Geography programs teach about the relationship between people, natural resources, and plant and animal life. Individuals will study how individuals are affected by and adapt to changes with their environment; identify the existence of natural resources and their impact on cultural and economic growth; and examine how people are distributed across the earth and the ways in which population movements can define historical, economic, and cultural development. There are focus areas in geography: human geography and physical geography. Human geographers concentrate on events that result from peoples, activities, and study human characteristics. They may investigate the use of farm land, the influence of cities and towns in particular areas, territorial disputes, urban trade areas, pollution, and how people see their environment. Physical geographers study variations in climate, vegetation, soil, and landforms, and their impact on human activity. They may study weather forecasting, watershed management, coastal land use planning, how forest resources are used, and soil erosion-control.

Programs at Montana State University will develop, in students, a unique understanding of the interaction and spatial relationships between people and their physical, cultural and socioeconomic environments. Students are required to complete one year of a foreign language as part of their curriculum in this program. This option will equip students for careers in hydrology, climatology, environmental analysis, resource and hazard assessment, cartography, remote sensing, marketing, policy analysis, and geographic information analysis.

Characteristics associated with success include training in statistics and mathematics, the ability to use computers for research purposes and familiarity with GIS technology.

A student should have:

- knowledge of mathematical and quantitative research methods
- an ability to think logically and methodically
- objectivity, open-mindedness, and systematic work habits
- perseverance
- intellectual curiosity and creativity
- research, evaluation, and presentation skills
- an ability to get along well with others
- good communication skills
- an ability to use computers for research purposes
- an ability to work with ideas

Occupations in this field require ability to work with teams of people or alone, and to understand history and relate past events with possible future events.

Related occupations include:

- Economic Geographer
- Physical Geographer
- Medical Geographer
- Environmental Analyst
- Economist
- Sociologist
- City/Urban Planner
- Political geographers
- Transportation geographers
- Regional geographers
- Anthropologist
- Conservator, Artifacts
- Cartographers
- Photogrammetrists
- Surveyors
- Foresters
- Atmospheric and Space Scientists
- Geoscientists
- Hydrologists
MSU graduates (Bachelor’s degree) were hired in the following selected fields:3
Academic Administrator- University of Idaho
Applications Scientist- Earth Science Corp
Bartender- Belt Creek Brew Pub
Boat Maintenance- Fair Winds Yacht Service
Carpenter- Cook Star Production
Cartographer– Department of Revenue
City Planner- City of Bozeman
Distribution Manager- Vacation Connection Inc
Driver- UPS
Educator Author- NOLES
Forestry Technician– USDA Forest Service
GIS Information Specialist– Big Sky Institute
Laborer- Big Sky Concrete
Land Search Analyst- KB Home
Landscaper Foreman- Autumn Hill Landscaping
Management Trainee- Dependable Pattern Works
Prep Cook- Applebee’s
Professor- Slippery Rock University; Fort Lewis College; Oklahoma State University;
University of Wisconsin- Sheboygan

Salary averages of survey respondents: (# of respondents in parentheses):3:
2007: MT: $ 35,856 (5) Out of State: Insufficient Data
2006: MT: $ 34,600 (2) Out of State: $ 33,889 (2)
2005: MT: $ 30,965 (3) Out of State: $ 32,050 (2)
2004: MT: $ 24,348 (7) Out of State: Insufficient Data

Graduates from this program entered programs of further education at these institutions:
Arizona State University
University of Maryland
Syracuse University
University of Akron
University of Kansas
University of Montana
San Diego State University
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Minnesota

Licensure and Certification1:
Geographers need no licensing, certification, or other special requirements for entry. However, those who teach in secondary school systems must have teacher certification.

Other Sources of Information:
Association of American Geographers: www.aag.org
American Geographical Society: www.amergeog.org
Society of Woman Geographers: www.iswg.org
National Council for Geographic Education: www.ncge.org
Department of Earth Sciences, Montana State University: www.montana.edu/

2 Montana State University Department of Earth Science
3 Montana State University Career & Internship Services
Number of graduates/number of respondents: 2004: 30/13; 2005: 17/11; 2006:21/12; 2007: 14/9