



THE UNIVERSITY  
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# MSc Global Environment, Politics and Society



Dr Darrick Evensen & Michael Albert, Programme Directors | November 2025

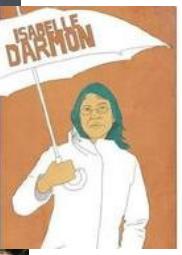
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# Agenda

- MSc GEPS : Introduction to the programme
- Teaching and learning methods
- Why study GEPS at Edinburgh?
- Career Prospects
- Questions



# MSc GEPS: Key Academic Staff



- Elizabeth Bomberg (politics; climate; social movements)
- Liz Cripps (ethics; justice; political theory)
- Darrick Evensen (energy; climate; risk; social-psychology)
- Isabelle Darmon (sociology; social theory)
- Michael Albert (capitalism, utopian future, pol. theory)

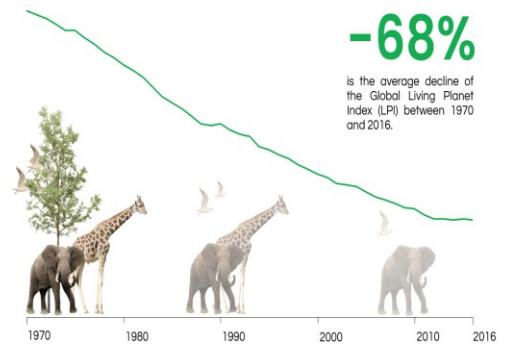


# What is the MSc GEPS about? (in pictures)



Figure 1. Living Planet Index, World

Source: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Zoological Society of London.



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# What is the MSc GEPS about? (in words)

- Approach: It offers a social-science based, trans-disciplinary understanding of global environmental problems and the political conflicts and debates over how they should be addressed.
- Skills: It enables students to critically engage with different positions on how environmental problems should be understood, framed, and addressed through policy, and to develop their own perspective.
- Content: climate change, biodiversity, energy, plastics, ocean governance, debates on capitalism and “sustainable development”, environment and security nexus, climate justice & ethics.



# MSc GEPS Programme Requirements, 2025-26

(180 credits in all)

1. Global Environment: Key Issues (Sem 1)

2. At least one of following:

- Global Environmental Politics
- Global Environment & Society
- Climate Change Justice and Responsibility
- Environmental Risk: Politics, Communication, Ethics

3. Four optional courses (80 credits) – *wide selection*

4. Dissertation or Placement-Based Dissertation (Apr-Aug) (60 credits)

Programme requirements and details for 2024 are here: <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/24-25/dpt/ptmscgleps1f.htm>



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# The year in overview

- 

Semester 1

**Global Environment:**  
**Key Issues**  
20 credits

**Option (i.e. your choice)**  
20 credits

**Option**  
20 credits

- 

Semester 2

**At least one of these core courses:**  
GEP, GE&S, CCJR, ER

**Option**  
(or another of above courses)  
20 credits

**Option**  
(or another of above courses)  
20 credits



# Sample of Optional Courses – Semester 1

- Ecosystems and Global Change\*
- Energy in the Global South
- Energy and Society: Themes and Issues\*
- Gender Politics and Representation
- Global Environmental History\*
- Globalization
- Happiness: Cross Cultural Perspectives
- Health and Human Rights
- Heritage, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice\*
- Human Dimensions of Environmental Change\*
- Human Rights, Global Politics and Intl Law
- Humanitarianism and the Media
- Innovation in Sustainable Food Systems
- International Ocean Governance and Protection of the Marine Environment\*
- Introduction to International Environmental Law\*
- Marine Systems and Politics\*
- Principles of Environmental Sustainability\*
- Politics & Theories of International Development
- Science, Knowledge and Expertise
- Topics in Environmental Humanities\*
- Values and the Environment\*

*\*outside course; limited spaces*



# Sample of Optional Courses – Semester 2

- Analysing Qualitative Data
- Anthropology and Environment
- Case Studies in Sustainable Development\*
- **Climate Change, Justice and Responsibility**
- Contemporary Political Theory
- Creativity and the Environment\*
- Energy Policy and Politics
- Energy & Society: Methods and Applications\*
- Environmental Governance
- **Environmental Risk: Politics and Ethics**
- Gender and Development
- **Global Environmental Politics**
- **Global Environment & Society**
- International Organisations
- International Political Economy
- Participation in Policy and Planning\*
- Political Ecology\*
- Public Engagement and Policymaking
- Research Design
- Social Movements and the Environment\*
- Waste Reduction and Recycling

*\*outside course; limited spaces*



# Studying & Learning



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# How will you study?

## Exploratory and analytical

- The programme will introduce you to a range of analytical perspectives (political, legal, ethical and societal) from which to examine global environmental issues

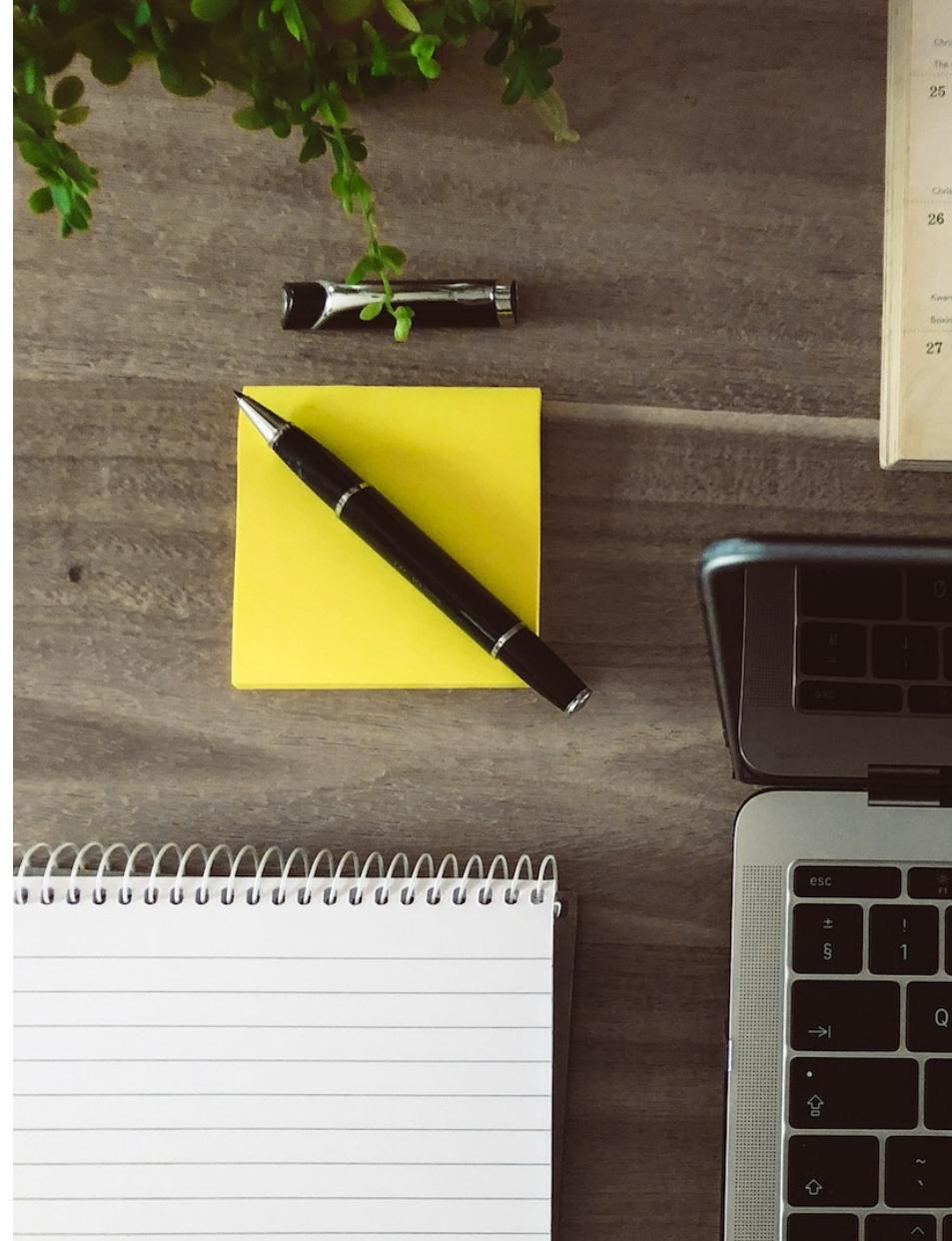
## Emphasis on independent work

- You will be expected to engage in independent reading, thought and writing, though you will be guided by lectures, seminar discussion, group work and supervised projects.



# Teaching Formats

- Lectures / Seminars – typically capped at around 30 students at the MSc level
- Self-led / Group Study
- Independent Research (including dissertation)



# GEPS Research Dissertation

- Extended piece of independent, in-depth scholarship on an environmental politics, ethics or sociology topic;
- Student's own endeavour, but with individual supervisor;
- up to 10,000 words
- Opportunity to choose area/topic of interest;
- Excellent preparation for further academic, teaching, or policy work; can be 'desk-based' or involve field work.
- Workshops held in winter; retreat towards end of Semester 2



# Placement-based dissertation

- Project-based report with organisation (NGO, charity, govt body, social enterprise);
- Project selected in consultation with the host organisation and Programme Director
- 12-15,000 words (including project diary)
- 2025-26
  - Information sessions in October
  - Both on-line and some in person
  - List of pre-arranged placement places released in December
  - Places are competitive (no guarantee)
  - Student – led placements also possible

More info: <https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/development-hub/masters/placement-based-learning/msc-placement-based-dissertations>



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# Some Past Placement Projects of GEPS Students

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Placement office (SWAY)                              | Student-led                                     |
| African Centre for Technology Studies                | Friends of the Earth Scotland                   |
| Classrooms for Malawi                                | Friends of Clear Water (Idaho, US)              |
| Dept of Social Responsibility & Sustainability (UoE) | Gibraltar Dept of Environment                   |
| Action Aid (Kenya)                                   | Green Party, Scotland                           |
| Red Rocks Rwanda                                     | IUCN (Intl Union for Conservation of Nature)    |
| SCIAC (Catholic development charity)                 | Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) |
| Stockholm Environmental Institute (Oxford)           | Oxfam Belgium                                   |
| Traidcraft, Edinburgh or Bangladesh                  | SCENE energy consulting                         |
| Water Witness  | World Resources Institute (WRI)                 |
| Tree Story   | Local councils                                  |



# Study Support

## GEPS Specific

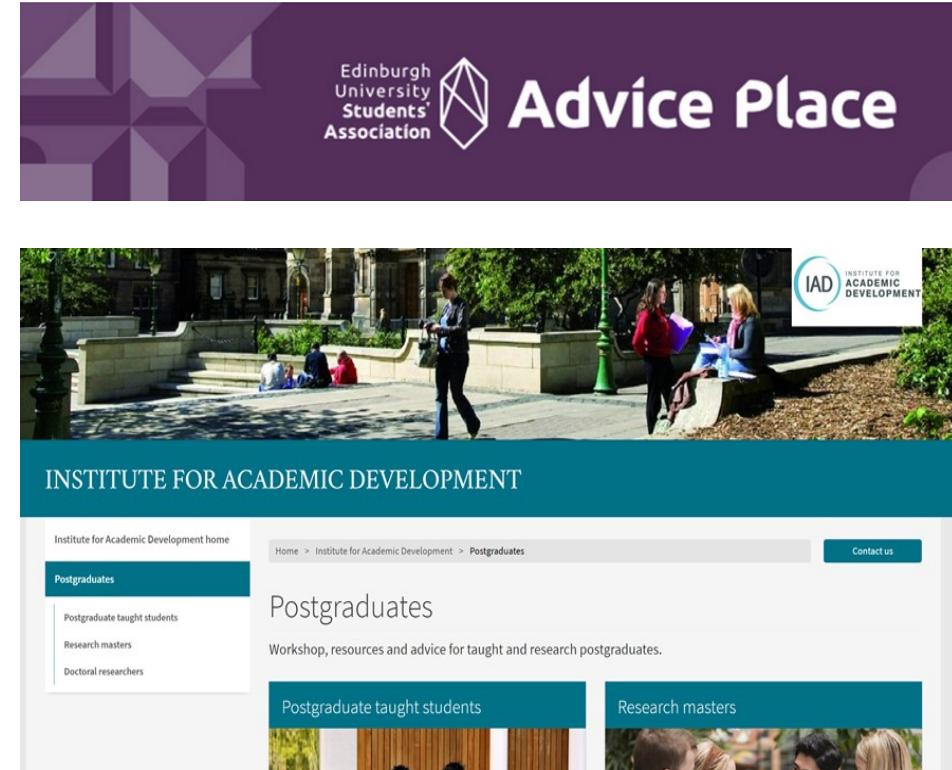
- Programme Directors as core contact; oversight of whole degree; contact for personal academic support
- Programme Administrator Casey Behringer [pgtaught.sps@ed.ac.uk](mailto:pgtaught.sps@ed.ac.uk)
- Student Advisor for help with pastoral issues ([student.sps@ed.ac.uk](mailto:student.sps@ed.ac.uk))

## School Level

- Student Development Hub (placements, academic skills)

## University Level

- Institute of Academic Development (writing workshops, etc)
- Award winning Student Association ‘Advice Place’



# Why study GEPS at Edinburgh?

- Dedicated, engaged faculty with interdisciplinary expertise
- Exemplary students from across the globe and with diverse backgrounds
- Amazing array of activities, seminars and events linked to climate and environment



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# Extra Curricular Activities (Examples)

- Our outstanding Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability:  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/events>
- Students' Association: societies galore  
<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/events>
- Lots of other University and community seminars, networks and clubs, provided in our GEPS handbook, and GEPS social media channels and list-serves
- GEPS-specific social and academic events



# Career Prospects (where our alumni work)

## NGOs, THINK TANKS, BUSINESS CONSULTANCY

- Baille Gifford consultant
- Biofuelwatch UK
- Cartier Jewellery, Sustainability Consultant
- Climate Analytics, Berlin
- European Environmental Bureau (Brussels)
- Global Oil and Gas Exit List
- Ricardo Energy and Environment (consulting)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (land use officer)
- Royal Town Planning Institute (Develop. Officer)
- Soil Capital (Environmental Consultancy, Brussels)
- WorldBoston, World Affairs Council (operations manager)

## GOVT AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- Dept of Environment (Defra, UK)
- European Commission (EU Political and Human Rights officer)
- House of Lords, UK (policy researcher)
- Hungarian Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Programme Coordinator)
- Natural Resources, Wales
- Scottish Parliament information Centre, Environment Analyst
- Environmentt and climate change Canada (policy advisor)
- Scottish Wildlife Trust
- UN Environmental Programme (consultant)
- UN Conservation on Migratory Species (Bonn)
- UN Resident Coordinator, Malawi
- World Bank (professional officer)

## ACADEMIC (PhD, Law School, Research posts)

Cambridge, Univ. East Anglia, Edinburgh, King's College London, Lancaster, Oxford, Sheffield, Australia National Univ., Arizona, North Carolina, Utah, Washington



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# Next steps...

<https://edin.ac/student-chat-pg>



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# Contact details for follow-up questions

MSc GEPS website: <https://edin.ac/3Svkjax>

Contact the programme director: [darrick.evensen@ed.ac.uk](mailto:darrick.evensen@ed.ac.uk)



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