



Maynooth University

Safe working practice covering Fieldwork / Field Trips and Transport Guidance

INTRODUCTION

Fieldwork includes any teaching or research practical work carried out by university staff, students or visiting research workers on sites outside the scope of a classroom or laboratory setting which are not normally under university control but where the University has a duty of care for the safety of its staff, students, visiting workers, in addition to members of the public who may be affected by the fieldwork activities.

At the initial stages of planning field trips, consideration should be given to the accessibility of the sites for all who are required to attend as part of their course/research. When the sites/ locations are identified, this guidance document will assist by outlining the responsibilities, and the requirement for a risk assessment to ensure the safety of those that all are going on the field trips/fieldwork.

The responsibility for ensuring that there are effective arrangements for the health and safety of staff and students undertaking field work/trip rests with the Head of Department. The Head of Department has a responsibility to ensure that those appointed to organise fieldwork/trips are authorised, trained, and competent to carry out the task.

This guidance assists staff responsible for organising field trips to ensure appropriate arrangements for health and safety are in place.

We recognise that risk is inherent in the field and seek to ensure that safe systems of work are in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level. It is essential that students and staff follow the instructions of the guide and/or party leader; keep in a close group (not to wander off). The field leader must be informed of any health conditions that may affect safety during fieldwork. For example: information on diabetes, asthma or epilepsy; students should also inform the leader if they require extra assistance – this will be dealt with in strict confidence.

While on fieldwork students/staff are expected to work in a professional manner. Students should avoid any substance which could impair judgement (e.g., alcohol or illegal drugs). Students should be mindful of the time it takes for the effects of a substance to wear off.

Learning to do field work can be one of the most interesting, rewarding, and appealing aspects of education. The University departments are committed to protecting individual and group, well-being and safety during fieldwork. Lack of attention or avoidable errors may have dangerous consequences for others, which means, no one should ever feel uncomfortable asking for help if they need it or if they are unsure what to do.

PRIOR APPROVAL FOR FIELDWORK/TRIPS

The leader of all fieldwork/trips is responsible.

- for carrying out a risk assessment which identifies the necessary safety arrangements for the fieldwork/trip.
- Notification to Safety office

Notification of field trip and risk assessment to be sent to the head of department (or their nominee) and the safety office before it is undertaken.

- One notification per site/activity required including if returning to the same site every day for several weeks, but this must be captured on the risk assessment.
Note: this may lead to a requirement to review of the risk assessment if conditions or tasks change.

The Risk assessment must be completed on IProtectU and submitted at least 1 week prior to the date of departure. (failure to do so may result in insurance cover for trip being refused)

Field trips notified to the Department and the Health and Safety Office will be noted as a standing item at departmental management meetings or other relevant meetings such as a departmental health and safety committee meeting.

Note: Any high-risk activities, e.g. diving, potholing are strictly prohibited unless specific university insurance is sought and approved prior to the field trip. The safety office can advise / assist as required.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The person organising or leading the field work / trip must carry out a risk assessment.

The risk assessment must consider the following:

- The aim of the activity and the location.
- The health and safety of the staff and students participating and any others who may be affected by the fieldwork activities, e.g., students, members of the public.
- For teaching field trips a ratio of supervision of staff/students must be identified. This will take into consideration the number of participants, tasks, location their experience and training.
- The fieldwork/trip the organiser must be clearly defined as having full responsibility for all of the activities to be performed by the group.
- General safety rules must be laid out for all those taking part in fieldwork/trip, preferably through written procedures, supplemented by verbal briefings or advice.
- Methods of communication to be agreed and documented e.g mobile phones , whistles etc
- Contingency plans for foreseeable emergencies must be included.
- Precautions put in place where staff/students will be working alone.

Please contact the Health and Safety Office (healthandsafety@mu.ie) if assistance is required carrying out the risk assessment on IProtectU.

Examples of some hazards which may be present, on a field trip and appropriate control measures are identified in this non exhaustive list below:

HAZARD	CONTROL MEASURE
Falling Rocks	Avoid working beside, above or below loose rocks.
Water - Drowning	Wear life jacket, carry emergency flares, mobile phone, whistle, check tide times.
Water &- Hypothermia	Dress appropriately in layers of heat retaining and waterproof material, carry mobile phone, whistle, sufficient food and drink. Change of clothing. Water resistant boots
Dehydration	Maintain intake of water and salt.
Sunburn / Heat Stroke	Sunblock, wear loose cotton clothing, keep head covered.
Vehicles	Use designated car parks. If necessary, park off road in safe area. Wear fluorescent jackets.
Farm and wild animals	Avoid contact, do not enter field/site if a dangerous animal is present e.g. bull – insect repellent
Biological Hazards	e.g. Weil's Disease. In high risk situations wear wellingtons, gloves and overalls. Wash hands before eating, drinking, smoking. Cover cuts with waterproof dressings. Tetanus - Tetanus immunisation Lymes disease , tick check after each day spend in the field
Chemical Hazards List each chemical.	In high risk situations wear wellingtons, gloves and overalls. Storage. Wash hands before eating, drinking, smoking. Cover cuts with waterproof dressings. PPE.
Lone Working (violence, falls)	Work in groups or pairs. Do not lose visual or aural contact with other group members. If an Individual must work out of visual contact of other members then they must carry a whistle .Each group leader must carry a mobile phone. Lone working should be avoided if possible, and a lone working risk assessment completed in situations where is necessary.
Electrocution	Avoid contact with power lines. Be aware of overhead services if carrying/moving tall objects. Care to be taken if digging in the event of underground services.
Manual handling	Each individual must assess any loads carried and carry only what they feel comfortable with.
Fire	No smoking or naked flames where fire is a likely risk.

Personal Injury including cuts	First aid kit to be brought and location identified to personnel. Apply First Aid as required. If required, seek medical advice.
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INSURANCE

The University has insurance cover for staff, students, on approved University business. Notification of field trips abroad must be sent to Governance office two weeks before it is undertaken. There is no requirement for this if the fieldtrip is in Ireland.

COMMUNICATION

The leader of the fieldwork/trip is responsible for ensuring that all safety precautions have been communicated to all participants. The leader must ensure that these precautions are observed for the duration of the fieldwork/trip.

A nominated person within the department / or personnel within the Departmental Office must be given details of any fieldwork trips, including a list of all those involved, itinerary, expected return time.

Where a field trip / work is repeated the risk assessment must be reviewed each time to identify changes to circumstances and any new hazards, and updated to reflect any changes, and communicated to all concerned.

Each individual field worker also has a responsibility for conducting fieldwork activities in a safe manner both for themselves and for others. They must comply with the procedures and any safety information provided. They must report any matters (e.g., health conditions) which might affect their ability and safety in carrying out the fieldwork/trip in advance. Any reported health issues these will be treated on a confidential basis.

EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

- Instruction and training must be provided to field workers to enable them to carry out the activities safely either prior to attending or as part of the field trip
- Field workers must be advised on appropriate clothing, footwear and equipment needed for the field. They should be given instruction in the safe use of any equipment provided.

WORKING ALONE ON FIELDWORK

Whenever possible, fieldwork should be organised for groups and working alone on field work is to be discouraged as far as possible.

However, it is recognised that in some situations it is not reasonably practicable to avoid working alone and particular care should be taken to establish safe procedures with respect to the working environment, with the staff member/student involved directly in the risk assessment.

Where people will be working unaccompanied/out of sight/earshot.

- This must be justified, and any additional precautions specified.
- Clear guidelines for the type of activity, which the lone worker may carry out, should be given.
- The risk assessment must consider the environment.
- The organiser/leader is ultimately responsible for the lone worker and should know the lone worker's location and itinerary. The use of mobile phones is advised.
- The frequency and nature of monitoring/reporting on lone workers depends on the nature of the work. This should be defined prior to commencement of the fieldwork and included in the risk assessment.

HEALTH ISSUES

The organiser/leader of fieldwork is required to request information from participating staff/students of any health problems which might affect their safety in carrying out the fieldwork e.g. A specific medical condition. All information provided by the Applicant will be treated confidentially as per GDPR requirements.

Procedures must be put in place to ensure the safety of the person who has identified with a health issue. This is to be included in the risk assessment. Exclusion on health and safety grounds from part or all of the activities may be required. Other health matters to consider are the fitness of participants, immunisations, first aid provision, emergency contacts. These details should be requested and submitted as required as per medical declaration form.

FIRST AID PROVISION AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

First Aid training is recommended for groups working in isolated areas and an adequate number of qualified First Aiders should be available in the field. Where fieldwork is being carried out in remote locations, a first aid kit and a mobile phone must be brought on the trip. All accidents during fieldwork activities must be reported as soon as possible after the occurrence to the Safety Office. heathandsafety@mu.ie

TRANSPORT

Staff organising field trips are required to identify the form of transport required for the outgoing and return journeys e.g. buses, private cars or public transport be used. Transport providers approved by the University and on the University framework should be used as these have been vetted and approved for use. Depending on attendees special transport arrangements may be required.

If transport is required to be used that is not on the University framework, organisers must ensure the following:

- Appropriate and current vehicle insurances are in place
- Ensure that drivers have an appropriate licence including for the operation of special transport.
- That buses / cars have a Certificate of Roadworthiness and are fitted with safety belts.

- If staff are using their own cars, they must check with their insurance company if they need occasional / business cover.
 - If they are bringing other researchers / staff and / or equipment to the site
 - If travelling alone and not carrying equipment but intend on claiming mileage

It is recommended that special bus/car transport arrangements are brought to the attention of the Safety Office (healthandsafety@mu.ie) 1 week in advance of the trip being undertaken by the group.

Those attending field trips are recommended to avail of official transport provided by the University, failure to use such transport is at the discretion of the student and/or staff member that chooses to do so, and the University will not accept any liability in the event of an accident or incident that occurs as a result.

WEATHER

Organisers are to use Met Eireann's weather warning service to ascertain forecasted weather. (www.met.ie)

The measures below are to be followed based on Met Eireann's weather alert system:

- No Weather Alert – travel to the site and work at the site is allowed.
- Yellow Weather Alert –
 - Travel to the site is allowed, if a bus company is used check with them first.
 - Work at a site is allowed if deemed safe (Risk assessment to be completed and submitted on IProtectU prior to commencing work)
- Orange and Red Weather Alerts – travel or work at a site is not allowed.

FIELD TRIP ABROAD

If travelling abroad to complete a field trip, the organiser/leader of the field trip is required to follow the steps detailed below in addition to the points outlined previously:

- Contact the Governance Office (governance@mu.ie) and seek insurance approval for the trip
- Arrange travel arrangement through the approved University travel provider
- Arrange for all participants to complete Maynooth University Field Trip Abroad Participant Emergency File (Appendix 3). This is to be kept confidentially by the department office and destroyed after completion of the trip.

Appendix 1: Example template



MEDICAL DECLARATION FORM

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

NOTE: THIS FORM IS TO BE SHREDED BY THE FIELDWORK LEADER ON RETURN TO MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY.

NAME:	
TERM ADDRESS:	
HOME ADDRESS:	
EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:	
EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER:	
MEDICAL CONDITION DETAILS:	
MEDICATION DETAILS (IF ANY)	
COMMENTS:	

Appendix 3 Example template



**MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY FIELD
TRIP ABROAD**

PARTICIPANT EMERGENCY FILE

PERSONAL DETAILS		
NAME		
ADDRESS		
PHONE NUMBER		
EMAIL ADDRESS		
EMERGENCY CONTACT:		
Person to be notified in event of emergency:	Name: Address: Phone No: Mobile: Email:	
Will you be under 18 at the time of this trip/activity?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Parental Consent is a requirement before trip/activity can be undertaken
MEDICAL INFORMATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes or No	DETAILS
Are you generally in good physical condition	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you any serious medical conditions? e.g. Heart condition, diabetes, asthma, eating disorders.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have allergies to foods, medications, environmental factors, insects etc? If Yes, please list.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you taking any medications? e.g. insulin, medication for epilepsy. If Yes, please list.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Is there any additional health information which you feel would be helpful to the University while you are abroad?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Name and Address of Doctor:		Phone:
PASSPORT DETAILS: PLEASE KEEP COPIES OF YOUR PASSPORT IN A SAFE PLACE IN CASE OF THEFT		
Name: (as on passport)	Passport Number:	Expiry Date:
Nationality:	Country of Birth:	Country of Citizenship:
HEALTH INSURANCE		
Travel within Europe: Do you have a European Health Insurance Card (E111)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, Card number: Date of Expiry:
Do you have Personal Health Insurance?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Health insurance is a matter for the individual. The University would strongly recommend that you obtain it.		