

UBC Geography
Undergraduate Student Guide
2016/2017

Introduction

If you're reading this right now, chances are that you're a new Geography student at UBC. Welcome to the Department of Geography! Whether you are in Environment & Sustainability, Human Geography, Honours Geography, or Geographical Biogeosciences, this handbook will provide you with important information about how to make the most of your degree. From course planning tips to who's who in the Department to information about your Geography Students' Association, this handbook provides information about every aspect of being a Geography student to help you succeed and thrive here at UBC.

UBC is a huge university and it can be hard navigating the numerous campus resources and various websites. That's why we have tried to compile all the most important things you'll need to know right here. While it's impossible to cover every relevant subject, we have done our best to make this handbook a great starting point for when you have any questions related to Geography. This is a collaboration between the Department of Geography and the Geography Students' Association in an effort to provide a way for you to get relevant, unbiased information without having to go back and forth between different websites and offices.

While Geography is a close-knit community, it can still be very alienating to be a new student. This handbook introduces you to the Geography Students' Association, which will be your go-to for fun activities, career nights, group field trips and volunteer opportunities. We hope you will take this chance to make the most of your time in Geography by getting to know your fellow Geographers through these events and finding where you belong.

If you read this handbook and you feel like you have further questions or comments, feel free to contact the GSA or the Student Services Team. We're always open to suggestions. While we've done our best to update this manual with the latest information, some details may change over time, so please do double-check deadlines and other important things on the original websites.

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History of the Department

The origins of the UBC Department of Geography go back to the establishment of the Department of Geology and Mineralogy in 1915. A half-year course in Physical Geography which was given in the fall of 1915, has become, in the form of the year-long Geography 101, the oldest continuing geography course in any Canadian university. In 1922-23 the name of the Department was changed to Geology and Geography, and UBC became the first Canadian university to have Geography as an academic division. The faculty consisted of three full-time members.

Construction of the “temporary” Geography Building circa 1925. ©UBC
When the University of British Columbia moved to its present Point Grey site in the Fall of 1925 the Department of Geology and Geography was placed in a “temporary” building. That building is the present Geography Building, completely rebuilt inside during the late 1970s, and still standing after more than 60 years as a “temporary” building.

In the Fall of 1946, J. Lewis Robinson was appointed to organize and expand the Geography program at UBC. Robinson was the first Ph.D. in Geography to be appointed at UBC. He was joined by John



Chapman, from Oxford University, in 1947, and J. Ross Mackay, from McGill University, in 1949. In the 1947-48 session the department offered 12 Geography courses with a total enrollment of 750 students. A graduate program was started in 1947 and the first Honours students in Geography graduated in 1948.

In 1959, Robinson became the first Head of the newly defined Department of Geography. In the next decade undergraduate enrollments in Geography courses became the largest in any Canadian university, graduate students in residence increased from 14 in 1960 to 33 in 1965. A Ph.D. program in Geography was introduced in 1962. In 1972, a B.Sc. program in physical geography was introduced. In 1975, a M.Sc. program followed and in 1988, the Atmospheric Science program (sponsored cooperatively by Oceanography and Geography) was initiated.

The faculty increased steadily during the 1970s, to a total of 23; by the end of the decade there were 81 undergraduate and 28 graduate courses in Geography, 50 graduating B.A. Majors and 10 graduating B.Sc. Majors and Honours students, over 50 graduate students in residence, and a total student enrollment of over 2,000.

During the 1980s the number of student enrollees exceeded 3,000 and the number of permanent, full-time faculty increased to 25.5. The new faculty in part were appointed as a result of the Department's success in being awarded two new programs from the Provincial Funds for Excellence in Education, in Atmospheric Science and the Geography of Japan.

Today the Department enrolls between 4000 and 4500 course enrollees and supervises about 80 graduate students. An external review of the Department in 2000 judged it the top all-round Geography Department in Canada, and comparable to the top 5 programs in the United States and Great Britain.

Majors in Geography

Our Department has the unique aspect of straddling two Faculties - both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science.

BA in Human Geography:

This degree, offered by the Faculty of Arts, emphasizes the changing regional patterns of human behaviour in order to understand the cultural, economic, social and political forces that shape the landscape.

BSc in Geographical Sciences:

This degree, offered by the Faculty of Science, focuses on aspects of the Earth's surface and near surface environments through an integrated view of the natural sciences. The sub-fields of climatology, biogeography, hydrology and geomorphology are included in this specialization.

BA in Environment and Sustainability:

The Environment and Sustainability specialization combines elements of both the BA and BSc degrees above. Building on the core ideas from natural and social sciences, the Environment and Sustainability BA is focused on the interface between societies and global and local environments.

BA in Honours Geography:

The Honours program in Geography differs from the Major in two respects: degree of specialization and standing, which must be at least 74% average of all courses taken (for entry and graduation).

For specific details and listings of required courses, please refer to the Vancouver Academic Calendar.

Course Planning and Registration FAQ

Course Planning & Registration in Geography

It can be really tough knowing where to go for help or for answers to your questions since UBC is such a large institution. Some questions can be answered by the Geography Advisor, while others may require that you go to Arts Academic Advising, the Science Information Centre or even your Enrolment Services Professional. This guide is meant to give you a general idea of policies and practices at UBC but you should check the Vancouver Academic Calendar for more detailed and up to date answers.

How do I know what courses to take?

Check the Vancouver Academic Calendar (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/>) to see which courses you will need to complete for your specialization(s). You can also check your Degree Navigator if you are in the Faculty of Arts to see your degree progress. If you need help with general course planning and your degree requirements, please contact an advisor from your home faculty. If you have specific questions about your Geography major, please meet with the Geography Advisor.

The GEOG or GEOB course that I want to register in is full. What do I do?

Please register for the corresponding waiting list if there is one. If you are an Arts student, you may want to attend the course and ask the instructor to sign a Change of Registration Form if there is no wait-list. The completed form can be returned to Arts Academic Advising. (double check Science full course procedures?). For more information, please check: <http://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/course-registration/full-courses/>.

The GEOG or GEOB course I need for graduation is full! What do I do?

If you need to be registered in the course in order to fulfill a program requirement to graduate, then please speak with the Geography Advisor to review your options.

The GEOG or GEOB course is blocked but there are spaces in the course!

Once GEOG and GEOB courses are full, their status is set to 'blocked' so that the Geography Advisor can move students from the waiting list to the empty seats in the course. This is only done at certain times during the day so when you see that a course is blocked but that there are still spaces, it means that students have not yet been moved to the course from the waitlist yet. Please register for the waitlist.

I have general GEOG/GEOB transfer credits from another institution. Can I use them towards my program requirements or as pre-requisite courses even though they didn't transfer as specific courses?

This is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Geography Advisor to have your course material reviewed.

My registration is blocked! What do I do?

If your registration is blocked, it may mean that you have not yet completed the Writing Component of the Writing and Research Requirement or you have not declared a specialization after 54 credits yet. Please contact Arts Academic Advising for help if you are an Arts student and Science Advising if you are a Science student.

How do I declare my major or minor?

You can declare your Geography major/minor online through your Student Service Centre > Registration > List of Specializations and select the one you

want. At certain times of the year, you may be unable to do this yourself and you can contact Arts Academic Advising or Science Advising for them to add your specialization manually. You must declare a specialization after 54 credits or you will not be able to register.

Can I take a GEOB/GEOG course without the pre-requi-sites?

If you feel qualified to take the course without the suggested pre-requisites, then you can go ahead and register. If a warning in a yellow box pops up, you can ignore it. If a warning in a red box pops up, you would not be able to add the course. It is always a good idea to dis-cuss with the instructor whether the pre-requisites are essential for the course as well.

Can I take 300/400 level GEOB/GEOG courses in my first/second year?

You can... but at your own risk. Higher level courses are often more intensive and instructors expect higher quality work and have higher expectations. You may not be able to meet these expectations if you don't have a solid foundation of lower level courses yet.

I want to drop my course! Is it too late?

There are two deadlines for dropping your courses (please see red box in image). The first deadline is the "Last day to withdraw without a W standing". If you drop your course before this deadline, you will receive a 100% refund of your tuition for the course. The second deadline is "Last day to withdraw with a W standing". After this deadline, the course cannot be dropped. If you withdraw by this deadline, you may receive a partial refund of your tuition depending on which week you dropped the course. You can check: <http://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/finances/tuition/deferments-and-refunds/winter> to see if you would be refunded. You will also have a W designation on your transcript.

Should I drop my course if it means I'll have a W on my transcript?

A W is a neutral designation and it has no impact on your GPA. It simply means you withdrew from a course after the deadline. If you're worried about this impacting your application for graduate studies, please be aware that UBC does not count W's against graduate candidates. If you are choosing between a W or failing a course/doing poorly, it may be wise to take the W instead. If you are withdrawing due to extenuating circumstances, you may want to consult with an academic advisor from your faculty.

Can I retake a course?

You may repeat a course offered in the Faculty of Arts (GEOG) once. Other faculties may not permit students to repeat courses, or allow it only if you did not pass the course. You may not receive credit for a course twice. The grade you received in the course will always count toward your overall average; you cannot replace the grade by repeating the course. It's rarely advised to repeat a course, unless you need it to meet a requirement or you're very keen to master the subject, and are aware that you will not receive credit for it again, and that the grade cannot be replaced.

What if I want to take courses at another institution and have the credits count towards my degree?

If you are not doing this through Go Global, you need to obtain a Letter of Permission. If you are a Geographical Biogeosciences student, you will obtain this through the Faculty of Science. Guidelines to this process are here: <http://science.ubc.ca/students/advising/lop>. If you are a Geography student in Honours, E&S or Human, you will appeal for your Letter of Permission through the Faculty of Arts (<http://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/course-registration/credit-applicable-towards-an-arts-degree/>).

I've missed coursework, a paper, a midterm, a final exam, etc. because I've been ill, a family member has passed away, or I've been struggling with mental wellbeing. What do I do?

You can apply for Academic Concession through your home faculty. It is generally a good idea to visit either the Science Information Center or Arts Academic Advising as soon as possible. Please make double check their advising hours online before to save yourself waiting time. You will generally be asked to fill out an Academic Concession Request Form and to meet with an advisor to discuss your situation. In order for Academic Concession to be granted, in most cases you will need documentation (doctor's note, letter from counselling services, etc.). You can discuss what kind of documentation to obtain with the advisor. Depending on your situation, you may also be referred to Counselling Services, Access and Diversity (Disability Resource Centre), or a physician at Student Health.

Please remember that there is a Student Health Clinic on campus where you can be seen by a doctor to provide documentation: <http://students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/student-health-service>.

Can I take time off of my degree?

You are eligible to leave for up to one academic year without needing to re-apply for re-admission if you are leaving in good standing. You can meet with an advisor from your Faculty to discuss program specific requirements. You can also meet with your Enrolment Services Professional to discuss the impact this may have on your student loans, bursaries, etc.

How do I use Degree Navigator (for Arts)?

You can find a helpful guide here:
<http://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/degree-navigator/>

What is the Science Exclusion List?

Please note that in some cases, you cannot receive credit for taking courses that overlap in material and subject matter. It is recommended that you check the Science Exclusion List (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/>) to ensure that you are not registering in a course for which you will not receive credit. For example, you cannot receive credit for both GEOB 103 and EOSC 110. If you took both courses, you would only receive credits for one.

What do I need to do for graduation?

If you are planning to graduate this year, make sure you submit a Grad Check form through Arts Academic Advising or meet with an Arts Advisor if you are in the Faculty of Arts to ensure that you are meeting all of your degree requirements. If you have specific questions about the courses you are taking to fulfill the Geography major requirements, then you should consult with the Geography Advisor.

Make sure you apply for graduation on time. You can do this through your Student Service Centre after the application opens. Make sure you check the Graduation Checklist (<http://graduation.ubc.ca/students/your-graduation-checklist/>) to ensure that you have completed all the steps for graduation.

Your graduation photos will be done through Artona Studios and arranged by the Geography Students' Association so keep an eye out for emails

Geography Lab FAQ

Your education in Geography may include courses that require lab time in the computer labs. Whether you are taking cartography or GIS, it's good to know how these labs work and where you can go for help if you need it. Here is a basic FAQ for questions about labs:

Where are the computer labs?

There are computers located in GEOG 239 upstairs, GEOG 114 on the main floor, as well as some computers in the GIC in GEOG 112. Please check the schedule outside each door as there may be courses or labs in session, in which case, it may not be appropriate to simply walk in.

When are the labs open?

Updated lab hours are posted outside of each lab room.

Where do I get the student software for ArcGIS?

The Faculty of Forestry manages the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software from ESRI. <http://gis.ubc.ca/software/> The one-year Student Edition of ArcView includes Spatial, Geostatistical, Network, and 3D Analyst extensions. This software Registration Code can be purchased from our receptionist in room 2045, Forest Sciences Centre with \$25.00 and presentation of your UBC card. This is a non-refundable, one computer only installation.

How do I print in the Geography Building?

You must have an active account to login to the computers to print. This means that you are currently taking a lab course and have paid your \$20 lab fee. You need to add money to your printing account. This can be done in the Main Office in GEOG 217. You can print from all the computers in the Geography Building. Please double check that you have sent your files to the correct printer.

B&W Printing (\$0.10/page): HP 4015N b/w PS for Room 114, HP 4250N b/w PS for Room 239

Colour Printing (\$0.40/page): HP4650 Colour PS for Room 114, HP4525N Colour PS for Room 239

Colour Printing 11" x 17" (\$0.80/page): HP5550N 11 x 17 colour PS

If the printer is not working, please double check that you still have money remaining on your printing account and you have sent the files to the correct printer before contacting Jose Aparicio.

How do I check my printing account balance?

You can check your balance by either inquiring at the Main Office in GEOG 217 or by clicking the 'Printers' Firefox icon on the desktop of any of the Geography computers. You can also find this information at <https://smew.geog.ubc.ca/cgi-bin/printing/lpstatus.cgi>.

What do I do if I'm having trouble with ArcGIS, IDRI-SI Selva, Adobe Illustrator, etc?

Learning new computer software can be frustrating at times. If you are having trouble, contact your TA or instructor first so they can assist you. You may have to meet up with them or attend office hours as it can be difficult troubleshooting over email. Jose Aparicio is also available to assist with the technical aspects of ArcGIS, but cannot help you complete your assignments!

What is the difference between the H drive and C drive? Where should I save to?

The H drive is the network linking all of the computers in Geography. You must save your data to the C drive which is the specific computer you're working on, to prevent all the computers from lagging. GIS, remote sensing and cartography courses generally have very large files that slow the network

down if everyone works from the H drive. So please save to your H drive or your personal USB stick and not the desktop as it may be lost.
Double check this info

What is the Geographic Information Centre (GIC)?

The Geographic Information Centre (GIC) in GEOG 112 offers support services for Geography undergraduate & graduate students, faculty and the general public. Holdings include maps specializing in BC and Canada, atlases, books, video recordings, course reserves on geographical topics, and the University Aerial Photo Collection. The holdings form a teaching, reference and research centre located in the Department of Geography. As a student, you may use the GIC as a quiet study space, read textbooks that are on hold, use the scanner, request maps or aerial photographs for assignments, or simply relax on one of the comfy couches. The most up to date GIC hours can be found at <http://gic.geog.ubc.ca/>.

The Geography Students' Association

The Geography Students' Association (GSA) is one of the most active student associations on campus, with events for every facet of university life: academics, sustainability, and, of course, social. Events range from lunches with the Department Head and professors to learn more about their work to guest presentations with professionals working in sustainability to our infamous bzzr gardens & trivia nights. We also publish the undergraduate journal Trail Six, run the GeoGarden, coordinate our Bad Latitude sports team, and celebrate the end of the year with a bang (the Geogala).

Come out and enjoy the fun!

1. Join the GSA! Membership is \$5 and this gets you 5 free beers or other drink of choice (1 per beer garden!). Membership also gets you access to all of our events! We have field trips to the movies, career nights, DIY sustainability events, beer gardens, and GeoGala!
2. Sign up to be a committee member! Get to know other Geography students and pitch in to help out with events and field trips. You can sign up for committees in the first week of classes in the Geography building or by emailing info@ubcgsa.ca.
3. Run for a position! Join our amazing team of volunteers by running for an executive position. Elections are held every year in April so be sure to learn more about the positions by meeting our executives!

The Geography Students' Association Annual Events

Mind Morphology with Marwan

"Mind Morph", as it has been affectionately dubbed, is a monthly opportunity for students to chat with Dr. Marwan Hassan, the Department Head of Geography, and a featured faculty member, over a com-

plimentary lunch. The event is organized by the VP Academic and is advertised through the GSA Facebook page as well as through posters in the building. It is a great way to get to know faculty members and learn about their research with a group of around 8 other students. This event requires that you RSVP. Please contact academic@ubcgsa.ca for details.

Geography Majors Lunch

Do you know someone who is interested in majoring in Geography? Then invite them to Geography Majors Lunch! This event gives prospective Geography majors a chance to learn more about the different streams in Geography as well as the other opportunities available. Complimentary lunch is provided.

Geography Careers Night

Careers Night is the most popular event of the year! Are you wondering what you can do with your major after you graduate? Careers Night gives you the opportunity to chat with Geography alumni working in a variety of fields and learn more about their work. It is organized as a “speed-dating” style event with groups of 8 - 10 students switching to different tables every 15 minutes. Complimentary dinner is provided. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact academic@ubcgsa.ca.

Sustainability in Action! Series

These events are sponsored by AMS Sustainability, and are directed at creating dialogue and awareness about local and global sustainability issues. The series is also an opportunity for students to learn more about how to apply their undergraduate degrees. Past presentations include: a debate on the sustainability of corporations with Andrew Telfer (Manager, Sustainability Walmart Canada); a tour of the CIRS building given by John Robinson (Executive Director of the USI,

Geography professor, IRES professor); and a talk on social sustainability by Mario Lee and Ali Grant (City of Vancouver). Contact sustainability@ubcgsa.ca for inquiries.

GeoGala

Geogala is the GSA's annual end-of-year celebration. All students, graduating and not, as well as faculty and staff, are invited to join. The event includes a catered dinner, trivia, dancing, speeches, and prizes.

Bzzr Gardens!

Trail Six: Undergraduate Journal of Geography

Trail Six is the Undergraduate Journal of the UBC Geography Department. It exists to publish in a peer-review academic journal setting, the outstanding writing of undergraduate students in the field of Geography. If you'd like to be an editor or layout designer or submit your work, please contact trailsix@ubcgsa.ca for more information.

Bad Latitude

Every year, Bad Latitude reps the Geography department at a handful of UBC REC events and leagues, such as:

Day of the Longboat

Gladiator

Storm the Wall

Dodgeball

If you're looking to participate in a team or league, let us know and we'd be happy to work it out. Please email external@ubcgsa.ca.

Feel free to ask any questions to any current executive members, or email info@ubcgsa.ca. Please also visit www.ubcgsa.ca or like The Geography Students' Association on Facebook for the more up to date information.

Enriched Learning Opportunities

Field Courses

The Department of Geography offers several field courses so that students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge from the classroom to real world situations.

GEOG 379B - Field Course in Human Geography

Please contact siobhan.mcphee@ubc.ca for more information.

GEOB 309 Geographical Biogeosciences Field Course

Field sampling, instrumentation, surveying, mapping techniques, and data analysis; mandatory multi-day field camp in April or May. Special fees and liability insurance are required.

Go Global

The Geography program is particularly suited for a Go Global experience abroad, as our discipline is incredibly diverse and varied. A Go Global experience can immerse you in the languages, cultures and customs of other places while finishing your degree!

Go Global and the Geography Department have worked closely together to identify study abroad opportunities for Geography students. Study abroad opportunities include: Exchange, Group Study Programs, International Service Learning and more.

Why Go Global as part of your Geography Degree?

Going Global lets you:

Explore your Geography degree from a different perspective and have the opportunity to take courses you would not have access to at UBC
Get an edge in the workforce, as more and more industries value cross-cultural and international experience

Get to know another part of the world for an extended period of time
Become globally aware, grow and develop as a person while gaining
cross-cultural understanding.

Arts Co-op

If you're interested in extending your degree by getting paid work
experience at various placements, then make sure you check out the
Arts Co-op Program. You can apply in September of 2nd or 3rd year.
<http://artscoop.ubc.ca/>

Science Co-op

Find out more information about Science Co-op at <http://science-coop.ubc.ca>.

Arts Internships

The Arts Internship Program enables undergraduate Faculty of Arts
students to develop their skills and expand their resume with part-
time, unpaid positions that offer meaningful, career-related experi-
ence within their communities. Internships integrate academic learn-
ing with development through professional experiences and help
students to expand their knowledge, experience, contact base and
chances of future career success. <http://students.arts.ubc.ca/involvement/arts-internship-program/students/>

Working at UBC

A great way to gain experience while you're still in university is to
work on campus! Many Geography faculty members hire students
from within the Department as research assistants so make sure you
ask your professors if they are hiring. You can also search for other
jobs through UBC Careers Online (<http://students.ubc.ca/career/campus-experiences/work-learn>).

Beyond your Undergrad

Are you thinking of graduate school? Urban planning? Becoming registered as an official geoscientist in BC? Whatever your plans are, take some time to think of steps you will need to take to get to your goals.

Here are some steps you may want to take:

- Research the field or job you're interested in online to find more information. What qualifications or education will you need? Will you need to go to graduate school?
- Talk to people who work within the field. Talk to professors or look at LinkedIn to find people in the field.
- If you're planning on going to graduate school, think about who will write you reference letters.
- Take courses that will help you prepare for that field. Talk to the Geography Advisor for course planning suggestions.
- Make an appointment with the Centre for Student Involvement and Careers.
- Attend the GSA's Careers Night.

The Centre for Student Involvement & Careers — Thinking about your degree and thinking about your career go hand in hand. Get career guidance and find out how you can connect your studies with your career path: Attend a workshop, find work or volunteer opportunities, and seek out one-on-one career advising (<http://students.ubc.ca/career>).

Important Resources on Campus

UBC Learning Commons — The Learning Commons is your first stop for resources and tools to help you learn more effectively. Connect online to access study toolkits and guides on presentation skills, exam prep, time management, and more. Or visit in person for workshops, tutoring, and academic coaching (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/>).

UBC Wellness Centre — Your academic success depends on your health and well-being. Take advantage of resources available on campus and learn how to maintain your health and create balance in all areas of your life (<http://students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/wellness-centre>).

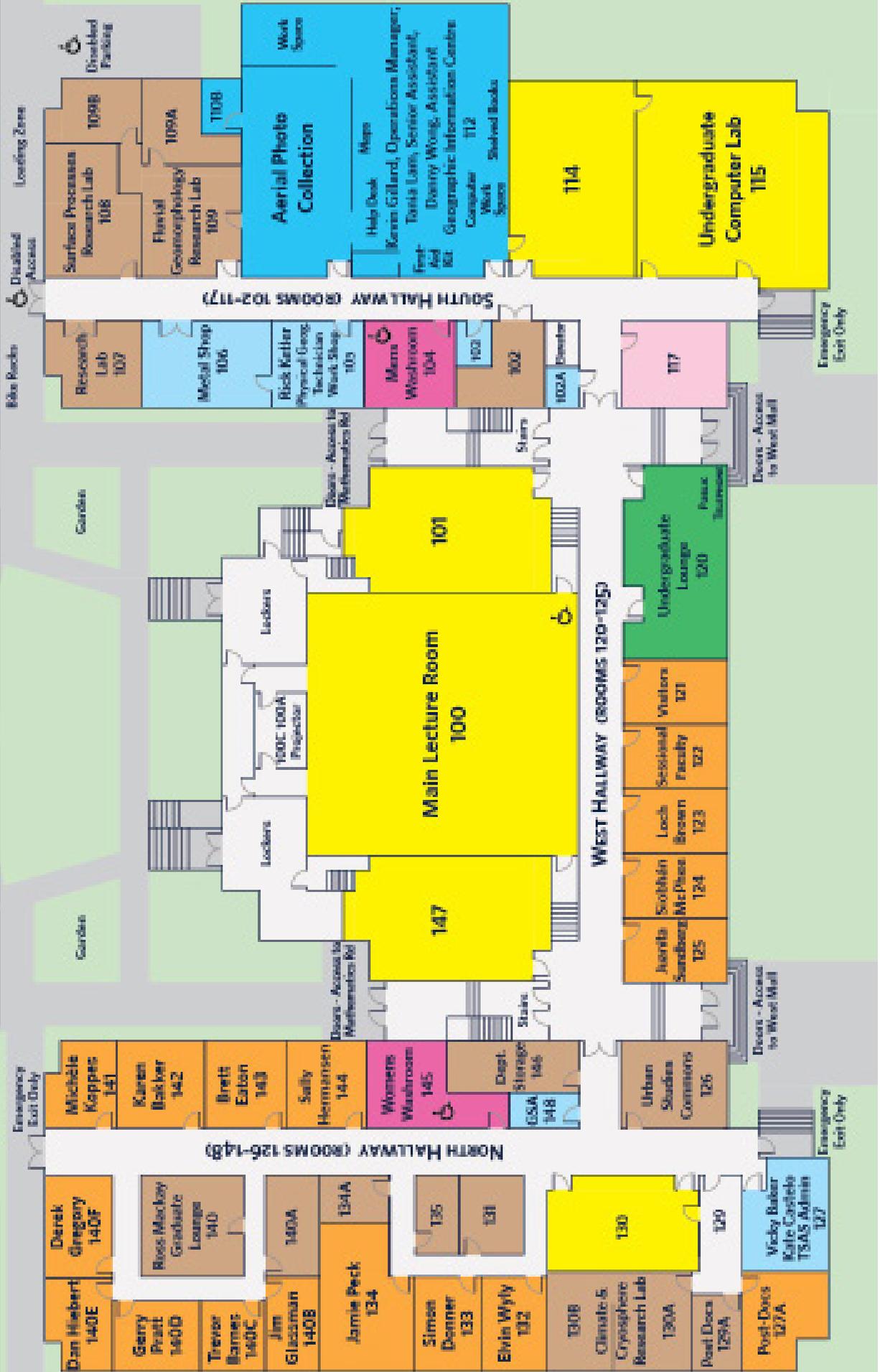
Alma Mater Society (AMS)— As UBC’s student association, the AMS offers a wealth of resources supporting the success, safety, and well-being of UBC students. Learn more about services offered, including AMS Tutoring, Safewalk, and Speakeasy.

International House — If you’re an international student at UBC, you may have questions about study permits, work permits, medical coverage, and your transition to Canada. International Student Development at International House is available to help answer your questions.

UBC Counselling Services — Speaking with a counsellor can help clarify concerns or situations and open up new ways of dealing with them. UBC Counselling Services offers drop-in counselling and appointments (<http://students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/counselling-services>).

Student Health Service — Student Health Service offers care for registered UBC students year-round. Our physicians can also act as your family doctor while you are a student at UBC.

1st Floor



Acknowledgements

This guide was compiled through a collaboration between the Geography Students' Association and the Department of Geography. Thank you to Alex Pysklywec and Mimi Yu for their assistance in writing and compiling this guide.

For questions related to this guide, please contact geography.advisor@ubc.ca. For the most up to date information, please remember to consult the Vancouver Academic Calendar as degree requirements and other information can frequently change.