**Department of Film and Screen Media**

Location Filming Practices and Procedures

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| 1. Aim and scope |
| This Code of Practice provides essential safety management standards for all location filming approved by the Department of Film and Screen Media, including practice teaching and training, research, and student-initiated projects. The scope of this Code of Practice covers all self-managed filming work, whether on or off University premises, and includes related activities such as photography, sound recording, preparation of sets and props, conducting location recces, and travel to and from locations.  The Code of Practice requires a sufficient level of planning to ensure adequate management systems are in place to protect your own safety, and that of your crew, cast members, contributors and others who may be affected by the filming, including members of the public.  Furthermore, the Code of Practice operates within the 2011 USHA UK Fieldwork Code of Practice, of which UCC is a member, which covers activities such as field trips and conferences.  Generally speaking, depending on the nature of the task, filming is conducted in relatively small groups formed within a class, so for example the 1st year practice students work in groups of 5 students, plus any actors or contributors. |

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| 2. Risk assessment |
| Risk assessment is essential to effective health and safety management. For our purposes, this is a two-tier process, comprising the following stages:  (1) A [General Risk Assessment (GRA)](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/filmstudies/files201718/FSMLocationFilming-GeneralRiskAssessment.pdf) has been conducted by the Department’s Health & Safety Officer in accordance with the University policy and procedure. This applies to the use of the Department’s location filming equipment when used in relatively stable operating environments, such as the Film and Screen Media premises, and filming simple actions, such as standing, sitting, reading, walking across the room, still life objects, etc.. The GRA for using Location Filming Equipment is appended and forms part of this Code of Practice.  (2) Owing to the extremely variable nature of film locations and filming action, whether or not you are working with real or imaginary situations, it is necessary to conduct a further level of risk assessment, which may be specific to a particular scene and location, or which can be used for a sequence of work, such as for a documentary or student film. [The Film and Screen Media – Risk Assessment Form (RAF)](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/filmstudies/files201920/LocationFilmingRiskAssessmentForm.docx) has been devised to serve this second level of risk assessment and blank forms can found in the leaflet holder outside office door B.10.D or can be downloaded from [the Student Area of the Film and Screen Media Website.](https://www.ucc.ie/en/filmstudies/students/) |

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| 3. Training and ability |
| As a pre-requisite to approving any self-managed location filming work, all practice students are at the earliest and most appropriate opportunity given location safety instruction.  Location Safety Management training, covers the legal context and the Department ’s operating procedures, including how to complete the Film and Screen Media – Risk Assessment Form.  Students are required to sign a declaration to acknowledge they have received this training and these are kept on file by the Department’s Health & Safety Officer.  In addition, good health & safety practice is reinforced during practice skills workshops and other practice sessions as an integral part of the various taught programmes. In accordance with the Film and Screen Media Guidelines, it is essential that you attend any sessions that cover location safety and fully understand the process of location assessment before you embark on any location recording work. If you have not attended such a session, or are not confident in undertaking the necessary location assessment, including health & safety risk assessment, then you must contact the Department’s Health & Safety Officer to arrange further training before planning any location work.  Get to know your fellow crew members in terms of any skills and abilities that may come in useful during filming, for example if you have a qualified First Aider on the team who may be able to take appropriate action in the event of an emergency.  It is also useful to be aware of any pre-existing conditions that people have in case their condition may be triggered or aggravated during filming, or if they have particular difficulties with certain situations such as height or confined spaces. Often, people may be unwilling to disclose such conditions so you will need to be sensitive to this when planning any work that may cause such difficulties. |

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| 4. Responsibility |
| Everyone involved in a location shoot is responsible for ensuring filming is conducted safely. Under the [University’s Standards of Conduct,](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/currentstudents/documents/studentcharter.pdf) all students are required to act in accordance with the health and safety information, training, and instruction they have received.  In accordance with the policy for location filming, one student from the crew (effectively the Line Producer, Director) must be responsible for the management of the production’s health & safety arrangements, including conducting location research and recce, safety risk assessment, completion of Risk Assessment Forms, seeking specialist safety advice as necessary, and ensuring stated control measures are effectively communicated to all participants or affected parties prior to filming.  This designated student will present the group’s Risk Assessment Form to a member of staff, who will then assess the form, ensuring an adequate safety risk assessment has been conducted, providing practical advice as necessary and approving the planned filming activity.  In certain cases, for example in which the level of expected safety risk is rated as high, authorization will need to be escalated to the Head of Department.  Whether or not you have specific responsibility for health & safety for any production, you must read and apply the following general guidance in any production work.  Be aware that you will often be using professional, rather than consumer, equipment and therefore you will be regarded by the authorities as being a professional film crew rather than, say, a tourist.  Furthermore, be aware that in terms of how you and your film crew are perceived you are building the professional reputation of yourself and your crew, and in addition the Department, the University, and indeed the profession as a whole. |

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| 5. Locations |
| For the purposes of this Code of Practice, filming locations may be considered under the following categories, requiring different processes and levels of management, and arrangements for obtaining the relevant filming permissions:  (1) On University premises - [Student Rules – University College Cork](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/currentstudents/documents/Student-Rules---UCC---Jan2018.pdf) - paying particular attention to the Standards of Conduct requiring Students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and reasonable manner at all times. This includes being respectful to staff, fellow students, members of the public and to respect and adhere to regulations and policies of the University.  (2) Off-campus on private property – many students choose to film in rented accommodation. It is essential to obtain the necessary permissions in writing from the owner or managing agent of the property in addition to the occupier as unauthorized filming may contravene the particular tenancy agreement, which has the potential for the occupier to be evicted. Charges may also apply.  (3) Off-campus commercial or managed spaces such as shops, offices, railway premises, bus stations, galleries, museums, theatres, etc. – It is essential to obtain filming permission from the relevant manager prior to filming. Charges will often apply.  (4) Street filming and other open spaces – If you are filming in the street, i.e. on the pavement, which is considered as being on the public roadway, you must obtain permission from the relevant local authority office and inform the relevant local police station. Charges may apply.  Some location hosts will request a copy of your Public Liability Insurance (PLI) certificate. This can be obtained from the Department’s Health and Safety Officer if required. |

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| 6. Actors, performers and contributors |
| Student productions have no legal constitution to employ people and therefore need to cast volunteer actors. In Irish employment law, being a volunteer means there are no contractual obligations on either party, including giving benefits in kind, though you should budget to reimburse any reasonable expenses they have incurred such as travel, overnight accommodation and subsistence.  Nevertheless, we encourage students to set the highest standards when casting actors and performers and to find the most suitable actors for the role. Work as a crew or sub-crew when meeting and screen testing your actors, rather than working alone.  Your actors, performers and contributors should be asked to sign a release form before any principal photography or recording commences. A [template Release Form](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/filmstudies/files201718/Film-and-Screen-Media-Risk-Assessment-Form.pdf) is provided on our website and you should keep a copy of the signed form in your production records.  If your actor, performer or contributor is below the Minimum School Leaving Age (MSLA), you must operate in accordance with the University [policy statement on Children and Young Persons](http://www.ucc.ie/en/policiesandprocedures/healthandsafety/personswithspecialneeds/general/). Under the Regulations, a young person is defined as having reached 16 years or the school leaving age (whichever is the higher) but is less than 18 years.  Always act in a professional manner with your actors, performers and contributors by being courteous and respectful at all times, ensuring you communicate all necessary information in a timely way and being punctual for any planned arrangements including call times for the shoot. |

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| 7. Props, costumes, make-up and filmed action |
| If you intend to use replica weapons, it is important that these are handled in accordance with the Department’s procedures. If you are using a prop weapon, you will need to have an approved risk assessment covering the planned replica weapon usage, and you will be asked to sign a declaration about the security, handling and use of the weapon. If you intend to use knives or other sharp implements as props, these must be blunted or modified before use. Actors and anyone exposed to these props need to be properly briefed in their use.  If you are using any substances such as make- up products, fake blood, etc., these must be proprietary products that are approved for the purpose and these often fall within the [Department Safety Statement for the Control of Hazards and Risks in respect of Chemicals and Hazardous Substances.](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/healthandsafety/documents/wm-scidocs-doc2/Chemicals.doc)  All action must be properly risk assessed and if there is a significantly high level of risk then you must seek tutorial advice to establish whether or not it is absolutely necessary to film the action in the planned way. Often, there will be creative ways of cutting or framing the action to reduce potential risks. Some actions will require special approval and possibly the use of suitably competent specialists such as stunt coordinators, animal handlers, weapons experts, etc., before the planned filming can proceed. |

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| 8. Planning (i) |
| Effective and timely planning is essential to safe working on location. If you are working as a production crew, one person must be identified as being responsible for sourcing and visiting locations, for risk assessing any filming work being planned, and for ensuring the planned control measures are applied during the shoot.  As a crew member, you are required to follow the health & safety procedures devised for the particular filming work and report any issues to the person with designated responsibility for health & safety management.  For certain recording activities, which will often include some forms of documentary production, you may be required to work alone and will effectively be the person responsible for health & safety management.  You will normally be expected to visit and do a ‘recce’ of all of the locations you are considering, well in advance of any planned recording, so you can assess their suitability and identify any hazards associated with the particular work environment. You should use the [Location Checklist](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/filmstudies/files201718/UCCFSMlocationchecklist.pdf), available on the Student Area of the FSM website, during your visit. If you are unable to do a recce, then you will need to provide your course tutor with evidence of an appropriate level of location research, for example correspondence with an appropriate location contact.  It is essential that you liaise closely with a local contact for your location. This person should be clearly identified and their name and contact details included in the Risk Assessment Form.  If it is a public facility such as a railway station, airport, museum or anywhere ‘out on the street’ or public roadway, you must contact the relevant authority, seek any necessary permissions and ensure you understand and observe the local contact’s safety management requirements.  Your local contact should also brief you on fire evacuation and other operational procedures, etc. If you are unable to find readily available information about who to contact, then ask a member of the Film and Screen Media staff to assist you in securing someone.  If you are recording in a private dwelling, pay particular attention to potential hazards occurring frequently in domestic environments, such as:  •steep staircases •unmarked steps •low beams and doorways •slippery surfaces •tripping on loose floor coverings, toys and other loose articles •kitchen hazards such as hot liquids, glassware, knives, etc. •unruly children or pets •substandard electrical mains installations  You will also need to identify suitable exit routes that can be used if an emergency such as a house fire occurs. You must agree with the local contact suitable means of keeping these routes free from obstruction during the shoot and arrange for any doors or windows serving as emergency exits to be readily usable to allow unimpeded exit. |

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| 8. Planning (ii) |
| If your shoot is complex in terms of needing to use specialist lighting equipment, jib, gimbal, etc. you will find it helpful to draw a scale floor plan of the location so you can plan blocking of shots (i.e. positions and moves of cameras and actors) and any required control areas for safe operation of equipment, storage of cases, designated safe walkways and emergency exits, cable runs including those to local mains power supplies, etc.  You may need to hire or borrow additional items of safety equipment, particularly if you need to restrict access to the set and work area if it is normally used by members of the public and suchlike.  The key section of the [Risk Assessment Form](https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/filmstudies/files201920/LocationFilmingRiskAssessmentForm.docx) is the ‘activities or risks’ section. This comprises of a checklist of generic activities/risks to assist you with identifying the ones most likely to occur during your shoot. While the appended General Risk Assessment applies to operation of the Department’s filming equipment, you will normally need to complete a Risk Assessment Form in order to assess and manage any hazards presented by the nature of the action being filmed and the environment you are filming in.  The purpose of the risk assessment is to enable you to safeguard the wellbeing of all participants in the location recording event and of anyone who may incidentally be affected by the work, such as a member of the public or bystander who works in an adjacent area.  For each activity/risk you think applies, you should enter the following details:  (1) How might these activities/risks result in accident/injury?  (2) a brief description explaining what measures are already in place to eliminate the activity/risk or reduce the level of risk involved.  (3) what further action is necessary to ensure any hazard or risk is avoided?  (4) who will carry out these actions and when?  You may need to seek specialist advice from your course tutor, the relevant local contact, the Department’s Health & Safety Officer, the University Health & Safety Advisers, or a specialist adviser. |

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| 9. Preparing for the shoot day |
| For filming purposes it is desirable for crew members to wear dark clothing to avoid causing reflections, made from fabric that doesn’t generate noise when moving. However, there may be overriding safety requirements to consider, such as the need for waterproof clothing (which is often quite noisy), light clothing to reduce heat absorption and hi-viz clothing in areas where there may be moving vehicles.  Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged and your account has sufficient credit to make any required calls. Programme in any relevant numbers, as identified in your Risk Assessment Form, so you can make rapid contact in the event of an emergency.  Personal contacts need to be made aware that you will have to switch your phone to silent during recording and it is helpful to indicate a time when you may next be able to respond to any messages in order to avoid causing unnecessary concern.  In addition to the technical equipment you are borrowing from the department, you may find it helpful to assemble a location kit containing the following items:   |  | | --- | |   •Production papers (including RAFs, evidence of filming permission, important contacts information, some blank sheets of plain A4 paper, etc.)  •Notebook and pens  •Waterproof wallet to keep papers in  •Camera tape  •Gaffer tape  •Work gloves  •Marker   * •Lens cloth * •Lens cleaner * •Camera rain cover * •Copy of equipment operating manual * •Mobile phone (charged and in credit) * •Utility toolkit including scissors, penknife, screwdrivers and pliers * •Spare batteries and blank recording media * •First Aid kit * •Anything else that you wished you had taken on your previous shoot * •Waterproof holdall in which to keep all of the above | |  | |

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| 10. Collecting and transporting the equipment |
| When the equipment is being set aside for issue, you need to check it is consistent with your booking request.  You must inspect the equipment, particularly all electrical cables and connectors, to make certain it is free from any signs of damage or disrepair. You also need to test the equipment to make certain it is fully operational.  Ensure you have been issued with any additional safety items required for the shoot, for example, work gloves for adjusting lighting equipment, hi-viz jackets for working near moving vehicles, etc.  If you identify any issues with the condition of the equipment you should report it to the member of staff who is assisting you so it may be set aside for repair or replacement. While we will attempt to replace any item of equipment you have reported as being in a state of disrepair, realistically we operate with a narrow margin of error and ultimately we may be unable to fulfil the full booking requirement. In such cases, we can discuss the difficulty with your course tutor to assess the consequences in the context of your coursework.  You must exercise due care when lifting and carrying equipment, taking into consideration the weight and size of any items or combination of items, the position of any carrying straps or handles, and any hard corners or projections.  There are trolleys available to assist in transporting heavy items of equipment, so please ask for one when you feel the need to use them.  If you are carrying equipment on public transport, ensure you have an adequate number of people to share the load and avoid causing injury to other passengers when moving and stowing any items. Keep alert for any suspicious activity that may pose a threat to your personal wellbeing and that of your crew members. Always keep any items of baggage attended and in view, and comply with any directions given by official transport personnel, especially if they advise your baggage handling arrangements are deemed to be causing safety or security issues. |

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| 11. Setting up (i) |
| On arrival at the location, check the layout and operation of the work environment to ensure there are no unexpected conditions that will affect the health & safety controls you intend to operate. Ensure the work area is clear of any slip or trip hazards.  Ensure that any lighting positions are well clear of any adjacent surfaces, structures and in particular soft furnishings such as curtains or drapes. This will allow the heat from lighting equipment to dissipate freely and minimise the risk of a fire being caused by igniting any fabrics or other flammable materials.  You should adopt the following principles with regard to use of gels, diffusers, reflectors and proximity to potentially flammable materials:  Take care when erecting stands. Check for any overhead fixtures and fittings, including lighting and other electrical installations that could pose a hazard. Telescopic systems can collapse if left improperly secured and stand legs can cause trips if poorly positioned. Also be aware the higher you extend a stand, the less stable the structure becomes. Risks can be reduced by weighing the stand legs down with sand bags, ensuring cables are kept free from tripping, and securing stands or light units to firm structures using proprietary ties.  Use white camera tape to mark the ends of any microphone stands, flag stands and similar pointed objects so they are still visible after working lights are dimmed. |

| 11. Setting up (ii) |
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| Cables should be routed so there are vertical drops to the floor from any connecting points and then run flat across the floor, preferably running between points in straight lines. Any excess lengths should be coiled up and stowed under the base of an equipment stand or similar dead space to avoid causing trips. All cables running across or along any walkways must be secured to the floor using gaffer tape.  If you are using mains power extensions, make certain they are of the appropriate rating for the load you intend to use. You can do this by assessing the total power output (in watts) required of any equipment items you plan to supply, then divide this by the supply voltage (Irish consumer supply is 230 volts AC). For example, an extension block rated at 6 Amps, when connected to a conventional 13 Amp power socket in Ireland, will allow a maximum total of 1,380 Watts. If in doubt always ask first.  If you exceed this loading by connecting too many appliances, you are at risk of overloading the circuit, which has associated fire and electrical safety hazards. It is wise to allow a reasonable margin of error rather than work to the maximum limit.  You need to ensure any mains extension reels are fully extended to prevent the cable from overheating. This however increases the potential for trips, so you must ensure any excess cable is laid out in a safe area.  You must prevent any electrical cables or connectors from being exposed to water, which includes puddles, spilled liquids, etc. It is useful to supply some paper towels to clear spillages as soon as they occur. |

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| 12. During filming |
| During any location recording, there is a high risk of becoming preoccupied with the demands of getting a good take and this is when there is a greater chance of an accident occurring. Your shooting schedule should provide a clear sequence of work so that everyone involved can operate efficiently and there are effective contingency measures if work falls behind schedule.  All crew members should apply the relevant control measures put in place for the shoot and monitor safety arrangements continually for changing conditions. For example, when shooting outdoors you need to be aware of over exposure to sun, cold and heat over a period of time.  Work areas will often be dark in relation to any set where film lighting is in use. This makes trip hazards less visible so check the floor frequently and remove any items that may have been placed in work areas to a suitable safe place.  Rehearsals on set will normally consist of run-throughs to check that planned actions work at the location and to adjust lighting, camera framing and sound recording levels.  It may be necessary to simulate some actions that will be included in the performance to reduce exposure to hazards. For example, if a scene includes performed smoking (which will have been risk-assessed in advance) then cigarettes must only be lit for the actual recording and not the rehearsal.  All mobile phones must be switched off during recording to avoid interference with sound recording equipment and to ensure work progress is not disrupted. You should refrain from unnecessary chatter, laughter, etc. as this can be very disruptive and, as a consequence, stressful when the production director, performers, and fully-occupied crew members are trying to focus on their work.  Be aware of where microphones and cables are placed and avoid making any sudden or loud noises. This includes accidentally knocking a boom pole or a lapel microphone you may be wearing, and pulling or treading on signal cables.  If you are responsible for recording sound, you need to adjust your headphone monitoring level to the minimum required, (1) to distinguish between sound the microphone(s) are receiving and any ambient sound heard through the structure of the headphones, and (2) to assess the quality of the sound that will be recorded. Ensure everyone in the recording area is aware of the placement of any microphones being used and zones they need to avoid.  If you are wearing a headset for sound recording, communications, etc., be vigilant in maintaining awareness of warnings you would otherwise normally be able to hear, such as the sound of an approaching vehicle. |

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| 13. Breakdown |
| After you have recorded your final take, it is very likely most of the cast and crew, including yourself, will be in a rush to leave. This puts everyone involved at greater risk and you must give proper consideration to striking any set safely.  Start by ensuring everyone leaves the set unless they are directly involved in clearing up as this will avoid obstructing the removal of equipment and props. Potential trip hazards, such as cables and tracks, should be removed before transporting any heavy objects.  Once all equipment, props, cables, etc. have been removed from the set, clear the rest of the location picking up any litter and cleaning up any spillages to prevent endangering subsequent users of the space.  Remember that you are likely to be tired after a long day’s shoot and must therefore avoid the risk of falling asleep while driving or performing a similar high-risk activity until fully rested. |
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| 14. In the event of an accident or incident |
| If there is an accident or incident on set (whether or not it causes injury), you will need to take prompt action along the following lines:   * Stay calm and take control of the situation . * Ensure no one else (including yourself) is exposed to the hazard – this may require as far as is possible such measures as evacuation from the scene to a safe area, shutting off mains electrical supply, extinguishing potential sources of ignition, isolating the area, etc. * If a person falls ill, or is injured, in the event of a life threatening emergency call **999**, otherwise seek urgent medical assistance by calling **112** for advisory support and if possible seek assistance from a qualified first-aider. Garda Station Directory: <http://www.garda.ie/stations/default.aspx> * If the injured/sick person is taken away by ambulance, make certain you know which A&E department they are being taken to so that next of kin can be informed. * If the injured/sick person is unable to contact their next of kin themselves, then you should call the University Security Services on **021 490 3111** (24hr service) and report the details of the incident so they may be forwarded to next of kin by the University authorities. * Inform your location contact (as designated in your RAF) that an incident has occurred. They may have local operating procedures that need to be followed.  1. If safe to do so, take photographs of the scene, obtain witness contact details and if possible isolate any relevant items that can be used as evidence in the event of an accident investigation. 2. Only resume filming if you are absolutely certain the events leading up to the incident will cause no further harm or injury to others.   As soon as possible, contact the Department Office, Room B.10.D, to ensure that an Accident/ Incident report form is completed. The Health & Safety Officer can assist with this.  If you are contacted by the press or media in relation to the incident, you should not answer questions but refer enquiries to the University Press Office on 021 490 2862  (email: donnaodriscoll@ucc.ie)  In compliance with the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations Act (current edition)* and the associated [University Safety policy](https://www.ucc.ie/en/policiesandprocedures/healthandsafety/universitysafetypolicystatement/UCCsafetypolicy(update)nov2011.pdf), all accidents, or any incident that could have resulted in an accident, must be reported as soon as possible using the relevant procedure and report form available from the Department Office. |

This document has been adapted from the Royal Holloway, University of London, Department of Media Arts Location Filming Code of Practice for the Department of Film and Screen Media, University College Cork.