

GEOLOGY, BA

Geology often draws students with interest in the outdoors and travel, and concern for environmental and energy issues, as well as those pursuing careers in geosciences-related industries. Geology applies chemistry, physics, mathematics, and sometimes biology to understanding earth processes, so students take a broad array of ancillary science classes. Additionally, majors train in the specialized laboratory and field skills required by professional geologists.

Admission into the Major

Students are expected to formally declare a major no later than the fourth semester of full-time enrollment (or at 61 semester hours for transfer students). Students can declare a major by completing the Change of Major/Minor Application online under the Student tab of myBama.

Special Opportunities

The Department supports two student chapters of professional organizations, the American Institute of Professional Geologists and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, both of which offer frequent career-development opportunities. The Department also hosts the Geology Club and a chapter of Sigma Gamma Epsilon, the national honor society for Earth Scientists, in which students participate in educational, social, and community service activities, often including field trips. All undergraduates are strongly encouraged to conduct laboratory and field research under the direction of faculty and earn course credit through internships working with professional geoscientists.

Students earning the bachelor of arts (BA) degree with a major in geology must complete all University, College and departmental degree requirements. These include the general education requirements, the following major requirements, all requirements for an approved minor and other sufficient credits to total a minimum of 120 applicable semester hours.

Code and Title	Hours
Major Courses	
Must take course listed below:	
GEO 101 The Dynamic Earth	4
Pick one of the following four 100-level courses from the list below:	4
GEO 102 The Earth Through Time	
GEO 103 Introduction to Oceanography	
GEO 104 Hazardous Earth	
GEO 105 Sustainable Earth	
GEO 201 Foundations of Earth Science	4
Electives	
GEO electives 300 or 400 level	10
GEO electives 100-400 level	8
Total Hours	30

Grade Point Average

A 2.0 grade point average in the major is required for completion of the degree. Please see the Grades and Grade Points section of this catalog for an explanation on grade point average calculations. All GEO courses must be passed with a minimum grade of C-.

Upper-level Residency

A minimum of 12 hours of 300- or 400-level courses in the major must be earned on this campus.

Ancillary Courses

This major does not require ancillary courses.

Required Minor

The geology major (BA) requires completion of a minor.

Additional Major Requirements

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have met all University, College, major and minor requirements. However, each student must meet with an adviser in the major department for academic planning and to be approved for registration each semester. College advisers are also available for additional assistance with minor, College and University requirements.

Prerequisites

Prerequisites for all GEO courses must be passed with a minimum grade of C-.

Geologists have broad career options. Common fields of employment include environmental assessment and remediation, water resources, geotechnical consulting, energy, earth materials, hazard assessments, academic research, and education. Some examples of employers would be environmental and geotechnical firms, energy and mining companies, public utilities, building material suppliers, and state and federal government.

Types of Jobs Accepted

Majors graduate to become geochemists, hydrogeologists, geophysicists, petroleum geologists, resource exploration geologists, hazard assessors, environmental regulators, geotechnical engineers, environmental lawyers, and consultants. Some graduates become licensed public geologists.

Jobs of Experienced Alumni

Alumni hold an impressive array of jobs as leaders of national and international energy corporations, environmental and geotechnical firms, and mining and materials production companies. Several majors became entrepreneurs and founded companies focused on geotechnical consulting, energy exploration, environmental remediation, and other key industries. Others conduct research at universities, national laboratories, museums, state and U.S. Geological Survey offices, and other government agencies including NASA, the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Learn more about opportunities in this field at the Career Center