



# Learner Handbook

CORK EAST DISTANCE EDUCATION SPRING  
2024

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## WELCOME

Dear Learner,

Welcome to the Learner Handbook which will provide you with information for your Distance Education Course starting in the Spring of 2024 –date of commencement to be confired

Yours faithfully,

*Sharon O' Mahoney*

### **COVID-19 Compliance**

Covid 19 has eased considerable over the past number of months and most of the restrictions aimed at preventing the spread of Covid-19 were relaxed at the end of February 2022. Despite the official end of Covid-19 containment requirements, we need to continue to be cautious.

While, we hope that, the incidence and effects of Covid-19 continue to decline in the coming months all learners have a personal responsibility. Teagasc expects learners to follow any guidelines issued by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and to adhere to any future Covid-19 measures

Cork East Centre will advise you on specific Covid-19 requirements as they arise including social distancing requirements, Covid-19 hygiene and etiquette best practice. You the learner are obliged to abide by this advice and along with college/centre management work to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

#### ***IT Requirements for Remote/blended education delivery***

Elements of your course may involve remote delivery and online learning. To engage with the programme and to facilitate learning you should have access to:

- The internet
- An active personal email account
- An effective desktop/laptop/notepad.

### **Purpose of the Learner Handbook**

This Learner Handbook has been produced for the benefit of, and to support all learners enrolling on Teagasc courses. It contains important information you will need to refer to throughout your period of study at a Teagasc college/centre.

The handbook provides important guidelines for learners in regard to code of conduct, assessments, practical learning period, health and safety, bio security, college and centre facilities and guidelines in regard to learner welfare and support.

If you have any issues or concerns, please make sure you bring them to the attention of your course co-ordinator or centre management.

## **1.0 Charter of Learners Rights and Responsibilities**

### **1.1 Teagasc Mission**

Teagasc is dedicated to providing the highest quality education and training that is accessible to learners in a manner that meets their needs.

**Teagasc is committed to providing learners with:**

- An environment and resources that supports and stimulates learning and enables learners to realise their full potential
- Courses of the highest quality
- Accurate information about all programmes and expectations
- Assessment of learning that is fair, valid and timely
- The opportunity to provide feedback on teaching and course quality in confidence
- A skilled, qualified and supportive staff who will treat all learners with dignity and respect and be responsive to learner needs and concerns
- A fair and consistent enforcement of all rules and regulations
- A healthy and safe environment that promotes a positive learning experience.

**Teagasc expect learners to:**

- Take charge of their own learning and produce work to the best of their ability
- Participate actively in all learning situations
- Make effective use of the facilities and services provided
- Comply with assessment regulations and use assessment feedback to guide their continued learning
- Provide honest and constructive feedback within the opportunities provided
- Support and respect the rights of fellow learners and staff
- Abide by all rules and regulations and guidelines stated in the Learner Handbook
- Take responsibility for their own health and safety; be conscious of the safety of others and to fully comply with college/centre health and safety requirements including specific requirements relating to COVID 19.
- Comply with the safety requirements while undertaking a practical learning period with a host.

### **1.2 Additional Learning Support**

Teagasc is an equal opportunities organisation and actively encourages applications from all sections of the community. Teagasc is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to support student learning. Learner support is available, your course co-ordinator or Access Officer can provide details. Additional information is also available at section 5 of this Learner Handbook.

### **1.3 Learner Representation**

A Learner Representative Committee is set up at each Teagasc training location. The committee works in partnership with the centre management and staff for the benefit of all involved in the programme.

The committee helps to build relationships and provide a forum for discussion with the aim of enhancing the learner experience for all. Learners from all courses at a centre are represented on the Learner Representative Committee. A schedule of formal meetings is managed by the college principal or course director where topics including teaching, assessments, learner support, work practice, policies and facilities can be discussed. The Learner Representative Committee will meet at least twice over the duration of a Teagasc programme.

## **2.0 Code of Conduct for Learners**

The Teagasc Code of Conduct for Learners is a set of principles and expectations that Cork East regional centre has for learners. It promotes a positive learning environment and sets out standards of conduct expected from learners. Failure to comply with these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action by the centre. This code applies to all learners, whether full-time or part-time and at all times whether or not during normal teaching times.

### **2.1 Purpose of the Code of Conduct for Learners**

- To set out a code of conduct to which learners are expected to adhere to in return for being admitted to the centre and provided with educational and other services and facilities.
- To set out the procedure which should be followed where the code of conduct is breached.
- A breach of the code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action being taken against a learner and repeated breaches or a single serious breach may result in a learner being suspended or expelled from a course.

### **2.2 General Principles**

Each Teagasc centre has a Code of Conduct for Learners. Staff and learners are expected to behave responsibly at all times, to observe and abide by the Code of Conduct for Learners and not to engage in any activity which might bring the centre into disrepute.

Learners are required to attend regularly and punctually all timetabled activities including classes, practicals, work practice, assessment, field trips and to conform to the directions of the staff member(s) responsible.

Should any learner, during any timetabled activity, be responsible for a breach of good conduct, or fail to obey instruction from a staff member, the staff member may require the learner to withdraw from the particular timetabled activity and bring the matter to the notice of the Course Co-ordinator for appropriate action to be taken.

### **Covert Recordings of Learning Activities**

Teagasc has a [Recording of Learning Activities Policy](#). This policy states that learners may not record any class or other teaching activity. Covert audio and/or visual recording of teaching activities is strictly prohibited. Unauthorised recordings constitutes a breach by the learner of privacy and data protection law and will be treated as a serious breach of the Code of Conduct for Learners.

### **Personation**

Arranging with or conspiring with another person to personate or represent you in connection with course attendance, assessment, academic attainment, awards or otherwise will be treated as serious misconduct.

Only learners who are registered on Teagasc Programmes or persons approved to supply learner support may be admitted to classes and assessments at the college and or centre.

### ***Damage to Property***

Learners are required to make good, to the satisfaction of the centre, any damage or loss which they intentionally cause to any property of the centre or for any such loss or damage which arises as a result of their being reckless or negligent. Learners are similarly required to make good any damage or loss which they cause to the personal property of any other learner or member of staff.

### **2.3 Time and Attendance**

Learners must attend classes/practicals and other scheduled events regularly and punctually. This is a requirement for all learners on Teagasc courses. Attendance records are an essential management resource to support:

- Duty of care to learners
- Health and Safety Management

#### ***•Notification of Absence/Illness***

For student maintenance grant payments, to facilitate learners seeking extensions for assignments and for examination deferrals, learners absent for more than 2 days due to illness, are required to present a doctors certificate to the centre office on their return.

Where a learner is absent in excess of 10 consecutive days without a doctor's certificate or force majeure circumstances the course director will inform the learner of the possible consequences of poor attendance on their course.

#### ***Time and Attendance Recording***

For your distance education course, time and attendance will be recorded manually by the course coordinator. Attendance data is considered necessary for the purposes of monitoring learner's time and attendance and is also required by Teagasc to facilitate duty of care, health and safety management.

Your personal data is retained as outlined in the Teagasc data retention policy. Teagasc Data Protection information is available on the Teagasc website at the following link, <https://www.teagasc.ie/about/corporate-responsibility/data-protection/> . Data is cleared from the system every August following completion of the Level 6 programme or earlier if the learner doesn't progress. Your personal data will not be retained for a longer period of time unless necessary for lawful reasons under data protection legislation or in circumstances where Teagasc is compelled to do so by law.

For further information, please contact the Teagasc Data Protection Officer at Data Protection Officer, Teagasc, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co Tipperary, E41 AK, or by email to [dpo@teagasc.ie](mailto:dpo@teagasc.ie)

## **2.4 Learner Responsibility**

Learners must:

- Conduct themselves, both inside and outside the college & centre, in a manner which will maintain the good name of the learner and the college & centre.
- Act at all times with due regard for their own safety and that of others.
- Engage in scheduled programme activities.
- Inform the centre office as soon as practicable if for any reason they are unable to attend a class/practical or other scheduled event.
- Respect the property of the college & centre and of its staff, other learners and visitors.
- Support staff and other learners in the maintenance of a clean and tidy environment throughout the college & centre.
- Adhere to regulations regarding bio-security measures for the control of animal diseases.
- Report at once all accidents to the college & centre office.

## **2.5 Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

The following sets out a non-exhaustive list of examples of behaviour, which constitutes a breach of the Code of Conduct for Learners and may result in the initiation of disciplinary procedures under this Code:

- Breach of any of the general principles set out above (including any breach of health and safety or other regulations of the college & centre).
- Failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff.
- Smoking, including vaping, in non-smoking areas.
- Dangerous or careless driving including failure to observe speed limits or parking regulations.
- Operating machinery or equipment without permission and supervision.
- Unauthorised interference with software, IT equipment or data belonging to or used by the college/centre.
- Theft of property or any other dishonest acts.
- Breaching assessment regulations including plagiarism (see Assessment Regulations - Section 9).
- Acts or omissions by learners while outside college & centre engaged in field trips, work practice, organised by the centre.
- Furnish during a course of study any false or misleading information calculated to deceive or mislead the centre .
- Non-compliance with college & centre COVID-19 requirements.
- Any other form of misconduct not listed above.

## **2.6 Serious Misconduct**

The above breaches of conduct may, when necessary, be treated by the centre as serious misconduct.

Further examples of serious misconduct include the following:

- Assault or abuse physically or verbally of any other learner or staff member of the college & centre or a serious threat of violence.



- Behaviour which is racially or sexually offensive or which is offensive to those with learning and/or physical disabilities or impediments.
- The possession or supply of any illegal drug or the inappropriate supply of prescribed or other drugs to learners or other individuals.
- Sourcing pornographic material or dissemination of such material.
- Endangering the health or safety of self or others.
- Deliberate breach of centre guidelines relating to bio security issues.
- Any criminal activities affecting the centre or other learners.
- Covert or unauthorised recording(s) of any aspect of a course including attendance on a practical learning period with a host.
- Unauthorised posting of material on social media in breach of the Recording of Learning Activities Policy.
- Reckless or negligent behaviour that results in damage or loss to the centre or to any learner or staff member including damage to property.
- Unwarranted interference or tampering with centre safety equipment, firefighting equipment, security systems or alarm systems.
- Setting of fires.
- Use of or possession of any offensive weapon while engaged in any course activity
- Non-compliance with centre COVID-19 requirements may constitute serious misconduct.
- Any other form of serious misconduct not listed above.

## ***2.7 Guidelines for Disciplinary Procedures and Breaches of Discipline***

Any act or omission, which affects adversely the rights of any staff/learner or which disrupts the orderly and responsible conduct of any centre activity, or which violates the Code of Conduct, shall constitute a breach of discipline. Disciplinary action may result in a fine, suspension for a fixed period or permanent expulsion from the course.

It is emphasised that the examples of breaches of the Code of Conduct, outlined above, are non-exhaustive and demonstrative and in no way prevents the appropriate member of staff from considering and adjudicating upon the conduct or action of any learner which is thought to constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct for Learners.

### ***Informal Procedure***

Cases of minor breaches of discipline may be treated informally by staff or others acting on behalf of the centre. However, if it is not appropriate to deal with the matter informally or if it fails to resolve the issue, the procedures set out below will be followed.

### ***Formal Procedure***

There are a number of stages to the formal procedure and it is usual to progress sequentially through the stages. However, depending on the seriousness of the allegation or if breach of the Code of Conduct is not disputed, the early stages of the disciplinary procedure may be omitted and the disciplinary process accelerated to a higher level.

Before imposing any of the sanctions set out below, an appropriate investigation of the relevant facts will be conducted.

The purpose of an investigation is for the centre to establish the facts in relation to any allegations made against (or suspicions existing in relation to) the learner before considering whether or not to impose one of the disciplinary sanctions set out below. The extent of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegation(s) or suspicions and will vary from case to case.

At every stage in the formal disciplinary procedure, the learner will be furnished with details of the allegation(s)/complaint(s) made against them and will be given the opportunity to respond fully to such allegation(s)/complaint(s) before any decision is taken.

### ***Disciplinary Meeting***

A decision on who conducts the disciplinary meeting will be made at the time based on the nature of the concern and other relevant factors. The centre decides, who on behalf of the centre, will conduct disciplinary meetings.

The centre will write to the learner setting out the allegation(s)/complaint(s) in relation to them, the basis for the allegation(s)/complaint(s) and what the likely range of consequences will be if it is decided, at the conclusion of the disciplinary process, that the allegation(s)/complaint(s) are well founded.

The learner will be given written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary meeting. The meeting will be held as soon as reasonably practicable; having regard to the learner's entitlement to assess the allegation(s)/complaint(s) made against them and prepare their case. The meeting will take place at a time and place at which it is reasonably practicable for the learner to attend and the learner must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. A learner may be accompanied by a friend, learner representative, or relative at the meeting.

As soon as practicable, after the meeting, the staff member who conducted the meeting will notify the learner in writing of their decision, together with details of the learner's right of appeal. Where a sanction is given (i.e. Stages 1-3 below) it should state the reason for the sanction, the behaviour which requires improvement (if any) and the consequences of failure to improve (if applicable) or the consequences for repeated breaches of discipline.

### ***Holding suspension***

A learner may be suspended pending an investigation or disciplinary process where the centre has reason to believe that the learner has committed an act of serious misconduct or has ignored a previous written warning. The learner will be informed of the reason for any such suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Suspension pending a disciplinary interview or other disciplinary process is a holding suspension and is not an indication that a decision has been made that misconduct has occurred. No such decision will be made or sanction applied until after a disciplinary meeting.

## **2.8 Implementation of Disciplinary Measures**

### ***Stage 1: Official Verbal Warning***

Where the minor breach of discipline is considered to warrant formal treatment, the learner may be given an official verbal warning. The official verbal warning will lapse after a period of 6 months.

An official verbal warning or incidents whereby a learner is dismissed from a class or practical will be recorded on a **Learner Incident Report Form**.

### ***Stage 2: Formal Written Warning***

Where the conduct complained of is of a more serious nature or where a further breach of discipline has occurred after an official verbal warning, the learner may be given a formal written warning. The formal written warning will lapse after a period of 9 months.

### ***Stage 3: Serious Misconduct***

Where the conduct complained of is of a serious nature or where a further breach of discipline has occurred after a formal verbal or written warning, a learner may be suspended for a fixed period or expelled from the centre. A fine may be applied (normally where there is loss or damage to property).

### ***Right of Review***

A learner has the right to request a review of the disciplinary sanction imposed. The review if granted will be carried out by local management.

### ***Right of Appeal***

Where a disciplinary issue is not resolved locally a learner will have the right of appeal to the centre against formal disciplinary sanction. This right of appeal must be exercised in writing to the Teagasc Head of Education setting out the grounds of appeal within 5 working days of the date of receipt of notification of the sanction. Appeals will be considered by an Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will not include any person that has had any previous involvement in the issue under consideration. Having considered the appeal, the Appeal Panel may confirm the original sanction, revoke the original sanction or impose an alternative sanction.

### ***Criminal Offences***

Where any member of staff has reason to believe that a learner may have committed a criminal offence, the centre may refer the matter to the Gardaí.

## **3.0 Learner Equality and Welfare Guidelines**

### ***3.1 Learner Equality***

Teagasc is committed to provide equal access to all learners. If any learner feels that they have not been treated equitably they have the right to raise concerns with **Sharon O'Mahoney** or lodge a complaint without fear of victimisation through the recognised complaint procedures under the Teagasc Customer Charter. See Section 5.1 below.

### **3.2 Dignity and Respect**

Teagasc is committed to the promotion of an environment for work and study which upholds the dignity and respect of the individual and which supports every individual's right to study and/or work in an environment, which is free of any form of harassment, intimidation or bullying. This [policy](#) applies to the behaviour of learners and staff of the centre and others on business or engaged in activities relating to the centre or providing services to the centre.

Dignity and Respect issues should be reported to **Sharon O'Mahoney**, the designated liaison person or to someone of trust on the staff.

### **3.3 Bullying/Intimidation and/or Sexual Harassment**

All learners and staff are entitled to be treated with respect and their learning/work environment must be such that learners and staff are free to perform their studies/duties in a climate free from intimidation/bullying from other learners, staff members, or others. Intimidation/bullying are repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or a group against others.

The college/centre environment is such that all learners and staff are free to perform their studies/duties without sexual harassment from other learners, staff members, or others. Sexual harassment includes any single serious incident which the recipient finds offensive or repeated and/or unwanted verbal or physical advances which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient or which cause discomfort or humiliation or which interfere with the recipient's study/job performance.

The prevention of bullying, intimidation and sexual harassment is an integral part of the centres ethos, which is covered by a Bullying, Intimidation and Sexual Harassment Policy.

The policy seeks to:

- Promote an ethos which encourages learners and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable conduct with centres management, staff & learners
- Implement procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Provide information and organise active consent workshops.
- Implement procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Offer a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and sexual harassment and for those involved in bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
- Review the effectiveness of the centre measures on anti-bullying behaviour.

Incidents of bullying/intimidation and sexual harassment should be reported to **Sharon O'Mahoney**, the designated liaison person or to someone of trust on the staff.

### **3.4 Learner Welfare**

The welfare of learners is important to Teagasc. It involves management, administration, catering, teachers, technicians. All of these support the total wellbeing of the learner and help build up a sense of community.

#### ***Personal Safety***

The safety and security of learners is of paramount importance to Teagasc. Teagasc requires you to cooperate fully with safety requirements and comply with all safety precautions while attending your course. Specific safety requirements are in place for residential students.

Outside of the college centre, we can only provide general advice to enhance the safety of our learners. We advise the following precautions:

- Practice safe driving and comply with speed limits and the rules of the road.
- Be aware of your responsibilities as a driver if carrying passengers in your vehicle.
- Look out for the safety and welfare of fellow learners.

#### ***Resilience and Mental Health***

If something is bothering you, no matter how big or small, you should raise it, sooner rather than later with a friend, family member or a centre staff member. You can also contact the Student Assistance Programme (SAP).

Additional information on mental health issues will be posted on college social media platforms or notice boards from time to time.

#### ***Alcohol and smoking***

The use or possession of alcoholic drinks or illegal substances within the college & centre or its grounds is prohibited. Disciplinary action will be taken against Learners who breach this regulation.

Smoking is prohibited throughout college & centre buildings. Designated smoking areas are provided. It is essential that there is no smoking anywhere in the vicinity a kitchen area. This is to comply with food hygiene regulations.

#### ***Illegal Substance Use***

If you have anxieties about someone using illegal substances or have personal concerns, talk to a staff member in confidence. It is important to know that substance use is prohibited and illegal.

#### ***Student Assistance Programme (SAP)***

This is a confidential counselling, support and information service, provided by **Spectrum Live**. All learners on full time, part time and distance education programmes are eligible to access the SAP service.

The Student Assistance Programme (SAP) is a free, confidential counselling service that provides you and your family with emotional and practical support for concerns big or small. The SAP is available 24/7, 365 days a year covering areas such as:

- Health and Lifestyle
- Emotional and Mental Wellbeing support
- Career Support
- Life Coaching
- Legal Assistance
- Financial Assistance
- Consumer Advice
- Non Irish National Support

You can access the service via:

**Freephone:** 1800 903 542  
**Online:** <https://app.spectrum.life/login> (Organisation code: Teagasc1)  
**Spectrum Life app:** Access to hours of additional wellbeing content.

The service is totally confidential and can help you or your family with problems you may experience in your own life.

#### **4.0 Learner Support**

Teagasc provides a range of supports for learners throughout their studies. Whether you need additional assistance due to disability or you require academic support Teagasc will endeavour to provide the supports that you need.

Each college/centre has an Access Officer who will support learners with recognised special needs to support learning. Where appropriate and feasible, Teagasc will provide reasonable accommodation to support learning.

Learner support is confidential.

For learners unable to complete a mainstream training programme, Teagasc provides an alternative training programme. While this is not an accredited QQI programme, learners who successfully complete the programme can benefit from DAFM and Revenue schemes and reliefs available to young trained farmers.

## **4.1 Teagasc Customer Charter**

The Teagasc Customer Charter outlines the level of service that Teagasc aim to provide to our customers. The Customer Charter is available [here](#) and it also is accessible at learner information points in the Agricultural College.

The steps in addressing education customer complaints (excluding assessment appeal procedures) are:

1. The learner raises their complaint with a local staff member. Every effort will be made by parties to mutually resolve the issue at this stage.
2. If not satisfied with the response you receive, you can make a written request for a review of your complaint to the Regional Manager. Again every effort will be made by parties to mutually resolve the issue at this stage.
3. If, having gone through the review process, you are not satisfied, you can contact the Teagasc Quality Customer Service Officer on **059 9170200** or email **qcs@teagasc.ie** to request a review by an independent Teagasc staff member.
4. If you are not satisfied that the Teagasc Customer Complaints process has adequately resolved your complaint, you can contact the Ombudsman.

## **5.0 Health and Safety**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Health, safety and welfare at work affect everyone. Brief lapses of care and attention can cause injuries, damage health and damage property which takes their toll both in human and monetary terms.

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 Act, Teagasc has a duty to provide learners with a safe environment, safe equipment, adequate safety information, instruction, training and supervision and adequate welfare arrangements.

The Learner should bear in mind they have a duty under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to assist Teagasc in maintaining a safe place for training and a specific legal duty not to interfere with anything which may compromise safety management at the college & centre.

A Safety Management System operates at the Teagasc college & centre . Relevant elements of the Safety Management System will be communicated to learners as part of your course induction and at on-going training activities.

Additional health and safety information is available on request from the Course Co-ordinator. Your course may contain instruction and practice elements pertaining to machinery, field trips, animals, laboratories, computing and information technology. Tutors will provide you with information, instruction and training which will allow for a safe system of work within these areas. Colleges will require you to wear high visibility clothing in designated areas of the college.

In the event that practical instruction and assessments are conducted remotely by video or other online channels, additional health and safety measures and risk assessment procedures may have to be

implemented to ensure the protection of the learner. Your college & centre will advise you on these requirements should this arise.

Any act which may compromise safety management will be treated as a serious offence by Teagasc and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **5.2 Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures**

Buildings are sign-posted indicating the direction to the nearest exit point. Exits are individually sign-posted.

Please note the following if the fire alarm sounds:

5. Walk (don't run) to the nearest exit point.
6. Do not delay to pick up personal belongings.
7. Close doors (where appropriate).
8. On arriving at the designated fire assembly point(s) please comply with the requests of staff.
9. Do not re-enter the building until authorisation has been given.

### **Any Person discovering a fire shall:**

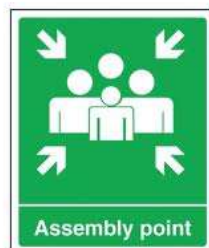
1. Activate the nearest Fire Alarm Break Glass Unit immediately.
2. Extinguish the fire if it is safe to do so (no more than one extinguisher to be operated- if fire has not been extinguished evacuate immediately).
3. Provide details to fire wardens/security staff of exact location and extent of the fire.

### **Alarm**

Evacuate the building without delay when you hear the fire alarm sound. Go to designated assembly point and wait there until further instructions.

### **Assembly Points**

The Fire Assembly Point is in the carpark at the designated sign (see example below)



### **Evacuation Routes**

Exit the room/building by the clearly marked signage throughout the building



### **Emergency Exits**

NEVER block or leave items to obstruct the emergency exits or normal entry/exits to the room/building.

### **Emergency Lighting**

Emergency lighting will automatically activate if required.

### **Break Glass Units**

Break Glass Fire Call Points are located near exit routes. Breaking the glass sounds the alarm and alerts all occupants. The 'glass' will break readily using elbow, fist or any small implement.

### **Fire Drills**

Participate in any fire drill that occurs when on site.

### **Fire fighting equipment**

Enter fire fighting details here if applicable see below for example  
Different colours of labels are used to identify the different types of fire extinguisher

<b>Colour of Label</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Notes</b>
RED Label	Water	Do not use on electrical fire Do not use on flammable liquids Suitable for wood, paper textiles
BLUE Label	Dry Powder	Suitable for electrical fires, flammable liquids, wood, paper textiles
BUFF / CREAM Label	Foam	Do not use on Electrical fires Suitable on flammable liquids, wood, paper and textiles
BLACK Label	Carbon Dioxide	Suitable for electrical fires, flammable liquids, wood, paper and textiles

### **Room Notices**

There are emergency evacuation procedures in every room.

### **5.3 First Aid**

All accidents and injuries, while attending timetabled activities, must be reported to a member of staff so that injuries can be assessed, medical attention arranged and to ensure that accidents are prevented in the future.

The trained first aider is **Sharon O'Mahoney**

**Emergency Numbers: 112/999**

## **5.4 Medical Services**

Learners requiring a doctor or pharmacist, while attending timetabled activities, should contact a member of staff.

Local doctor is: Fermoy Medical Centre 025-33133

Learners with a medical condition should inform the Course Co-ordinator. Such information will be treated in strict confidence. Please be advised that courses may include handling farm livestock, soil, animal feeds, fertilisers, machinery, farm equipment and other materials. If you have concerns that such activities may compromise your health, it is recommended that you consult with your medical practitioner for advice.

## **5.5 Use of Vehicles**

Many learners use private vehicles to commute to and from their college & centre. Drivers should be aware of specific risks associated with travelling to or from a college & centre such as:

- Inexperience drivers
- Visitor unfamiliar with the campus
- Walkers and members of public visiting the campus
- The movement of livestock on college farms
- The operation of slow moving farm machinery

The college & centre is committed to an environment which ensures the health and safety of all staff, learners and visitors. To achieve this objective, certain rules apply to the use of vehicles at the college & centre. We require the full co-operation of our employees, learners, contractors and visitors with these rules.

You need to be aware of your additional responsibilities as a driver if carrying passengers in your vehicle

Please note that Teagasc accepts no liability in the event of accidents or damage to personal vehicles used by learners in connection with their studies for reasons of personal convenience. Learner's cars must be parked in the designated parking areas.

Please take a few minutes to become familiar with these rules and observe them at all times for your health and safety.

- There is a general speed limit of **30Kph** throughout all college & centre grounds.
- Do not leave valuables or personal documents in your car.
- Unauthorised vehicles are not allowed to enter restricted areas e.g. the college farmyard, or the farmyards of farms being visited.

## **5.6 Transport for farm visits**

Staff will arrange for the provision of adequate transport for farm visits in connection with the course. For reasons of personal safety and bio-security, learners are not allowed use personal vehicles for such trips unless specifically approved and in such instances learner cars must be parked in the

designated parking areas. Teagasc accepts no liability in the event of accidents, personal injury or damage to personal vehicles used by learners in connection with their studies for reasons of personal convenience.

### **5.7 Bio-security**

Bio-security refers to measures taken to prevent the introduction of infections which can affect livestock or humans. For learner safety, and bio-security on your home farm, the college farms and visited farms, the following precautions should be taken:

- Provide a **clean** set of Wellingtons, solely for the use on farm visits/college farm activities.
- Disinfect these Wellingtons at the entrance and when leaving visiting farms.
- Wear and/or use personal protective equipment provided while on farm visits.
- Follow instructions and visiting protocols.
- Follow any bio security regulations in place at the college. In the event of a notifiable animal or plant disease occurring at the college, in the college area, on your home farm or in your home area, you may be requested to comply with more detailed bio security procedures.

### **5.8 Use of Computers/Printers**

The college/centre aims to promote an environment which is supportive of and conducive to the training and the personal development of all learners and staff. Computer facilities play a very important role in this development. All learners enrolled will be allocated an individual password for computer access.

## **6.0 Teaching and Learning**

Teaching and learning are core activities of Teagasc Education. Teagasc is dedicated to providing the highest quality education and training that meets your needs as a learner. Teagasc is committed to providing you with a learner-centred environment and you will be supported by qualified and committed staff. Belief and confidence in your potential is central to Teagasc education philosophy. Teagasc will treat all learners with dignity and respect and respond to their needs and concerns.

### **6.1 Teaching Methodologies**

Teagasc will use a range of delivery methodologies depending on the subject matter to reinforce and relate theory with application. Teaching methodologies may include:

- Classroom based instruction
- Practical skills demonstration
- Work practice training with a host or on a home enterprise
- Group discussion
- One to one instruction
- Learner self-directed learning
- Technology enhanced learning
- Conference calls

- Use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE)
- Project and assignment work
- Field trips and visits to research centres
- Guest lectures

## **6.2 Skills Training and Assessment**

Practical skills demonstration and hands-on practice are an integral part of the Teagasc learning experience. Teagasc provides a learning environment and resources that supports your learning enabling you to achieve the key skills and competencies necessary for your award. Facilities and equipment include:

- Classrooms, workshops and computer rooms
- Commercial farms, forests, horticultural and equine units.
- Skills demonstration facilities including livestock handling facilities and enterprise specific equipment including stables, glasshouses, gardens and farm buildings
- Horticultural and farm machinery/equipment
- Work practice arrangements

Please note that learners who have not attended certain practical skills training involving livestock/machinery/equipment may be prohibited from undertaking practical skills assessment for health and safety reasons.

## **6.3 Blended Learning**

Teagasc training may involve a blended learning approach using a combination of traditional face to face teaching with the use of technologies. Teagasc employs Moodle as a blended learning platform. This allows tutors and learners to communicate electronically. Moodle provides electronic copies of workbooks and other learning support materials including PowerPoint presentations, video and quizzes. Online assessments are also conducted on Moodle. Teagasc may also use Zoom (or similar) for the provision of remote classes and lectures. To engage with the programme and to facilitate learning, you should have access to the internet, a working email and a desktop/laptop/notepad. Learner Guidelines for Online Behaviour or Netiquette are available in Appendix 1.

### **6.3.1 Recording of Learner Activities and Presentations for Course Delivery and Assessment**

Teagasc use various means to deliver and assess course work including the use of video/voice recording.

Where it is necessary to use video/voice recordings for course delivery or assessment purposes; the learner's image and/or sound of the learner's voice will not be edited, copied, exhibited, published or distributed either within Teagasc or with an external third party except for course delivery and assessment purposes.

The learner completes a consent form as part of their online application process. Consent can be withdrawn by emailing the Data Protection Officer at [dpo@teagasc.ie](mailto:dpo@teagasc.ie) .

#### **6.4 Practical Learning Period**

Your programmes will include a Practical Learning Period (PLP) which will be undertaken on a host/home-based enterprise.

Learners undertaking a Practical Learning Period (PLP) as part of a Teagasc programme are required to comply with procedures relating to:

- Health and Safety
- Animal Welfare and bio-security
- Use of vehicles and equipment
- 

#### **6.5 Field Trips**

Your training will be supported by visits to benchmark units including high performing producers

Your programme will be supported by the Teagasc advisory service and may involve attendance at conferences, open days and visits to Teagasc research farms and research centres.

#### **6.6 Learner Responsibilities**

While Teagasc is committed to supporting you, the successful completion of your programme also requires you to commit to your course and take responsibility for your own learning. To this end Teagasc expects you to:

- Attend punctually and participate actively in all learning situations
- Comply and submit all assessments and project work
- Engage with online training on Moodle or other learning platforms
- Complete PLP as scheduled
- Act on constructive feedback
- Support and respect the rights of fellow learners and staff
- Abide by all rules, regulations and Teagasc policies

Attendance is monitored during training sessions throughout your programme. Poor attenders will be contacted and advised about the possible consequence of poor engagement.

Exam and assessment results are posted to Quercus (learner management system). Quercus will inform you of your provisional results and it allows tutors to monitor your performance. Teaching staff will provide feedback to you on exam/assessments if requested. Concerns will be raised directly with you by your tutor and may be followed up by your course co-ordinator if required.

**Please note that all assessment results are provisional and are subject to change as part of internal verification and external authentication processes.**

#### **7.0 Assessment Regulations for Teagasc - Programmes Leading to QQI Awards**

It is your duty to familiarise yourself with the regulations relating to written examinations, assignments and practical assessments and the consequence of infringing these regulations.

### **7.1 Assessment and Practice**

Teagasc adhere to QQI guidelines in regard to fairness and consistent assessment practice. Assessment Policy and Practice within Teagasc Courses was developed with reference to international theory and best practice. Please note learners are required to bring evidence of identity with them to produce on request if required by assessment supervisors.

### **7.2 Written Examinations**

- You must carefully note the date, time and location for all written examinations.
- You are required to be in attendance at the examination room/hall or computer room prior to the commencement of the examination.
- You will not be admitted into the examination room/hall once a learner has surrendered their examination script and left the examination room/hall.
- You will not be allowed to leave the examination room/hall and re-enter it during the time of the examination.
- If you leave the examination centre before the end of the examination you must surrender to the superintendent the examination papers, answer books and all other stationery supplied for the assessment.
- It is the learner's responsibility to ensure their name has been entered onto the examination script, answer book and any additional stationery used during the examination.
- You must not bring any books, paper or notes into the examination room/hall or have any of these within reach, under your control or in your possession.
- You must not, use or attempt to use a mobile phone, while in the examination room/hall.
- At the end of the examination, you should hand all stationery including examination papers and answer books to the superintendent.
- Each learner will be asked to sign that they have read and understand the Teagasc Assessment Policy and Practice before undertaking written examinations.

### **7.3 Practical Examinations**

The regulations applying to the written examination will be adopted as appropriate for the conduct of practical assessments. Where learners have not attended instruction in practical skills, the college/centre reserve the right not to allow the learner to attempt the practical examination due to health and safety considerations. In addition you must:

- Wear personal protective equipment appropriate for the practical examinations in question.
- Use safe procedures and practices at all times.
- Ensure that you do not compromise your safety, the safety of other learners, the assessor, the public, the environment and/or the safety/welfare of the animal (if applicable).
- Inform the assessor of any factors which may influence the learners' ability to sit a practical assessment.

#### **7.4 Written Coursework (Assignments/Projects)**

You must observe deadlines for submission of written coursework for assessment. If the assignment is submitted late it will be treated as a repeat assessment thereby capping the associated module grade at a pass.

- When submitting coursework, you must sign a declaration that all coursework (assignments, projects, records, collection of work, portfolios etc.) submitted for assessment is your own original work.
- Downloading and submitting material directly from the internet or copying the work of other learners will be regarded as plagiarism.
- Making course work (projects, assignments, records, collection of work, portfolios etc.) available to other learners is a breach of Assessment Regulations.
- Where group projects/assignments are to be undertaken, all learners must indicate which part of the work is their own and submit supporting evidence of each individual's contribution to the group projects/assignment

A learner can request an extension to the submission date for assignment or projects where genuine difficulties arise in meeting a scheduled submission deadline. An application can be made by contacting either the course co-ordinator or the relevant tutor/assessor. You must provide verifiable evidence for consideration. Examples include:

- An accident, illness or a physical injury
- An emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- A recent bereavement of a family member or friend
- Domestic emergency
- Other extenuating circumstances.

#### **7.5 Repeats Assessments**

Learners will have 2 assessment attempts (an initial assessment and a repeat assessment) during the duration of a Level 5 or Level 6 programme.

- Where a learner has passed a module, they are not required to repeat any assessments.
- Where a learner has failed a module and there are a number of assessment types associated with a module, a learner is not required to repeat elements of a module which they have passed. Only failed assessment types need be repeated.
- Learners can only repeat assessments/ examinations/assignments that they have failed. They cannot repeat assessments they have already passed to achieve a higher grade.
- The highest mark achieved at the initial assessment or a repeat assessment will always stand. This mark will be the record on your Record of Education on Quercus.
- Where any assessment (written exam, skills assessment, assignment or project) is repeated, the module grade will be capped at a "Pass". Capping a module or a number of modules at a pass grade may have implications for the overall award result.

- Assignments, projects, diaries or other work which is presented for correction after the submission deadline will be treated as a repeat attempt and late submission of work will result in the module being capped at a “Pass” grade.

#### *Repeating Modules in a Subsequent programme*

- Learners who do not pass all modules associated with their programme cannot be put forward for a major award with QQI.
- The results for all modules which have been successfully passed will be exported to QQI and the learner will receive component awards for these modules.
- A learner can re-register, pay repeat fees and repeat additional modules on a subsequent programme. Your college/centre will inform you of the repeat fee per module.
- Learners who repeat coursework and successfully complete the modules required for a major award will be put forward for a major award with QQI.

### **8.0 Penalties for Breaches of Assessment Regulations**

It is an offence, under the Assessment Regulations for Teagasc, to procure, or to attempt to procure a breach of the regulations, whether on your own behalf or on behalf of any other person.

A **breach of assessment regulations** shall be deemed to have occurred when there has been an actual or attempted form of:

- Cheating
- Copying
- Aiding another learner during a written or practical examination
- Plagiarism
- Sharing assignments or project work with other learners
- Falsely claiming to have carried out assignments, work based learning, projects etc.
- Misrepresentation
- Bribery
- Falsification
- Personating or other such form of deception. Personation will be treated as serious misconduct.
- Breaching the security and integrity of any assessment in any way or by any means.
- Any other behaviour, deception or false claim that manipulates or breaches assessment practice and result outcomes

The **penalties which can be imposed for breach of assessment regulations** may constitute any or all of the following:

- No credit in the assessment or part of the assessment.
- No credit for a module.
- No credit for all of the modules associated with a particular programme.
- Ineligibility for an award.



- Suspension from all course activities, for a fixed period of time.
- A recommendation to the head of college/centre for the formal expulsion from a college /centre.

**You will be notified in writing if a suspected breach of assessment regulations is being investigated.**

### **8.1 Compensation policy**

Teagasc operates a compensation policy which can allow learners who fail to attain the required pass standard in some modules to achieve the overall award within the limits set out in the Compensation Policy document. Details of this policy will be made available to you during the programme.

### **8.2 Assessment Appeals**

There is a system of academic appeal for learners unhappy with their assessment results. All written assessment scripts, assignments, projects and skills assessment record sheets are retained by your tutors for external authentication.

If you are unhappy about an assessment result you should firstly contact your tutor, who will explain to you how the assessment was marked. If you are still unhappy about the result you then have the option of lodging a formal assessment appeal. There is an application form on which the appeal must be made. A fee of €20 is charged for an appeal. This fee is refundable if the appeal is upheld. Appeals can only be considered where a valid reason for the appeal is given. Valid reasons include:

1. Perceived inequity in the marking of scripts or practical assessments
2. Perceived errors in the Record of Education and Training

The Application Form for an Assessment Appeal can be provided by your Course Co-ordinator.

Any unresolved queries between learners and assessors can be referred to the External Authenticator.

### **8.3 Results**

Results of assessments will be available to view on Quercus using your user name and password.

**However, it is important to note that all results are provisional until verified by an appointed External Authenticator.**

Exam scripts and other course work submitted by learners will be held by colleges and regional centres until the appeals period following external authentication has expired.

## **9.0 QQI Certification**

Teagasc is not an awarding body, your award will be issued by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Learners who successfully complete training programmes with Teagasc will receive QQI awards placed at Level 5 or Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The NFQ facilitates progression through the education system as below.

## National Framework of Qualifications

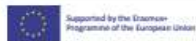


### CLASSES OF AWARD

- Major Awards: named in the outer rings, are the principal class of awards made at a level
  - Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
  - Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
  - Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement
  - Professional Awards: are for occupation-orientated qualifications including apprenticeships
- \*Please refer to NCCA website, [ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/](http://ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/)

### IRISH REGISTER OF QUALIFICATIONS

- For more information on
- Qualifications
  - Providers
  - Courses
- visit [www.irqi.ie](http://www.irqi.ie)



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The QQI Learner Charter can be read and downloaded from the QQI website at [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie).

## **10.0 Recognition of Prior Learning**

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Teagasc is a process by which prior learning is formally identified, assessed and acknowledged.

### **10.1 The Purpose of RPL**

RPL in Teagasc programmes is used for the following purposes:

- To enable applicants to gain entry to Teagasc programmes.
- To enable applicants to gain exemption from components (modules) of a Teagasc programme (exemption will not be granted for parts of a component).

Learners seeking exemptions for components by RPL should contact their course coordinator at the start of their training programme for information on making an application for RPL. Further information on RPL can be viewed [here](#).

## **11.0 Teagasc Student Maintenance Grant Scheme**

The Teagasc Student Maintenance Grant Scheme is the means testing of maintenance grants for students attending full time Level 5 and Level 6 courses at Teagasc and Private Agricultural Colleges. Teagasc maintenance grants are paid through Teagasc and the grant scheme is managed by Teagasc. The scheme is implemented along the lines of the national Student Grant Scheme but varies in respect of items added back to determine overall reckonable income.

The Student Maintenance Grant is a contribution towards the living costs of students. Students will not be paid for non-attendance unless specifically allowed. See section 2.3 on time and attendance.

All scheme information including application form and guidance notes are available [here](#).

## **12.0 Teagasc Education and Training Promotion**

Teagasc use various means to promote education and training. The list below, not exhaustive, includes:

- Educational videos
- Event promotional material
- Conference presentation
- Testimonial videos
- Teagasc Course Prospectus

A consent form is required for learners to participate in such promotional materials. This consent allows for the use of the learner's image, and sound of the learners voice as recorded on audio or video devices, without payment or any other consideration, for Teagasc educational, training or promotional purposes. The image and/or voice recording may be edited, copied, exhibited, published or distributed and this

personal data may be used in diverse educational/promotional settings and mediums within an unrestricted geographic area.

The learner will be asked to complete a consent form as part of their online application but have the right to opt out.

### **13.0 Data Protection Statement**

Teagasc (or private college) will comply with all its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Teagasc is the data controller in relation to any personal data which you provide to us.

Teagasc will process your personal data for purposes which are necessary to comply with the Learner Handbook. We may, on occasion, share your personal data with third parties such as hosts involved in practical learning period training, education contractors employed by Teagasc, Central Statistics Office, QQI and college/centre service providers (e.g. catering companies, security companies).

Teagasc applies different retention periods for different categories of your personal data. The personal data supplied by you will be retained according to Teagasc Data Retention policies. Your personal data will only be processed for purposes other than compliance with the Learner Handbook where such processing is necessary for lawful reasons under data protection legislation or in circumstances where Teagasc is compelled to do so by law. Teagasc may share personal data requested by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). Under regulations which were introduced in 1991, third level institutions are obliged to supply the Department with details of learners registered for full-time daytime education.

Teagasc has taken the appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect your personal data from loss, abuse and unauthorised access. For more information on how Teagasc may process your personal data, please contact the Teagasc Data Protection Officer at: [dpo@teagasc.ie](mailto:dpo@teagasc.ie)

#### 14.0 Emergency Contact Numbers

Staff contact	
Local Garda Station	
Local General Practitioner	
Out of hours Doctor	
Fire Brigade	
Child Protection Designated Lead Person(s)	
College/centre Access/Disability Officer	

#### 15.0 Other Relevant Policies

The Learner Handbook does not exhaustively detail all Teagasc policies of potential relevance to learners. Other policies may be accessed through the Teagasc website.

## Appendix 1

### Learner Guidelines for Online Behaviour or Netiquette (extract from DKIT Guidelines)

This guide aims to clarify expectations and promote courteous and professional behaviour and communication online.

#### Guide to Online Etiquette

With attending classes online, we have constructed a guide to help you get the most out of your online learning. Here are a few simple guidelines you can follow to ensure your online classes will go as smoothly as possible:

1. **Mute your microphone:** (Unless you are told otherwise) This avoids any unnecessary background noise or interference and ensures everyone is able to hear the person speaking.
2. **Raise your hand:** If you want to talk or ask for help and the lecturer is already talking make sure to use the 'raise your hand' feature or indicate in the chat, do not interrupt them. When finished, don't forget to lower your hand.
3. **Take notes:** Even if the lecture is recorded it is always good practice to take notes and write things in your own words to make it more memorable and understandable when you review it come exam time. (You could further consolidate your learning by speaking it out loud or explaining it to someone else in your class).
4. **Use the video option when possible:** This shows the lecturer you are attending and paying attention. Where this is not possible, it is useful to have a photo uploaded to your profile.
5. **Position your camera properly, dress accordingly and be aware of your surroundings and what others can see in the background:** College at home can be more difficult if you are in a busy household, but ensure you are positioned in the best possible way to attend your lectures by finding a quiet, private place in your house and ensure you are dressed appropriately.
6. **Stay focused:** Don't multi-task or do things you wouldn't do in a physical lecture. This ensures you or other attendees will not be distracted during class time. Attend the class as though you are in a physical lecture, this means do not eat and do not do things that should be done in private such as checking emails or texts or bathroom breaks (it is likely for longer lectures your lecturer will schedule in a break).
7. **Be prepared:** Before attending the lecture ensure you have your copy and pen ready to take notes, but also have a think about any extra materials you may need for the class such as calculators, drawing materials, sketchbooks etc.
8. **Be on time:** Arrive promptly so the lecture can begin on time and you don't get stuck in the waiting room (if there is one).
9. **Be considerate to your lecturer:** If you can't attend a class, a quick email to your lecturer will be much appreciated. Some lecturers may be waiting for the call to reach a certain number of people for the lecture to go ahead, so letting them know if you aren't attending will ensure the class goes ahead on time. Remember, this is a new experience for your lecturers too, we are all going through similar struggles. Talk to your lecturer if something is bothering you, they are there to help.
10. **Use a headset if possible:** You might want to invest in a good headset with an external mic. This will block out background noise around you but also let others hear you more clearly.
11. **Close applications not in use:** Try to only have the applications you are using for your lecture open and close the others. This hopefully allows for a stronger connection and a better video.
12. **Leave meeting:** When your lecture is over, remember to leave the meeting, hang up or sign out.
13. **Groups:** When working in groups be courteous and considerate of others.