resources*
- *Management of particularly valuable natural resources*
- *Nature and landscape as arenas for inclusion, participation and democracy*



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GLOBALIZATION, MOBILITY AND CITIZENSHIP

A key perspective in this thematic priority area is how transnational economic relations, cultural interaction, and interdependence between places and people in different parts of the world influence politics and political participation, cooperation, and sustainable development. Special attention is given to social development in the Global South. A geographical perspective is used to provide new knowledge that will contribute to the development and implementation of institutional practices and measures to ensure that groups of people, which for various reasons do not participate in conventional planning processes, are included in decision-making processes. A major theme is how citizenship is emerging as an arena and resource for social and political strategies. The research in this thematic area will contribute to ways of facing the challenges of cultural diversity, social exclusion and democratic deficit.

MAJOR THEMES WITHIN THE PRIORITY AREA:

- Migration and cultural encounters
- International capital, trade and investment
- New preconditions for citizenship
- Collaboration and participation in planning and management processes

INNOVATION AND REGIONAL CHANGES

Based on economic and cultural geographical perspectives, we study the interfaces between people's activities, places, and major social processes such as migration, industrial development, urban growth, and rural change. The research focuses on the importance and consequences of innovation, policy and planning for sustainable change, and how people in different communities shape and experience their everyday lives. We also study sustainable changes in businesses and their value chains. We emphasize how business activities, places and regions are linked through global networks and value chains.

MAJOR THEMES WITHIN THE PRIORITY AREA:

- Transition to sustainable cities, communities and industries
- Entrepreneurship and innovation
- Urban, rural and regional changes
- Social inequality, identities and perspectives on place

RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING



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Through research, we seek to understand how interactions between people and environments lead to changes and challenges, including the consequences that various changes and challenges have for natural environments, urban areas, economies, and societies as a whole. Our goal is to produce fundamental and curiosity-driven research that furthers the understanding of human–environment interactions, as well as research that has a positive impact on the world in which we live.

Our research is based on academic freedom. This implies that our academic staff define research questions and themes, and conduct long-term research that develops geography as a discipline. Collegiality is the key to success in the strong research culture at the Department, and we recognize that a well-functioning research community is the basis for individual success. Doctoral and postdoctoral candidates represent an invaluable resource for the Department, and together with our candidates we set ambitious goals for individual projects, in addition to providing research training.

We will continue to have our work published through internationally recognized disciplinary and interdisciplinary academic channels. Additionally, our research will be made more available to the wider public.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TRAINING:

- *We will build on both the strong collegiality and established research collaboration, both internally and with colleagues and institutions nationally and internationally.*
- *We will strengthen our fundamental, curiosity-driven research to ensure that we have a clearer academic voice within international geography. Interdisciplinary collaboration is a prerequisite for our ability to strengthen our contribution towards defining and responding to contemporary challenges relating to social change and sustainability.*
- *We will continue our efforts to secure external funding in order to develop further the thematic areas of focus at the Department. Such funding is important if we are to continue to attract talented doctoral and postdoctoral candidates to an exciting international research community.*
- *We will make our research available to the wider public to a greater extent*

EDUCATION AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Photo: Elin Iversen / NTNU

Geography is both a work-related and socially relevant subject, and geography students will become well equipped to handle major and complex challenges related to the environment, value creation, inequality, and development, including sustainable development. Both sustainable development and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals are highlighted in all courses offered by the Department.

The Department of Geography offers courses covering key human geographical areas of knowledge. Additionally, GIS, didactic and physical geographical approaches form important parts of the Department's educational profile. All of the Department's thematic areas of focus are clearly represented in the educational programmes, and to a large extent the courses are linked to the teaching staff's own research.

Fieldwork and field-based teaching are characteristic of geography as a discipline and form an important part of the Department's educational programmes. In addition, some experimental forms of education are provided, including the use of digital technologies and new forms of interaction with the labour market, often in combination with field-based teaching.

The international profile of courses and focus on internationalization at the Department of Geography are clearly manifest in the studied themes and the fact that we have an international learning environment. Our students can be offered internships elsewhere, do fieldwork abroad and take part of their study courses at foreign educational institutions. Additionally, the Department's teaching staff participate in a number of international projects and research networks, which are actively exploited in their teaching.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR EDUCATION AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- *We will strengthen the quality and attractiveness of the Department's disciplinary study programme in geography, and continue the Department's collaboration in interdisciplinary study programmes.*
- *We will make visible and further develop the social and work-related relevance of geography through closer cooperation with labour market institutions and other relevant social institutions.*
- *We will build on the Department's positive experiences of field-based learning and use this as a starting point to develop active learning and different methods of teaching and evaluation even further.*
- *We will further develop the international profile that currently characterizes the courses by providing students with more varied international experiences through increased numbers of placements for exchange students.*

ORGANIZATION AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT



Photo: Elin Iversen / NTNU

At the Department of Geography we will facilitate the conditions for high-quality research and teaching. Our department will be a place of work where we take care of and support each other. We consider that good levels of interaction are important both within and between the various groups of employees.

We will facilitate conditions for good cooperation between members of the Department. We aim to have an organization with clearly defined roles and good internal communication and information flow. We will further the development of our administrative personnel and the interaction between them.

We will have a competent administration that, through its support, will contribute to the Department achieving its professional development goals. We will ensure that both administrative and academic staff can develop their expertise as and when necessary, to ensure that they can perform their tasks well and efficiently. The administration will have a functional division of labour that provides a transparent and high level of support to academic staff and students.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR ORGANIZATION AND WORK ENVIRONMENT:

- *The Department of Geography will be an attractive and inclusive workplace, and we will have an open and transparent organization that will strive for a shared understanding of how we are to achieve our common goals.*
- *We will develop our internal organization, management and work environment to support our academic goals, and we will have a well-functioning organization that consolidates our discipline-related work.*
- *We will take care of each employee through systematic dialogue on their development goals and competence enhancement, and facilitate good career development for both technical administrative staff and academic staff*

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