

Introduction

Staff and students may be required to travel both within and outside the country on university business. In the School of Food and Nutritional Sciences this mainly involves visits to other academic institutions, and travel for conferences and training courses (for field work activities, see *Fieldwork* section of the safety statement). Note that the advice given below is general in nature and you should thoroughly research your intended destination well in advance of travel.

Hazards

While most travel activities in the School would be expected to occur without incident, domestic travel may involve increased exposure to everyday hazards such as traffic accidents and adverse weather conditions. Foreign travel to certain regions may involve potential exposure to security risks. However, even in 'safe' destinations, theft, loss of valuables or illness can be stressful when in an unfamiliar environment away from home.

Risks

While travel in the School is generally low risk, a risk assessment must be carried out for all domestic and foreign travel. Based on feedback from staff in the School, a number of risk assessment templates have been prepared for 'academic' travel, i.e., visits to other institutions, conferences, workplace visits, etc. These are for:

- Travel within Ireland.
- Travel to Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand (Foreign Travel 1): These are destinations usually regarded as 'safe' and 'familiar', having a broadly similar level of infrastructure, healthcare, emergency services and culture.
- Other foreign destinations (Foreign Travel 2): While not necessarily less 'safe', there may be other issues to consider, e.g., vaccinations requirements, difficulty accessing emergency services.

You don't need to carry out a separate assessment for routine or repeat trips, provided the original assessment adequately covers any changes in circumstances (e.g., health of the traveller, the destination's security status). If travelling in a group, a single assessment is sufficient. These templates are not suitable for travel involving fieldwork, travel to remote locations or leisure activities. The Health and Safety Office [Work Travel Related Risk Assessment Form](#) (19.3.21) should be used in these circumstances.

Arrangements and controls***Foreign travel***

All persons travelling abroad on university business should ensure they have adequate travel insurance. Details of the University's travel insurance arrangements are available here <https://www.ucc.ie/en/ocla/insure/travel/>.

1. Security (terror threats, civil unrest, etc.)

- You must familiarise yourself with the current security situation of your destination. Up to date travel advice is available from the [Department of Foreign Affairs](#) and the [UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#). The Department of Foreign Affairs recommends the Travelwise app for country specific security alert updates (<https://www.dfa.ie/travelwise/>).
- The Department of Foreign Affairs uses four security ratings:
 - Normal Precautions
 - High Degree of Caution
 - Avoid Non-essential Travel
 - Do Not Travel

You should follow any travel restrictions issued. If in any doubt contact the university insurance claims officer.

- While away keep up to date with events that may affect you through local media and contacts.
- Keep in regular contact with family or friends if travelling alone. If an incident occurs in the area you are visiting, make sure you contact them so they know you are safe.
- Be vigilant in public places. Keep a lookout for people acting suspiciously or unattended packages. Follow the instructions of local authorities at all times.

2. Personal security

- Check any visa requirements are in order and your passport is valid to your return date. Note that some countries will require 6 month validity after your travel dates, so always check well in advance of your trip.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Do not engage in behaviour you would not do at home. Avoid appearing conspicuous, and in particular be wary when using high value electronics such as smartphones or laptops in open areas. Check with your local contacts for safe or 'no-go' areas.
- Avoid showing large sums of money in public and avoid using ATMs after dark, especially if you are alone. Check no one has followed you after conducting your business.
- Be aware of cultural sensitivities (e.g., dress codes, attitudes to alcohol).
- Don't carry your credit card, travel documents and money together - leave spare cash and valuables in a safe place.
- Don't carry your passport unless absolutely necessary and leave a copy of your passport and other travel documents with family or friends at home.
- Check that your credit cards are valid before you leave home, and find out how to replace/cancel them if lost or stolen while away.
- In the event of theft, you should report it to the local police immediately and get a written police report (in English if possible).
- Make sure you can easily access emergency contact numbers. It is a good idea to keep a separate paper copy of these, not just on your electronic devices.

3. Medical

- Ensure all necessary vaccinations are up to date well in advance of travelling. Many destinations outside of Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand require vaccinations and this may depend on the length of stay, specific regions visited or work undertaken. If in doubt, always discuss with your healthcare provider.
- If you require regular medication ensure you have as much as you might reasonably expect to need for the duration of the trip. Keep medications in your hand luggage, in their original packaging with your name on the prescription label and take a copy of your prescription. Some countries have very strict controls on medications that can be brought in (for example, medications available over the counter or on prescription in Ireland may be illegal or considered a controlled substance in the UAE). If in doubt consult the embassy or consulate of the country involved on restrictions or any documentation required.
- If you have a pre-existing medical condition, take regular medication, or are pregnant, you should seek the advice of your health care provider before travelling. The university's occupational health physician (for staff) or Student Health (students) may also be contacted for advice.
- The Health and Safety Office have issued an advisory note on travel and health for staff. All staff must read, sign and return a copy for school records (your only need to do this once, not for every trip).

- When travelling to another EU country, the Department of Foreign Affairs strongly recommends that you bring a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Information for Irish citizens on application, countries covered, and how to access healthcare services is available here <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/1/schemes/EHIC/>. Non-Irish nationals can access information here <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=563&langId=en#nationalinfo>.
- See <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/travelhealth/Pages/PreventingDVT.aspx> for information on [deep vein thrombosis \(DVT\)](#).
 - General and country-specific travel health advice is available on the NHS [Fitfortravel](#) website.

4. Driving abroad

- Ensure your drivers licence is valid and sufficient for your destination country (you may need an international drivers permit).
- Always plan your driving route in advance.
- Don't give lifts to hitchhikers.
- Park in well-lit safe areas.
- Keep doors locked and bags/valuables out of sight.
- Familiarise yourself with local traffic laws.
- See the [AA Travel hub](#) for country specific driving advice.

Domestic travel

1. Travelling by car

- If using your own car, it must have valid insurance, tax and NCT certificate.
- It is a good idea to give your car a quick check before setting out (see [RSA Car and Small Passenger Vehicle Driver Daily Pre-Checks](#)).
- Check weather forecasts in advance if adverse conditions are expected.
- Keep contact details of a breakdown assistance company to hand.
- Plan your route in advance. If you need to check directions while en route, pull off the road in a safe location first.
- For long car journeys, plan for breaks at regular intervals.

2. Breakdowns

- Move off the road if you can, put your hazard lights on and ring for breakdown assistance.
- If you get out, take care and use the doors facing away from passing traffic.
- Don't stand between your vehicle and oncoming traffic.
- On a motorway it is safer to wait outside your car. Put your hazards on and get out your car by the left hand door. Contact motorway services using the nearest roadside telephone and move a safe distance away from the car and motorway (move up on the bank or stand behind the barrier).

3. Car accidents

- Try to remain calm and take stock of the situation.
- Check if you are injured. If you are able, assess any others involved for injury. Don't move any injured persons unless they are in immediate danger.
- Call the emergency services (112), providing as much detail about the accident as you can such (location, number of people and vehicles involved, injuries sustained).
- If it is a serious motor accident, don't move any vehicles.
- For minor accidents, pull off to the side to prevent obstruction to traffic.
- Exchange details with any other drivers involved including name, address, phone number, insurance company name and number, insurance policy number, driver's license number, vehicle

registration number, car make, model and colour. You should also take the contact details of any witnesses and the name and number of the on-scene Garda.

- Where necessary photograph the scene of the accident and damage to vehicles.
- No discussion of liability needs to take place at the scene of the accident and do not feel drawn into any discussion. Even if you feel yourself to have been responsible take the other driver's full details. You should only discuss details of the accident with the Gardaí or your own insurance company.

4. Snow and ice

- Consider rescheduling meetings/appointments or organise them so that you can avoid driving during the worst of the part of the day (e.g., driving in the early morning before thaw sets in, driving after dark).
- Clear your windows and mirrors and remove snow from your vehicle before setting out.
- If roads are snowy or icy slow down, use all controls delicately and leave extra distance between you and the vehicle in front. Avoid harsh braking and harsh acceleration. Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin. Select a low gear when travelling downhill especially if through bends.
- Pay particular attention if the road looks polished or glossy - it could be "black ice".
- Watch out for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists and allow extra space.

5. Heavy rain and floods

- Slow down and allow extra distance between you and the vehicle in front.
- Take special care when driving behind large vehicles that generate a considerable amount of spray which reduces visibility.
- Allow extra space between you and vulnerable road users such as cyclists and motorcyclists.
- Drive with dipped headlights at all times.
- Be aware of aquaplaning especially on roads with speed limits of 100 km/h and 120 km/h.
- If the road ahead is flooded choose another route, do not attempt to drive through it.
- After going through water, drive slowly with your foot on the brake pedal for a short distance - this helps to dry the brakes.
- Be aware that roads can be slippery when the weather breaks after a dry spell. Adjust your driving accordingly.

6. Cycling for work

- Anyone cycling for work must read the Rules for Cyclists in the Road Safety Authority [Rules of the Road](#) and follow requirements and recommendations.
- See the [UCC Campus Cycling Policy](#) for cycling on campus.

6. Accommodation

If you need to stay away from home overnight, even minor emergencies can be stressful in unfamiliar accommodation and locations.

- If you plan an overnight stay, book accommodation in advance.
- In most cases conference/meeting organisers will provide an accommodation list. If you need to choose your own accommodation, research suitable options (e.g., places you may have stayed before/are familiar with, recommendations from colleagues, suitable location, etc.).
- Know where the emergency exits are, and familiarise yourself with the escape route from your room.

Sources of information

- Department of Foreign Affairs:
<https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/>
- UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Foreign Travel Advice:
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
- NHS fitfor travel:
<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx>
- Road Safety Authority of Ireland:
<http://www.rsa.ie/>
- AA Ireland Limited:
(www.theaa.ie)

Revision history

Version	Comments	Date
1	New section.	June 2017