



HERODOT
Network for Geography
in higher education

CITIZENSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION GEOGRAPHY: A BENCHMARK STATEMENT

Citizenship through Geography in Higher Education

Geography provides a spatial context to being a citizen. Re-conceptualisations of citizenship are fostered through Geography.

Higher education Geography prepares spatially aware, active citizens. It allows students to develop an awareness of the relevance of issues at different scales, from village to planet. Developing Citizenship through Geography in higher education is about individuals and their personal beliefs, the decisions they make, their capacity for individual and joint action, their links to their localities and the world outside, and their awareness of the past, present and future.

Geography helps citizens to become critically aware of diverse and overlapping values. It shows how places exist in complex, inter-related and inter-connected systems and ways that people can and do interact with them. Citizenship through geographical studies gives individuals a sense of their rights and responsibilities in an interdependent world.

Citizenship through Geography is an essential component of an undergraduate programme. It prepares graduates to apply their geographic capabilities so that they are capable of making a meaningful contribution to the 'community' as responsible, active and spatially aware 'world' citizens.

LEVEL DESCRIPTOR

Undergraduate level

This level of qualification should prepare students in the fundamentals of active citizenship through Geography, in terms of awareness, understanding and participation with special emphasis on spatial aspects. Students should develop their sense of place, an awareness of difference and tolerance for others. They will be responsive to the importance of spatial dimensions in broader debates and issues involving policies associated with physical and human environments. They will be able to express their ideas, feelings and intentions, make decisions, influence others and reflect on the possible implications of their behaviour.

The essential knowledge and competences acquired should allow students to further their studies at post-graduate (specialised) levels.



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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Undergraduate students should be able to recognise the societal relevance of Geography and weigh up the importance and challenges of citizenship in the context of their studies.

Students completing undergraduate Geography study programmes should be able to:

- Recognise different aspects of citizenship
- Investigate/explore citizenship issues from geographical perspectives
- Identify stakeholders, recognising who is responsible for and benefits from the process
- Identify and focus on the important geographical factors involved and analyse them
- Set the issues in a relevant context and specify any internal and external connections
- Be empowered to develop an agenda for change
- Devise likely actions and consider wider impacts
- Be able to act on these to shape the world around them in a sustainable manner

This draft benchmark statement has been produced as a result of the HERODOT thematic network for Geography in higher education meeting in Dublin, Ireland in March 2009.