Geography

Degree conferred
Scientiarum doctor in geographia / Doctor of Philosophy in Geography (PhD)

Commencement of studies
An application for admission may be submitted at any time.

Regulation
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/1Q *(French and German only)*

Application procedure
Candidates with Swiss qualifications
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/Ui3b4
Candidates with foreign qualifications
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/2KPbe

Fribourg profile

The Geography Unit of the Department of Geosciences offers doctoral programmes in Human Geography and Physical Geography.

Research orientations
Research in **Human Geography** at the University of Fribourg examines the ways in which nature and society interact through the lens of power, knowledge and politics. It focuses on Political Ecology, Environmental History, Urban SocioNatures, and Migration and Environmental Change. Our research expertise includes Central Asia, Western and Southern Africa, Oceania, Europe and Switzerland.

Research in **Physical Geography** at the University of Fribourg centers on the dynamics and evolution of the mountain cryosphere (glacier, permafrost, snow), and the periglacial and geomorphologic environment, with emphasis on the interactions with atmospheric changes. Our approaches include both measuring and modelling techniques, which we apply in remote, cold regions, including the Alps, Scandinavia, Andes, Central Asia, Himalayas, Antarctica, Svalbard and Greenland.

Contents of doctoral programme
The central part of the doctoral programme is a personal research project which the candidate conducts under supervision during a period of 3-4 years. The final product of the doctoral programme is the PhD thesis. The candidate's research can be part of ongoing research projects within the Unit of Geography, but can also be a single-standing study relevant to the research expertise at the Unit of Geography. In addition, candidates also participate in lecture series, professional development courses, publication projects, national and international conferences and may be involved in teaching activities. Doctoral candidates in Human Geography are strongly encouraged to attend workshops and conferences of the *Programme doctoral de géographie* of Western Switzerland (CUSO) (see link below).

Acquired competences
In accordance with the Dublin Descriptor, the doctoral programme in Geography enables candidates to:

– develop a systematic understanding of a field of Geography and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field;
– conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity;
– to make a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge in Geography;
– to undertake critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas;
– to communicate with their peers in Geography, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise.

Positions for doctoral candidates
Open positions for doctoral candidates are advertised on the website of the Geography Unit (http://www.unifr.ch/geoscience/geographie/en/general-information/open-position). Alternatively, interested candidates can also contact a supervisor of the Geography Unit and state their interest or propose a research project.

Funding and salary
Doctoral research is either financed through assistant positions at the Unit of Geography, or through third party funding acquired by the supervisor or the doctoral candidate himself. Salaries of employed doctoral candidates correspond to the standards of the Faculty of Science and Medicine.

Supervisors
PhD theses are supervised by professors and senior researchers at the Unit of Geography:

- **Prof. Christine Bichsel**

– Political geography
– Environmental history
– Critical water studies

- **Prof. Reynald Delaloye**

– Mountain geomorphology
– Periglacial geomorphology
– Permafrost-related processes

- **Prof. Olivier Graefe**

– Political ecology of land
– Water and park management

- **Prof. Christian Hauck**

– Applied geophysics
– Permafrost modelling

– Land-atmosphere interaction

- **Prof. Martin Hoelzle**

– Alpine cryosphere

- **Dr Matthias Huss**

– Glaciers and climate change
– Mass and energy balance of glaciers

- **Dr Horst Machguth**

– Ice sheets
– Glacier and climate
– Surface processes of glaciers and ice sheets
– Arctic glaciology

For a complete and updated list of research activities check the link to the website of the Unit of Geography (see Contact).

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

No ECTS credits can be earned.

Doctoral school

https://geographie.cuso.ch

Admission

In order to be admitted to a doctorate the candidate must have been awarded an academic **bachelor's and master's degree** or an equivalent qualification from a university recognised by the University of Fribourg.

Before applying for a doctorate the candidate must contact **a professor** who would be willing to supervise the thesis work.

There is **no general right** to be admitted to a doctorate.

The respective conditions of admission for each doctoral study programme are reserved.

Contact

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