

GREEN FORT ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT, IRELAND

Program Information

Current students should refer to information received in their Moodle course during the online portion of their program for the most up to date information.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

What are the average weather conditions during the time of the field school?

Irish weather is unpredictable and is often described as ‘four seasons in every day’. Summer temperatures can range between 10 – 25 deg C or 40 - 75 degrees F. Rain showers are frequent and, unless very heavy, it is usual for excavation in Ireland to continue during these. However, May and June are often the driest months and so we can be hopeful!

For the excavation you should wear clothes that you don't mind getting wet/dirty. Several thin layers are better than one thick layer as they can be added/removed as needed.

Please describe the site(s) where the students will work.

The Green Fort is a bastioned or ‘star-shaped’ military fort with spectacular and extensive views overlooking Sligo Town, Sligo Bay and the surrounding mountains in the north-west of Ireland. As the site is on a prominent hill and is exposed to the weather it can be windy. It was probably constructed in 1599 during the Nine Years War (1594-1603), on the site of an early medieval ringfort (circa 6th-10th century AD). It became a strategic defensive base during the Williamite Wars (1688-91). The focus of the excavation will be on understanding the dating and origin of the site as well as the nature of features identified by fieldwalking, geophysics and survey.

What does an average week look like?

Daily schedule

- Meet in the car park of O’Boyle Park 8:50am <https://maps.app.goo.gl/LW4RTfBXzqYTKoEr6>
- Start work 9am sharp
- Tea break, Lunch break
- Depart 5:00pm
- Social events (optional)
- In the event of bad weather in Weeks 1 and 2 excavation may continue into Week 3. Otherwise work in Week 3 will take place at ATU Sligo. Details will be given at the time.

What are the options for students to access money? Are there ATMs nearby? Should students plan to bring a certain amount of cash?

Banks with ATMs will be accessible.

ACTIVITY LEVEL & ACCESSIBILITY

Please provide information about the physical requirements of the program.

Note that both the study tour and the excavation require a reasonable level of physical fitness. Students will need to be able to walk over rough ground for 500m or more at a time without difficulty, while excavation is a physical activity that requires a similar level of fitness to gardening, including lifting, bending, kneeling, crouching, and carrying. You should be aware that you may be outside in all weathers for extended periods.

Please comment how accessible your site is for people with mobility challenges. Would someone using a wheelchair be able to participate? Someone who uses crutches or other assistive walking devices?

If you have concerns or anticipate difficulty with these or other physical activities, please consult with the program director(s) prior to starting the program.

PROGRAM COUNTRY & CULTURAL INFORMATION

What do you love about the country and area you work in? What do you think students will be most excited to discover?

Sligo is a great place for food, pubs and entertainment.

For gigs check <https://www.johnthemap.co.uk/sm-file/mobile.html> which is updated weekly and provides locations of traditional music sessions.

For theatre and art see <https://www.blueraincoat.com/>; <https://www.hawkswell.com/>;
<https://www.yeatssociety.com/>; <https://www.themodel.ie/>

For cinema see: <https://omniplex.ie/cinema/sligo>

Popular pubs with the archaeology crowd are <https://www.thomasconnollysligo.com/>
<https://www.hargadons.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/shootthecrows/>

How large is the community where students will be staying? Will students have opportunities to interact casually with local residents? Please describe.

The field school is based in Sligo town, in the county of the same name. This is a university town of c.20,000 people and is a safe and friendly place. Sligo is a cultural and population center for this exciting region of Ireland, famed for dramatic landscapes, surfing, music, literature, and arts. Although English is the usual language spoken in Ireland, expect significant cultural and culinary differences from your home country. More details about Sligo can be found at <https://www.sligo.ie/>.

Primary languages spoken by people in the area:

English

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

Please describe student accommodation.

Students will be housed in holiday homes or purpose-built student accommodation in single rooms close to the University and the excavation site, and the safe capacity of each house will not be exceeded.

Changes of bed linen will be supplied. Students should provide their own towels. There will be access to laundry facilities. Students will be responsible for routine cleaning of the accommodation.

Will the program provide meals? If not all meals, please specify which meals students will be responsible for, and what facilities are available for them to get groceries and prepare meals.

Food is not provided; however, all the accommodation will have fully equipped self-catering kitchens and be convenient to local stores. Lunchtimes will offer an opportunity for informal discussion and social interaction. Students will need to prepare and bring a packed lunch to the study tour and to the excavation site daily. For the post-excavation week students may bring a packed lunch to be eaten in the University canteen facilities or may purchase food there. Students will need to prepare breakfast and evening meals within their households. Facilities will be provided on site to store bags and for shelter at mealtimes, if necessary. Toilets and handwashing/sanitizing facilities will be available onsite and at the laboratory. Students will be advised on correct hand washing and sanitizing at the start of the project, as well as procedures for on-site hygiene. Students will be required to bring their own reusable water bottle.

Other meals and refreshments may be provided at social events. Vegetarian, vegan, lactose-free and gluten-free meals are widely available and will be offered as necessary at communal meals. Religion-based diets such as kosher and halal meals may be difficult to accommodate in this relatively small town. Students should indicate dietary restrictions and/or food allergies on their application forms and we will do our best to advise you accordingly.

VISA AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Indicate the visa requirements, if any, for US citizens. If there is a visa requirement, what type of visa should students apply for?

Citizens of the US and Canada do not require visas to enter Ireland. Your passport should be valid for at least 90 days after the end of your trip. Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website of their home country for specific visa requirements.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

If students will fly, what airport should they fly into?

It is strongly recommended that you fly into Dublin rather than Shannon airport as transport links are direct. From Dublin Airport or Dublin Busáras (Main Bus Station) to Sligo take Bus Eireann Service 23 which runs seven times per day. See <https://www.expressway.ie/> for details and to book tickets. There is also a train from Dublin Connolly Station which runs every two hours. See <https://www.irishrail.ie/> for details and to book tickets. The bus and train station in Sligo are right next to each other.

Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and various other factors may force the cancellation or alteration of a field school. IFR recommends students only purchase airline tickets that are fully refundable and consider travel insurance in case a program or travel plans must change for any reason. General information for this program is below, but keep in mind we will discuss any updated travel information and regulations during the required program orientation, which could affect travel plans.

If you miss your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

Where will you meet students?

From Dublin Airport or Dublin Busáras (Main Bus Station) to/from Sligo the easiest is to take Bus Eireann Service 23 which runs seven times per day. See <https://www.expressway.ie/> for details and to book tickets. There is also a train from Dublin Connolly Station which runs every two hours. See <https://www.irishrail.ie/> for details and to book tickets. The bus and train station in Sligo are right next to each other. Note that you can change your reservation up to an hour before the scheduled departure.

From Knock (Ireland West) airport take Bus Eireann Service 64 which runs six times per day. See <https://www.expressway.ie/> for details and to book tickets.

As people will arrive at different times, students should make their own way to the accommodation to check in, and arrangements for this and for the first morning of the course will be provided at the online sessions.

If the field site is not close to student accommodations, how will students get there? How long does it take?

Accommodation will be within walking distance of ATU Sligo and of the excavation site. The study tour will consist of daily field trips by minibus, departing from ATU Sligo, while the post-excavation analysis week will take place in the archaeology laboratory at ATU Sligo.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Trowel

You will need a 4-inch pointing trowel. This needs to be described as a 'forged' or 'drop forged' trowel, which means they are made in one piece rather than the handle and the blade being two pieces welded together. You do not want one that is larger than 4 inches (10cm). You may be able to find them in builders' merchants/DIY stores but can also buy them online.

The most common brand in Ireland is a WHS trowel. You can buy them online, for example at <https://pasthorizons.com/products/whs-4-archaeology-trowel-wooden-handle>. The most common brand in the US is a Marshalltown trowel. You can also buy them online, for example at <https://marshalltown.com/pro-3818-pointing-trowel>. Or in Ireland from Screwfix: <https://www.screwfix.ie/p/marshalltown-pointing-trowel-4-/450jf>

Safety Boots

These should be worn on site as we may be moving large stones. They can have steel, composite or plastic toecaps, but you must ensure that they are approved to a suitable national/international standard. e.g. ISO:EN (European) or ASTM (US) standards as you want to be sure that your toes are protected!

There is a good explanation of the different grades of boot at this link for ISO:EN: [Safety Boot Ratings & Codes Explained - EN ISO 20345:2022 | ITS Hub](#) and at this link for ASTM:

[All you need to know about ASTM-F2413-18 safety standard | GIM \(inspectionmanaging.com\)](#)

Safety boots are better than safety trainer/sneaker/runner - style shoes as they also protect your ankles from being turned. A basic, but perfectly adequate pair of safety boots is around €30-40. They can be bought in hardware shops and builders merchants. Small sizes can be harder to find can most easily be bought online.

PACKING LIST

Required

- Safety boots with steel, composite or plastic toecaps. See above. Safety wellingtons/gumboots are also acceptable but can be very hot to work in if the weather is good. For safety reasons you will not be permitted on site in cotton deck shoes, sandals etc.
- Waterproof rain jacket and over-pants. These can be bought in camping/outdoors stores and larger sports stores. Typical brands are Arc'teryx, Patagonia, North Face, Berghaus and Gelert.
- Two pairs of work trousers/pants - avoid jeans or e.g. cotton tracksuit bottoms as both hold moisture when wet and get very cold.
- Several tops e.g. 2 or 3 base layers, thin fleece, thick fleece, shell jacket. Remember that if you get wet or very dirty you will need to have spare clothes for the following morning.
- Both a sun hat with a brim and also a woolly hat so that you are covered for all of those inevitable four seasons.
- Thick socks under your work boots. Bring several pairs so that you have spares if you get wet.
- A reusable water bottle
- A 'thermos' flask and small reusable, sealable containers for milk, tea/coffee, sugar etc as appropriate.
- A sealable 'Tupperware'-type lunchbox
- A four-inch archaeology/pointing trowel. Recommended brands are Marshalltown and WHS. See above.
- Gardening gloves with a textile glove and a rubberized palm as these can be used when wet.
- Sunglasses!
- Sunscreen!
- Insect repellent
- Liquid hand sanitizer or wipes
- Any essential medicine
- Allergy medicine for e.g. hay fever reaction to grass pollen
- Personal towel
- Personal toiletries
- Casual clothes for the evenings and weekends, including a clean jacket and sweater and clean shoes.
- Nightclothes
- Electrical adapters. Ireland uses 240 Volt 3-pin plugs that are the same as those used in the UK.
- Mobile/cell phone and charger. For those coming from overseas, check your plan for costs when used overseas. It may be cheaper to buy an Irish pay-as-you-go SIM card (and unlock your cell phone) or to buy a cheap phone with a SIM card.
- Laptop/tablet (and charger) suitable for typing assignments and working with e.g. spreadsheets.
- Identification/passport
- Travel documents
- Prescription medication for the entire program period
- Credit/Debit card
- Extra glasses/contacts if worn

Recommended

- For those coming from overseas, check your cell phone plan for costs when used overseas. It may be cheaper to buy an Irish pay-as-you-go SIM card (and unlock your cell phone) or to buy a cheap phone with a SIM card.
- If your overseas phone won't connect to an Irish number then try dropping the 0 and replace with +353 e.g. 087 1234567 becomes +35387 1234567 or replace with 00353, so that it becomes 00353 87 1234567.
- To ring an overseas number make sure that you add +(and then the country code) before the number. You also usually need to drop the first digit (often a zero) as in the example above.