

Department of Physical Science  
Division of Geosciences

**Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose**

**Mission Statement**

The Division of Geosciences strives to provide students at Southern Utah University with excellence in earth science education. Our integrated efforts are directed toward those methods we feel produce the best possible educational experience. The primary goal of the geology faculty is to ensure academic excellence in our students while demanding integrity, building self-esteem, and developing critical thinking skills.

**Goal Statement**

The Division of Geosciences will:

1. Provide expert instruction in all teaching settings: lectures, labs, field trips, etc.
2. Provide expert direction/instruction for competitive opportunities in scholarship, employment, and other experiences.
3. Educate students to think critically and independently, and to improve communicative, creative, analytic and information gathering skills.
4. Prepare students who choose to pursue graduate education.
5. Prepare students who choose to pursue employment in a science related field in business, industry, or public education upon graduation.
6. Provide service courses for other academic and professional programs and for the general education purpose.

**Program Intended Educational Outcomes-  
2003-2004**

**Outcomes/Objectives**

1. Courses will be taught by faculty with expertise appropriate to their teaching assignments.
- 2a. Geoscience laboratories, field experiences, and other hands-on experiences will be conducted by faculty members with appropriate expertise in their fields.
- 2b. Students will practice and demonstrate understanding of theoretical and applied geoscience principles via laboratory experiments, undergraduate research, field experiences, etc.
- 2c. Graduates in geoscience will write a senior thesis based on their independent research.
3. Students will learn and demonstrate the ability to critically think about the principles of geoscience, and to communicate them orally and in writing.
- 4a. Students desiring graduate degrees will have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their abilities to meet entrance requirements: tests, scholarship, etc.
- 4b. Appropriate curricula will be provided for professional geoscience preparation.
- 5a. Students desiring employment upon graduation will be prepared for business, industry, or public education.
- 5b. Appropriate curricula will be provided for geoscience technician/earth science employment.
6. In addition to offering courses for the campus general education program, the division will provide geoscience courses that meet the needs of other academic majors (engineering, forestry, biology, etc).

**Means of Program Assessment and Criteria  
for Success**

**Assessment Criteria and Activities**

- 1./2a. Only doctoral qualified faculty with expertise in appropriate geoscience sub-fields who are evaluated in teaching, scholarship, professional commitment, and service at least as "fair/average" in two areas, and as at least "good/above average" in the other two areas will be hired, promoted, and tenured. Faculty will participate annually in development activities to enhance subject knowledge and presentation methods.
- 2b. Geoscience students will pass their "major" courses with a grade of "C" or better. Graduating seniors will perform acceptably on the subject and general portions of the Graduate Records Examination (GRE).
- 2c. Geoscience students will also complete directed undergraduate research/senior thesis projects, including presentation of the results at state, regional, or national professional meetings.
3. Capstone experiences (senior thesis and field camp) will assess each student's ability to communicate via written and oral reports. Their success in these activities will provide evaluation of prior "course embedded activities" requiring critical, logical, and analytical thinking.
- 4a./4b. Graduate acceptance/entrance success in graduate geoscience programs will be tracked. In addition, GRE and other relevant scores will be monitored for determining subject matter mastery. (Also, see 2b. above).
- 5a./5b. Placement of graduates will be monitored annually. Surveys of both students and employers will assess preparedness of geoscience graduates.
6. Surveys of general education and non-geoscience students will be conducted to assess success of courses in providing background knowledge.