

MARCHATHON

COORDINATOR GUIDE



Thank you Coordinators?

We would like to say a **BIG THANK YOU** to all our Coordinators for taking the time to coordinate our annual Marchathon Step Challenge. We acknowledge that you have a busy working schedule already but we are delighted that you can find the time to coordinate Marchathon and encourage your colleagues/classmates to walk as an alternative to the car, as well as increasing their physical activity.

What is Marchathon?

Marchathon is the annual Smarter Travel Workplaces and Campus Step Challenge that runs during March. It is open to all staff and students of partners of the Smarter Travel Workplace and Campus Programmes.



How does Marchathon work?

The aim of the Challenge is to encourage and support staff and students to walk more throughout their day, particularly on the commute, and to support and facilitate long term physical activity where possible.



While some participants may be working or studying remotely, Coordinators may decide to encourage walking as an opportunity to connect with colleagues virtually, and to provide an opportunity to step away from the desk.

Marchathon Key Dates

Registration: Now open.
Marchathon Information Webinars: 2nd February – 27th February
Marchathon begins: Monday 4th March
Marchathon ends: Sunday 31st March
Weekly steps to Sunday; submit by 2pm on Monday (11th, 25th)
St Patrick's and Last week of Marchathon steps **to submit steps: 2pm Tuesday 19th March and 2pm Wednesday 3rd April**
Final results announced by: Friday 5th April

Weekly deadline to log steps for the previous week: Monday's 2pm.

How do staff and students take part?

Participants and Coordinators are asked to refer to the **Marchathon Participant Guide** for more information on how to sign up and take part. We recommend the Coordinators circulate the guide to all participants at the beginning of their promotional campaign.

Note: During the Challenge we use an honour-based system and spot checks on the accuracy of step entries will be done throughout. Teams who receive an email or phone call to verify their steps are asked to please respond as soon as possible so that delays to the publication of the Leaderboard are avoided. We recommend that the Coordinators highlight this throughout the Challenge to participants.

Tip: Remind participants to save screenshots of their daily steps to their phones!

Useful links

Join the Challenge: www.ActiveTravelLogger.ie.
For more information: www.stepchallenge.ie.
Email: stepchallenge@nationaltransport.ie.

What resources are available?

The Smarter Travel Team have developed the following resources for Coordinators to help make your promotion as easy as possible:

1. **Promotional Marchathon Graphics:** include these on emails, intranets, presentations, newsletters, social media and more.
2. **Participant Guide** – an easy-to-follow guide that you can circulate to all participants to ensure an easy sign-up process and information for them to follow.
3. **Sample Emails** – you can use or amend our sample email guide when promoting and communicating Marchathon at your organisation.
4. **Active Travel Logger Video Tutorials** – We have provided easy to follow video tutorials specific to both participants and Coordinators.
5. **Marchathon Editable Graphics** – editable graphics for you to use during the Challenge to make announcements, celebrate achievements and so on.
6. **Marchathon Internal Leaderboard Template** – promote your organisations Top 5 Leaderboard teams throughout the challenge.
7. **Marchathon Information Webinar** – an opportunity to discuss resources, best-practices and potential opportunities for your organisation. To access these resources, please visit stepchallenge.ie.

What is the Active Travel Logger?

The Active Travel Logger website is the platform that is used for our Step Challenges. **Participants must have a registered and verified account to participant in the Challenge.**

Coordinators can use the Active Travel Logger to:

1. View Organisation Teams
2. Communicate with Marchathon participants.

Please refer to the FAQ section on www.stepchallenge.ie for more information.



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What are the Marchathon Competitions?

There are lots of prizes to be won throughout the Challenge. These include Photo Competitions, Leaderboard Prize Draws, Quizzes and much more. We will keep participants updated on prizes and competition winners regularly on www.stepchallenge.ie.

At the end of the Challenge, there will be prizes for:

- Top 3 Teams on both Leaderboards
- Best Small, Large Workplace and Best Campus
- Prize draws for the Top 50 teams on the Overall Leaderboard
- And more!

To acknowledge the efforts the Coordinators make during Marchathon, the **Top Marchathon Coordinators** will win a fantastic prize! Coordinators prizes will be issued with the following taken into consideration:

1. Number of participants
2. How Marchathon was promoted
3. How participants were motivate throughout the month
4. Events or Prize Giving events following the Challenge



Promoting Marchathon – Getting Started!

Successfully promoting Marchathon in your organisation plays an important role in determining whether your colleagues or classmates engage and participate.

Based on previous Step Challenges, we have developed a successful promotional strategy and the resources you need to ensure maximum engagement.

1. Get **buy-in from Senior Management** or similar within the organisation. Promoting the benefits of Marchathon for the organisation and securing support from management is one of the key steps to success.
2. **Begin the promotion early!** Once your organisation has registered for Marchathon, use the promotional graphic to post on your intranet, social media channels, emails, newsletters and so on, with the message 'Coming soon! Get ready to step and compete against teams nationwide'.
3. Create a **Marchathon Promotional Team** – it can help reduce workload, increase promotion and participation rates and improve the overall experience.
4. Attend our **Marchathon Information Webinar** – where we will discuss best-practice, share ideas and stories from previous Step Challenges and offer you support.
5. Familiarise yourself with the **Active Travel Logger** website and the Organisation Dashboard.
6. Access your **Coordinators Resources** and begin your promotional strategy. Develop a social media campaign, organise promotion for your intranet, newsletters, canteen, notices boards, etc.
7. Finalise your **internal organisation competitions** and organisation events. Successful internal competitions and events will be discussed at our Marchathon Information Webinar.

Promoting During Marchathon

Some top tips to help you promote Marchathon and keep your organisation motivated throughout.

As the Challenge begins:

- Encourage last minute sign-ups.
- Help staff and students to find a team to join.
- Promote Marchathon on social media and other promotional channels available to you.
- Launch the first day of Marchathon – hold an online event, organise a virtual walk or hold a tea/coffee morning.

During the Challenge, check out our list of events or incentives to keep participants motivated:

- Give ideas for participants to incorporate walking on the commute and throughout the day.
- Virtual group walks.
- Health awareness webinars.
- Set up a Marchathon email/messaging group.
- Launch a 'My Story' competition.
- Promote local Sli Na Slainte routes.
- Encourage regular breaks from the computer.
- Encourage walking meetings where possible.
- Hold internal competitions.
- Staff V Student or Department V Department competitions.
- Set weekly organisational targets.
- Celebrate targets and achievements.
- Continued promotion and communications.
- Remind participants to log their steps by the deadline.
- Promote your internal and national Leaderboards.

