



Integrating research & teaching: the Queen Mary, University of London module in Geodiversity & Geoconservation

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The School of Geography at Queen Mary, University of London has been running a Level 6 (undergraduate) module in “Geodiversity & Geoconservation” since 2004. The course is based around the book Geodiversity: valuing and conserving abiotic nature (John Wiley, 2004) but lectures are used to update each topic based on the latest research. The course is divided into 5 parts:

1. Defining and describing geodiversity – which discusses the concept of geodiversity, its definition and the nature of the geodiversity of Planet Earth;
2. Values of, and threats to, geodiversity – a lecture on valuing geodiversity is now based around important research on the role of geodiversity in “ecosystem services” assessments. A second lecture covers the major threats to geodiversity;
3. The protected area approach – lectures here cover geological World Heritage Sites, Global Geoparks, GSSPs, and national geoconservation systems in the UK, USA and other parts of the world;
4. Protecting geodiversity in the wider landscape – the contribution of geology and geomorphology to landscape character are described, together with the role of land-use planning and policy-making in protecting geodiversity.
5. Putting it all together – lectures here emphasize that geodiversity is an important basis for geoconservation, that different geoconservation methods are appropriate to different elements of geodiversity, and that integrated geo/bio conservation is essential.

A field trip to three Chalk/Quaternary Sites of Special Scientific Interest in East Sussex is included which discusses some of the planning issues that have arisen at these sites, a theme that is expanded in the lectures.