

University Geography in the Catalan Language Domain Today

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As of today (2023), Geography is widely taught in the public universities of the Catalan language domain. All in all, there are nine universities in which undergraduate Bachelor's degrees (either the four-year *grau* or three-year *licencia*) and Master's degrees are taught: five in Catalonia, two in the Valencian Country, one on the Balearic Islands and one in Northern Catalonia (see Map 1). While the other public universities of the language domain do not specifically offer academic degrees in Geography, they have geographers among their faculty members and teach Geography within other broader degree programs (including, the Humanities, Global Studies, History, and Geography and Art History). This is the case of the Open University of Catalonia and Pompeu Fabra University, both in Catalonia; Jaume I University, in the Valencian Country; and, the University of Andorra. Alghero, a Catalan-speaking city on the island of Sardinia, is home to the Department of Architecture, Design and Urban Planning of the University of Sassari, and this has geographers among its faculty. Yet, in contrast, Geographical studies are not taught at any of the private universities in this language domain.

The names of the different degree courses (see Table 1) reflect the emphasis placed on the links between geography, the environment, sustainability and spatial planning. This tendency has been strengthened over the last 15–20 years, highlighting the fact that Geo-

graphy is a living discipline, and echoing the concerns of the day and, in particular, those that affect the spatial dynamics and the challenges that society has to face. Clearly, here, sustainability is of critical concern,

Map 1. Location of the universities in the Catalan language domain where Geography is taught



Table 1. Public universities in the Catalan language domain teaching undergraduate Bachelor's degrees (either the *grau* or *licence*) in Geography

| Location | University | Abbreviation | Name of degree (2022–23) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Catalonia | Autonomous University of Barcelona | UAB | Geography, Environmental Management and Spatial Planning |
| | University of Barcelona | UB | Geography and Global Change |
| | University of Girona | UdG | Geography, Territory and the Environment |
| | University of Lleida | UdL | Geography |
| | Rovira i Virgili University | URV | Geography, Spatial Analysis and Sustainability |
| Valencian Country | University of Alacant | UA | Geography and Land Planning |
| | University of Valencia | UV | Geography and the Environment |
| Balearic and Pityusic Islands | University of the Balearic Islands | UIB | Geography |
| Northern Catalonia | University of Perpignan Via Domitia | UPVD | Geography and Planning (Géographie et Aménagement) |

since it is where social, environmental and economic variables converge. Gradually the syllabuses of these courses have incorporated different subjects and different goals, promoting a shift in our understanding of Geography. However, it continues to hold true to those defining features that have characterised it from the moment it was first institutionalised as an academic

and, hence, university discipline: that is, the spatial understanding and analysis of the earth's surface.

In this brief statistical analysis, we cast the spotlight on University Geography in the Catalan language domain by examining three variables for each of the nine universities listed in Table 1 and located on Map 1: the teaching faculty working in their Geography departments, the students currently enrolled on undergraduate Bachelor's degrees (both the *grau* and *licence*) and the students that have graduated with a Geography degree. The data are taken from EDUCABASE, a database maintained by the Spanish Ministries of Education and

Photo 1. Casa dels Països Catalans, UPVD



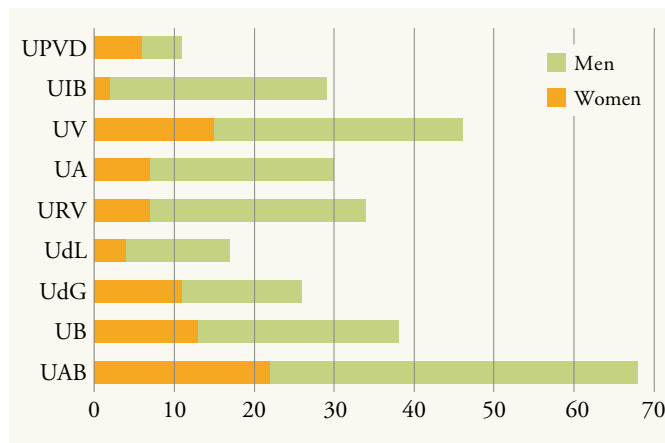
Vocational Training and the Universities, and from information provided directly by the UPVD. Finally, we list all the officially recognised research groups working in the discipline at these universities.

To complete the picture we would have liked to have considered the wide range of Master's degrees on which Geography faculty teach, but due to the sheer number and dispersion of these courses it has not been possible to summarise them here.

Geography Department Faculty Members

During the academic year 2022–23, the faculty of the Geography departments of the nine universities totalled 299 members, 29% (87) of whom are women. Figure 1 shows their distribution by university, with the UAB (68) and UV (46) running the largest departments.

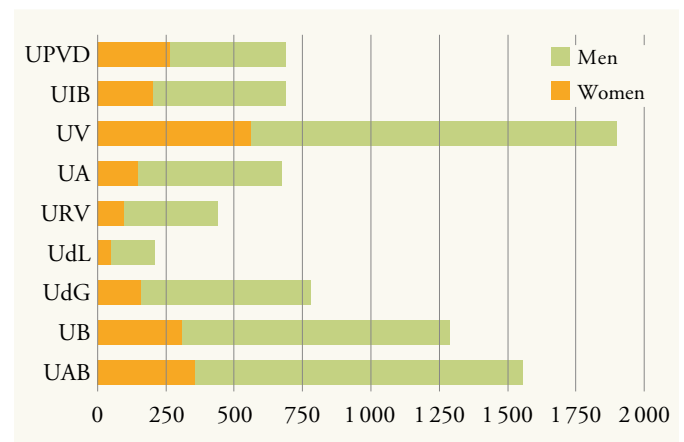
Figure 1. Faculty members (academic year 2022–23) by university and sex



Students Enrolled on Undergraduate Bachelor's Degrees (both *grau* and *licence*)

If we sum the number of students enrolled on both undergraduate Bachelor's degrees — that is the four-year *grau* and three-year *licence* (UPVD) — over the last seven academic years (2016–17 to 2022–23), the UV has the most Geography students, followed by the UAB (Figure 2). Female students account for 26% of the total, the proportions ranging from 39% in the UPVD to 21% in the UdG. During this seven-year period, the number of students matriculating each academic year presents a downward trend. Indeed, in the academic year 2022–23, 25% fewer students were enrolled than in the academic year 2016–17. All the universities suffer this trend with the exception of the URV.

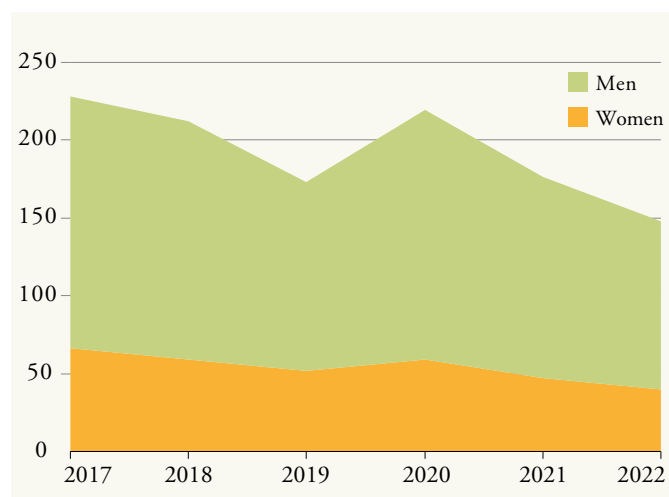
*Figure 2. Total number of students enrolled on undergraduate Bachelor's degrees – four-year *grau* and three-year *licence* (UPVD only) – between 2016 and 2022, by university and sex*



Geography Graduates

The number of new geography graduates also fell in the period analysed. Figure 3 shows that while in 2017 a total of 228 students graduated in Geography, 29% (66) of whom were women, five years later this number had fallen to 148, with even fewer women, 27% (40).

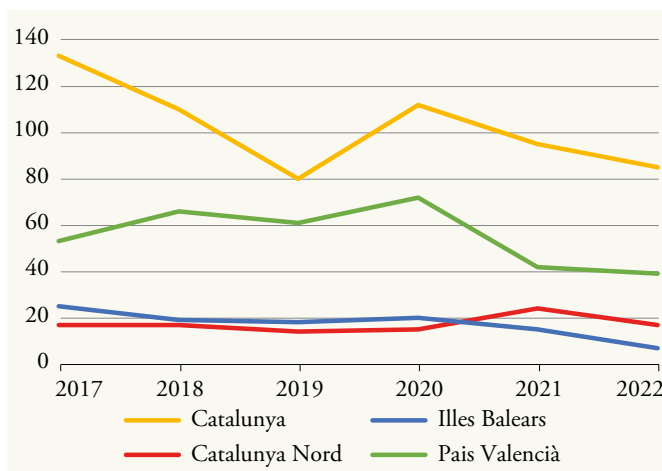
Figure 3. Evolution of the number of graduates in Geography (2017–2022) from the nine universities, by sex



The evolution of the number of graduates has varied across the language domain (Figure 4). The most marked fall in this period has been recorded in the Balearic Islands (-72%) followed at some distance by the universities of Catalonia (-36%) and the Valencian Country (-26%), while in Northern Catalonia numbers have remained largely stable.

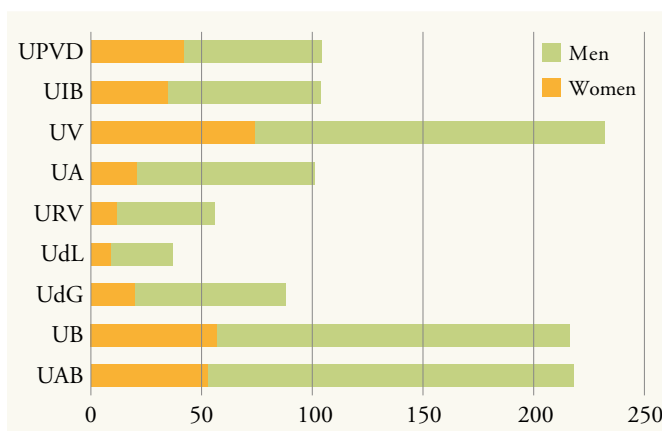
If we examine the number of graduates by university (Figure 5), the UV (232), the UAB (218) and the

Figure 4. Evolution of the number of graduates in Geography (2017–2022), by area of the Catalan language domain



UB (216) account for 58% of the total number in the language domain. The highest number of female graduates is recorded by the UPVD, with 40%, while the UA and the URV record the lowest, at just 21%.

Figure 5. Total number of graduates in Geography (2017–2022), by university and sex



Research Groups

In the nine universities of the Catalan language domain, we have identified a total of 50 research groups, distributed by university as shown in Table 2.

Table 3 lists all 50 research groups, indicating the name of the group, the university to which it is affiliated, its line(s) of research and website address. The groups were identified, in the first instance, by reference to information contained on the webpages of each of the Geography departments and, subsequently, via the research groups' own websites. All the groups thus identified are included, regardless of the level of recognition afforded to them and their activity.

The list provides a good profile of the research currently being conducted in the universities of the Catalan language domain. From a variety of different perspectives, Catalan Geography addresses a wide range of issues, highlighting the versatility of our discipline and the breadth of research interests. Moreover, each group clearly organises itself according to its own specific interests, preferred approaches and research goals.

Catalan Geography thus extends its research arm across fields that include the physical environment, both coastal and mountain areas; geomorphology; the landscape; climate and climate change; natural resources; energy; cartography; the use of GIS technology, remote sensing and drones; migrations; the gender perspective; governance and local development; sustainability; social and urban policies; global change; economic geography; tourism and socio-territorial dynamics; natural and cultural heritage; geographical thinking; critical geography; the pedagogy of geography and a long etcetera. All these topics are studied and analysed by at least one of the research groups mentioned.

Table 2. Number of research groups by university

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| UA | 5 |
| UAB | 16 |
| UB | 10 |
| UdG | 3 |
| UdL | 1 |
| UIB | 6 |
| UPVD | 2 |
| URV | 2 |
| UV | 5 |
| Total | 50 |

Table 3. Research groups, lines of research and websites

| Name of research group | University | Research line(s) | Website |
|--|------------|--|---|
| Actors, Resources and Territories in Development [<i>Acteurs, Ressources et Territoires dans le Développement</i> (UMR 5281 ART-Dev)] | UPVD | Interfaces between the dynamics of territories and their development | https://art-dev.cnrs.fr |
| Antarctic, Arctic and Alpine Environments (ANTALP) | UB | Research in the Antarctica, Arctic and Alpine regions aimed at understanding current environmental dynamics from a multidisciplinary perspective | https://www.ub.edu/antalp/ |

| Name of research group | University | Research line(s) | Website |
|---|------------|---|---|
| Mountain Areas and the Landscape (GRAMP) | UAB | Environmental historical geography of mountain areas | https://twitter.com/gramp_UAB |
| Critical Spaces | UB | Theoretical development and discussion of the literature aimed at rethinking concepts and theories to address global change | https://espaiscritics.org/ |
| Studies of Landscape and Heritage (ESTEPA) | UV | Water heritage and landscapes, local development and regional studies, landscape studies and analyses of environmental impact | https://www.uv.es/uvweb/departament-geografia/ca/investigacio/grups-investigacio/-estepa-estudis-territori-patrimoni-/presentacio-1285858445673.html |
| Critical Geographies | UAB/UB | Critical spatial thinking. Cities and urban theory. Radical geographies | https://www.uab.cat/en/geography/geografies-critiques |
| Coastal Geomorphology | UV | Coastal geomorphology | https://www.uv.es/uvweb/departamento-geografia/es/investigacion/grupos-investigacion/geomorfologia-litoral/presentacion-1285858446014.html |
| Local Sustainable Development and Governance (GDLS) | UV | Innovation and knowledge transfer in local government based on new territorial governance practices | https://www.uv.es/oferta-cientific-tecnologica/ca/grups-investigacio/linies-investigacio/grup-investigacio-govern-desenvolupament-local-sostenible-1286225405503/GrupsInves.htm?id=1286220656842 |
| Demographic and Tourism Studies Group (GEDITUR) | UIB | Population geography, migration, security and health; tourism and local development | https://www.uib.cat/recerca/estructures/grups/grup/GEDITUR/ |
| History of Cartography Study Group (GEHC) | UB | Maps as geohistorical documents and as cultural products that reflect the evolution of art, science and technology | https://www.ub.edu/gehc/ |

| Name of research group | University | Research line(s) | Website |
|--|------------|---|---|
| Research Group on Population (GEP) | UAB | Historical demography, fertility and families | https://www.uab.cat/ca/geografia/grep-ced |
| Research Group on Energy, Territory and Society (GURB) | UAB | Interrelations between territorial dynamics, energy consumption and public policy | https://gurbuab.com/ |
| Tourism, Mobility and Regional Planning Research Group (GITMOT) | UIB | Study of the interrelation between tourism, mobility and regional planning from the perspective of spatial and geographical analysis. | http://gitmot.uib.es/ |
| Research Group on Water, Territory, Tourism and Sustainability (GRATTS) | UAB | Analysis of the territorial and environmental dimensions of resources and risks such as those derived from the hydrological cycle | http://geografia.uab.es/grats/ |
| Geography and Gender Research Group (GGG) | UAB | Urban and rural studies from a gender and intersectional perspective | http://geografia.uab.cat/gener/ |
| Research Group on Inclusive Governance and Territorial and Coastal-Marine Sustainability (INTERFASE) | UAB | The study of socio-environmental changes in space and time and the sustainability of environmental and spatial policies | http://geografia.uab.cat/interfase3/ |
| Mediterranean Eco-geomorphological and Hydrological Connectivity Research Team (MEDhyCON) | UIB | Eco-geomorphology, hydrology and natural hazards in Mediterranean environments | http://medhycon.uib.cat/ |
| Methods and Applications of Remote Sensing Research Group (GRUMETS) | UAB | Theory and methodologies of Geographic Information Science and Technology, particularly as manifest in GIS and remote sensing | https://www.grumets.cat/ |
| Water Resources and Global Change Research Group (GLOWATER) | UIB | Water resources and water economy in tourist areas, hydro-climatic interactions and fluvial ecology in Mediterranean environments | http://glowater.uib.es/pagina-de-inicio/ |
| Climatology Group (GC) | UB | Analysis of climate variability at a scale ranging from decades to several centuries, including climate change | http://www.ub.edu/gc/ |

| Name of research group | University | Research line(s) | Website |
|--|------------|--|---|
| Territory and Society Research Group | UdL | Knowledge and analysis of physical and socioeconomic transformations in intermediary cities and low-density spaces | https://dgha.udl.cat/ca/recerca/Grups-de-recerca-consolidats/territori_soc/ |
| Mediterranean Environmental Research Group (GRAM) | UB | Analysis of the concept of landscape, as a geographical, historical and social totaliser | http://www.ub.edu/gram/ |
| Territorial Analysis and Tourism Studies Research Group (GRATET) | URV | Impact of tourist and recreational activities on landscapes and how these actions generate new forms of development at different geographical scales | https://www.gratet.urv.cat/ca/ |
| Centre for Climate Change (C3) | URV | Research, outreach and knowledge transfer in the fields of climate reconstruction and analysis | http://www.c3.urv.cat/ |
| Research Group in Environmental and Territorial Analysis and Planning (APTA) | UdG | Analysis of territorial and urban structures and dynamics, cross-border cooperation and the analysis and management of local development | https://www.udg.edu/ca/grupsrecerca/APTA |
| Territorial Analysis and Regional Development Research Group (ANTERRIT) | UB | Geographical knowledge of Catalan territory adopting dual basic and applied research approach | http://www.ub.edu/anterrit/ |
| Socio-Environmental Change Research Group (SAMBI) | UdG | Analysis and interpretation of the processes of socio-environmental change that affect today's societies | https://www.udg.edu/ca/grupsrecerca/sambi |
| Climate and Spatial Planning Research Group | UA | Theoretical and practical aspects of climatology, natural hazards and the relationship between extreme events | http://rua.ua.es/dspace/handle/10045/21835 |
| Research Group in Education and Geography of Perception | UIB | The mental map as a tool for analysing geographical literacy | https://blocs.uib.cat/educacioipercepcio/ |
| Applied Geography Research Group | UAB | Quality of life, biodiversity, sustainability and risks | https://portalrecerca.uab.cat/en/organisations/grup-de-recerca-geografia-aplicada/ |

| Name of research group | University | Research line(s) | Website |
|---|------------|---|---|
| Economic Geography Research Group | UAB | Research in many different fields of economic geography | https://webs.uab.cat/economicgeography/ |
| Landscape Analysis and Management Laboratory Research Group (LAGP) | UdG | Landscape analysis in its broadest sense | https://www.udg.edu/ca/grupsreerca/lagp |
| Landscapes and Palaeoenvironments of the Mediterranean Mountains | UB | Dynamics, temporal evolution, recognition and description of ancient environments and landscapes of the Mediterranean mountains | http://www.ub.edu/paisatgeipaleo/ |
| Territory, Population and Citizenship Research Group (TERRIPOC) | UB | Social processes in the urban area, centred on the structure and the social and territorial inequality of urban areas | https://www.ub.edu/terripec/ |
| Territory, Tourism and Climate Change Research Group | UB | The impact of climate change and global change on the territory and human activities, from a geographical perspective | https://www.ub.edu/portal/documents/4439448/10495034/TTCC/3d012d9d-9e1a-d371-0b3c-e18b1eab5c71 |
| History and Climate | UA | Natural disasters, science, technology and popular religiosity in modern Spain | https://cvnet.cpd.ua.es/curriculum-breve/grp/es/grupo-de-investigacion-en-historia-y-clima/524 |
| History of Prehistoric Man [<i>Histoire Naturelle de l'Homme Préhistorique</i> (UMR 7194)] | UPVD | Study of the biological and behavioural evolution of hominids over time, in the chronological, environmental and climatic context of the different geographical areas | https://hnhp.mnhn.fr |
| Immigration and Social Integration (INMIX) | UAB | Processes of socio-cultural integration of immigrants and their descendants, interculturalism and ethnicity | https://webs.uab.cat/inmix/ |
| Innovation and Local Development (INNODES) | UV | Economic geography, territorial planning and regional development | https://www.uv.es/innodes/ |
| The Environment, Society and Landscape (MedSPal) | UA | Integrated study of the landscape from a diachronic perspective considering both natural processes and human intervention | https://cvnet.cpd.ua.es/curriculum-breve/grp/es/medio-sociedad-y-paisaje-(medspai)/485#capacidades |

| Name of research group | University | Research line(s) | Website |
|---|------------|--|---|
| Human Migration and Sustainability | UAB | International migration and migration in Europe, within a global context | http://geografia.uab.cat/migracions/cat/index.htm |
| Mobility, Transport and Territory (GEMOTT) | UAB | Effects of territorial dynamics on mobility | https://mobilitat.uab.cat/ca/inici/ |
| Standards of Life, Health and Food (NIDES) | UAB | Population, food, living standards, economic modernisation, 19 th and 20 th century Spain | https://www.uab.cat/ca/geografia/nides |
| Landscapes and Natural Resources of Spain | UA | Territorial diagnoses of the structural and formal components of rural landscapes, with special attention to their evolution | https://rua.ua.es/dspace/handle/10045/30195?locale=ca |
| Palaeogeocology, Natural Hazards and Environmental Management (PaleoRisk) | UB | Fluvial variability, climate and land use interactions in alpine environments | http://www.palaeo.org/ |
| Planning and Sustainable Management of Tourism | UA | Planning and sustainable management of tourist destinations, international mobility and residentialism in tourist areas | https://cvnet.cpd.ua.es/curriculum-breve/grp/es/pl |
| Social and Urban Policies (URGOCIS) | UAB | Local urban governance networks, urban and social policies | https://urgocis.net/ |
| Sustainability and Territory (GIST) | UIB | The territorial transformation undergone by the Balearic archipelago since the second half of the 20 th century | https://www.uib.cat/recerca/estructures/grups/grup/GIST/ |
| Tourism and Socio-territorial Dynamics (TUDISTAR) | UAB | Critical analysis of tourism from the dynamics established between the different actors present in the territory | https://tudistar.com/ |
| Tourism and Territory | UV | Integrated tourism development and strategic territorial planning in tourism | https://www.uv.es/uvweb/departament-geografia/ca/investigacio/grups-investigacio/turisme-territori/presentacio-1285858445445.html |