

Degrees and Programs

Degrees Offered

The Jackson School offers the Bachelor of Arts in Geosciences, the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science, the Bachelor of Science in Geosciences, and, in partnership with the Cockrell School of Engineering, the Bachelor of Science in Geosystems Engineering. Whichever degree they pursue, students must take courses in the Jackson School of Geosciences (JSG), the College of Natural Sciences, and the College of Liberal Arts. These units work together to meet students' individual needs and to ensure that they receive a superior education. Graduation from an accredited program is an advantage when applying for a position in industry, membership in a professional society or for registration as a professional geologist.

Core Curriculum

Each student must complete the University's [Core Curriculum](#). The Core Curriculum includes the first-year signature course and courses in English composition, American and Texas government, American history, mathematics, science and technology, visual and performing arts, humanities, and social and behavioral sciences. The core is an integral part of all geosciences degree programs so graduates will be aware of their social responsibilities and the effects of technology on society.[†]

Foreign Language Requirement

In accordance with the University's general education requirements, all students must demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language equivalent to that shown by completion of two semesters of college coursework. This requirement may be fulfilled by either completion of the two high school units in a single foreign language that are required for admission to the University as a freshman or by earning college-level foreign language credit to meet beginning-level proficiency. Students who enter the University with fewer than two high school units in a single foreign language must remove that deficiency as specified in the *General Information Catalog*. The foreign language courses/credit used to address that deficiency may not be counted toward the total number of semester hours required for a degree.

Individual degree programs may include additional foreign language requirements.

Undergraduate Research Courses

The Jackson School supports undergraduate research through numerous programs specifically for undergraduate geological sciences majors. Undergraduates have the opportunity to take part in research experiences that enrich their academic studies and career trajectories. Participating students may be eligible to earn University credit, special departmental honors for exceptional research, and recognition at spring graduation depending on the undergraduate research program they complete.

In order to be eligible to earn University credit for undergraduate research work, students must be enrolled in the BS Geological Sciences Option I, II, or III degree program and have a complete undergraduate research contract on file with the JSG Student Services Office prior to registration. Students may count up to six semester hours of geological sciences research courses, as listed below, toward the required total upper-division elective hours in geological sciences.

- Choice 1: Geological Sciences 371C and up to three credit hours of Geological Sciences 171C, and 271C; or

- Choice 2: *Restricted to students enrolled in the Geosciences Departmental Honors Program*, Geological Sciences 171H, 172H, 173H, and 379H.
- Students may not earn course credit for research work completed as a paid undergraduate research assistant.

Simultaneous Majors

A student in the Jackson School may pursue two majors simultaneously. The student must follow all procedures and meet all requirements outlined in the [General Information Catalog](#) as well as those associated with both majors. A JSG student may not pursue any two geosciences majors, including the BS Environmental Science degree option, simultaneously.

The simultaneous major option is available only to undergraduates who have completed 30 hours of coursework in residence at the University and who have been admitted to both degree programs.

Length of Degree Program

An eight-semester arrangement of courses leading to the bachelor's degree is given for each of the geological sciences degree plans. The order in which the courses are taken is critical due to the prerequisites for required courses and schedule when courses are offered. A student who registers for fewer than the indicated number of hours for each semester or skips prerequisite courses may need more than eight semesters to complete the degree. The student is responsible for including in each semester's work any courses that are prerequisite to those the student will take the following semester.

Applicability of Certain Courses

Physical Activity Courses

Physical activity (PED) courses and Kinesiology 119 may not be counted toward a degree in the Jackson School. However, they are counted as courses for which the student is enrolled, and the grades are included in the grade point average.

ROTC Courses

The Departments of Air Force Science, Military Science, and Naval Science maintain ROTC units on campus. Information about each program is available from the chair of the department concerned.

Nine semester hours of coursework in air force science, military science, or naval science may be counted toward any degree in the Jackson School. Such credit may be used only as electives or to fulfill the writing requirement, and only by students who are commissioned by the University ROTC program.

Correspondence and Extension Courses

During a long semester students enrolled in the Jackson School are not allowed to take courses at another school or institution or by correspondence or extension at the University unless approved in advance by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Students must submit a concurrent enrollment petition and meet with a JSG academic advisor for approval well in advance of the start of the requested course.

No more than 30 percent of the semester hours required for any degree in the Jackson School may be completed online, by correspondence, or through distance learning, including University Extension courses. These courses are not included in certain metrics, such as total hours, residency status, etc., and therefore may affect students' eligibility for some JSG programs.

Courses Taken on the Pass/Fail Basis

All courses required for all geological sciences degrees must be taken for a letter grade unless the course is offered only on the pass/fail basis. A student may elect to take courses that do not count toward the degree or are being taken to remove a deficiency on the pass/fail basis rather than for a letter grade. To elect the pass/fail system of grading a student must have received at least 30 hours of college credit before registering for any course on the pass/fail basis, unless the course is offered only on the pass/fail basis. Complete rules on registration on the pass/fail basis are given in the [General Information Catalog](#).

Bible Courses

No more than 12 semester hours of Bible courses may be counted toward a degree.

† Effective April 2025, UT Austin no longer requires Skills and Experience flags.