

# Iceland

## Cross border travel

### - People

- Depending on your citizenship, you may need a visa to enter Iceland.
- Here is a list of countries that need a visa to visit:  
<https://www.utl.is/index.php/en/who-needs-a-visa>.
- Here is a list of embassies and consulates issuing short stay visas (max 90 days) on behalf of Iceland: <https://www.utl.is/index.php/en/where-you-can-apply-for-a-visa>
- A visa normally grants you the right to stay in the entire Schengen region for up to 90 days.
- It depends on your citizenship whether you need a residence and work permit to be able to work in Iceland. Citizens of EU/EEA member states do not need permits but non-EU/EEA citizens do. You can read about long-term visas here:  
<https://www.utl.is/index.php/en/long-term-visa2>
- Note that a fee needs to be paid for all visa applications.

## Covid-19

You can find general information, travel restrictions and links to relevant COVID-19 related information in Iceland here: <https://www.covid.is/english>

Here is a list of hotels that offer accommodation during quarantine:

<https://www.ferdamalastofa.is/en/about-us/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-general-info/accommodations-that-welcome-guests-in-quarantine>

### - Instrumentation (import/export)

- Various goods are subjected to special import conditions or import prohibitions according to law, regulations or other regulatory acts. Here you can see examples of goods that are subjected to special import conditions:  
<https://www.tollur.is/english/individuals/customs/moving-to-iceland/import-restrictions/>
- If scientific instruments need to be shipped to Iceland by cargo, a permit for temporary import is required. Such permit is issued by the Iceland Revenue and Customs office, on form number E1.  
You can read more about temporary import here:  
<https://www.tollur.is/english/businesses/customs/procedural-aspects/importing-to-iceland/temporary-import/>  
You will have to contact the office for more information and assistance (email: [tollstjori@tollur.is](mailto:tollstjori@tollur.is)).
- When the equipment will be exported Iceland Revenue and Customs need to be notified, in order to get their confirmation of the export.
- Import of fishing equipment  
Infectious disease agents such as viruses and the parasite, *Gyrodactylus salaris*, have

never been detected in freshwater fish in Iceland. Importing the following equipment is strictly prohibited: Used fishing equipment such as fishing rods, reels, hooks/lures/flyes, waders and nets, unless it has been disinfected by approved methods. You can read about the requirements and certificates you need here: <https://www.mast.is/en/import-export/import-of-fishing-equipment>

- Samples (import/export)

- Export of threatened species (listed by the CITES convention) requires a permit. Find the relevant management and scientific authorities here: <https://cites.org/eng/parties/country-profiles/is>
- Natural history specimens and micro-organisms originating in geothermal areas and their genetic material, may not be exported from Iceland except with the permission of the Icelandic Institute of Natural History. A formal application can be sent with an application form: [https://en.ni.is/sites/ni.is/files/atoms/files/ni\\_eydublad\\_application\\_exportpermit\\_v06.pdf](https://en.ni.is/sites/ni.is/files/atoms/files/ni_eydublad_application_exportpermit_v06.pdf) or by sending an email to IINH ([ni@ni.is](mailto:ni@ni.is))  
Note that a fee needs to be paid for all export permits!
- Cultural heritage – Samples that are considered cultural heritage may not be exported from Iceland except with a permit from the Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland (email: [postur@minjastofnun.is](mailto:postur@minjastofnun.is)). An application form is available here: [https://www.minjastofnun.is/media/skjol-i-grein/utflutningur\\_umsokn.pdf](https://www.minjastofnun.is/media/skjol-i-grein/utflutningur_umsokn.pdf) (in Icelandic)

- Chemicals (import/export)

- In general, it is recommended to use a shipping/transport agency, in order to reassure compliance with the complex set of regulations.
- The Environment Agency of Iceland operates a helpdesk to serve as first point of contact for questions regarding Icelandic chemicals legislation (email: [ust@ust.is](mailto:ust@ust.is)).

Access to specific areas

- Off-road driving is strictly prohibited in Iceland. Should off-road driving be needed for research purposes, a permit is needed. The Environment Agency of Iceland handles the permits, and you can find the application form here: <https://umsokn.umhverfisstofnun.is/web/index.html> (in Icelandic) (email: [ust@ust.is](mailto:ust@ust.is))

- Remote areas

- No permits identified

- Protected areas

- If you want to conduct a research in a protected area in Iceland, you need to apply for it and pay a fee if you are granted permit.
- The Environment Agency of Iceland handles these permits. Find information about applying for a research permit here: <https://ust.is/english/nature-conservations/permits-on-protected-areas/research-permit/>

- General information on protected areas can be found here:  
<https://ust.is/english/nature-conservations/>
- Find information where the nature reserves in Iceland are located here:  
<https://ust.is/english/nature-conservations/nature-reserves/>
- Restricted areas
  - No permits identified

#### Fieldwork and sample collection

- You may need zero, one or more research permits when conducting research in Iceland.
- There is no central coordination of research applications in Iceland, so scientists need to identify all relevant permits themselves and obtain these from relevant authorities.
- Note that it can take a long time to process an application and a fee needs to be paid for most permits!
- According to Icelandic laws, official research permits are not required to conduct scientific research work on Icelandic dry lands, except for research on thermophilic microorganism.
- In order to assist foreign scientists to enter the country and undertake scientific research work and obtain clearance from customs authorities, the Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannís) issues a Research Declaration for foreign scientists that are planning to undertake scientific research work in Iceland.  
You can access the form here: <https://en.rannis.is/funding/research/research-declaration/>. Please fill out the form and send to [rannis@rannis.is](mailto:rannis@rannis.is), preferably three months before the planned research work will be carried out. The Research Declaration can be presented at customs upon entry to the country.
- Whether you need to obtain permits depends on the area you want to go to and the type of research you conduct. The most general permits are described below.
- Permit to conduct research (observations, handling and sampling within all disciplines)(incl. collection of genetic resources)
  - You need permits to conduct the following types of research in Iceland:
    - Experiments on animals: a research permit is needed for all experiments on animals in Iceland. The Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority (MAST) handles the applications. Find the application form here: <https://www.mast.is/is/annad/starfsemi-med-dyr/tilraunadyr> (in Icelandic). Note that the application for a permit needs to be submitted at least one month before the experiment will take place! No applications are evaluated during the months of December, June and July. If an experiment is to be conducted during the period of May to August, the application needs to be delivered before April 30<sup>th</sup>. Note that a fee needs to be paid for all permits regarding animal experiments!
    - Bird ringing: A ringing permit is necessary for bird ringing in Iceland. The Icelandic Institute of Natural History (Náttúrufræðistofnun) is responsible for bird ringing in Iceland. (email: [fuglamerki@ni.is](mailto:fuglamerki@ni.is))

- Earth resources: A permit is required to conduct research that includes earth resources. The National Energy Authority (Orkustofnun) handles the permits. You can read more about the application process here: <https://orkustofnun.is/orkustofnun/leyfisveitingar/rannsoknarleyfi/> (in Icelandic)
- Ocean resources: A permit is required to conduct research that includes ocean resources. The National Energy Authority handles the permits. Find more information about the application process here: <https://orkustofnun.is/orkustofnun/leyfisveitingar/audlindirhafsbots/leidbeiningar/> (in Icelandic)  
For more information, please contact the National Energy Authority (email: [os@os.is](mailto:os@os.is))
- Archaeology research: A permit is needed for archaeology research in Iceland. The Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland (Minjastofnun) handles the permits. Find an application form here: [https://www.minjastofnun.is/media/skjol-i-grein/form\\_rannsoknarleyfi\\_2019.pdf](https://www.minjastofnun.is/media/skjol-i-grein/form_rannsoknarleyfi_2019.pdf) (in Icelandic)  
Note that the permit needs to be applied for at least four weeks before the work is planned to start!
- Core drilling: A permit is needed from the Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland for core drilling. An application is available here: [https://www.minjastofnun.is/media/skjol-i-grein/leyfi\\_kjarnabor.pdf](https://www.minjastofnun.is/media/skjol-i-grein/leyfi_kjarnabor.pdf) (in Icelandic)

### Field Instrumentation

- Area allotment for instrumentation
  - If you intend to set up field instruments in Iceland, you will always need permission from the landowner. To get information about the owner you will have to contact the municipality office in the nearest town and work from there.
- Drone use
  - There are rules for drone use in Iceland. Here you can find all the information you need about drone flying in Iceland: <https://www.icetra.is/aviation/drones/>
  - A special care must be taken when flying a drone in protected areas. The guidelines are available here: <https://ust.is/english/nature-conservations/drones-in-protected-areas/>
  - A permit for drone flying in protected areas is needed! The Environment Agency of Iceland issues the permits. You can apply here: <https://ust.is/english/nature-conservations/permits-on-protected-areas/photography-cinematography-and-drone-flying/>

### Safety related permits

- Weapon
  - A person holding a European Firearms Permit can import the weapons stated in the license without a special permit if the stay is not for longer than three months.
  - Others need to apply for a permit issued by the National Commissioner of Police. The best way is to contact the National Commissioner of Police (email: [rls@rls.is](mailto:rls@rls.is))
- Radio permits

- The Post-and Telecom Administration (<https://www.pfs.is/english>) authorizes 406 MHz PLB's, issues all radio licenses and maintains a database (email: [pfs@pfs.is](mailto:pfs@pfs.is)).
- PLB registration is available online at <https://www.pfs.is/um-pfs/eydublod/umsokn-um-leyfi-til-starfraekslu-plb-neydarsendis/> (in Icelandic).

#### Regional/local level permits (if clicked, permit information folds out)

- Regional or local research related permits would mainly be needed because of land access in Iceland (see area allotment above).
- If you intend to set up field instruments or get access to an area for research purposes, you will always need permission from the landowner.
- To get information about the owner you will have to contact the municipality office in the nearest town and work from there. It might be helpful to contact the Icelandic Association of Local Authorities: <https://www.samband.is/english/>

#### Additional information of relevance

- Icelandic Institute of Natural History – conducts basic research on the zoology, botany, and geology of Iceland. IINH houses libraries, collections, handles research, and monitors various projects in Iceland. The institute also provides consulting services as well as information on permissions for fieldwork and exporting samples: <https://en.ni.is/>
- The Environment Agency of Iceland promotes the protection as well as sustainable use of Iceland's natural resources. It also offers information on protected areas, handling fuels, chemicals, toxic and hazardous substances, driving in uninhabited areas, and waste management – <https://ust.is/english/?>
- The Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority – <https://www.mast.is/en>
- The Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland – <https://en.minjastofnun.is/>
- Icelandic Association of Local Authorities – <https://www.samband.is/english/>