1.	Awarding institution/body:	University of Plymouth
2.	Teaching institution	University of Plymouth
3.	Accreditation	n/a
4.	Name of final award	B.A. (Hons); B.Sc (Hons)
5.	Programme title	Geography (single subject, major subject)
6.	UCAS codes	F800, L700 and combined programmes starting F8, L7
7.	Subject benchmark statement	Geography
8.	Date of preparation	January 2001

9. Aims of the Geography programme

We aim to deliver a programme that:

- offers a broad, relevant and contemporary curriculum, enriched by the scholarly activity of staff
- provides plentiful opportunities for practical work and experiential learning in geography
- challenges, stimulates, enthuses and encourages students

Through the Geography programme we aim to develop graduates who:

- have thorough knowledge, understanding and practical experience in geography
- are competent in a wide range of intellectual, geographical and key skills
- are critical, rational and creative thinkers
- are confident, adaptable and independent learners
- are readily employable
- are intellectually inquisitive, equipped for life-long learning and ready to play a co-operative and responsible role in society

10. Programme outcomes. The Geography programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

a typical graduate will demonstrate an understanding:

- of the role of geography in contributing to knowledge [1]
- of the complex and reciprocal nature of processes in natural and cultural landscapes [2]
- that geographical processes operate over a variety of scales in space and time [3]
- that spatial variation in geographical processes leads to pattern in the distribution of geographical phenomena and to distinctiveness among places [4]

TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS AND STRATEGIES

The acquisition of knowledge and understanding in Geography permeates every part of the curriculum, but is perhaps most apparent in the **thematic** modules at Stage I and the **option** modules at Stage II and III (§11). Such acquisition starts in timetabled classes in each module; these might include **lectures**, **practical work** in the **field** or in **science, IT** or **cartographic labs**, **seminars** or other **discussions**, with an emphasis on experiential learning. Students explore from entry the idea that knowledge is contested and temporary; thus they are encouraged to extend their understanding by **guided reading** of alternative hypotheses & viewpoints, at all Stages. The curriculum enables progression in the depth & style of learning from Stage I to III, particularly in terms of:

- *knowledge base*: broad, covering main sub-disciplines *to* specialist knowledge of particular sub-disciplines
- *level of sources*: textbooks *to* current research literature
- *independence:* learning through instruction *to* learning through investigation
- *understanding geographical issues:* definition, description and exemplification *to* design, debate and evaluation

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Both knowledge and understanding are tested in **coursework assignments,** including **reports** of various kinds, **essays**, **seminars** and other **verbal** presentations and assignments based on **cartographic** or **graphic** representations. All modules at Stages II and III contain coursework. Many modules also make use of unseen examinations, which may require responses as essays, short answers, or a critical response to data, a scenario, or text.

SKILLS AND OTHER ATTRIBUTES

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS
a typical graduate will be able to:

- understand the contested nature of knowledge and identify and evaluate alternative hypotheses and viewpoints [1]
- assess the reliability and validity of evidence [2]
- develop reasoned and informed arguments [3]
- identify, formulate and resolve problems [4]
- synthesise information from disparate sources [5]
- interpret a particular case in the context of generalised or abstract concepts, and *vice versa* [6]

TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS & STRATEGIES
Intellectual skills are advanced in all parts of the teaching and learning programme described above and at §11. In particular, the emphasis on experiential learning allows repeated practice and refinement of skills [2], [4] & [5]. The development of these skills as a coherent package is emphasised in the **core curriculum**, including **fieldwork**, at Stages I and II. They are also addressed in the context of particular sub-disciplines in the **option** modules. Intellectual skills are tested most effectively in the student's **dissertation** at Stage III.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
All assignments allow students to practise and refine a selection of the intellectual skills listed. Feedback on intellectual skills is embedded in the proformas used to assess essays and other coursework and all the intellectual skills are prominent in the programme's generic grading criteria. Unseen examinations provide a particular opportunity to test [3] under time constraints; exam tasks that involve a critical response to data, a scenario, or text involve a wider range of the skills listed.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS
a typical graduate will be able to:

- plan, design, execute and report on an original geographical research investigation [1]
- apply concepts and principles of geographical knowledge to new issues and situations [2]
- select and apply appropriate geographical techniques, and interpret and present their results, in the following contexts:
  - primary and secondary data collection in natural and cultural environments, including fieldwork [3]
  - manual and computer-based analysis of quantitative and qualitative data [4]
  - laboratory work [5]

TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS AND STRATEGIES
Students' subject-specific skills are developed through a progressive, coherent core curriculum, culminating in the application of a wide range of these skills in the final year dissertation. At Stage I students engage in tasks in [1] –[5], involving practical work in the scientific, C&IT and cartographic laboratories and in the local field area. At Stage II [1] to [4] are prominent themes of the core curriculum whilst [5] is taught, practised and assessed in appropriate option modules. The skills map (Appendix 1) shows how [1] – [5] are further consolidated within the option modules at Stage II and III. The greatest potential to exercise these skills is in the dissertation at Stage III, in which each student, with some staff guidance, designs, carries out & reports on a major piece of geographical research on a topic of their choosing.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
These skills are assessed primarily by reports and practical exercises. Such reports can include formal, written accounts, verbal presentations, posters, and web-based material.

KEY SKILLS
a typical graduate will be able to:

- select and use appropriate C&IT technologies, including the Internet, word-processing, graphics, spreadsheets and specialist software packages [1]
- communicate effectively through the spoken word and in a variety of written and graphical formats [2]
- work independently and organise his/her own learning [3]
- search for, retrieve, sift, select and order information from a variety of sources [4]
- collate, analyse and interpret data in quantitative and qualitative forms [5]
- participate effectively and supportively in groups, meeting obligations to others [6]
- transfer skills and apply them in new contexts [7]
- reflect on his/her own learning and evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses [8]

TEACHING/LEARNING METHODS AND STRATEGIES
A coherent and progressive curriculum in key skills is in place in order to improve students' academic performance, enhance their employment prospects and equip them for lifelong learning. Guidance in key skills starts at Stage I, particularly in tutorials [2]-[4], [6]-[8] and the subject skills module [1], [4] & [5] but also in other Geography modules [2]-[5]. At Stage II there is further guidance in C&IT [1], verbal presentations [3] & groupwork [8], linked firmly to field experience in Geography. Further teaching, practise and assessment of a wider range of skills occurs in options (see Appendix 1). At Stage III the emphasis is on practising and refining skills as a precursor to employment. In options and the core students can expect to practice and establish their competence in a range of key skills, including those directly relevant to careers and gaining employment.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
Competence in [1]-[2], [4]-[5] is assessed in many investigative tasks. Verbal presentations [2] and groupwork [6] are assessed routinely; [3], [7] & [8] are reviewed by tutor and student in the Department's Personal Development Profile system

11. Programme structure and features, curriculum units (modules), credit and award requirements

The programme is modular and is offered in full-time and part-time modes. All full-time programmes take a minimum of three years to complete, with the exception of Geography and French, Geography and German, Geography and Spanish and Geography and Modern Languages. These are four-year programmes, in which the third year is spent overseas, following the Centre for Modern Language's Year Abroad curriculum. In all other full-time programmes most students complete a Stage of study each year; thus Stage I is completed in the first year, Stage II in the second and Stage III in the third. In addition, students may undertake a work experience placement between Stages II and III; this does not contribute numerically to the degree but leads to the University's Certificate of Industrial Experience.

The department has well-established exchange schemes with universities in Australia, the USA and Canada and most countries in continental Europe. Students may spend one or both semesters at Stage II on such a scheme. Students on exchange must follow and pass an approved programme of study, but the marks gained do not contribute numerically to the final degree.

Entry and progression points are indicated in Figure 1 overleaf. A complete Stage of study consists of 120 credits; at Stage I modules are each 10 credits, at Stages II and III they are 20 credits unless shown otherwise. Geography is offered as a single subject, leading to B.A./B.Sc (Hons) Geography, and as the major or the minor component in a range of combined awards (see www.geog.plym.ac.uk or the University prospectus for the current listing). At each stage, students study some compulsory, or 'core' modules and select from a wide range of options. Figure 1 lists the modules in each of these categories and Figures 2a-2c show the pattern of core and option modules needed to complete each Geography pathway.

The single subject programme in Geography, and most combined awards in which Geography is the major subject, are offered with both B.A. and B.Sc titles. Such programmes share the same diet of core and option modules - the award title is determined by the balance of physical geography and human geography taken at Stages II and III. Students may enter on the B.A route and graduate with a B.Sc and *vice versa.*.

Students who decide not to take the full curriculum for their pathway will be required to transfer to the generic B.Sc Combined Science programme. In most cases it is possible for students reading Geography as a major subject to transfer to the single subject programme in Geography.

Figure 1: The Geography programme

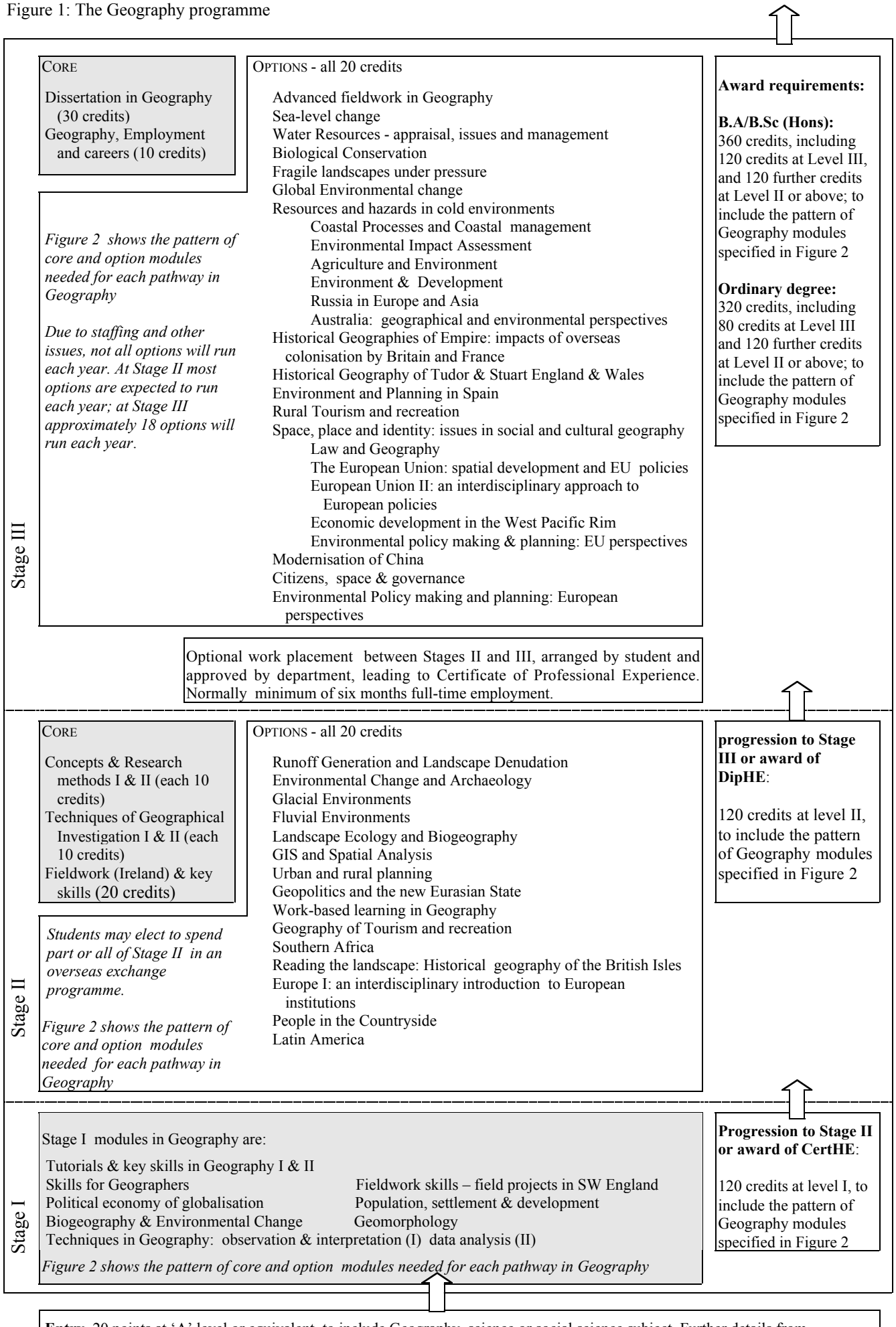

Figure 2a: Details of the programme leading to B.A./B.Sc. (Geography)

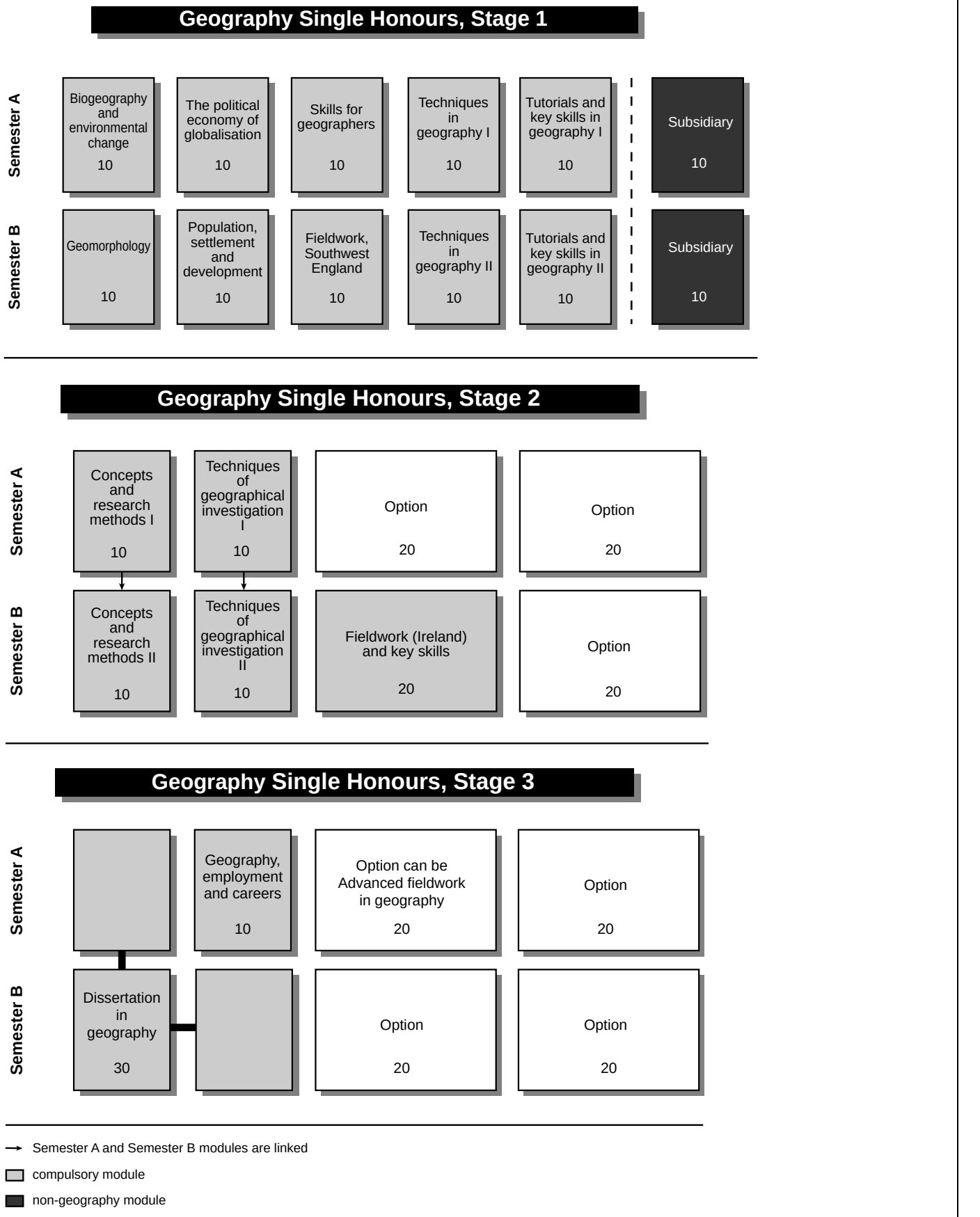

Figure 2b: Details of the programme leading to B.A/B.Sc Geography as major subject

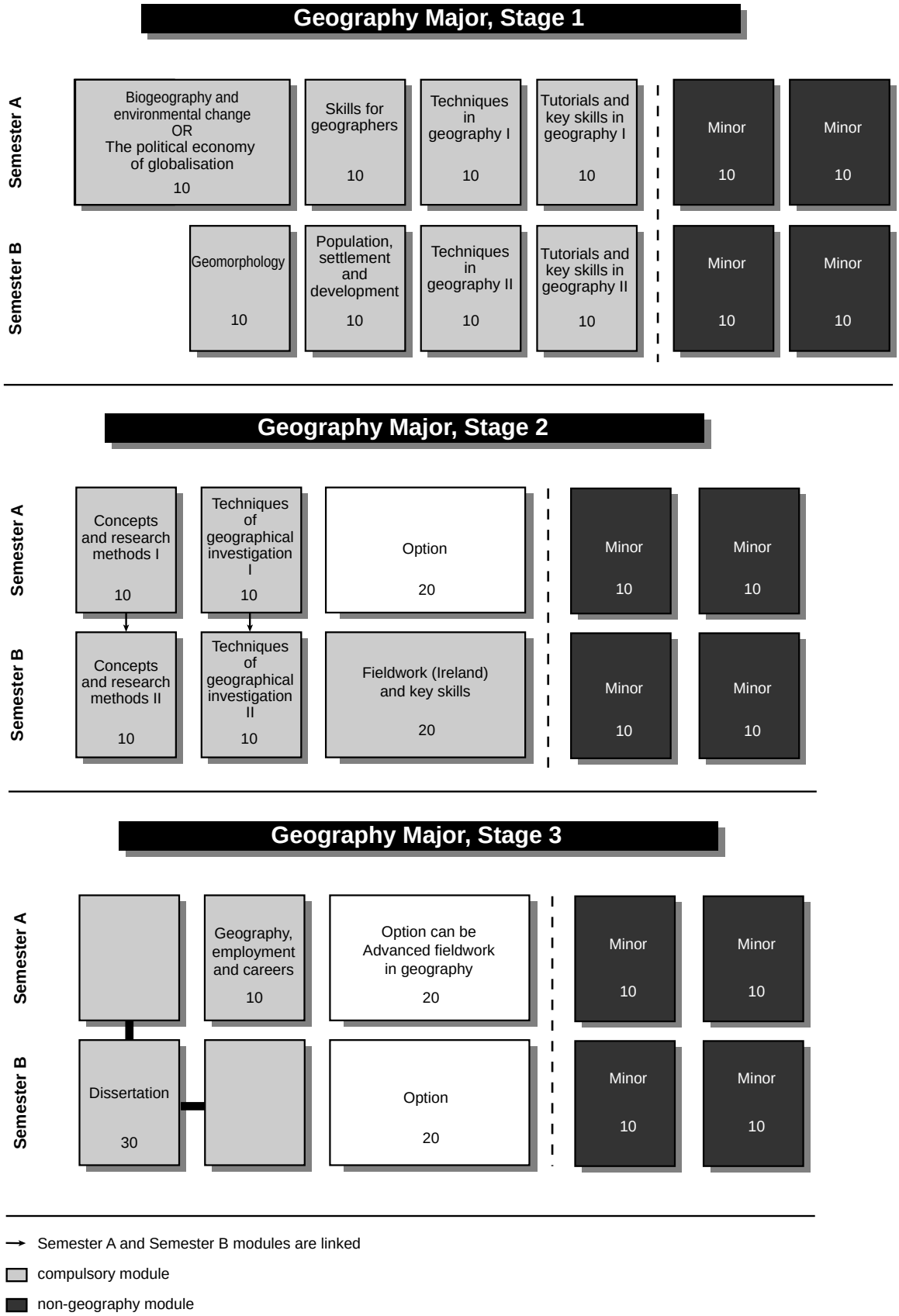

Figure 2c: Details of the programme leading to B.AS/B.Sc Geography as minor subject