

28<sup>th</sup> April 2003

## **BENFIELD HAZARD RESEARCH CENTRE ANNOUNCES NEW MSc IN GEOPHYSICAL HAZARDS**

### **Course Will Answer Industry Demands for Increased Understanding of Natural Hazards**

Benfield Hazard Research Centre (BenfieldHRC), part of University College London (UCL), has launched a new MSc in *Geophysical Hazards*. The course - the first of its kind - is designed to provide essential training for careers in hazard assessment and risk evaluation, including industry, engineering, insurance, and civil protection. It answers a need for increased understanding of hazards in a world where, every year, natural disasters affect as many as one in thirty people on earth.

The course will cover both geological and meteorological hazards, comprising earthquakes, floods, windstorms, landslides, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, impacts, space weather and hazard aspects of climate change.

These components will describe the nature of the hazards, their impact on life and the economy, as well as potential mitigating solutions. Students will then progress to evaluate quantitative models for forecasting and assessing hazards, and for evaluating their impact. Through selected case studies, they will also provide a basis for using geophysical models to improve (1) decision making in, for example, medium-term land planning and short-term emergencies, (2) raising the awareness of vulnerable populations, and (3) evaluating mitigation strategies, from evacuation to engineering solutions.

Professor Bill McGuire, Benfield Professor of Geohazards and Director of Benfield Hazard Research Centre says:

*"This course is a significant landmark in the development of Geophysical Hazards as a distinct discipline and reflects an increased demand for understanding of the hazards facing our planet. I am very pleased that the Benfield Hazard Research Centre is once again demonstrating its leadership in the research and teaching of this subject by launching this unique and innovative course. With a focus on practicality the course will not only be a valuable academic adjunct to studies on geography and earth sciences, but will equip all students with the knowledge required to assess and map geophysical hazards for application in the workplace".*

The new programme follows close on the heels of the UCL Postgraduate certificate course in *Natural Hazards for Insurers*, launched in September 2002. Applications for this course are now also open (for further details contact [w.mcguire@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:w.mcguire@ucl.ac.uk) or go to [www.nhfi.net](http://www.nhfi.net) ).

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The MSc course will commence in October 2003. Applications are expected normally before 1<sup>st</sup> August, although later applications may exceptionally be considered. Application forms may be downloaded from <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/admission/pg/gradadmis.pdf> Further information can be obtained from the course director, Dr. Chris Kilburn ([c.kilburn@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:c.kilburn@ucl.ac.uk)).

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the Benfield Hazard Research Centre:**

BenfieldHRC is sponsored by Benfield, the world's leading independent reinsurance intermediary and risk advisory business. Benfield's customers include many of the world's major insurance and reinsurance companies as well as Government entities and global corporations. Benfield employs over 1,700 people based in over 30 locations worldwide. [www.benfieldgroup.com](http://www.benfieldgroup.com)

With over forty researchers and practitioners, Benfield Hazard Research Centre is Europe's leading multidisciplinary academic hazard research centre and comprises three groups: Geological Hazards, Meteorological Hazards and Seasonal Forecasting, and Disaster Studies and Management. Benfield Hazard Research Centre is based at University College London, one of the world's leading universities and, along with Oxford and Cambridge, one of the UK's top three multi-faculty teaching and research institutions. Website: [www.Benfieldhrc.com](http://www.Benfieldhrc.com)

### **For further information please contact:**

Professor Bill McGuire/Anna McGuire  
Benfield Hazard Research Centre  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 3637  
[w.mcguire@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:w.mcguire@ucl.ac.uk)  
[anna.mcguire@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:anna.mcguire@ucl.ac.uk)

Issued by:  
David Bogg/Chris Gatland  
Benfield  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7522 4016/+44 (0) 20 7578 7485  
[David.bogg@benfieldgroup.com](mailto:David.bogg@benfieldgroup.com)  
[Chris.Gatland@benfieldgroup.com](mailto:Chris.Gatland@benfieldgroup.com)