DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Geology is the study of the origin and evolution of the earth, emphasizing the concepts of geologic time and plate tectonics. The applied aspects of geology include the search for hydrocarbons, ores, and water; the assessment of geologic hazards associated with earthquakes, volcanoes, and landslides; and the study of the global environment. Also included in these studies are geologic aspects of waste disposal and pollution abatement.

The bachelor’s degrees offered in geology is one that emphasizes practical and field science along with theory. It is the goal of the department that our graduates not only be ready for immediate employment, but also that they have the broad education that will help them to grow professionally, be successful in graduate school, and advance through positions of greater responsibility during their careers.

The geology program provides the student with the necessary background courses in cognate sciences and mathematics plus a spectrum of courses in the sub-disciplines of geology. Specialized elective courses can be chosen to prepare for various careers such as exploration for minerals or petroleum, the search for and management of ground water, environmental geology, and earth science education.

A minor in geology is offered for students in allied fields who have an interest in geology. The minor curriculum can be tailored to meet the needs of individual students.

Research laboratories are equipped for work in applied economic geology, geochemistry, geochronology, geomechanics, geophysics, hydrogeology, mineralogy, paleontology, petrology, structural analysis, tectonics and volcanology. Laboratories are maintained for work in all of the basic courses, with large study collections of fossils, rocks, minerals, crystal models, ore suites, thin sections, polished sections, and topographic and geologic maps. Equipment used in advanced courses includes several sets of microscopes, photomicrographic apparatus, x-ray diffraction equipment, and a variety of instruments for geochemical analysis. Also available are computers, resistivity survey equipment, gravity meters, GPS receivers, seismographs, magnetometer, soil drilling and sampling kits, and water-level recorders.

The department offers Master of Science degrees in geology and hydrology. A thesis is required in the geology program, whereas a non-thesis option is available in hydrology. The Doctor of Philosophy is offered in geology.

The undergraduate preparation expected of the entering graduate candidates depends upon the degree sought. Some of our most promising graduate students have come to us with bachelor’s degrees in other subjects. Deficiencies for master's candidates are determined by the major professor.

BSU-ISU Cooperative Programs

The department participates in cooperative programs with the Earth Science Departments at Boise State University and at Idaho State University. Students interested in pursuing bachelor’s degrees in geology at those institutions may take transferable preparatory courses at UI.