

Department of Earth Science and Engineering - Covid protocol for undergraduate fieldwork.

We are really looking forward to welcoming you on our in-person field trips. The following Covid protocols have been designed to keep you safe and to minimise the risk that our in-person teaching is disrupted by cases of Covid-19. The steps outlined in this protocol are intended to keep you safe, as well as those teaching on the trip, their families and/or people they live with.

By participating in the in-person fieldtrip, you are expected to follow the rules outlined in this document. You will need to sign-off a Qualtrics form confirming you've read and agree to these protocols before you can board the coach. If you have any queries or concerns about what's expected of you, please raise this in the briefing or by email before the trip.

Pre-fieldtrip Departure

By 12 noon on the Friday before your fieldtrip departs (Friday 10th September for South Wales/Scotland, Friday 17th September for North England), you **must** complete the following survey form, to tell us your vaccination status and to confirm that you have read, understand and will adhere to the protocols laid out in this document:

https://imperial.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_37vwRw7OGiQ47zw

Prior to your fieldtrip departing you will need to **take two Covid tests**:

If you are in London, you should get a free Imperial PCR test no earlier than 72 hours prior to departure (<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/testing-scheme/>).

If you are not in London, please take a PCR if you can access one; if not take a lateral flow test within 48 hours of departure.

On the morning of the fieldtrip departure, you will need to take **another** lateral flow test and receive a negative result **before you leave your accommodation/place of residence** and make your way to the RSM.

You must report both sets of tests to the NHS and on My Imperial. More information can be found here: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/testing-scheme/lfid-collect/>

Lateral flow tests can be ordered from <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> for postal delivery or can be requested from most pharmacies in the UK.

Please meet **outside** the RSM on Prince Consort Road at the meeting time indicated to you by your fieldtrip leader. Please refrain from entering the foyer of the RSM as there is limited capacity to hold everyone safely. In the event of bad weather (i.e. rain) your fieldtrip leader will advise you where to meet in the RSM. To be allowed to board the coach to attend the fieldtrip you will have to sign to confirm that you have a negative result from your two pre-trip tests, and that you have not had a positive test result from any test within the last 10 days.

Although not compulsory, we strongly recommend that all students and staff attending fieldwork have a Covid vaccination. We will need to know your vaccination status (double vaccinated, single vaccinated, not vaccinated or prefer not to say), as UK contact-tracing procedure differs with vaccination status. In

particular, UK government self-isolation rules are much more strict for individuals who are not fully vaccinated in the event of being identified as a Covid close-contact. Please note that if you say that you prefer not to say, we will have to treat you as not vaccinated. You should record your vaccination status (a) using the departmental survey (link above), (b) via My Imperial (<https://my.imperial.ac.uk/>), and (c) with the NHS app. Please note that for NHS contact-procedure purposes, only Covid vaccinations that have been given by the NHS in the UK are recognized.

We strongly recommend that you download the 'NHS' app* before the trip so that you can easily demonstrate that you are fully vaccinated if needed. Note that setting yourself up on this app is somewhat time consuming, and should be done as far in advance as possible.

* NOT the same thing as the NHS Covid-19 app – these are two separate apps!

During the fieldtrip

While on the coach, throughout your fieldtrip, you should only sit directly adjacent to students with whom you are also sharing a room, to help maintain limited close contacts to allow for easier contact tracing. We are currently making room allocations based on the roommate(s) preferences survey you previously completed. While on fieldwork you will be required to take a lateral flow test every other morning, and will need to show the trip leader a negative test result to be able to board the coach and continue the fieldtrip. You must report all tests to the NHS and on My Imperial. More information can be found here: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/about/covid-19/testing-scheme/lfid-collect/>. If you do not comply with these requirements, you will be asked to leave the trip and return back to London at your own expense. You will be provided with enough tests that you can perform daily tests should you wish; we encourage this, but do not require it.

Because we are a group residential trip and we do not want to introduce additional sources of infection, it is important not to mix in an indoor setting outside of the trip accommodation or transport. You will not be able to go to higher risk hospitality venues such as a pub or club during the trip. Going for a walk, buying food from e.g. a shop, or eating/drinking in the communal areas of the hotel or caravan is of course allowed. You will also be required to be present in accommodation most evenings, as there will be briefings/discussions that form part of the trip.

You will not be expected to wear face-coverings while outside, but you will be expected to wear them when indoors, except while eating and drinking, and when you are in your own room. You may choose to wear a face covering at all times, which is fine. You will also need to wear a face-covering when on the coach. We will supply disposable masks, but you are strongly encouraged to bring your own. If you are exempt from wearing a face-covering, please let the trip leader know ahead of time, or alternately please let Lizzie Day know and she can pass this information on the relevant people. Please also remember to carry hand sanitiser with you during the trip.

What if someone tests positive during the fieldtrip?

If someone tests positive on one of the lateral flow tests, or is contacted and asked to isolate by the NHS (either through the Covid-19 app or an NHS test and trace service phone call), they will be required to remain in the accommodation, take a PCR test, and continue to self-isolate until the PCR result is received. Sites within walking distance of accommodation are listed below, and are open 8am till 8pm -

tests can be booked at <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>. Where no site is available within walking distance, an NHS postal PCR test will be ordered. While you are waiting for your PCR test result you will have to self-isolate.

Anyone who has been sharing a room with someone who tests positive will also be required to isolate and to take a PCR test. Where possible they will be moved to a different room from the primary contact. Room-mates of people contacted by the NHS are *not* eligible for a PCR test unless the 'primary contact' tests positive. Where possible however we will move any such people to a different room, and they will also be required to isolate and not take part in the trip until a negative PCR test result is received by the primary contact.

If you are contacted by the NHS and asked to isolate while not in accommodation (e.g. in the field), we will arrange transport to accommodation using the best means available.

North-West of England trip: Covid-19 Walk-through Testing Site – Kendal, Kendal County Hall Car Park, Busher Walk, Kendal LA9 4RQ.

South Wales trip (Port Talbot): Covid-19 Walk-through Testing Site – Baglan, Baglan Energy Park, Baglan Energy Park, Baglan, Neath SA12 7AX.

Scotland trip and second hotel for South Wales: there is no walk-in test-site close to the accommodation.

If you received a positive PCR test result you can either (a) return home if someone can come and pick you up (we cannot arrange this), or (b) self-isolate in the accommodation for the 10-day duration. In the latter case the costs arising (accommodation and further transport, either back to college or to catch up with the trip later on), will be covered by Imperial College.

If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive and you are **not** double vaccinated, you will need to self-isolate for 10 days. If you **are** double vaccinated (which you will need to prove with the NHS app), you will be required to take a PCR test and receive a negative result before you can re-join the fieldtrip. Note that in Scotland, isolation is currently required by law in these cases even if you *are* double vaccinated, until you receive a negative PCR test.

Our policies go beyond the current UK government guidelines. We are implementing a tighter policy in order to minimise the likelihood of Covid-spread within our fieldwork group.

We will bring a small number of laptops on each trip, that we can provide you with if you need to self-isolate. We encourage students to bring their own laptops as well.

What will happen to your studies if you miss field time?

If a student misses field-time as a result of a positive Covid test (or indeed any other illness or unforeseen circumstance beyond their control), we will determine the best approach with regards to their study on a case-by-case basis. If a small amount of time is missed, normally the student will simply carry on with the fieldtrip after missing a day or two. You will not be expected to continue working for any time that you are ill. If a student needs to leave the fieldtrip, or are unable to attend at short notice, for Covid reasons, alternative assessments will normally be arranged.