

## 10.1 Equal Opportunities Policy

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### Policy Statement

Teagasc is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity in its employment practices, policies and procedures. It will ensure that no applicant or staff member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Disability
- Age
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Colour
- Nationality or ethnic or national origins
- Membership of the traveling community

Staff members will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their capacity, suitability and according to the requirements of the post. Recognising the commitment of management and staff required to make this policy fully effective, Teagasc will seek to ensure that equal opportunities in employment is part of 'best practice' in the organisation and in line with the Code of Practice.

### Code of Practice

For the promotion of equal opportunities and best employment practices, a code of practice has been devised in the following areas:

- Recruitment/selection
- Advertising posts in Teagasc
- Interview panels
- Staff/career development
- Working arrangements
- Equal pay
- Intimidation/bullying and sexual harassment
- Publications
- Complaint procedures
- Monitoring

### Recruitment/selection

#### General

Under the [Employment Equality Act 1977](#) it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate directly or indirectly against a staff member or a prospective staff member in relation to access to employment on the grounds of gender or marital status. It is also unlawful to classify a post by reference to gender. Under the terms of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 the grounds under which it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly have been widened to include family status, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins or membership of the traveling community.

### **Qualification and Requirements**

To ensure that indirect discrimination does not occur, qualifications and requirements i.e. experience, aptitude and potential, will be in line with what is necessary to fill the position.

### **Application for Posts**

Application forms will only require necessary and relevant information. Where selection procedures are used, these will relate directly to the genuine requirements of the post.

### **Advertising Posts in Teagasc**

In accordance with and subject to the provisions of the Employment Equality Acts, 1977 and 1998, all posts in Teagasc are open to suitably qualified men and women applicants in line with the policy statement. Advertising of all appointments in Teagasc will reflect the commitment to equality of opportunity and in line with the policy statement.

The language used in advertising a position will be gender inclusive and where titles might imply that persons of one sex are being sought, it will be stated clearly that applications from both sexes are being sought.

Where in practice only men or only women are likely at present to be qualified or apply for a particular position, advertisements will state that applications are being sought from both sexes.

Recruitment and promotion documentation and publicity material including all appointment advertisements, descriptions and application forms will include an equal opportunity statement.

Consistent with the policy of providing equal access to all jobs, advertisements should be given the widest possible circulation. This does not preclude local advertising of positions where appropriate.

### **Interview panels**

It is the responsibility of the HR Department to ensure that all those involved in the appointments procedures are fully aware of their obligations in line with the policy statement and comply with these.

Members of interview boards will be instructed in good interview practice and in the prevention of discrimination. Teagasc will ensure that, as far as possible, interview panels will be gender inclusive.

### **Staff/Career development**

It is unlawful under the [Employment Equality Acts, 1977](#) and [1998](#) to discriminate on grounds of gender, marital status, family status, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins and membership of the traveling community in relation to training, transfers or promotion.

### **General**

Those with staff responsibilities must not make assumptions about future career intentions or family responsibilities which would adversely influence decisions about staff training and development.

While responsibility for development rests jointly with the individual and their manager, management should ensure that all staff, men and women, are informed of and encouraged to pursue personal and career development opportunities open to them.

In line with the policy statement, bias or any assumption regarding mobility or length of future service should not be introduced into formal and informal staff review, appraisal or assessment systems.

### **Counselling**

Access to formal or informal counselling should be equally available to all staff.

### **Training**

Training, both formal and informal, is important to career development and job enhancement, and will be equally available to all staff.

Where no persons, or an insignificant number of persons of one gender have been engaged during the previous 12 months in a particular type, form or category of work, the [Employment Equality Acts](#) 1977 and [1998](#) allow for relevant training exclusively for persons of that gender i.e. special training, including single sex training may be required to prepare women for participation in non-traditional roles.

### **Promotion**

It is the responsibility of the HR Department to ensure that all those involved in the promotion procedures are fully aware of their obligations in line with the policy statement and comply with these.

Promotion within Teagasc shall be determined solely by the application of objective criteria and personal performance and suitability.

### **Work Rotation/Work Experience**

Work rotation is recognised as an important element of on the job training and development. This facility will be available to all staff subject to work requirements.

Work should not be allocated in such a manner as to disadvantage men or women in the matter of gaining work experience.

### **Working arrangements**

Efforts should be made to enable staff to combine their work and family responsibilities. Career breaks/job sharing/parental leave, etc. are available options. Access to flexible working arrangements will be equally available to men and women.

### **Equal pay**

Teagasc is an equal opportunities employer and fully subscribes to the principle of equal pay as defined in the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act of 1974, which confers an entitlement to equal pay and benefits on men and women.

All payment agreements, whether negotiated through the mechanism of a national pay round or as an internal Teagasc agreement will take the provisions of this Act into account.

### **Publications**

Authors should be aware of the need for men and women to be represented in positive rather than stereotypical fashion and publications will be monitored to ensure that occurs. Language should be reviewed to identify gender inclusive rather than gender specific terms.

### **Complaints procedures**

Complaints procedures are based on the principle of fairness. These procedures incorporate both informal and formal ways of redressing issues at local and national level with the support of the HR Department.

### ***Monitoring***

Ensuring that all aspects of HR administration are in line with the policies outlined in this document will be the responsibility of the HR Department and Management. The gathering of statistical data to monitor progress of these policies will occur on a yearly basis. This type of audit will highlight any deficiencies in the practices and procedures of Teagasc with regard to these policies

Version	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Policy Owner
1.0		n/a	HR