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MSc Environmental Protection and Management



Professor Alistair Hamilton | 20 November 2025

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Who are we?

- Professor Alistair Hamilton
 - Programme Director - background in applied ecology, but now also work in spatial mapping and modelling, as well as interdisciplinary areas
- Dr. Hannah Grist
 - Deputy Programme Director – coastal ecology background, increasingly engaged in interdisciplinary studies, community and stakeholder engagement
- Dr. Andrew Innes
 - Senior lecturer – environmental chemist, specialism in soil and water pollution, modelling and research design and analysis



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Institutional Context



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School of GeoSciences



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Who/what is SRUC?

- Scotland's Rural College
- Specialist HEI with a focus on land-based industries and issues
- Research and education, but also a large consultancy business. A main research provider to the Scottish Government.
- University partner in MSc delivery. You are a normal UoE/GeoSciences MSc student!



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Why study this MSc?

- Gain an in-depth understanding of natural resource management based on a scientific understanding of the issues, but also allowing you to explore how implementing solutions requires working across disciplines.
- It will equip you with advanced skills and knowledge about:
 - the processes that give rise to environmental degradation and pollution problems
 - the strategies to affect sustainable change



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Why Edinburgh?

- Well established programme – constantly evolving over the last 25 years
- Access to expertise and facilities across the University and SRUC
- Diverse and interdisciplinary teaching team
- Flexibility to pursue your own area of interest through coursework and dissertation
- Extensive alumni network, engaging with them from day 1
- Every year comes from a diversity of backgrounds, countries, experiences



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Programme structure

Find a full list of compulsory and option courses on the [Degree Programme Tables](#)

Compulsory Courses	Semester	Credits
Land Use/Environmental Interactions	Semester 1	20
Professional and Research Skills in Practice	Full Year	20
Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Environment	Semester 2	20
Environmental Survey and Monitoring	Semester 2	20
Dissertation	April - August	60
2 option courses	1 per semester	40



Part-time structure

- Two and three-year part-time options are available.
- We recommend living within a commutable distance from Edinburgh in order to undertake part-time study, and we encourage you to contact us to discuss part-time study in more detail.

2-year programme	
Year 1	4 compulsory courses 1 option course
Year 2	Dissertation 1 option course
3-year programme	
Year 1	2 compulsory courses 1 option course
Year 2	2 compulsory courses 1 option course
Year 3	Dissertation



Teaching and assessment

- Courses can be delivered through a mix of lectures, guest speakers, workshop-style activities, problem-based learning
- Fieldwork
- Assessments include essays, reports, policy briefs, presentations (individual and group), webpages, and creative pieces (multimedia)



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Dissertation

- An opportunity to explore, in-depth, a topic of your choice in relation to the programme, with the support of an academic supervisor
- Can be desk-based research or fieldwork
- Typically 10,000 – 15,000 words
- Your bespoke project can be developed from your own idea and/or in collaboration with external organisations, or with current ongoing research conducted at SRUC and the University of Edinburgh
- You can use the dissertation to demonstrate your work to potential employers



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Possible dissertation topics

- COVID impacts on air pollution in China and the UK
- Development of automated mapping from UAV (drone) data
- Gender issues in waste policy
- Biochar impacts on soil nutrient cycling
- Heavy metal pollution and phytoremediation
- River and flood risk modelling
- Life cycle analysis of Italian wine production
- Wildlife/human conflicts in Canadian parks
- GHG emissions from agriculture: a policy analysis
- Mapping the potential for urban nature-based solutions
- Stakeholder evaluation for achieving NetZero
- Biodiversity and farm management options



What a typical week looks like...

Semester 1, Week 4	
Classes	Timetable
Land Use/Environmental Interactions – Lecture/practical sessions	Tue, 14:10-17:00
Professional and Research Skills in Practice – Lecture	Thu, 14:10-15:00
Professional and Research Skills in Practice – Practical	Thu, 15:10-17:00
Option course: Coastal Environments and Communities – Lecture	Wed, 09:00-13:00
Total class hours	Roughly 10hrs



- Please note that the option course listed is just an example – hours will vary depending on the option courses you choose.

Other activities

- You will also need to take into account your own independent study hours (typically 2-3 hrs per contact hr), find where you work best!
- You are encouraged to engage with your lecturers and guest speakers, develop your professional network
- Other activities take place each semester:
 - May also have a dissertation workshop, or cohort/geosciences event to attend.
 - Workshops – often take place on Wed afternoon
 - Evening events – potluck, careers/alumni get together, ceilidh
 - Weekend activities – visits, hillwalking



Field trips

- There is a residential field trip as part of this programme, in recent years to Morocco
- Students learn a range of field and data analysis techniques covering topics such as:
 - water quality assessment
 - biodiversity monitoring
 - river survey and flood modelling
 - carbon footprinting local agriculture
 - social science and tourism attitudes
 - air quality monitoring



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Field trips

- We also typically offer local trips as part of your compulsory courses to explore the surrounding environments
- This includes day trips to get to know Edinburgh during your first weeks with us, and a residential dissertation retreat in the Highlands
- Please note that field course locations may vary year to year, but will always align with course learning outcomes



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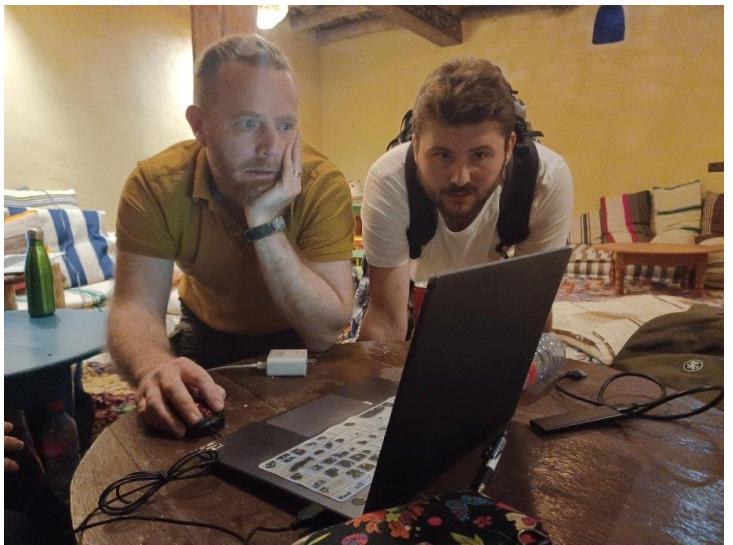
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Career opportunities

- We produce graduates with a holistic approach to environmental issues, flexibility in assessing and implementing possible solutions, and possessing key academic and soft skills for the workplace or further studies



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Career opportunities

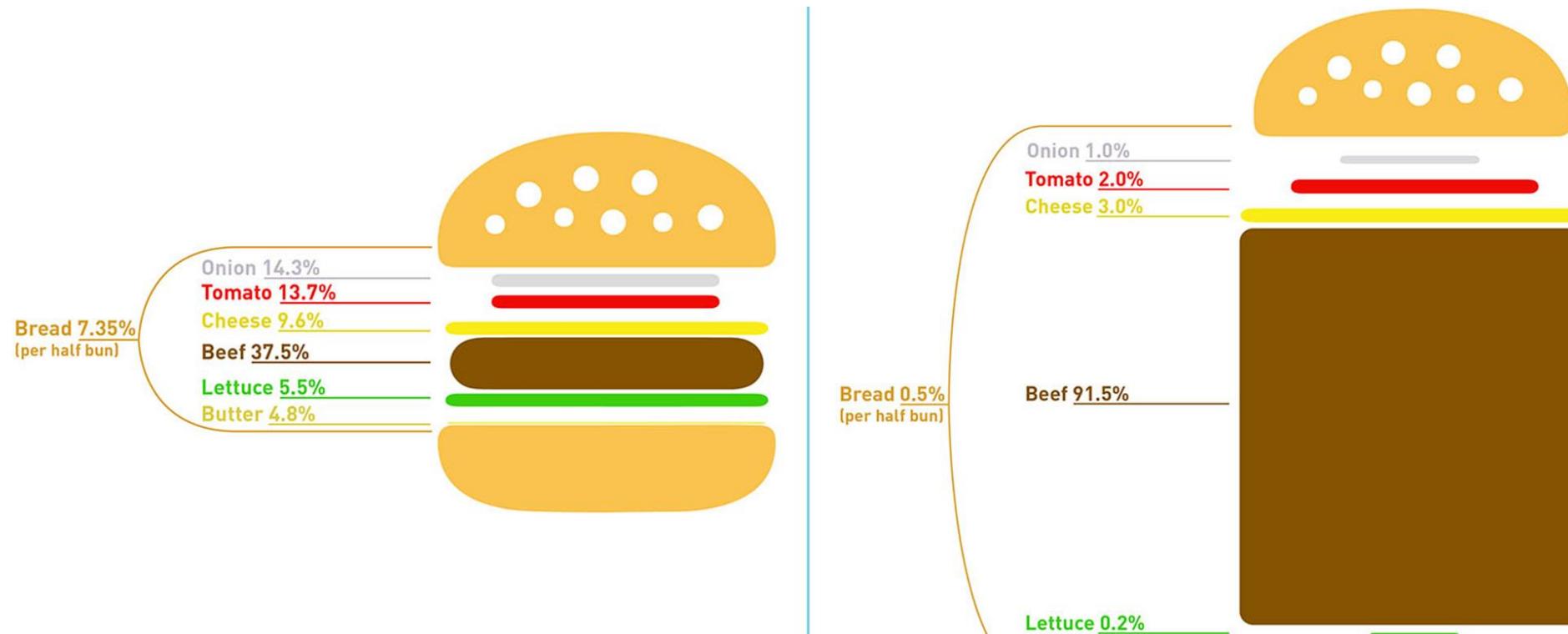
- Examples of graduate roles include:
 - environmental regulators
 - international and governmental agencies
 - NGOs
 - private environmental consultancies
 - PhD studies and academia
 - and many more.
- Examples of where our graduates have gained employment:
 - SEPA
 - Talisman Energy
 - AECOM
 - Water Witness
 - The Archipelagos Institute of Marine Conservation



Links with consulting

Find out more by visiting the SRUC website -

<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/business-services/sac-consulting/>



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Our alumni – Laura Young

- Graduated 2019
- Worked for international development NGO Tearfund as a **Scotland COP26 Advocacy and Campaigns Coordinator**.
- Runs the environmental platform **Less Waste Laura** across social media channels
- "For a year, I was immersed in such a wide range of environmental issues, looking at everything from the soil biology to political strategies and everything in between. I chose to study at Edinburgh because of its reputation and academic quality."



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When to apply?

- Due to high demand for this programme, we operate on a series of early application deadlines.
- We strongly recommend you apply as early as possible.
- You should avoid applying to more than one degree. Applicants who can demonstrate their understanding and commitment to a specific programme are preferred.
- If you plan to apply to more than one programme, you should discuss your choices with us before you submit your application.
- Where possible, we may make an alternative programme offer if you have been unsuccessful in your chosen programme.



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Student cohort

- As a result of our interdisciplinary approach to environmental management, our programme attracts students from a variety of backgrounds, allowing you to benefit from a diverse set of insights and perspectives
- 430 applicants for 2025 entry
- 28 new students on course in 2025/26



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Scholarships and funding

- Featured funding
 - [Chevening Scholarships](#)
- School of GeoSciences scholarships
 - [See potential funding for GeoSciences students](#)
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) alumni discount
 - [Visit the SRUC website](#)
- You are encouraged to research the range of potential scholarships and other funding outside the University for which you may be eligible
 - [Search for funding](#)



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Next steps...

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



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Contact details for follow-up questions

- We apologise if we did not get through all of your questions in the time allotted for this session. If you have further questions that have not been answered, please email: futurestudents@ed.ac.uk
- Or, Professor Alistair Hamilton: [*Alistair.Hamilton@sruc.ac.uk*](mailto:Alistair.Hamilton@sruc.ac.uk)



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Thank you

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