

1. Introduction and Overview

1.1 About the Staff Handbook

Foreword from the Director of Teagasc

“This document represents a complete guide to the policies, procedures, codes and standards which exist within the organisation and serve to ensure excellence, consistency and fairness for all staff in Teagasc. I am confident that the Handbook will be of enormous benefit to all concerned and that manager’s and staff alike will use the document in a constructive and positive manner.

I would like to acknowledge and commend the time, effort and perseverance of the staff members, union and management representatives who have been involved in the process of publishing each edition of the Teagasc Staff Handbook”

The Staff Handbook contains information staff will require in relation to:

- Teagasc Policies
- Statutory Entitlements (i.e. entitlements granted by law)
- Non-Statutory Entitlements (i.e. entitlements granted at the discretion of Teagasc)
- Staff Benefits (such as sick leave, pensions and training & development)
- Teagasc Regulations, Standards & Codes of Practice

Section 8 (5) of the [Agriculture \(Research, Training & Advice\) Act 1988](#) states the following: “The terms and conditions relating to tenure of office which are granted by Teagasc in relation to a member of the staff of Teagasc who is transferred to its staff (from ACOT/AFT) shall not while in the service of Teagasc, be less favourable to him/her than those prevailing immediately before the establishment day (in ACOT/AFT), as may be appropriate, save in accordance with a collective agreement negotiated with any recognised trade unions or staff associations concerned”

In the absence of any established arrangements as referred to above, the policies and procedures as outlined in the Staff Handbook will apply. The onus will be on the staff member concerned to prove their entitlement to any such arrangements. Disputes over the interpretation or entitlement to established arrangements may be referred to a third party adjudicator for consideration.

The Staff Handbook should be used in conjunction with the HR section of the Teagasc T-net site (our internal website) where staff will find application and submission forms relating to all the relevant policies and procedures as outlined in this document. An online version of the Handbook is also available on the T-net and staff will be notified where any changes have been made to the Handbook. Any such changes will be reflected on the online version. Managers and staff should refer to the HR Department for guidance in relation to the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

Method for Disagreements in relation to the Interpretation of the Document

The relevant HR Partners should be contacted in the first instance where there is a disagreement over the interpretation of the document as they are best served to advise in this regard. However, where an agreement cannot be reached internally, Teagasc may seek the assistance of a third party adjudicator who will make a recommendation in this regard. The adjudicator will be an external independent party and their recommendation will be final.

Methods for Future Amendments to the Handbook

The Teagasc T-net will be the definitive version of the Staff Handbook. Any changes proposed (either by management or unions or as a result of changing legislation) will be agreed between management and unions following discussion. The T-net version will be updated accordingly and staff will be notified.

Definitions used in the Handbook

The following provides an explanation for some of the management definitions that are used throughout the Staff Handbook. A full Glossary is available in the pages below:

- **Line Manager:** A line manager is the person to whom a staff member has a direct administrative reporting relationship. This person, for example, approves annual leave and increments etc. Depending on the area of work a line manager can be a Head of Directorate, Head of Programme, Enterprise Leader, College Principal, Regional Manager, Head of Department, Administrative Officer or a Staff Officer.
- **Next Most Senior Manager:** The next most senior manager is the person that a staff members' line manager reports to. So for example if a line manager is a Research Head of Department, they would report to the Head of Programme.
- **HR:** This refers to Human Resources.
- **Senior HR Representative:** This refers to a member of the HR Department who is at Administrative Grade 5 level or higher.
- **Established Staff Members:** This is a permanent member of staff (used in Department of Finance circulars).
- **Un-established Staff Members:** This is a temporary/contract member of staff (used in Department of Finance circulars).
- **Senior Management Group –** The Director and three heads of directorate.
- **Senior Manager –** a manager with line managers reporting to him/her
- **HR Partner –** The Senior Administration G6 HR staff member who partners with the Directorates on all operational and strategic matters related to staff.
- **Hiring Manager –** The member of staff who is responsible for leading on the filling of a temporary/contract or permanent post. The hiring manager could be the line manager, but does not necessarily have to be. For example, a project leader may be the hiring manager, but the line manager of the new recruit is the head of department. The hiring manager is the lead person who liaises with HR and the external service provider on all matters related to the recruitment competition. HR will ensure that relevant management approvals are received for certain aspects of the competition.

Note in relation to Remote Managers

Where a line-manager is not physically based at the same location as the staff member(s) they manage, particular attention must be paid to identifying and addressing issues that arise with regard to line-manager/staff interaction. In addition to PMDS interaction, this must include regular communication by phone and email and face-to-face meetings at least twice yearly.

Where issues with remote line-managers are identified, they must be addressed informally in the first instance.

Circulars

Throughout the Handbook, circulars are often referred to e.g. Circular 21/2004. If staff wish to view all circulars these can be accessed on the Department of Finance website at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/circulars/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/circulars/> A search can be done by title or by date. A list of all circulars referenced in the Staff Handbook can be viewed at Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

The following terms and abbreviations are used throughout the handbook.

- **ACOT** – the national advisory and training body (ACOT) was set up in 1980 to provide training and advisory services for farmers. In 1988, Teagasc, was established as the national agency with overall responsibility for the provision of research, training and advisory services to the agriculture industry and it subsumed the training functions of the national advisory and training body (ACOT).
- **AFT** – An Foras Talúntais was responsible for agricultural research and was subsumed by Teagasc in 1988.
- **AVC's** – Additional voluntary pension contributions. Reference pensions chapter for more information.
- **Business Plan** – Level 1 Business Plan is the high level plan of actions for Teagasc in a calendar year, the Level 2 Business Plan is the high level plan for each Directorate and the Level 3 Business Plan is the detailed plan of actions for each business unit.
- **CP** –Contact Person (outside the HR department) for dignity at work related concerns
- **Designated Person** – Individual within the HR department who will review formal complaints under the Dignity at Work Policy
- **DEASP** – Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection
- **DPER** – Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- **EAP** – Employee Assistance Programme
- **FOI** – Freedom of Information (ref section 4.7)
- **GIA** - Grant in Aid which Teagasc receive from the state.
- **ICT** – Information Communications Technology
- **Increment** – An increase in pay from one scale point to the next scale point
- **Incremental Credit** – Credit awarded for previous civil or public service which may lead to progression up the relevant pay scale
- **Mission Statement** – The purpose or high level strategy of an organisation, or department.
- **Non Statutory Entitlements** – benefits or schemes granted to Teagasc staff which are at the discretion of Teagasc (not legally obliged to offer this benefit, eg: Marriage Leave)
- **PAP** – Positive Action Programme
- **PMDS** – Performance Management and Development System.
- **PRD** – Pension relation deduction
- **PRSI** – Pay related social insurance.
- **Statutory Entitlements** – An entitlement for a benefit which is enforceable by law
- **T-Net** – Teagasc internal intranet and communications tool for staff
- **Unions** – Teagasc staff are represented by four unions. SIPTU, Fórsa, UNITE and UCATT.
- **Vision Statement** – An ambitious statement of what the organisation or department aspires to achieve.

Version	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Policy Owner
2.0	October 2020	Updates to definitions, titles and hyperlink	HR