



## **UCD Travel Safety Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

This document sets out safety guidelines for staff and students when travelling abroad. It is intended to be a non-exhaustive guide and travellers should undertake further research when travelling if they deem it necessary.

### *Travel Insurance*

All persons travelling abroad should ensure that they have adequate travel insurance in place. Staff traveling abroad on behalf of the university are covered under the university's *Travel and Personal Accident Policy*. This also extends to postgraduate students in some cases but clarification must always be sought from [insurance@ucd.ie](mailto:insurance@ucd.ie).

There is very limited travel insurance cover provided by UCD for undergraduates. Cover is extended to foreign fieldtrips organised and supervised by university staff but does not extend to independent fieldwork or work placements / internships. In such cases undergraduate students are strongly advised to obtain their own cover or to extend any health insurance that they may hold in Ireland. In the event that medical treatment is required abroad and travel insurance is not held then this could lead to student personally incurring very large medical bills. Undergraduates travelling within the EU and the EEA are advised to obtain a *European Health Insurance Card* (EHIC). This allows access to the public health systems of countries within these areas and is free of charge. Details on the EHIC can be found [here](#).

Cover is not extended to any students (postgraduate or undergraduate) engaged in work placements or internships. Such students are strongly advised to obtain their own cover or to extend any health insurance that they may hold in Ireland.

### *Security*

Before travelling abroad persons should familiarise themselves with the current situation in their destination country. This is especially important for any areas where there may be reports of civil or political unrest. Up to date travel advice is available from the [Department Of Foreign Affairs website](#) and the [UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office website](#). If either of these



## ***UCD Travel Safety Guidelines***

agencies recommends against non-essential travel to a particular area then that travel should not be undertaken. Travel to an area where a travel advisory exists may invalidate any insurance cover.

When abroad stay in regular touch with your family and friends, especially if you are travelling alone or in a remote area, or you are aware of a terrorist attack or other catastrophe in the region in which you are travelling. Although you may feel perfectly safe, people at home may worry if they don't hear from you, and could report you missing.

When abroad follow a number of basic safety precautions:

- Be aware of your surroundings – do not engage in types of behaviour that you would not do at home.
- Keep up to date with events that may have an impact on you in the local media.
- Be aware of cultural sensitivities.
- Be wary of using mobile telephones and other high value electronic devices in open areas.
- Keep a lookout for people acting suspiciously or unattended packages in public places.
- Limit the amount of cash you carry.
- Ensure you have easy access to your travel insurers emergency contact numbers.
- Seek advice locally about areas of risk. At night, avoid dark or isolated places.
- Plan the routes of car journeys in advance; keep car doors locked; do not give lifts to hitchhikers; and park in safe and well-lit areas.
- Leave your jewellery and other non-essential valuables at home if you can.
- Fill in the contact details at the back of your passport for your next-of-kin or someone who can be contacted in an emergency. Apart from your passport, take another form of identification with you (preferably one with a photograph, such as a driving licence). Keep photocopies of both.
- If you are travelling in uncertain local conditions or remote areas, you should bring the contact number for the Irish Embassy or consular office or that of your country of origin. A full list of Irish Embassies is available on the Department of Foreign Affairs website [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie). They will help if you are a victim of crime, if you require urgent medical treatment, if you lose your passport, if you are arrested or you get caught up in a natural disaster.



## ***UCD Travel Safety Guidelines***

- Passports are valuable documents, and you are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to protect your passport.
- Take enough money for your trip and some back-up funds, some cash (sterling or US dollars) or credit cards. Before you leave, check that your cards are valid, and find out how you can replace them if they are lost or stolen. Keep a separate note of their numbers and of the number you would need to ring to stop any credit cards if they are lost or stolen.

### *Medical Issues*

Before travelling ensure that all necessary vaccination are up to date. Details on the vaccinations recommended for foreign travel can be found [here](#). Staff members can arrange their own vaccinations or can be referred to the university's occupational health advisors. Staff should contact their HR Partner to arrange the latter.

If you are required to take regular medication ensure that you have packed enough supplies of same in your hand luggage. You should keep your medication in its original packaging and take any prescription documents with you. For certain types of medications you may wish to check with the nearest embassy of the country you are going to that your medication will be legal in that country and find out whether you will need to take a doctor's letter with you.

For longer trips or trips to underdeveloped regions a dental check and a general medical check-up may be useful. This may be of particular importance for field workers who may be located away from urban centres and easy access to medical and dental care.

### *Visa / Immigration Issues*

You must be aware of the immigration and customs controls of the country you are travelling to in advance of any travel. In particular the need for visas must be researched. You should ensure that you have a visa appropriate to the nature of your visit, e.g. student visa versus work visa. It is your responsibility to make sure you have the correct visa for your stay in another country. Do not overstay your visa or work illegally – you may be fined or sent to prison.

You should note that for many countries your passport needs to be valid for at least six months after the date that you travel. Travelling on a short life passport can be difficult.



## **UCD Travel Safety Guidelines**

### *Cultural / Legal Issues*

When abroad you must adhere to local laws. What is legal in Ireland may not be legal in the country you are visiting and local laws may differ to Irish laws e.g. the minimum legal age for alcohol consumption. There may be very serious penalties for breaking a law which might seem trivial to you or for doing something which may not be illegal in Ireland.

Hobbies that involve using cameras and binoculars, such as bird watching or plane spotting, may be misunderstood (particularly near military sites). If in doubt, don't do it.

Respect local customs and behave and dress appropriately, particularly when visiting religious sites, markets and rural communities. If in doubt, take extra care. In some places, behaviour that would be acceptable elsewhere can lead to serious trouble. In some countries, it can also be worth asking for permission before taking any photographs so as not to cause offence. Help protect local wildlife and habitats by respecting rules and regulations (including how to get rid of rubbish properly). Be aware that buying any wildlife products is risky – fieldworkers may need to obtain advice on what they may and may not bring back to Ireland.

Be aware of local attitudes to alcohol and know your own limit. Remember that drinks served overseas are often stronger than those served in Ireland. Keep your drinks with you at all times as drinks can be spiked with drugs to make you more vulnerable to assault. Be aware that accidents are more likely to happen after drinking alcohol or taking drugs.

Be aware of what may happen if you become involved with drugs overseas. Not only are there health risks, but there may also be severe penalties for any association with drugs. Never carry packages through customs for other people and be cautious about accepting gifts. If you are driving, do not lend your vehicle to other people and do not sit in someone else's vehicle when going through customs or crossing borders – get out and walk. Pack your own baggage, fasten it securely and do not leave it unattended. If you are thinking about taking drugs whilst abroad or bringing some back with you, stop and think – otherwise you may end up in jail. Some countries have a very heavily enforced zero tolerance towards illegal narcotics including Spain, Cyprus, Greece, some North African Countries and some Middle Eastern Countries.



## ***UCD Travel Safety Guidelines***

If necessary by a good travel guide that includes basic information on local laws and customs.

### *In Country Travel*

If you are planning to travel in country plan your journey in advance. In so far as is possible utilise public transport unless there are reasons to avoid same.

If you are planning to drive, make sure your driving licence is current and valid. Make sure you know the driving laws, licence requirements and driving conditions in the country you are visiting. In some countries you will need to have an international driving permit as well as your Irish license. Never drink and drive. Be aware that in many countries there are on-the-spot fines for traffic offences.

In some countries driving conditions can differ significantly from Ireland. If in doubt as to your ability to handle these conditions do not drive yourself, instead arrange for alternate means of transport.

### *Food and Drink*

In some countries particular care may have to be taken when it comes to eating and especially drinking. Food and water may become contaminated in a variety of ways - and that includes the water in swimming pools, lakes, rivers and the sea.

Travellers' diarrhoea is very common, especially in hot countries. This, as well as diseases such as cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A, can be contracted from contaminated food and water. Make sure you:

- Always wash your hands after going to the toilet, before handling food and before eating.
- If you have any doubts about the quality of the water available, boil it or filter it using a water 'purifier', a unit which combines filtration and chemical disinfectant and is more effective than using sterilisation tablets alone (it is important that manufacturer's instructions are followed). Alternatively, use bottled water and ensure that seals are intact.
- Avoid ice unless you are sure it is made from treated or chlorinated water. This includes ice used to keep food cool.



## ***UCD Travel Safety Guidelines***

- Eat freshly cooked food that is thoroughly cooked and still piping hot.
- Avoid food that has been kept warm.
- Avoid uncooked fruit and vegetables, unless you can peel them yourself.
- Avoid food likely to have been exposed to flies.
- Avoid ice cream from unreliable sources, such as kiosks or itinerant traders.
- Avoid milk, cheese and other dairy products unless they are pasteurised and have been properly refrigerated.
- Avoid undercooked or raw seafood or shellfish.

### *Fieldworkers*

Fieldworkers must refer to the Fieldwork Safety Manual which is available on the University Safety Office [website](#). All fieldwork must be subjected to a thorough risk assessment. In some cases insurance cover will not be provided without the submission of a risk assessment.

### *Work Placements / Internships*

If students are travelling abroad to engage in a for credit work placement or internship they must ensure that the placement has been approved by their School. Work placements should not be entered into in the absence of a work placement agreement. Students should not sign such agreements until such time as their module coordinator or similar approves same. If there are problems with any placement students should contact their School as soon as possible. Students on work placements abroad are strongly encouraged to take out their own travel insurance. The University provides no travel insurance cover for students (postgraduate or undergraduate) engaged in work placements or internships.

### **Rev History**

**Rev 0** – Issued Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Rev 1** – Issued Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016. Minor changes made to ensure clarity on insurance provisions and to update hyperlinks.