# Restricted Access Guidelines for Fieldwork

1. Permission to conduct fieldwork should only be granted for essential fieldwork that is time sensitive. All other work including meetings should continue be conducted remotely via Teams etc.
2. National guidelines must always be adhered to. Currently guidelines have been issued by the Government (Return to Work Safely Protocol) and HSE but other national guidelines may be made available in due course.
3. A letter of authorisation must be secured from Head of College and VPRI before commencing any fieldwork activity.
   a. The following plans and assessments must be produced by the PI/supervisor in order to apply for a letter of authorisation.
      i. A COVID-19 Response Plan (including details on density of occupancy). This plan must comply with UCC's Health and Safety Policy and the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol.
      ii. A full Risk Assessment must be conducted for all fieldwork research activities for both Covid-19 public health pandemic risks and for Occupational H&S Risks. Template to be found on the RCBT webpage. Where RA have already been completed, they need to be revised for COVID-19 public health pandemic risks.
   b. All documentation should be submitted to local research leadership (Director of RICU or Head of School/Dept) who will compile and record all requests before sending in batch to the relevant Head of College (HoC), and Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI). HoC and VPRI will review and issue a letter of authorisation if appropriate.
   c. Once a letter of authorisation has been issued, PIs/supervisors should be complete letters of assurance and submit to local research leadership. The letter template can be found on the RCBT page.
   d. Names of researchers who will be involved in the field research along with a timetable to be supplied to HoC to enable letters of authorisation to be issued.
   e. Researchers must have a copy of the letter of authorisation with them at all times.
4. All PIs must consider the following in their compliance plan:
   a. Plans must adhere to all Fire and Occupational H&S Regulations and emergency preparedness and should be discussed with the Health & Safety Office and Buildings and Estates in advance.
   b. Clear electronic record kept at academic unit level, where researchers are based, listing the names of the researchers involved in any activity, where they travel and when and with whom.
   c. Travel plans for each researcher involved must be submitted as part of the compliance plan. Researchers must travel alone to the fieldwork site unless already sharing accommodation with co-fieldworkers.
   d. Public transport should not be used to travel to fieldwork site.
   e. If necessary to refuel a vehicle during fieldwork, government guidelines should be followed.
   f. If there is overnight accommodation involved, this must be single occupancy.
   g. Plans for meals/rest breaks must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Scheduling breaks will help to assist in this.

h. Where boat work is involved, the size of the vessel will determine the number of researchers allowed. This must be determined as part of the compliance plan.

i. Fieldwork that occurs in off-campus facilities e.g. off-site labs or other accommodations, will need to ensure that there is a COVID-19 plan in place for those facilities and that they comply with UCC guidelines and regulations in place at that time.

j. If PPE equipment is required due to the nature of the research activity, this needs to be acquired at local level. Where additional PPE is not required, national guidelines should be adhered to.

k. All light field equipment should be loaded by one person. Proper physical distancing will be followed for the loading of light items, where 2 people will not be within 2m of each other at any stage. If heavy field equipment has to be moved, loading will be done outdoors, face protection and gloves will be worn, and the time spent in proximity limited to less than 5 minutes total.

l. Staff should regularly sanitise their workspace and equipment. This should be clearly communicated, and necessary supplies made available.

m. Where consumables are required, technical staff need to be made aware and local arrangements must be put in place for collection.

n. A system should be put in place to ensure maintenance of equipment and monitoring of health and safety regulations.

o. Controls and protocols need to be put in place in relation to how any incidents that might occur would be managed.

p. As per the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol, a response plan must be put in place for dealing with suspected cases of COVID-19 that might arise during fieldwork. Please see appendix below for further information.

5. When conducting field work, researchers must comply with all comply with UCC's Health and Safety Policy, HSE Guidelines and the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol. In addition, they should also comply with the following:

a. Good hand hygiene is important. All personnel shall wash hands with soap and water on a regular basis where possible. All personnel shall carry hand gel and regularly use it where hand washing facilities aren't available.

b. All personnel shall follow good hygiene and cough etiquette.

c. Sharing of equipment should be discouraged.

d. Any equipment being used by multiple people will be sanitised using suitable spray or wipes between uses.

e. Should a suspected case of COVID-19 arise, researchers should follow HSE advice and immediately contact their line manager as well as the Student Health Department at 021 490 2311.

6. All measures put in place should be directly communicated to researchers who are granted permission to conduct fieldwork. Note that the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol requires that induction training is put in place for all employees returning to the work place. All aspects of these restrictions will be covered in induction which will be supervised by the lead project scientist

7. It must be clearly communicated to all staff undertaking fieldwork that **they need to stay at home if demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19.** Note that the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol requires that employers must issue a pre-return to work form for workers to complete at least 3 days in advance of the return to work to seek confirmation

that the worker, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirm that the worker is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website.

> All protocols and compliance plans must adhere to UCC Health and Safety Policy, Compliance Checklist / Access Protocol and the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol.

**Appendix 1**

**DRAFT: Preparing for and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the University**

**Background**

On 01st May the Government published the "Roadmap for Re-opening Society & Business" which sets out how the COVID-19 restrictions will be lifted. Subsequently, on 09th May they published the

"Return to Work Safely Protocol" which supports "employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace when the economy begins to slowly open up".

Significant work is underway through the Campus Business Continuity Team, the Research Business Continuity Team and the Academic Leadership Forum to safely restart activity on campus in a measured and phased way in line with the :

- Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business (1st May 2020)

- Return to Work Safely Protocol (9th May 2020).

This Standard Operating Procedure follows the recommendations in the Return to Work Safely Protocol as to how to prepare for and deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 at work.

**Developing a Response Plan**

Prior to an activity restarting on campus, the Head of School/Department/Research Centre must put in place a response plan, in advance, for dealing with a suspected case that may arise during the course of the activity. The following steps, based on the Return to Work Safely Protocol , outline the steps involved in developing a response plan:

The Head of School/Department/Research Centre must:

1. include a defined response structure that identifies the team(s) responsible for responding to a suspected case in their COVID-19 response plan.

2. appoint an appropriate manager(s) for dealing with suspected cases.

3. allocate staff members to be part of the response team and train them in what actions to take.

4. consult with Buildings and Estates to identify a designated isolation area(s) in advance of any activities restarting on campus. The designated area should preferably be one with a door that can be closed. The designated area and the route to the designated area should be easily accessible and as far as is reasonable and practicable should be accessible by people with disabilities. First Aid Rooms or similar may be suitable as isolation areas.

5. take into account the possibility of one or more persons displaying the signs of COVID19 and have additional isolation areas available or another contingency plan for dealing with same.

6. ensure the designated area has the ability to isolate the person behind a closed door.

7. provide as far as is reasonably practicable:

   - ventilation, e.g. fresh air ventilation/ability to open a window

   - tissues,

   - hand sanitiser,

   - disinfectant and/or wipes,

   - gloves, masks,

   - clinical waste bags,

   - pedal-operated, closed bin

**Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

While any staff member or student should not attend the University if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, if a person displays symptoms or believes they may have COVID-19 whilst at the University, the line manager and the local response team must:

1. ask the individual if they feel well enough to travel home. If they do, immediately direct them to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.

2. facilitate the individual remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor.

3. isolate the individual and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.

4. provide a mask for the individual if one is available. The individual should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.

5. advise the individual to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

6. advise the individual to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue(s) provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue(s) in the waste bag/bin provided.

7. arrange transport home or to an assessment centre if directed to go there by their GP. Public transport of any kind should not be used.

8. advise the individual not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital.

9. advise the individual to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home.

10. carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.

11. advise your line manager of the incident.

12. for reasons of patient confidentiality, please do not use e-mail or social media to seek assistance for a colleague who may be displaying symptoms/seeking help.

13. take the individual's work area(s) and isolation area(s) (if used) out of use immediately. Arrange for appropriate cleaning and disinfection of the area(s). Cleaning and disinfection should not commence until at least one hour after the affected individual(s) has left the building. Contact General Services by phone on 021 4903111 and ask to speak with a Duty Officer to arrange cleaning.

14. inform student health of the incident on 4902311.

15. provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.


**Further Information**

https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/

https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_and_checklists/employers-checklist-no-41.pdf