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**UCC Policy on Camping on UCC Campus**

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| **Document reference number** | HSP: 002 | **Document developed by** | Nick Parkinson, Director of Enterprise Risk management/ Deputy Corporate Secretary |
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**Policy on Camping on UCC Campus**

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1 Introduction

UCC campus, while private property, is relatively open during normal business hours. Indeed, UCC welcomes visitors to its beautiful and historic grounds, which offer both vibrancy and tranquillity in equal measure.

It is not surprising then, that UCC offers a tempting location for those seeking to exploit the above qualities by setting up an encampment. Indeed, there are many potential reasons why someone might wish to camp on UCC premises, including:

* **Homelessness**: The individual might not have a permanent place to stay and is seeking shelter wherever they can find it.
* **Emergency:** They could be in an emergency situation, such as being stranded or having their vehicle breakdown, and need a place to stay temporarily.
* **People travelling:** Sometimes backpackers or people travelling might camp out of convenience, especially if they are on a long journey and need a place to rest.
* **Safety:** They might feel safer on UCC premises compared to other locations, especially if the area is well-lit or has some form of security.
* **Lack of Awareness:** They might not be aware that camping or sleeping rough on UCC premises is prohibited. That is, they might mistakenly believe that the area is public land or that camping is permitted.
* **Mental Health Issues:** Some individuals might be dealing with mental health challenges that lead them to camp or sleep rough in unconventional places.
* **Protest:** Individuals or groups might camp as a form of protest or demonstration to draw attention to a cause or issue.
* **Adventure or Thrill-Seeking:** Some people might camp in unconventional places for the thrill or adventure of it, often without considering the implications.
* **Temporary Shelter:** In some cases, people might use UCC premises as a temporary shelter while they are in transition, such as moving between homes or waiting for accommodation arrangements.
* **Seeking Privacy:** They might be looking for a private place to stay away from crowded or public areas.

Following a number of recent instances of camping, UCC has reviewed its process around encampments[[1]](#footnote-2) and completed a Risk Assessment. See Appendix 1. This risk assessment shows that camping on the UCC Campus may pose many risks to UCC and others, including health, safety, welfare, security[[2]](#footnote-3) and environmental risk[[3]](#footnote-4) and threats to business continuity and reputation. Moreover, risk from this source may be exacerbated due to the type of person who may be involved, i.e. they may be young or otherwise vulnerable.

As UCC has already encountered instances of camping on campus and given the potentially vulnerable nature of those who may be involved, the likelihood is assessed as 5 and the impact also as 5, as injuries up to and including fatality are foreseeable. Hence this risk accrues an overall rating of **25**.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to address issues arising from camping, rough sleeping and the establishment of encampments on the UCC campus.

3 Aims and Objectives of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to avoid potential risks arising from camping, rough sleeping and the establishment of encampments on UCC campus.

The objectives are to:

* Clearly set out UCC’s policy position.
* Describe how encampments and campers/rough-sleepers will be monitored and managed.
* Set the above within the context of legislation and the [University Student Rules](https://www.ucc.ie/en/academicgov/policies/student-policies/studentrules/) (see Appendix for extract), [Staff Code of Conduct](https://www.ucc.ie/en/hr/policies/performance/conduct/) and individual staff contracts of employment.

4 Scope

This policy applies to:

* All staff, students and others on a UCC campus, and
* Any form of camping as defined in this policy.

5 Definitions

* **Camping**:
  + The act of setting up for temporary residence an encampment which may, or may not include tents, sleeping bags, or other temporary shelters/ dwellings and any associated camping paraphernalia.
  + The act of staying and sleeping in a tent or other temporary dwelling for one or more days and overnights.
* **Camping paraphernalia**:
  + Any items relating to an encampment including, but not limited to, fences, sign boards, fliers, posters, flags, tables, benches/chairs, cooking/eating/drinking materials, lighting, marquees, awnings, plastic sheeting, books and stationery, blankets and bedding, drug paraphernalia, etc.
* **Campus:**
  + Any land/property owned or managed by UCC and/or its subsidiaries.
* **Encampment**:
  + The place where a group is [encamped](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/encamped).
  + The individual(s) that make up an encampment.
  + The act of [encamping](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/encamping) : the state of being encamped.
* **Overnight:** The following periods areoutside normal business hours[[4]](#footnote-5):
  + **Night:** Between 2200 Hrs and 0800 Hrs, Monday to Friday inclusive.
  + Anytime on Saturdays or Sundays.
  + Certain advertised periods when the campus is closed, e.g. the Christmas closure period.

6 Policy

* In pursuit of legal duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and under the University Health and Safety Policy, as a general principle, camping on the UCC Campus is prohibited[[5]](#footnote-6).
* Any person or group who camps on the UCC Campus will be asked to vacate the encampment immediately and may face disciplinary action under the appropriate UCC procedures, and/or legal action as applicable.
* In the event a camp is established in contravention of this policy, a “leave no trace” policy will be applied. I.e. the camper/rough sleeper must be return the UCC campus in all respects to the condition it was in immediately prior to the establishment of the camp.
* The person or group responsible for the encampment will be liable for any costs incurred by the university in the removal and disposal of tents, shelters and camping paraphernalia and, if applicable, for the restoration of the area to its original condition.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Corporate Secretary

The Corporate Secretary is the Senior Officer within UCC responsible for this Policy and, in particular:

* Ensuring that this Policy is reviewed, updated and approved by the University Leadership Team.
* Providing advice and Policy to members of UCC on associated insurance, legal and risk management matters.

7.2 Deputy President and Registrar and Chief People and Culture Officer

The Deputy President and Registrar and the Chief People and Culture Officer will assist the Corporate Secretary by ensuring the following with respect to UCC students and employees respectively:

* Ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place from a student and staff perspective to support the Policy.
* Provide advice and Policy when it is deemed necessary to invoke formal disciplinary procedures.

7.3 General Services Officer

The General Services Officer is responsible for:

* Monitoring the campus for evidence of camping or the establishment of encampments and taking appropriate steps where evidence of such is found.
* Ensuring that appropriate supporting risk assessments and procedures are in place to support the above and that General Services staff are trained as appropriate.
* Liaising with An Garda Síochána and other internal and external key stakeholders where appropriate.
* Through B&E ensuring adequate signage is erected to support this policy.

7.4 Staff, Students and Others

Staff and/or students must adhere to this Policy, all relevant legislation, University Student Rules or the staff Code of Conduct and individual staff contracts of employment as applicable.

Failing to observe this policy could result in action under the relevant disciplinary processes and, in serious cases, potential legal action.

7.5 University Leadership Team (ULT)

ULT is responsible for reviewing and approving this Policy (including updates) as recommended by the Corporate Secretary.

8 Enforcement

Under the direction of the General Services Officer, General Services Security staff will:

* Monitor the UCC campus regularly and enforce this Policy.
* Request any person or group who, without approval, establishes an encampment on the UCC campus to immediately leave, vacating and removing the encampment as applicable.
* Remove any tents, shelters and any other camping paraphernalia left on UCC campus and dispose of it accordingly. Note: The person or group responsible for the encampment will be liable for any costs incurred by the University for the removal and disposal of tents or shelters, etc., and for the restoration of the affected area to its original condition.

As stated in Section 7.4, failure to comply with this Policy[[6]](#footnote-7) may result in disciplinary and/or legal action. Serious breaches of compliance with this Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against staff members in line with the University’s current disciplinary procedures (Principal Statute). Likewise, serious breaches of compliance with this Policy by students may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Student Rules and the Student Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate. Breaches of compliance by persons other than students and staff may result in expulsion from the UCC Campus, and/or the involvement of An Garda Síochána.

9 Appendix

Appendix 1 Bowtie Risk Assessment – Camping on UCC Campus

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Before** | |  | **After** | |  |
|  | **Causes** | | **Risk Event** | **Consequences** | |  |
| **Potential causes** | **Threat:**  Camping on the UCC campus could occur due to a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:   * Protest. * Homelessness. * Planned event.   **Causes:**   * Staff, students or members of the public involved in camping which could include tents, sleeping bags, general waste, drug paraphernalia and fire pits. * Lack of emergency response plan/arrangements for first aid. * Violence/Intimidation/weapons/drugs and alcohol on UCC grounds. * Blocked entrances, walkways or fire exits/ Lack of suitable entrances and exits. * Unsuitable environment for camping (e.g. potentially exposed and vulnerable to weather – rain, snow, high wind, frost, etc; falling branches; flooding, etc.). * Campfires or temporary cooking facilities. * Adverse/severe weather. * Breach of security. * Uninvited groups or people engaged in anti-social behaviour. * Non-routine activities occurring on the grounds redirecting resources from core operations. * Posts related to camping at UCC on social media. * Reports on camping on mainstream media, locally, nationally or internationally. | | **Overnight camping on UCC grounds** | * **People**:   + Camp set up including temporary structures and location causing slips, trips and falls: physical injury to students, staff or members of the public while setting up the camp and staying in it.   + Ill-health: unhygienic conditions and illness.   + Threat, actual harm and/or disruption to others. * **Environment**:   + UCC is not an official campsite.   + UCC has a range of biodiversity projects, with rare and endangered flora and trees, as well as regular maintenance of grounds to uphold for the safety of all users: Long- or short-term damage to grounds and biodiversity.   + Disruption to grounds keeping leading to slips, trips and falls.   + Unofficial camp area with no facilities: unsafe cooking/use of campfires leading to fire spread. * **Assets:**   + Damage to or theft of UCC property, structures and grounds. * **Continued operation**:   + Disruption to day-to-day operation including lectures, student and staff activities. * **Reputation:**   + Failure to meet legal obligations related to safe place of work, fire safety, hygiene or other requirements leading to enforcement action or claims.   + Loss of reputation locally, nationally and internationally. | | **Potential outcomes** |
|  |  | |  | |  |
| **Control Barriers** | * Policy banning overnight camping on UCC grounds. * Signage advising camping is prohibited on UCC grounds. * Appropriate patrolling and removal of encampments. * Requirement for Event Plan and Risk assessment for activities on campus. | | * UCC Emergency Response Plan. * Business Continuity Plan. * Procedures and Staff training applicable to their role such as training for General Services staff. * Permit to work and risk assessment required for staff involved in removal of homeless shelters or other unauthorised camps (SOP 28) * Access to vaccinations and post exposure to sharps medical support. * Regular meetings. * Physical barriers and security. | | **Defence Barriers** |
|  | **KRI (early warning a risk may occur)** | **KCI (measure of prevention effectiveness)** | **Risk Event** | **KRI** | **KCI (measure of loss reduction)** |  |
|  | * Occurrence of war and political conflicts internationally. * On-going social issues for staff and students (increased level of homelessness, drug and alcohol usage, etc.). * Instances of camping on UCC grounds. | * Proportion of meetings dedicated to risk management/ emergency. * Meetings with An Garda Síochána. * Additional training on management of WRVA. |  | * Associated events involving General Services staff. * Increase in time spent on anti-social behaviour. |  |  |
|  | **Prevention** | | Shape | **Recovery** | |  |

Appendix 2 Document Details

1 Revision History

Date of this revision: 08/10/2024

Date of next review: October 2025 (12 months post approval)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Revision Number** | **Revision Date** | **Summary of Changes** |
| 0 | 10/09/2024 | Initially written as an SAGN |
| 1 | 19/09/2024 | Approved as a policy and document reworked accordingly per ULT instruction. |
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2 Consultation History

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Revision Number** | **Consultation Date** | **Names of Parties in Consultation** | **Summary of Changes** |
| 1 | 10/09/2024 | Pat Cotter  Collette Dunne | Changes, comments and other feedback |
| Draft 2 | 11/09/2024 | ULT | Reviewed and approved – on basis reworked as policy |
| Draft 3 | 08/10/2024 | ULT | Now presented as policy |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

3 Approval

This document requires the following approvals:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Title** | **Date approved** |
| University Leadership Team |  | 11/09/2024 |
| University Leadership Team |  | 08/10/2024 |
|  |  |  |

This Policy will be reviewed periodically by the Corporate Secretary in light of any legislative or other relevant developments.

1. B&E SOP 28 - The Safe Removal of Homeless Camps; After Action Review – UCC BDS Encampment [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. E.g. fire, theft, vandalism, injury, harassment, assault and biological risks [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. E.g. damage the grass, soil, trees and plants, accumulation of litter and noise/nuisance for other campus users and nearby residents [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Please note the University reserves the right to adjust its normal business hours at its own discretion and at any time. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Subject to periodic review [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. And, by default, the UCC Safety Statement and duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)