



**Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences**

**Proposals for Attracting Non-EU Students**

**University of Limerick**



**Title of Project** (for targeted NON EU PhD students): GO GREEN EX: Transdisciplinary Investigations of Green Exercise as a Preventative Intervention for the Promotion of Physical Activity and Mental Well-Being.

**EHS Research Theme:** Physical activity and Human Performance

**Supervisory Team:**

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Nature based solutions to well-being have been suggested as a means of jointly tackling several societal challenges. Among the current global challenges are climate change, physical inactivity, and mental health problems. Our interaction with nature is increasingly being explored as a means to enhance both physical and mental well-being. For example, green exercise, or physical activity in natural settings, is one possible preventative solution with a range of co-benefits including reduced stress, increased well-being, greater adherence to physical activity, enhanced pro-social behaviour and more positive attitudes towards the environment.

**GO GREEN EX** projects, several of which have been designed as part of work packages in a recent H2020 proposal, are transdisciplinary by nature, and aim to bring health, sport and environmental sectors together in collaboration to bridge sectorial gaps, as well as to maximise impact in society. This project requires applicants with expertise in either psychology, exercise physiology, the sport sciences or allied health disciplines. Given the transdisciplinary nature of the project, a broad range of methods will be employed including RCT's, field studies and mixed-methods approaches, to elucidate our understanding of the effects of green exercise. Our studies will explore the physiological, biological and psychological mechanisms underlying exercise performed in a range of settings (e.g. indoor, outdoor built and natural outdoor).

Experience in physical activity promotion, measuring physical activity, physiological testing and psychological monitoring of athletic samples will be desirable. The sampling will encompass general population, students, student-athletes (or dual-career) and athlete groups. UL based expertise will be augmented by collaborations with international partners to optimise the development and training of graduate attributes.

This research clearly aligns with the EHS research themes of Physical Activity and Human Performance. The studies will provide proof-of-concept for larger scale implementation of nature-based solutions to address national physical inactivity problems (See Healthy Ireland report) coupled with a need to address well-being on a national and international level. According to the WHO (2017) depression, for example, is now the biggest burden of any disease globally. Our studies will also explore aspects of human performance. Sport samples are included as they provide a natural laboratory for the exploration of adaptation to multiple transitions both planned (e.g. career transition) and unplanned (e.g. sport injury).

See <https://www.researchgate.net/project/Go-Green-Ex-GO-GREEN-EX-Cubed-Going-Outdoors-Gathering-Research-Evidence-on-ENvironment-Exercise-Explore-Excite>