Learner Handbook

Tipperary

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Dear Learner

You have enrolled on a Teagasc course and as Course Director I welcome you, on behalf of the staff, on the course. We hope that you will find the course interesting, challenging and rewarding. The course leads to a widely recognised QQI award.

You may find the course and the new surroundings a little daunting at first. This is natural as it takes time to adapt to a new location, to new ways of learning, to new friends and to becoming a more independent person. Indeed, the aim of Teagasc courses is to assist people to become independent learners who are capable of identifying their own education and training needs. It is our role to help you through this transition process. One of the strengths of most courses offered by Teagasc is that learners can progress “up through the ranks” right up to degree level.

If you work hard and satisfactorily complete all the requirements asked of you, you should pass your assessments. We hope that you will be successful and be well qualified to pursue a worthwhile career of your choice.

Finally, I wish you well for your time with us. I hope that you will benefit from and enjoy your course and the time spent with us.

Yours faithfully

Klara McGriskin

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Course Director

Purpose of the Learner Handbook

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

Some of the issues addressed in this Handbook are dealt with very briefly. Learners are advised to consult the definitive versions of policies and regulations which are available from the Course Director e.g. Safety Statement, Code of Behaviour, Statement on Bullying, Intimidation and Sexual Harassment, Child Protection Policy, College Computer and IT policy, and other relevant college policies etc.
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 achieves this goal by creating a dynamic, learner-centred environment that promotes individual potential. Teagasc is motivated and supported by the deep commitment of all staff to facilitate learners to work to the full extent of their capabilities.

Teagasc staffs are empowered to create and facilitate a learning environment that supports and stimulates learners and enables them to realise their full potential. Belief and confidence in each learner’s potential is at the heart of Teagasc’s relationship with its learners and is central to everything that Teagasc does for learners.

Teagasc is committed to providing learners with:

- Accessible, quality education at a time, place and pace that mutually suits Teagasc staff and the learners situation and aspirations
- A learning environment and resources that supports and stimulates learners and enables them to realise their full potential
- An environment that promotes continuous improvement
- Courses of the highest quality
- Accurate information about all programmes and expectations
- Assessment of learning that is fair, valid and timely
- The opportunity to evaluate teaching and programmes 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 policies stated in the Learner Handbook and Individual Course Memoranda.
1.2 Mentoring System

At the beginning of each year students, if requested, are assigned a member of staff as a personal mentor by the Course Director or College Principal. The mentor is responsible for supporting a student’s academic performance and welfare during their time spent at the college/centre. It is important to maintain contact with this mentor throughout the year.

A mentor speaks on their appointed students behalf in examinations meetings/teacher meetings etc if they are aware of any factors affecting the student’s progress. Mentors can also provide references for employment.

In addition to timetabled mentor meetings, it is possible to meet a student mentor informally to discuss any issues of concern. It is strongly advised that mentors are informed of relevant issues that might have implications for a student’s welfare, and/or academic work, particularly with respect to attendance and completion of projects/assignments.

The agenda for mentor meetings will include some or all of the following items; academic progress, attendance record, work placement, projects and assignments etc.

1.3 Additional Learning Support

Additional learner support is available where evidence of a support requirement is provided. Please contact your course co-ordinator for details.
2.0 Rules and Code of Behaviour for Students

*Code of Behaviour*

Each Teagasc college/centre has a Code of Behaviour. This is available from the Course Director. Staff and learners are expected to behave responsibly at all times, to observe and abide by the Code of Behaviour and not to engage in any activity which might bring the college/centre into disrepute.

Learners are required to attend regularly and punctually all timetabled activities – classes, practicals, work practice, assessment, field trips etc. 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, such a staff member may require the learner to withdraw from the particular timetabled activity and bring the matter to the notice of the Course Director for appropriate action to be taken. Details of the code are in the following sections.

2.1 Purpose of the Code

2.1.1 This section sets out a code of behaviour to which students are expected to adhere in return for being admitted to the college/centre and being provided with educational and other services and facilities. It also sets out the procedure which should be followed where the code of behaviour is breached.

2.1.2 Breach of the code of behaviour may lead to disciplinary action being taken against a student and repeated breaches or a single serious breach may result in a student being suspended or expelled from the college and or course.

2.1.3 This code applies to all students, whether full-time or part-time and at all times during the year, whether or not during normal teaching times.

2.2 Obligations of Students

Students must:

2.2.1 Conduct themselves, both inside and outside the college/centre, in a manner which will maintain the good name of the student and the college/centre.

2.2.2 Act at all times with due regard for their own safety and that of others;

2.2.3 Respect the property of the college/centre and of its staff, other students and visitors;

2.2.4 Support staff and other students in the maintenance of a clean and tidy environment throughout the college/centre.

2.2.5 Attend classes/practicals (and other events at which they are scheduled to attend) regularly and punctually.
2.2.6 Inform the college/centre office as soon as practicable if for any reason they are unable to attend a class/practical or other scheduled event.

2.2.7 Adhere to regulations regarding bio-security measures for the control of animal diseases.

2.2.8 Report at once to the college/administration office all cases of illness or accidents. Student absent from the college/centre must complete an absenteeism form with the college/administration office. Students absent for more than 2 days due to illness must present a doctors certificate to the college/administration office on their return.

2.3 Misconduct

The following are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action being taken against students:

2.3.1 Breach of any of the students’ obligations set out above (including any breach of health and safety or other regulations of the college/centre.

2.3.2 Failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff;

2.3.3 Smoking in non-smoking areas that is indoors & adjacent to doors and windows;

2.3.4 Residential students are not allowed to have non-residential students in their bedrooms after midnight.

2.3.5 Unduly noisy or any unruly behaviour or the use of foul or abusive language;

2.3.6 Disrupting class or any other college/centre activity.

2.3.7 Deliberately or by gross negligence causing damage to any college/centre buildings, equipment, books or furnishings or the property of others.

2.3.8 Dangerous or careless driving including failure to observe speed limits or parking regulations.

2.3.9 Operating machinery or equipment without permission and supervision.

2.3.10 Unauthorised interference with software or data belonging to or used by the college/centre.

2.3.11 Theft of property or any other dishonest acts.

2.3.12 Possession of alcoholic drinks within the college/centre or its grounds.

2.3.13 Drunkenness on college/centre premises or on any activity associated with the college/centre.
2.3.14 The use or possession or supply of any illegal drug;

2.3.15 Bullying, intimidation, taunting, verbal abuse or the use of any violence or threat of violence towards any person;

2.3.16 Behaviour which is racially or sexually offensive or which is offensive to those with learning and/or physical disabilities or impediments;

2.3.17 An illegal act which may have an adverse effect on the work of the college/centre or on other students;

2.3.18 Sourcing pornographic material on the internet;

2.3.19 Any behaviour which could bring the college/centre into disrepute.

2.4 Gross Misconduct

Serious case of misconduct may be treated by the college/centre as gross misconduct. Gross misconduct includes among other things violence or a serious threat of violence, deliberate damage to property, endangering the health or safety of others, deliberate breach of college/centre guidelines relating to bio security issues or any criminal activities affecting the college/centre or other students.

In-appropriate use of camera phones and uploading of in-appropriate comments, images of staff or students etc online is also considered to be gross misconduct.

Interfering with smoke alarms or fire fitting equipment is regarded as gross misconduct.

2.5 Damage to Property

Learners are required to make good, to the satisfaction of the college/centre, any damage or loss which they intentionally cause to any property of the college/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.

Reckless or negligent behaviour may result in a fine, suspension for a fixed period or permanent expulsion from the course.
2.6 Guidelines for Disciplinary Procedures

2.6.1 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 college/centre activity, or which violates any Code of Behaviour, shall constitute a breach of discipline. Disciplinary action may result in a fine, suspension for a fixed period or permanent expulsion from the course.

In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the following are examples of offences:

- Breaching assessment regulations (see Assessment Regulations)
- Plagiarism on assessments, assignments, projects etc.
- Conduct which is disruptive of or which may disrupt teaching, work practice or study
- Abuse of alcohol or other substances on the college/centre premises
- Obstruction or harassment of any member of staff or learner in the performance of duties, work or other Teagasc activity
- Damaging, defacing, stealing or misappropriating any property of the college/centre
- Tampering with safety equipment
- Bullying or sexual harassment of any learner or member of the staff
- Smoking in non-designated areas. This includes indoor and outdoor areas.
- Acts or omissions by learners while outside college/centre engaged in field trips, work experience, placement or club activities, organised by the college/centre or while representing the college/centre which would breach the Code of Behaviour if committed in the college/centre
- Activity which adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect the reputation of the college/centre, the learners or members of staff
- Incitement or encouragement of any other person or persons to do any of the aforementioned things.
- All mobile phones must be switched off or put on silent while attending classes – indoor or outdoor. A warning will be issued to a student for a breach of this regulation. Repeated breaches of this regulation will lead to permanent expulsion from the Course.

It is emphasised that the examples of offences, given in the proceeding paragraphs, are 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 discipline.
**Official Verbal Warning**
Cases of petty misconduct may be treated informally by staff or others acting on behalf of the college/centre.

Where the misconduct is repeated or is considered to warrant more formal treatment, staff may give an official verbal warning to the student concerned. An official verbal warning or incidents whereby a student is dismissed from a class or practical should be recorded on a Student Incident Report Form and returned to the college/administration office.

**Formal Written Warning**
Where the conduct complained of is of a more serious nature or where conduct has been repeated after official verbal warnings, the student will be invited to attend a disciplinary interview. A student will be entitled to state his or her case before any decision is taken. After hearing the student’s case the college/centre may decide to issue a formal written warning or an official verbal warning or may decide that no disciplinary sanction would be appropriate. Measures, including fines for damage to property may be implemented.

Any formal written warning will be issued within 5 working days of the interview. It will give reasons for the decision and will state that any repeated or similar misconduct by the student may result in further disciplinary action by the college/centre.

**Gross Misconduct/Repeated Misconduct**
A student may be suspended pending a disciplinary interview where the college/centre has reason to believe that the student has committed an act of gross misconduct or has ignored a previous written warning. Any such suspension will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of its occurrence and the student will be invited to an interview with college/centre management within 5 working days of the suspension. The student may be accompanied by a friend, student representative, or relative at the interview and will be entitled to state his or her case. If the interview is adjourned pending further investigation, the student will remain on suspension until the interview is reconvened. Within 5 working days of the end of the final interview, the student will be informed in writing of the results of that interview. The student may be permanently expelled or suspended for a fixed period or other action may be taken or no disciplinary action may be taken.

**Right of Appeal**
A student will have the right of appeal to the college/centre against any recommendation for permanent expulsion or formal suspension. This right of appeal must be exercised in writing within 5 working days of the date of recommendation for expulsion or suspension.

**Criminal Offences**
Where any member of staff has reason to believe that a student may have committed a criminal offence, the college/centre may refer the matter to the Gardaí.
3.0 Policy Documents

3.1 Policy on Bullying/Intimidation and Sexual Harassment

**Bullying/Intimidation**
All students and staff are entitled to be treated with respect and their learning/work environment must be such that students and staff are free to perform their studies/duties in a climate free from intimidation/bullying from other students, staff members, or others. Intimidation/bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or a group against others. It affects the dignity of people and undermines people as human beings.

All students and staff are responsible for ensuring that bullying does not occur in the college/centre.

Bullying should be reported to Klara McGriskin, the designated liaison person or to someone of trust on the staff.

**Sexual Harassment**
The college/centre environment is such that all students and staff are free to perform their studies/duties without sexual harassment from other students, 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.

Sexual harassment should be reported to Klara McGriskin, the designated liaison person or to someone of trust.

**Policy Statement Aims and Elements**
The prevention of bullying and sexual harassment is an integral part of the Code of Discipline and Disciplinary Procedures. There is a policy statement on bullying/intimidation and sexual harassment. The essential elements of the policy statement include:

1. An ethos which encourages students and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

2. Raising awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with college/centre management, staff, students, parents/guardians.

3. Ensuring comprehensive supervision and monitoring.

5. Procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

6. A programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and sexual harassment and for those involved in bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

7. Working with and through various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.

8. Evaluating the effectiveness of the college/centre policy on anti-bullying behaviour.

Incidents of bullying behaviour or sexual harassment should be reported to Klara McGriskin (Designated Liaison Person) or to someone of trust.

3.2 Teagasc Protection for Learners Policy and Practice

This policy outlines Teagasc’s policy in the event of a college ceasing to provide training programmes.

3.3 Teagasc Student Equality Policy

This policy outlines Teagasc’s commitment to providing equal access to all students. If any student feels that they have not been treated equitably they have the right to lodge a complaint without fear of victimisation with the College Principal/Area Managers or the Teagasc Head of Education.

3.4 Teagasc Assessment Policy and Practice

This policy outlines Assessment Policy and Practice within Teagasc Courses, and was developed with reference to international theory and best practice.

3.5 Teagasc Policy on Access, Transfer and Progression

This policy outlines Teagasc’s commitment to the promotion of access, transfer and progression to facilitate enhancement of opportunities for students to gain access and to education leading to major awards and to progress within it.
3.6 Learner Support
Each college has an Access/Disability Officer who can assess the learning support requirements of students with recognised special needs or disabilities. Where appropriate and feasible Teagasc will provide reasonable accommodation to these learners at assessment.

3.7 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 use.
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 host farms or units, education contractors employed by the college, Central Statistics Office, QQI and college 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 polices. 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 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.

4.0 Health and Safety And Welfare

4.1 Introduction
The health, safety and welfare at work affects 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.

The main piece of legislation dealing with health and safety is the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. Under this Act Teagasc has a duty to provide you with safe entry/exit within buildings and around buildings and farms, safe equipment, adequate safety information, instruction, training and supervision and adequate welfare arrangements.

You should bear in mind that each of you also has a duty under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act to assist Teagasc in maintaining a safe place to pursue your course and a specific legal duty not to interfere with anything which may compromise safety management at the college/centre.

Additional health and safety information is available in the library or on request from the Course Director. 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.
Any act which may compromise safety management will be treated as a serious offence by Teagasc and may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.2 Student Welfare
Student welfare involves management, administration, catering, teachers, house and technical staff, student clubs and societies. All of these support the total well being of the student and help build up a sense of community.

Good Mental Health
Read some of the notices on the notice boards and feel free to take the leaflets and handouts promoting good mental and emotional health. If something is bothering you, it’s best to tackle it sooner than later. There are people here who can help if you need to talk things through. Confide in someone you trust.

Policy Documents
The Anti Bullying Policy that supports a bully free environment. You have the right to enjoy your time here without intimidation or harassment. There are designated staff that you can approach if you experience difficulties. For more information on this policy please see section 3 of the Learner Handbook.

We also have a Substance Use policy. If you have anxieties about someone using or are troubled yourself talk to one of the named staff in confidence on the policy document. It is important to know that substance use is prohibited and illegal.

Alcohol and smoking
Binge drinking or drinking to excess is monitored and recorded. It is important to be aware of the way in which alcohol affects your behaviour.

Smoking is prohibited throughout college/centre buildings. All rooms are fitted with smoke detectors. Designated smoking areas are provided.

It is essential that there is no smoking anywhere in the vicinity of the main kitchen area. This is to comply with food hygiene regulations.

Personal Safety
- When travelling to your accommodation or sports club use well lit walkways – avoid dark or isolated areas.
- Walk facing traffic so vehicles cannot approach you from behind without you being aware of their presence. Wear high visibility clothing.
- Avoid situations that will necessitate you travelling alone at night. There is safety in numbers. Plan your journey with safety in mind.
- Do not leave valuables or personal documents in your car.
4.3 Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures
Buildings are adequately sign-posted indicating the direction to the nearest exit point and all exits are individually sign-posted.

Please note the following when the alarm sounds:
(a) Walk (don’t run) to the nearest exit point
(b) Do NOT delay to pick up personal belongings
(c) Close all doors behind you (where appropriate)
(d) On arriving at the designated assembly point(s) please obey the requests of staff and keep areas adjacent to buildings clear
(e) 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 1 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
A continuous ringing of the alarm is the signal to evacuate the building. All students must evacuate without delay. No person may enter the building to rescue belongings or equipment if the alarm has been given. Go to the designated assembly point and record your name on the roll call. Once the alarm is ringing, the relevant Fire Marshal will ascertain the need to alert the fire brigade.

Assembly Points
The Fire Assembly point is located in the Car Park

Evacuation Routes
Buildings can be excited through different routes and are clearly marked.

Emergency Exits
Never Block Emergency Exits
Emergency Lighting

Break Glass Units
Breaking the glass will sound the alarm

Fire Drills
When alarm sounds, leave belongings behind and proceed to the Emergency Exits and Assembly Points.
### Fire fighting equipment

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

### 4.4 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 aiders are **Klara McGriskin, & Mary Maher**

**Emergency Numbers**

Local emergency numbers are given at the back of this book

### 4.5 Medical Services

Learners requiring a doctor or pharmacist, while attending timetabled activities, should contact a member of staff. Costs for these services are the responsibility of the learner.

Local doctors are: Premier Health Clinic, Kickham Street, Thurles Tel 050421331

After hours service is provided by ShannonDoc, St Mary's Health Centre, Parnell Street, Thurles, Co Tipperary, Tel. 1850 212 999

Learners on specific long-term medication or with a detailed medical history should inform the Course Director and be assured that this will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Students are advised to have an anti–tetanus vaccination before starting a course.
4.6 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. Teagasc recognises the right of every individual to such an environment and requires all staff and learners to recognise their responsibilities in this regard. Harassment of others by staff or learners will not be tolerated. This policy applies to the behaviour of learners and staff of the college/centre and others on business or engaged in activities relating to the college/centre or providing services to the college/centre.

4.7 Use of Vehicles
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. In all cases college/centre staff will arrange for the provision of adequate transport for all excursions/field trips in connection with the course. Student’s cars must be parked in the designated parking areas.

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

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

عناصر
- There is a general speed limit of 10 Kmph throughout all college/centre grounds.
- Students are required to register details of vehicles used in the college/administration office.
- Students keeping vehicles at the college/centre are required to park in the designated student car park.
- Do not park on double yellow lines
- Unauthorised vehicles are not allowed to enter restricted areas e.g. the college farm yard, visiting farm yards
- Only vehicles displaying authentic permits can park in designated disabled parking areas.

The college/centre reserves the right to prohibit the keeping of a vehicle at the college/centre where individuals fail to co-operate with these regulations.

4.8 Excursions/Field Trips
In all cases college/centre staff will arrange for the provision of adequate transport for all excursions/field trips in connection with the course. For reasons of personal safety and bio-security learners are not allowed use personal vehicles for such trips. 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.

4.9 Bio-security

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

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

4.10 Policy for the Use of Computers

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

**General Computer Usage**

1. Users must log on to the computer network system using their own user name and password.
2. This password must be confidential to each user and must not be made known to other students.
3. Students must not interfere with the system settings on the computer.
4. Accessing another student’s computer account is strictly forbidden.
5. When a user is finished he/she must log out of the computer.
6. Should a user have problems logging on, or with their password they should contact a member of staff.
7. The computer rooms are to be kept tidy at all times.
8. There is no food or drink allowed in the computer rooms.
9. Wilful damage to facilities in the computer room will be treated as misconduct.
10. Students carrying out projects will have preferential access to computers.
11. If a computer user encounters a problem with a computer, this should be reported to a member of staff.
Use of the Internet, mobile phones and, email
Accessing, downloading or sending indecent, obscene, pornographic, sexist, defamatory, racist or other inappropriate material and the circulation of these materials are a potential criminal offence, and will be treated in a very serious manner.

Passing information through email and the Internet greatly increases the risk of computer viruses, and users should be aware of this when they receive suspicious emails especially.

Internet use will be monitored on a regular basis by college/centre staff.

Students who do not comply with the regulations will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Printing
Students on QQI courses will be given credit to print projects and assignments. Once this credit is used, further credit must be purchased through the college office/administration. Students on other courses will have to purchase credit for printing.
5.0 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.

5.1 Written Examinations

5.1.1. You must always sit at your assigned desk during all written examinations unless otherwise directed. Attendance will be taken according to the seating chart, therefore if you are not sitting at your assigned desk you will be marked absent and your paper may be in danger of not being accepted. You must remain in this place for the duration of the examination.

5.1.2. Any writing on your assigned desk must be brought to the attention of the superintendent before the exam commences otherwise you will be held accountable and disciplined accordingly.

5.1.3. You must carefully note the date, time and location for all written examinations.

5.1.4. You are required to be in attendance at the examination room/hall prior to the commencement of the examination. If you are late you will be in danger of not being admitted into the examination room/hall.

5.1.5. You will not be admitted to the examination room/hall after the examination has commenced.

5.1.6. You will not be allowed to leave the examination room/hall and re-enter it during the time of the examination.

5.1.7. 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 during the examination period.

5.1.8. You must enter your name on every separate piece of stationery used during the examination. No marks can be allocated where a student fails to sign their name on an exam paper.

5.1.9. Any additional stationery issued to you during the examination should be returned to the superintendent.

5.1.10. You must not bring any mobile phone, books, paper or notes (except in the case of open book exams) into the examination room/hall or have any of these within reach, under your control or in your possession.

5.1.11. You must not, use or attempt to use books, mobile phone, notes or papers while in the examination room/hall other than the examination paper, answer book and stationery supplied by the superintendent.

5.1.12. You must not while in the examination room/hall, aid or attempt to obtain aid from another candidate.

5.1.13. You must not, while in the examination room/hall, communicate with or attempt to communicate with another candidate in any way.

5.1.14. You must not write in the answer book anything that is not directly connected with the subject matter of the questions to be answered.

5.1.15. You must not damage the examination room/hall or its furniture.
5.1.16. At the end of the examination, you should hand all stationery including examination papers and answer books to the superintendent.

5.1.17. You must obey the directions of the superintendent in all matters relating to the examination.

5.1.18. You may be expelled from the examination room/hall if your behaviour, in the opinion of the superintendent, is such as to jeopardise the successful conduct of the examination.

5.1.19. Repeated expulsion from the examination room/hall may result in more serious disciplinary action.

5.1.20. At the conclusion of the examination, you should immediately stop writing and remain in your seat until the superintendent has collected the scripts.

5.1.21. It is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure his/her name has been entered onto the examination script and additional sheets, and that the script has been handed to the invigilator.

5.2 Practical Examinations

The regulations applying to the written examination will be adopted as appropriate for the conduct of practical assessments. In addition you must:

5.2.1 Wear personal protective equipment appropriate for the practical examinations in question.

5.2.2 Use safe procedures and practices at all times.

5.2.3 Ensure that you do not compromise your safety, the safety of the assessor, the safety of the public, the safety of the environment and/or the safety/welfare of the animal (if applicable).

5.2.4 Inform the assessor if under the influence of medication, drugs or alcohol.

5.3 Written Coursework (Assignments/Projects)

5.3.1 You must observe deadlines for submission of written coursework for assessment. Penalties will apply where assignments are submitted late or for no valid reason. Courses have laid down penalties for late submissions:

Assignments submitted up to 5 days late will be penalised by a 10% deduction from the awarded mark.

After 5 days, the assignment will be recorded as a repeat in addition to the 10% deduction. Modules with repeat marks can only be achieved at a pass grade. This could be significant in altering the grade you achieve for your overall award. Students experiencing difficulties are strongly advised to inform their tutor.

Worked example:
Assignment worth 20% of the award, Assignment is 3 days late
Assignment is awarded 75% (normally 15% out of 20% of the award)
10% penalty: 75% - 7.5% = 67.5% (Penalised result 13.5% out of 20% of the award).
If the assignment is more than 5 days late, it is treated as a repeat. It will now only be possible to achieve a pass grade for this module.

5.3.2 You must sign a declaration that all coursework (assignments, projects, records, collection of work, portfolios etc) submitted for assessment is your own original work. Downloaded material from the internet, is not your own work, and so is plagiarism

5.3.3 Where group projects/assignments are to be undertaken, all candidates must indicate which part of the work is their own and submit supporting evidence of each individual's contribution to the group projects/assignment

5.3.4 You must not interfere with or damage, in any way, the work of other learners

5.3.5 You must not access files of any other candidate on a computer.

5.4 Penalties for Breaches of Assessment Regulations

It shall be 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:

(i) Cheating
(ii) Copying
(iii) Plagiarism
(iv) Misrepresentation
(v) Bribery
(vi) Falsification
(vii) Personating or other such form of deception
(viii) Breaching examination paper security
(ix) Aiding another candidate
(x) Untrue claim to have carried out assignments, work based learning, projects etc.
(xi) Untrue claim to the acquisition of results is committed by a learner, whether acting alone or in concert with any other person or persons.

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

(i) No credit in the assessment or part of the assessment in which the offence was committed
(ii) No credit for the module in which the offence was committed
(iii) No credit for all of the modules for a particular year of the course being followed
(iv) Ineligible for an award during the year of the breach
(v) Suspension of the candidate, from all activities of the college/centre, for a fixed period of time

(vi) A recommendation to the Teagasc, Head of Education for the formal expulsion of the candidate from the college/centre.

You will be notified in writing when a suspected breach of assessment regulations is being investigated.
5.5 Assessment Appeals

There is a system of appeal for learners unhappy with their assessment results. All written assessment scripts are retained by your tutor for verification by the External Verifier.

Procedure

If you are unhappy about an assessment result you should firstly contact your tutor, who will explain to you how the script was marked. If you are still unhappy about the result you then have the option of lodging a formal assessment appeal. There is a special 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:

(i) Perceived inequity in the marking of scripts or practical assessments
(ii) Perceived defects in the Record of Education and Training

The Application Form for an Assessment Appeal can be got from your Course Director.

Any unresolved disputes between learners and assessors are referred to the External Verifier.

5.6 Results

All results are provisional until verified by an appointed External Verifier.
6.0 QQI System

QQI stands for Quality and Qualifications Ireland. QQI awards framework allows for progression through the education system as part of life-long learning. Central to the system is to allow the learner to build on previous experiences.

6.1 Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning is a process that enables individuals with prior learning to receive formal recognition for skills, knowledge and competence they already have.

The learner will be required to provide valid and reliable evidence of this prior learning to Teagasc Curriculum Development and Standards Unit to demonstrate attainment of the exempted element of the programme. The decision of granting of recognised prior learning will be made by Teagasc Curriculum Development and Standards Unit.

If you believe that you have a case you must arrange to meet and discuss your case initially with your course director. Your course director will advise you on the best course of action, which may include the learner to prepare a portfolio / collection of evidence to submit for assessment against the standards of a specific award. The decision of granting of recognised prior learning will be made by Teagasc Curriculum Development and Standards Unit. The learner may be required to undertake further assessments and an interview (s) as appropriate to demonstrate the standards of the award.

6.2 QQI Progression

Your qualification will be awarded by QQI and will be part of the awards framework below. Normal progression is from one level to the next on the framework.
The Fan Diagram outlines the awards framework. Further details are available from your course tutor or the QQI website at www.qqi.ie

Every major award is made up of component awards or minor awards. The syllabus specifications for each minor award outline the required subject matter and assessments. This information is available from your course director.

The table below outlines categories of results for each award:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50% - 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>65% - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>80% - 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 QQI Learner Charter

The QQI Learner Charter can be read and downloaded from the QQI website at www.qqi.ie
6.4 Progression and the Higher Education Links

Normal progression is from one level to the next on the QQI framework on the preceding page.

The Higher Education Links Scheme links specific QQI Level 5 Certificates and Level 6 Advanced Certificates to reserved places on a variety of higher education programmes. Applicants must have achieved a QQI Major Award. Higher Education Institutions operating the scheme may have other requirements for access to programmes. It is essential that learners intending to apply should check with the Central Applications Office and with the Applications Office of the individual Institution. Further information on the Higher Education Links Scheme is available from the QQI website www.qqi.ie

Recognition of Other Awards

Individuals seeking recognition of awards that were formerly issued in Ireland by FÁS, CERT (Fáilte Ireland) and the National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA), may enable progression to 3rd level courses. Further information is available from the QQI website www.qqi.ie

Individuals seeking recognition of awards other than those issued by the above bodies should refer to the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland website at http://www.qualrec.ie/

Progression Links

For information on progression and links to other courses and institutions, contact your Course Director and check with the institution itself.

CAO

You should follow the procedures as laid down in the CAO Handbook. The CAO handbook may be accessed on line at www.cao.ie or from

Central Applications Office
Tower House
Eglinton Street
Galway
Tel +353 (0)91 509800
Fax +353 (0)91 562344

The CAO’s normal closing date is 1st February. This applies to all applicants. Late applications are those which are received after the 1st February. The latest date for receipt in the CAO of such applications is 1st May. Late applicants are required to pay an additional fee. Students are advised to check with the relevant institution for guidelines on application procedures.
7.0 Services for Students

7.1 College/centre facilities
Teagasc, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary 0504 21777

Notice boards
Moodle; Text

Parking
Teagasc Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

Post
Education Officer, Teagasc, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

College office
Teagasc, Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Appendix

Glossary of terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QQI</th>
<th>Stand for Quality and Qualifications Ireland. All Teagasc course at level 4 to 6 are awarded by QQI.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism</td>
<td>The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emergency Contact Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff contact</th>
<th>0504 21777</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Garda Station</td>
<td>0504 21111 or 0504 25116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local General Practitioner</td>
<td>0504 21331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of hours Doctor</td>
<td>1850 212 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Brigade</td>
<td>999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/centre Access/Disability Officer</td>
<td>Klara McGriskin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learner Handbook Student Agreement

Name of Course ________________________________________________________

Course Director ________________________________________________________

I have received the learner handbook.

I have read and understood the learner handbook.

Signed: ____________________________  Print Name: _____________________________

Date: ______________________________