

APPRENTICE Information Guide

FARM TECHNICIAN Apprenticeship



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Earn while you learn working on a farm

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Introduction

The Farm Technician Apprenticeship is for those who wish to pursue a career in the agricultural industry as a farm technician or for existing personnel in the industry who would like to gain a qualification.

This apprenticeship was developed by a consortium of industry representatives and Teagasc. Apprentices on the programme will engage in an integrated programme of work place training along-side traditional classroom and blended on-line delivery. The programme runs over a two year period.

The Farm Technician Apprenticeship will provide individuals with the knowledge and technical skills required to operate within Irish farming systems. Successful completion of the Farm Technician Apprenticeship will see individuals gain skills in daily farm operations, compliance with industry standards and regulatory measures.

The guide provides an overview of this apprenticeship for prospective apprentices, parents/guardians and guidance counsellors.

Programme Aims

The Farm Technician Apprenticeship will provide apprentices with knowledge of technical farm operations with strong foundation of sustainable agriculture production, health and safety, quality assurance, business, sustainable and work organisation skills.

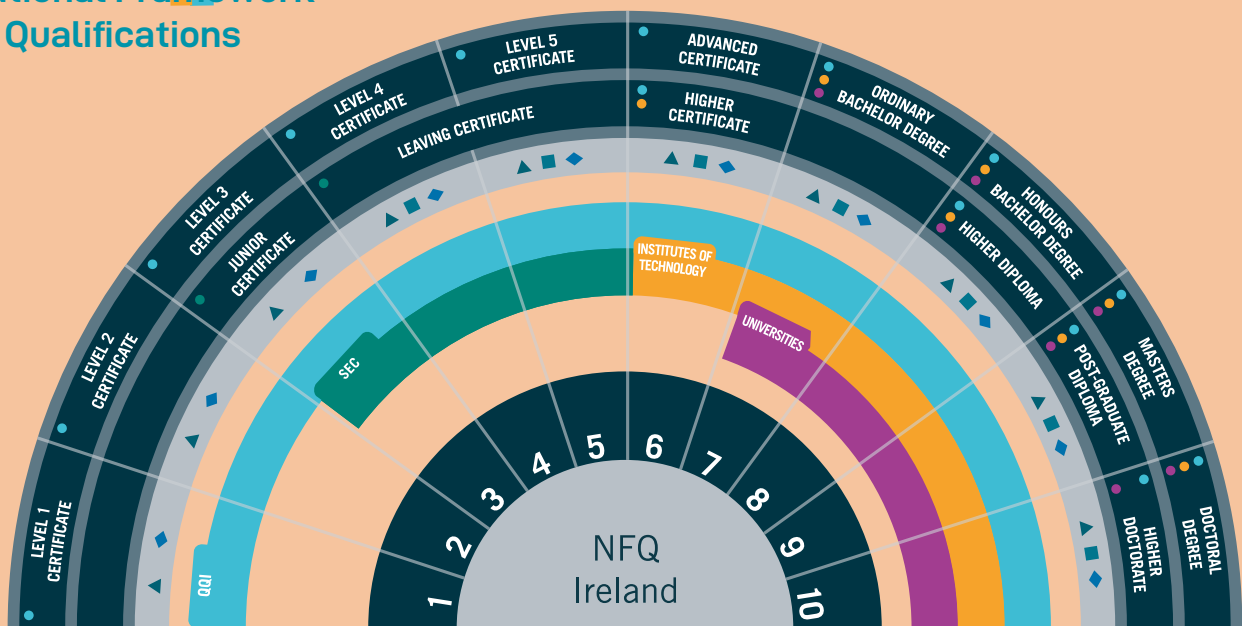
The Farm Technician Apprenticeship Programme aims are to:

- Offer apprentices a specified pathway to gain a qualification while in employment.
- Prepare the apprentice to work safely and productively in a commercial farm.
- Develop a range of skills (technical, personal, inter-personal) to independently complete farm operations and to contribute to a work environment.
- Develop competencies in the areas of sustainable, health and safety requirements, regulatory compliance, biosecurity and work organisation mechanisms.
- Provide apprentices with transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, supervisory, computer and leadership skills.
- Bring apprentices together as a community so as to enable cross-collaboration on projects and knowledge transfer.
- Provide apprentices with a thorough scientific grounding and factors specific to farm enterprises.
- Allow apprentices to learn from a nominated skilled mentor on-the-job.
- Equip apprentices with the practical skills and knowledge necessary to complete and oversee daily and seasonal operations on a commercial farm to the highest standard.



Programme Overview

Programme Title	Farm Technician Apprenticeship
Duration	Two years
NFQ Level	6
Award Title	Higher Certificate in Technical Farm Operations
Certification	Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) issues certification as the awarding body
Credits	120 ECTS



AWARDING BODIES

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) makes awards in further and higher education and training
- SEC - State Examinations Commission (Department of Education and Skills)
- Institutes of Technology
- Universities

AWARDS IN THE FRAMEWORK

There are four classes of award in the National Framework of Qualifications:

- Major Awards: named in the outer rings, are the principal class of awards made at a level
- Minor Awards: are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award
- Supplemental Awards: are for learning that is additional to a Major Award
- Special Purpose Awards: are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement

For further Information consult: www.nfq.ie www.QQI.ie

Source: <https://www.qqi.ie/>

Progression

Farm Manager Apprenticeship (Ordinary Bachelor Degree in Professional Sustainable Farm Management – NFQ Level 7).

Apprentice Entry Requirements

To be eligible for this apprenticeship, an applicant must:

- Be directly employed by a SOLAS approved Employer
- Have achieved a pass in the Leaving Certificate Established (NFQ Level 5)* or Vocational Programme (NFQ Level 5)*, obtaining a minimum grade O6/H7 in Maths** or a F2 in Foundation Maths, and O6/H7 in four other subjects

Or

- A Major QQI level 5 (or higher) Award*

Or

- Level 6 Specific Purpose in Farming programmes*

Or

- Anyone working in the agricultural sector, 18 years old or older with have two full-time years of work experience in a land-based sector (such as farming, agricultural contracting, horticulture, forestry, aquaculture or the equine sector) deemed acceptable by employer and consortium and subject to the validation of supporting evidence and/or assessment process.

* A qualification deemed equivalent on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications to any of the qualifications listed above.

****Note** – Where there is a mathematics requirement at Leaving Certificate Established or Vocational Programme, obtaining a minimum grade O6/H7 in Maths or a F2 in Foundation Maths, mature and international applicants may be required to demonstrate that they possess the required competency through the completion of a maths assessment.

The programme is through the medium of English and it is highly desirable that the applicant will meet CEF Level B2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Language). Applicants whose first language is not English may be required to provide evidence of English language proficiency. The certificate of the English language standard must have been issued within 2 years of the expected start of your course.

Programme Structure

Apprentices will be trained in a progressive manner and will get to put their skills into practice during both on and off the job training stages. On successful completion, the apprentice will be fully competent in the role of a Farm Technician.

Employers are asked to support employees throughout their learning journey by engaging and facilitating mentor one-to-ones consultations on a regular basis. Employers will be issued with advice on this during induction training.

The block release programme has been designed to minimise the impact of the apprentice's absence for the employer. Block release allows for employers to plan for the apprentice's absence throughout off-seasons. Attendance is compulsory and apprentices will attend classes, practicals, labs and field trips while off-the-job. Assessments will take place also in this period.

The following is an overview per stage of the off-the-training periods:

Semester Label	Off-the-job training
Autumn / Winter Semester (Sept – Dec)	16 days off-the-job 8 online live classes
Winter / Summer Semester (Jan – June)	24 days off-the-job 12 online live classes
Note - Off-the-job training (Classroom; Practical; etc.) supported with E-directed learning (Online Classes & Online Tasks) in addition to formative feedback from on-the-job training.	
Note – Repeat Days are extra days and will be scheduled in July.	





Programme Modules

Year 1 / Stage 1

- Introduction to Business & Technology of Farming
- Health and Safety on the Farm
- Environment and Science of Farming
- Quality Assurance, Regulation & Compliance
- Farm Operation Skills & Work Routines
- People Skills – Teamwork & Supervisory

Year 2 / Stage 2

- Farm Administration & Business Skills
- Lean Management & Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)
- Sustainable Farm Production
- Farm Enterprise Monitoring & Evaluation
- Farm Operation Planning & Record Keeping
- Apprentice Project

Is it for me?

Do I –

- Meet the Minimum entry requirements.
- Want a Career in farming.
- Want to learn and earn at the same time.
- Have a good level of physical fitness and enjoy physical activity and work.
- Want to start work early in the mornings.
- Have a love for working outdoors and are safety focussed.
- Have an interest in agriculture and science.
- Have a solid literacy, verbal and numeracy skills.
- Have the ability to plan and prepare work.
- Have good analytical and problem solving skills.
- Have good computer skills.
- Have good hand/eye co-ordination, manual dexterity and spatial aptitude.
- Have good interpersonal skills.
- Have the ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Take responsibility for my own learning with the continual support of Teagasc, appointed Workplace Mentor and your employer.

How to become an Apprentice Farm Technician

Step 1 To be eligible for this apprenticeship, an applicant must:

- Be directly employed by a SOLAS approved Employer
- Meet the entry requirements.

Step 2 - The approved SOLAS Employer will start the registration process with SOLAS (The Further Education & Training Authority).

Step 3 - Applicant's application will be assessed by Teagasc in consultation with SOLAS.

Step 4 – If successful, applicant will be registered as an apprentice both with SOLAS and Teagasc.

Step 5 – Apprentice will be called for induction training and off-the-job learning block release.

Note – Applicants may be called for an interview to discuss entry qualifications and learner support requirements.

Programme Costs

Programme cost per annum are to be confirmed. Associated costs such as travel and accommodation for off-the-job block release are extra.

Learning Environment

Off-the-job

Direct contact via lectures and practical demonstrations at co-ordination locations:

- Teagasc, Ballyhaise College, Ballyhaise, Co Cavan. H12 E392
- Teagasc, Clonakilty Agricultural College, Darrara, Clonakilty, Co. Cork. P85 AX52

Extensive facilities and equipment for demonstrations and practice.

Field trips to industry / research / Teagasc facilities around Ireland highlighting excellence.

Off-the-job

Apprentices while on-the-job will be mentored by a Workplace Mentor.

Apprentices will be trained in the skills associated with the daily and seasonal operations of the farm enterprise.

Blended learning access to Teagasc's e-learning platform Moodle.

Connection to peers through weekly on-line sessions.



Further Information

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Farm Technician Apprenticeship

*Higher Certificate
in Technical Farm Operations
(NFQ Level 6)*



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