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WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome all!

The staff of Mountbellew Agricultural College and Farms extends a warm welcome to all our students for the academic year 2019/2020. As a Mountbellew College student we hope that your time here is an enjoyable and rewarding experience, both in academic achievement and personal development.

As you enter this stage of your education, many exciting opportunities will arise; some students may have difficulties in adapting to a different form of education and new experiences, it is normal to feel overwhelmed. Try to remember that you are not the only one feeling this way; many of your peers will be feeling exactly the same, many of our staff members were once in your place. Try not to panic, all the information you may need is available to you.

The staff and I are always available to assist with any problems that you may encounter, be they academic or personal. There is also a course co-ordinator along with many other support staff whose function is to ensure that you settle into college life as quickly and easily as possible.

Mountbellew Agricultural College has a long tradition in agricultural education and believe in the power of education to transform lives. We will do all that we can to ensure you are well supported and informed. We acknowledge that you are individuals with personal goals and we will do our best to assist you in achieving these goals. It is important to remember, however, that the value of your experience depends upon the effort and commitment that you make; so make the most of the variety of opportunities that college will present.

We at Mountbellew College hope you find your studies interesting, challenging and rewarding and encourage you to engage fully to ensure you complete your studies, gain your just rewards, and we wish you every success in your endeavours.

*Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.*

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Edna Curley
Principal
On behalf of the staff of Mountbellew Agricultural College and Farms

<table>
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<th>Purpose of the Learner Handbook</th>
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<td>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.</td>
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The handbook provides important guidelines for learners in regard to code of conduct, assessments, 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 college/centre management.
Mountbellew College Mission Statement

To enhance the viability and sustainability of rural communities through the provision of quality education and training designed to meet the unique requirements of rural Ireland.

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:

- A learning environment and resources that supports and stimulates learners and enables them 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 and individual Course Memoranda.
- Take responsibility for their own health and safety and to fully comply with college/centre health and safety requirements.
1.2 Mentoring System

At the beginning of each year, full-time learners (Level 5 and Level 6) are assigned a member of staff as a personal mentor by the Course Co-ordinator. For adult courses a mentor may be assigned where a need arises. The mentor is responsible for supporting a learner’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.

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

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

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 Conduct for Learners

2.1 Purpose of the Code

a) This section sets out a code of conduct to which learners 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 conduct is breached.

b) 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 the college and or course.

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

2.2 General Principles

Each Teagasc college/centre has a Code of Conduct. Staff and “learners” (meaning learners participating in QQI accredited full time, part time and distance education programmes) are expected to behave responsibly at all times, to observe and abide by the Code of Conduct 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, 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. Details of the code are in the following sections.

Learners must:

a) 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.

b) Act at all times with due regard for their own safety and that of others.

c) Respect the property of the college/centre and of its staff, other learners and visitors.

d) Support staff and other learners in the maintenance of a clean and tidy environment throughout the college/centre.

e) 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.

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

g) Report at once all accidents to the college/centre office.
2.3 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 and may result in the initiation of disciplinary procedures under this Code:

a) Breach of any of the general principles set out above (including any breach of health and safety or other regulations of the college/centre).

b) Failure to follow the reasonable instructions of a member of staff.

c) Smoking, including vaping, in non-smoking areas and adjacent to doors and windows. Smoking, including vaping, is restricted to designated smoking areas.

d) Residential learners permitting non-residential learners in their bedrooms after specified hours.

e) Unduly noisy or any unruly behaviour or the use of foul or abusive language.

f) Conduct which is disruptive of or which may disrupt teaching, work practice or study.

g) Causing damage to, defacing, stealing or misappropriating any college/centre property or the property of others. See section 2.4 for further details on damage to property.

h) Dangerous or careless driving including failure to observe speed limits or parking regulations. Vehicles and bicycles must be parked in authorised places and are parked at the owner’s risk.

i) Operating machinery or equipment without permission and supervision.

j) Unauthorised interference with software, IT equipment or data belonging to or used by the college/centre.

k) Theft of property or any other dishonest acts.

l) Use or possession of alcoholic drinks or illegal substances within the college/centre or its grounds.

m) Drunkenness or substance abuse (i.e. use of illegal drugs and the misuse of prescribed drugs or substances) on college/centre premises or on any activity associated with the college/centre.

n) Obstruction of any member of staff or learner in the performance of duties, work or other Teagasc activity.

o) Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, intimidation, taunting, verbal abuse or the use of any violence or threat of violence towards any person.

p) An illegal act which may have an adverse effect on the work of the college/centre or on other learners.

q) Breaching assessment regulations including plagiarism (see Assessment Regulations - Section 8).

r) 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 Conduct if committed in the college/centre.

s) Activity, including but not limited to the posting of material on social media, which adversely affects, or is likely to adversely affect the reputation of the college/centre, the learners or members of staff or bring the college/centre into disrepute.
t) Furnish during a course of study any false or misleading information calculated to deceive or mislead the college/centre or calculated to deceive or mislead any other person or organisation to which they are accountable while on work practice, assessment, field trips, and placement.

u) Incitement or encouragement of any other person or persons to do any of the aforementioned things.

2.4 Serious Misconduct

Breaches of the above requirements may, when necessary, be treated by the college/centre as serious misconduct.

Further examples of serious misconduct include the following:

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

b) Behaviour which is racially or sexually offensive or which is offensive to those with learning and/or physical disabilities or impediments.

c) The possession or supply of any illegal drug or the inappropriate supply of prescribed or other drugs to learners or other individuals.

d) Sourcing pornographic material on the internet or dissemination of such material.

e) Endangering the health or safety of self or others.

f) Deliberate breach of college/centre guidelines relating to bio security issues.

g) Any criminal activities affecting the college/centre or other learners.

h) Inappropriate use of camera phones and uploading of inappropriate comments, images of staff or learners etc. online.

i) Reckless or negligent behaviour that results in damage or loss to the college or to any learner or staff member including damage to property.

j) Unwarranted interference or tampering with college/centre safety equipment, fire fighting equipment, security systems or alarm systems.

k) Setting of fires.

l) Use of or possession of any offensive weapon.

Personation

Personation of others, within or outside the college/centre, in connection with academic attainments, awards or otherwise will be treated as serious misconduct. Only learners who are registered 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 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.

2.5 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 college/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.

Informal Procedure

Cases of minor breaches of discipline may be treated informally by staff or others acting on behalf of the college/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, the disciplinary procedure may be invoked at any stage.

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 college/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 him/her 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 college/centre decides, who on behalf of the college/centre, will conduct disciplinary meetings.
The college/centre will write to the learner setting out the allegation(s)/complaint in relation to him/her, 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 him/her and prepare his/her 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 of his/her decision, in writing, 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 college/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.

### 2.6 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 should 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 written warning, a fine may be applied (normally where there is loss or damage to property) or a learner may be suspended for a fixed period or expelled from the college/centre.

**Right of Appeal**

A learner will have the right of appeal to the college/centre against formal disciplinary sanction. This right of appeal must be exercised in writing to Teagasc Head of Education setting out the grounds of appeal within 5 working days of the date of receipt of notification of the sanction. Having considered the appeal, the Appeal Panel may confirm the original sanction, revoke the original sanction or substitute one sanction for another.

**Criminal Offences**

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

### 2.7 Time and Attendance

Learners must attend classes/practicals (and other events at which they are scheduled to attend) regularly and punctually. This is a requirement for all learners at Teagasc colleges/centres. Attendance records are an essential management resource to support:

- Duty of care to minors
- Health and Safety management
- Student mentoring (attendance patterns)
- Student Maintenance Grant payments

**Notification of Absence/Illness**

Notify the college/administrative office of illness. Learners absent for more than 3 days due to illness, are required to present a doctors certificate to the college/centre office on their return. If a learner is absent from class/practical for more than 5 days without a doctor’s sick certificate or other force majeure they will be required to account for their absence with college management. Where a learner is absent in excess of 10 days without a doctor’s certificate or force majeure circumstances it will be assumed that the learner has withdrawn from the programme.

**Time and Attendance Recording**

Minors (under 18 years of age). The college reserves the right to contact parents/guardians where minors do not attend classes or practical instruction, or give cause for concern in other respects.
For full-time courses, time and attendance is recorded using biometric readers. 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 to minors, health and safety management and learner mentoring. Teagasc requires accurate records of learner attendance for the purposes of confirming learners’ attendance for maintenance grant payments. Personal data collected through the reader system will not be processed for any other purposes nor will it be transferred to any third parties, unless necessary for lawful reasons under data protection legislation or in circumstances where Teagasc is compelled to do so by law.

The information collected through the use of the biometric readers is your personal data and will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Regulation (EU) 2016/679. Teagasc is the data controller in relation to this personal data.

In order to protect your personal data the biometric reader system does not record your full fingerprint. Instead, a biometric reader is used to measure the depth of a number of ridge points from your finger. This information is converted to a data string, which is then encrypted. The image of the fingertip is not stored other than in the form of an encrypted data string. This data string cannot be reversed to be used as a fingerprint for any other purposes.

This data is then stored for subsequent authentication both on the biometric reader and the Time Management System database.

Your personal data is retained as outlined in the Teagasc data retention policy. Biometric data is cleared from the system every August following completion of the Level 6 programme or earlier if the student 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, Oak Park, Carlow, R93 XE 12, or by email to dpo@teagasc.ie.
3.0 Child Safeguarding, Student Welfare and Equality Guidelines

3.1 Teagasc Child Safeguarding Statement

Teagasc is committed to the safeguarding of all children (persons <18 years of age) participating in Teagasc education and training programmes. Teagasc’s Child Safeguarding Statement is prepared in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidance together with the other legal provisions. It sets out the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure, as far as possible, that a child availing of Teagasc’s services is safe from harm. Some of the aims of the Teagasc Child Safeguarding Statement include (but are not limited to) the following:

- To create a safe environment for children in their interactions with Teagasc and minimise the possibility of harm, either deliberate or accidental.
- To encourage safe practices for those who work with children.
- To set out appropriate responses and procedures to adverse events or disclosures.

Teagasc has assigned staff to act as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) in keeping with best practice in child safeguarding. The DLP and Deputy DLP are the contact persons for any children protection concerns within Teagasc. At national level the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mary O’Shaughnessy, Teagasc, Grange, Dunsany, Co. Meath. 076-1113202/mary.oshaubhnessy@teagasc.ie. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is Karen O’Connell, Teagasc, Clonakilty College, Cork. 023-8832500/karen.oconnell@teagasc.ie.

Each college also has designated liaison staff. For Mountbellew Agricultural College the designated liaison person is:

- Edna Curley-090 9679205 or edna.curley@mountbellewagri.com

The Teagasc Child Safeguarding Statement is accessible on the Teagasc website.

3.2 Bullying/Intimidation and Sexual Harassment

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 college/centre and others on business or engaged in activities relating to the college/centre or providing services to the college/centre.
**Bullying/Intimidation**

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.

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

**Sexual Harassment**

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.

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

**Code of Conduct**

The prevention of bullying and sexual harassment is an integral part of the Code of Conduct. The college/centre will seek to;

a) Promote an ethos which encourages learners and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
b) Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable conduct with college/centre management, staff, learners, parents/guardians.
c) Implement procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
d) Implement procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
e) Offer a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and sexual harassment and for those involved in bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.
f) Review the effectiveness of the college/centre measures on anti-bullying behaviour.
3.3 Learner Welfare

Learner welfare involves management, administration, catering, teachers, technicians and house staff, learner clubs and societies. All of these support the total wellbeing of the learner and help build up a sense of community.

Student Assistance Programme (SAP)

This is a counselling and information service, provided by Vhi Corporate Solutions. The service is a stand-alone and separate service from Vhi Healthcare and does not require Vhi membership. All full time students and their family members are eligible to access the SAP service.

Through the SAP service, free professional counselling and information services will be available to you and your family. You will be able to talk to a counsellor on the phone 24 hours a day, for the duration of your course. You can also see a counsellor locally for face to face counselling. The service is totally confidential and can help you or your family with problems you may experience in your own life.

Mental Health

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

Additional information on mental health issues and events may be posted on college social media/notice boards from time to time.

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.

Alcohol and smoking

It is important to be aware of the way in which alcohol affects your behaviour. Smoking is prohibited throughout college/centre buildings. 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

a) When travelling to your accommodation or sports club use well lit walkways – avoid dark or isolated areas.

b) Walk facing traffic so vehicles cannot approach you from behind without you being aware of their presence. Wear high visibility clothing.
c) Avoid situations that will necessitate you travelling alone at night. There is safety in numbers. Plan your journey with safety in mind.

d) Do not leave valuables or personal documents in your car.

3.4 Learner Equality

Teagasc is committed to providing equal access to all learners. If any learner feels that they have not been treated equitably they have the right to lodge a complaint without fear of victimisation with the College Principal/Regional Manager or the Teagasc Head of Education.

3.5 Learner Support

Each college has an Access/Disability Officer who can assess the learning support requirements of learners with recognised special needs or disabilities. Where appropriate and feasible Teagasc will provide reasonable accommodation to these learners at assessment.
4.0 Health and Safety

4.1 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.

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 learners 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 learner 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.

A Safety Management System operates at the Teagasc colleges. Relevant elements of the Safety Management System will be communicated to learners as part of your induction and at ongoing course 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.

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 Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures

Buildings are sign-posted indicating the direction to the nearest exit point and 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 alarm system.
2. Call the fire brigade.
3. Alert management and other staff.
4. Inform the public and direct them to the nearest available escape route.
5. Attack the fire using the nearest and suitable equipment only if safe to do so.
7. Close all doors as areas are vacated, checking that nobody is left behind.
8. Assemble at the designated assembly point.
9. Assist the fire brigade on arrival.

**Alarm**

1. On hearing a continuous ringing of fire alarm leave immediately by the nearest exit, switching off equipment, closing all windows and doors

2. **(Evacuation Plan presented on Notice Boards and in Appendix 4 in Safety Statement).**
3. Assemble at designated Fire point.
4. Do Not Run
5. Do not stop to collect personal items
6. Do not re-enter the building (until authorized to do so)
7. Do not leave assembly point until all persons have been accounted for

**Assembly Points**

All persons will go to the designated assembly point(s). This is located at: **Back of the Old Gym (Rear Carpark)** and will not return until the all clear has been given.

**Evacuation Routes**

Evacuation Plan presented on Notice Boards and in Appendix 4 in Safety Statement.

**Emergency Exits**

**Never** block or leave anything (bags or equipment) to obstruct emergency exits or normal entry/exit to any building.

**Emergency Lighting**

In the event of an emergency or power outage emergency lighting will illuminate the classrooms and corridors, emergency signage will be illuminated.

**Break Glass Units**

Break Glass Units are strategically located near exit routes. Breaking the glass sounds the alarm and alerts all occupants. The glass will break easily using elbow, fist or any small implement.
Fire Drills

1. Fire drills are carried out twice a year.
2. All students and staff are notified that a fire drill will take place and they are expected to take part.
3. Fire marshals are appointed to supervise the drill and ensure everyone gets out the building safely.
4. Visitors are informed of fire drills.
5. Systems in place that informs the fire service when the alarm is triggered.
6. Any staff or students with disabilities, plans will be put in place to help them escape.

Fire Fighting Equipment

There are four Classes of fire.

- Class A: Combustible Solids
- Class B: Liquids
- Class C: Gases
- Electrical Fires

Extinguishers must be supplied capable of dealing with each of these classes.

The four categories of fire extinguishers are colour coded.

Red


Blue


Cream


Black

CO2: Liquid, Electrical.

Fire Extinguisher Locations

Fire extinguisher locations are presented on Notice Boards and in Appendix 4 in Safety Statement.

Room Notices

There are fire drill/emergency evacuation procedures in every room. Please become familiar with the information on this notice.
4.3 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 aiders are: Enda Kennedy, Lana O Reilly and John Tully.

First Aid Box Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit/Area</th>
<th>Responsible Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Office</td>
<td>Bernadette Kilkenny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep Unit &amp; Beef Unit</td>
<td>John Hurley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>John Tully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Mary Costello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Office</td>
<td>John Hurley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery/Buildings Workshop</td>
<td>Myles Connelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Office</td>
<td>Enda Kennedy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emergency Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctors</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Jim Moore</td>
<td>090 967932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Matt Linehan</td>
<td>090 9679265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospitals</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portiuncula Hospital, Ballinasloe, Galway</td>
<td>090 9648200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College Hospital Galway</td>
<td>091 524222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bon Secour Private Hospital</td>
<td>091 381900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway Clinic</td>
<td>091 785000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merlin park</td>
<td>091 757631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSE</td>
<td>091 751131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garda</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountbellew</td>
<td>090 96799292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballinasloe</td>
<td>090 9631890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Station</td>
<td>999 or 112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 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:

**Dr. Jim Moore** - 090 9679327

**Dr. Matt Linehan** - 090 9679265

After hours service is provided by Westdoc, Tel. 1850 365000 or 091 747710

Learners on specific long-term medication or with a detailed medical history should inform the Course Co-ordinator and be assured that this will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Courses may include handling livestock, soil, machinery and farm equipment, and other materials. If you have concerns, it is recommended that you consult with your medical practitioner in regard to any health risks that might arise and precautions you should take (e.g. tetanus risk).

4.5 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. Learner’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, 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.

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 15 Kph throughout all college/centre grounds.
- Learners are required to register details of vehicles used in the college/administration office.
- Learners keeping vehicles at the college/centre are required to park in the designated learner car park.
- Do not park on double yellow lines
- Unauthorised vehicles are not allowed to enter restricted areas e.g. the college farm yard, or the farmyards of farms being visited.
- 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.

### 4.6 Excursions/Field Trips

College/centre staff will arrange for the provision of adequate transport for 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, 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.

### 4.7 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, 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/college farm activities.
- 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.

### 4.8 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 which are efficient and reliable play a very important role in this development. All learners enrolled will be allocated an individual password for computer access.

**General Computer Usage**

Teagasc are finalising an Acceptable Usage Policy which states the practices a user must agree to access the network, resources, services and the Internet. The learner specific items given here are only part of the overall policy to be published on the Teagasc website.

a) Users must log on to the computer network system using their own user name and password.
b) This password must be confidential to each user and must not be made known to other learners.
c) Learners must not interfere with the system settings on the computer.
d) Accessing another learner’s computer account is strictly forbidden.
e) When a user is finished he/she must log out of the computer.
f) Should a user have problems logging on, or with their password they should contact a member of staff.
g) The computer rooms are to be kept tidy at all times.
h) There is no food or drink allowed in the computer rooms.
i) Wilful damage to facilities in the computer room will be treated as misconduct.
j) Learners carrying out projects will have preferential access to computers.
k) 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 e-mail

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

Printing

Learners on full time, part time and distance education courses will have a print top-up payment system available to print projects and assignments. Once credit is used, further credit must be purchased through the college office/administration.

Learners on other courses will have to purchase credit for printing.

5.0 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 2.7 on time and attendance.

All scheme information including application form and guidance notes are available at link.

6.0 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 learners 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.

7.0 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 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
8.0 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.

8.1 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.

8.2 Written Examinations

a) You must sit at your assigned desk during all written examinations unless otherwise directed. An attendance record will be taken according to the seating plan, therefore if you are not sitting at your assigned desk there is a risk that you may be marked absent and your paper may be in danger of not being accepted. You must remain in your assigned desk for the duration of the examination.

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

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

d) 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.

e) You will not be admitted into the examination room/hall once a learner has surrendered their examination script and left the examination room/hall.

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

g) 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.

h) It is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure his/her name has been entered onto the examination script, answer book and any additional stationery used during the examination.

i) 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.

j) You must not, use or attempt to use a mobile phone, while in the examination room/hall.
k) You must not while in the examination room/hall, aid or attempt to obtain aid from another candidate.
l) You must not, while in the examination room/hall, communicate with or attempt to communicate with another candidate.
m) You must not write in the answer book anything that is not directly connected with the subject matter of the questions to be answered.
n) You must not damage the examination room/hall or its furniture.
o) At the conclusion of the examination, you should immediately stop writing and remain in your seat until the superintendent has collected the scripts.
p) At the end of the examination, you should hand all stationery including examination papers and answer books to the superintendent.
q) You must obey the directions of the superintendent in all matters relating to the examination.
r) 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.
s) Expulsion from the examination room/hall may result in more serious disciplinary action.
t) Each learner may be asked to sign that they have read and understand the Teagasc Assessment Policy and Practice before undertaking written examinations.

8.3 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 reserve the right not to allow the learner to attempt the practical examination due to health and safety considerations. In addition you must:

a) Wear personal protective equipment appropriate for the practical examinations in question.
b) Use safe procedures and practices at all times.
c) 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).
d) Inform the assessor of any factors which may influence the learners’ ability to sit a practical assessment.

8.4 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.
a) 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 and submitting material directly from the internet is not your own work and may be regarded as plagiarism.

b) 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.

c) You must not interfere with the work of other learners.

8.5 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:

a) Cheating
b) Copying
c) Plagiarism
d) Misrepresentation
e) Bribery
f) Falsification
g) Personating or other such form of deception. Personation will be treated as serious misconduct.
h) Breaching examination paper security
i) Aiding another candidate
j) Untrue claim to have carried out assignments, work based learning, projects etc.
k) 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:

a) No credit in the assessment or part of the assessment.
b) No credit for a module.
c) No credit for all of the modules associated with a particular programme.
d) Ineligible for an award.
e) Suspension of the candidate, from all course activities, for a fixed period of time.
f) 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.

8.6 Assessment Appeals

There is a system of 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 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 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:

a) Perceived inequity in the marking of scripts or practical assessments
b) 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 disputes between learners and assessors are referred to the External Verifier.

8.7 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 Verifier.
9.0  QQI Certification

QQI stands for Quality and Qualifications Ireland. QQI awards framework allows for progression through the education system. Your qualification will be awarded by QQI and will be part of the awards framework below.

**National Framework of Qualifications**

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

9.1  Access, Transfer, Progression and Higher Education Link Scheme

Teagasc is committed to the promotion of access, transfer and progression to facilitate enhancement of opportunities for learners to gain access and to education leading to major awards and to progress within it. Normal progression is from one level to the next on the QQI framework.

The Higher Education Links Scheme provides for holders of QQI Level 5 Certificates and Level 6 Advanced Certificates to apply for 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 ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)) 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

Other Progression Links
For information on progression and links to other courses and institutions, contact your Course Co-ordinator and check with the relevant institution itself.

10.0 Services for Learners

10.1 Lockers
A limited number of lockers are available in the student changing room located in the main farm yard. Instructions for their use are indicated in the changing room.

10.2 Lost and found
Any item lost or found should be reported to the general office via the reception desk inside the main entrance. The general office can be contacted at 090 9679205.

10.3 Notice boards
Noticeboards are located in the main student common area and are used only for official communication, announcement of events and other relevant information. Noticeboards may not be used to disseminate material or notices offensive to staff or students.

10.4 Parking
Parking is available on-site at the back of the main college building. Owners are advised to take reasonable care to secure their vehicles against damage or theft. A small amount of visitors parking is available at the front of the main college building.

10.5 Post
Post is available through the general office.

10.6 College office
The college office is available via reception inside the main door for general enquiries.

10.7 Catering
A catering service is available in Mountbellew College in the main dining room.

Opening Hours:
10.30-11.15 (morning break)
12.45-1.30 (lunch)
10.8 Special diets
Students with particular dietary requirement should speak with the catering manager in the main dining room to discuss their requirements.

10.9 Laundry facilities
Laundry facilities are not available on campus but are available in Mountbellew Town.

10.10 Site layout and maps
A campus layout/map is shown below and available on all college noticeboards; farm layout maps are available on the respective farms.

10.11 Security / CCTV
Teagasc operates 24hr Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) on Mountbellew Agricultural College property. Learners may be recorded on CCTV in accordance with the Teagasc CCTV policy (available from the principal upon request) and Teagasc’s legal obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679).
Camera Schedule – Mountbellew Agricultural College is available in the college general office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| College access and entrance points | Learner safety  
College security  
College bio-security              |
| College farmyard                | Learner safety  
Health and safety  
College security  
College bio-security              |
| Education facilities            | Learner safety  
College security  
Health and safety  
Facility management              |

For further information relating to Teagasc's CCTV recording activities contact the Teagasc's Data Protection Officer at: Data Protection Officer, Teagasc, Oak Park, Carlow, R93 XE 12, or by email to dpo@teagasc.ie

**Emergency Contact Numbers**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Contact</td>
<td>090 9679205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Garda Station</td>
<td>090 9679292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local General Practitioner</td>
<td>090 9679327 or 090 9679265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Hours Doctor</td>
<td>1850 365000 or 091 747710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection Designated Lead Person(s)</td>
<td>090 9679205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/Centre Access/Disability Officer</td>
<td>090 9679825</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**11.0 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 (approximate date of publication September 2019).
12.0 Learner Handbook Learner Agreement

DETACH AND RETURN TO YOUR COURSE CO-ORDINATOR (manual applicants only)

Name of Course ____________________________________________________________

Course Co-ordinator _______________________________________________________

I have received the learner handbook.

I have read and understood the learner handbook.

Signed: ____________________________  Print Name: _____________________________

Date: ______________________________