

After 72 years as the Department of Geography, we are now officially the Department of Geography and Environment.

This change was first considered in 2014 when the Department struck a subcommittee to examine the issue and to consider possible name changes. The name was again considered in 2019, with unanimous support from our Departmental Council to change our name to Geography and Environment. Reviews of our Graduate Program (2017) and our Undergraduate IQAP review (2019) supported the proposed name change.

This name better reflects what Geography is at Western, the study of the environment from both a social science and physical science perspective. Nearly 40% of our courses incorporate 'environment' in their name or calendar description and thus the name change better reflects what the Department is actually teaching and researching. The name change will more clearly communicate to prospective students, many of whom have interests related to the study of the environment (in its broadest sense) but who may have limited or no exposure to Geography in high school.

We will continue to offer the same range of Honors Specializations, leading to both BA and BSc Honours Degrees, with names of modules that incorporate Geography updated to match that of the Department. At the graduate level, our approved fields of study: Environment, Development and Health, Geographic Information Science, Physical Geography and Urban Geography, remain the same.

Our name change also reflects a trend in other Geography Departments in Canada where at least 16 'Geography' departments now include the word Environment or a derivative in their name, with at least nine of these changes occurring in since 2014.

Coinciding with the name change, we are renaming our website, introducing a Twitter account (@westernuGeoEnv) to provide broader outreach, and of course updating our letterhead and other branded materials.

James Voogt,
Chair, Department of Geography and Environment