AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Teagasc Further Education Governance Guide

V0.5 26/03/2025

Contents

Introduction

This document provides guidance on how Teagasc Education governance operates. It is a living document and will be reviewed and updated from time to time and when require. The approach is multi-output in that it will input into annual quality reports, inform on performances and strengthen the Teagasc education programme.

Why Governance?

QQI require a system to oversee the education and training activities for providers of their awards. This requires separation of responsibilities between those who produce / develop material and those who approve it. In Teagasc, the Academic Council is responsible for the oversight and approval of education programmes and supporting materials. Sub committees are responsible for development of such programmes and materials.

Modus Operandi

The devised approach for Teagasc Governance is based on the academic year, its cycle and the required outputs of academic governance. Meetings of the committees are scheduled with rolling agendas and timelines at strategically important times, which dovetail with the meetings of Academic Council (AC). The scheduled meetings run at the designated time and report accordingly, irrespective of outcomes. Therefore, even if there is not a quorum then this is reported and highlights that this particular aspect of governance was unsuccessful. Supporting documents for meetings are in the appendices, as are the terms of reference for Academic Council and its sub committees. The onus is on AC to support Teagasc Education Management in the operation of Education Governance.

Features –

- Agendas for each of the committees and for AC have been be identified on a continuous cycle and both agendas and minutes will be recorded on prepopulated templates creating efficiencies for reporting and administration of governance.
- Items are flagged so that the various committees and AC are prompted to be both forward looking and reflective.
- Key outputs provide a summary that will inform AC and input directly to annual quality reports.
- Minutes or a summary report of meetings can be published on the public website as per Teagasc terms of re-engagement with QQI.
- Dovetailed meeting cycles are fixed and flagged in advance for all members of committees and AC which enables:
  - Committee members to plan their availability
  - Committee members to prepare and reflect on items on the agenda
  - Committee members to know when the next meeting is planned and bring new items to the agenda
  - Free flow of information between AC and the various committees
  - Closing of the loop within the governance system
- Prepopulated templates provide indicative content, efficiency, guide agendas, and provide multi-outputs.

Limitations

- The modus operandi is devised for the committees of Teagasc Further Education. The link with Higher Education governance will be linked where there are common structures such as AC.
- Membership of committees and AC has to have strong externality.
- Teagasc must recognise that this is additional work that it committed to as an organisation and to date has not resourced.

V0.5 26/03/2025

Worked Examples

The two examples below illustrate how the devised approach works:

Example 1 – Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults

The Whole College Evaluation Report has indicated that child protection is a key area of concern for Teagasc education, and needs to be visible. Child protection also includes vulnerable adults. One of the suggested ways is that it is a recurring standing item on relevant agendas. From a governance perspective the rolling agenda Academic Council. This is directly reported by to AC by Teagasc Education Management. As it is a key item of note then this also informs the annual quality report as an area for investigation by Teagasc.

This approach:

- Helps to monitor how child protection is operating in Teagasc
- Maintains the operation of child protection as a key issue of importance
- Will flag both areas of strength and weakness in how child protection is operating
- Will help to support continuous improvement in child protection in Teagasc.

Example 2 – Updating Indicative Content on Module Specifications

Good governance principles require a separation between those who propose and those who approve. For this reason the committees and AC operate separately and independently. Oversight and governance of indicative content of Teagasc education programmes is provisioned within the meeting cycle of the Programme Development and Review Committee (PDRC) and AC.

Late November / Early December PDRC Meeting

The cycle starts in late November / early December where "*Guidance on changes to indicative content and programmes needed*" is on the agenda. This is informed by feedback garnered during external authentication, and input from subject matter experts. As a standing item on the agenda, committee members have oversight and can have input into this feedback. Education staff are asked for feedback and edits between September and February. If there are key areas of concern that should input into the AQR these too are noted on the minute template.

December AC Meeting:

AC are informed of findings of the PDRC and have the opportunity to comment, guide and support.

Late February / Early March PDRC Meeting:

PDRC standing item on the agenda is to "*Propose module specifications for the coming academic year*" subject to appropriate follow up on guidance from the PDRC and AC has been taken into account, and that the committee are satisfied to propose the changes to AC. The committee can defer proposal to their next meeting if they so deem. Proposal will facilitate finalisation of module specifications in good time for September opening. Deferral of proposal pushes the item to the May meeting by which time it is the last opportunity to propose changes in time for September opening.

April AC Meeting:

Proposed changes to the modules specifications from the PDRC Committee are either approved or rejected. Approval allows for finalisation of module specifications for September opening. Rejection still allows time for feedback and a second attempt in the May meeting of the PDRC.

May PDRC Meeting:

Where proposed changes were rejected by the committee or AC previously, the standing item of "*Particular issues for this meeting*" will include proposal of changes of module specifications which allows a

tight timeframe for approval of changes to module specifications in the July AC meeting so that they can be made available for September opening.

How can I raise an issue through Teagasc Education Governance?

Within the limits of the terms of reference for Academic Council and its sub committees, it is open to all stakeholders of Teagasc education to raise a query with the relevant body. You can do this by contacting Teagasc Head of Education, the Head of Curriculum Development and Standards Unit or a member of Academic Council or one of its sub committees, whichever is appropriate. The query can then be placed on the agenda of the next meeting if necessary.

Indicative Agendas and Timelines for Teagasc Further Education Governance

The table below shows indicative topics. In practice these may differ.

Date	Teaching and Learning Committee	Programme Development and Review Committee	Quality and Results Committee	Academic Council
Late November / early December	- Particular issues for this meeting - Guidance on changes to teaching and learning approaches, policy, training - Pedagogy IST - Report on VLE - Responses to graduate and learner surveys - Annual quality report input - Report for AC	- Particular issues for this meeting - Guidance on changes to indicative content and programmes needed - Validation schedule update - Guidance on programmes currently being developed - Review of programmes to be proposed/validated - Programme review - Annual quality report input - Report for AC	- Particular issues for this meeting - Review of academic year start up - Review graduate surveys - Election of learner representatives - Review trends in results for June, August and October exports to QQI and any notes of the national RAM - KPI's in education performance - Annual quality report input - Report for AC	
December				- Particular issues for this meeting - Review trends in results for August and October exports to QQI and any notes of the national RAM - Approve results for December export

				• Updates from sub-committees • Child protection update • Review any work for approval in July meeting • Approval or not of proposals from committees • Publication of materials • Feedback to committees • Identify key steps for Teagasc Education • Feedback for SMG and Authority
Late February / Early March	• Particular issues for this meeting • Propose changes to teaching and learning approaches, policy and training for the coming academic year • Pedagogy IST • Report on VLE • Responses to graduate and learner surveys • Annual quality report input • Report for AC	• Particular issues for this meeting • Propose module specifications for the coming academic year • Validation schedule update • Annual quality report input • Report for AC	• Particular issues for this meeting • Review of learner representation in courses • Review trends in results for December and February exports to QQI and any notes of the national RAM • KPI's in education performance • Annual quality report input • Report for AC	
April				• Particular issues for this meeting

				• Review trends in results for December and February exports to QQI and any notes of the national RAM • Approve results for April export • Review the updates from all 3 committees • Child protection update • Review any work for approval in September meeting • Approval or not of proposals from committees • Publication of materials • Feedback to committees • Identify key steps for Teagasc Education • Feedback for SMG and Authority
End of May	• Particular issues for this meeting • Pedagogy IST • Report on VLE • Responses to graduate and learner surveys • Annual quality report input • Report for AC	• Particular issues for this meeting • Propose results for export • Validation schedule update	• Particular issues for this meeting • Review trends in results for April exports to QQI and any notes of the national RAM • KPI's in education performance	

			• Annual quality report input • Report for AC	
July				• Particular issues for this meeting • Approve results for apprenticeships • Review trends in results for April and June exports to QQI and any notes of the national RAM • Review the updates from all 3 committees • Child protection update • Review any work for approval in December meeting • Approval or not of proposals from committees • Update on Child safe guarding • Publication of materials • Feedback to committees • Identify key steps for Teagasc Education • Feedback for SMG and Authority

September				- Particular issues for this meeting - Publication of materials - Feedback to committees - Child protection update - Identify key steps for Teagasc Education - Feedback for SMG and Authority

V0.5 26/03/2025

Appendix 1 Teaching and Learning Committee Supporting Documents

Meeting Invitations:

01_Teaching_and_L
earning_committee_

02_Teaching_and_L
earning_committee_

03_Teaching_and_L
earning_committee_

Minute Templates:

T%20and%20L%20
Minutes%20templat

Appendix 2 Programme Development and Review Committee Supporting Documents

Meeting Invitations:

01_Programme_Dev
elopment_and_Revie

02_Programme_Dev
elopment_and_Revie

03_Programme_Dev
elopment_and_Revie

Minute Templates:

PDRC%20Minutes%
20template.docx

V0.5 26/03/2025

Appendix 3 Quality and Results Committee Supporting Documents

Meeting Invitations:

01_Quality_and_Sta
ndards_committee_a

02_Quality_and_Sta
ndards_committee_a

03_Quality_and_Sta
ndards_committee_a

Minute Templates:

Q%20and%20R%20
Minutes%20templat

Appendix 4 Academic Council Supporting Documents

Meeting invitations:

01_Academic_Coun
cil_agenda_and_invi

02_Academic_Coun
cil_agenda_and_invi

03_Academic_Coun
cil_agenda_and_invi

04_Academic_Coun
cil_agenda_and_invi

Minute Templates:

Teagasc%20AC%20
Minutes%20templat

Appendix 5 Teagasc Academic Council Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Teagasc Academic Council

The Teagasc Academic Council is established by Teagasc to assist in the planning, coordination, development and overseeing the educational activities of Teagasc and to protect, maintain and develop academic standards.

Subject to the Teagasc Senior Management Group and the Teagasc Authority, the Academic Council has the responsibility to deal with and regulate academic and quality assurance matters within Teagasc. Its core function is to oversee academic quality assurance for the purposes of enhancement, accountability, and quality improvement. Its remit does not extend beyond academic and education quality assurance matters.

The Teagasc Academic Council governance structure reflects Quality and Qualifications Ireland guidelines in relation to education governance structures.

This document outlines the terms of reference for the Teagasc Academic Council with respect to structure, membership, role and conduct of business.

2. Teagasc Education Quality Assurance Governance Structure

Figure 1 illustrates how the Teagasc Academic Council fits into the Teagasc Education Quality Assurance Governance Structure.
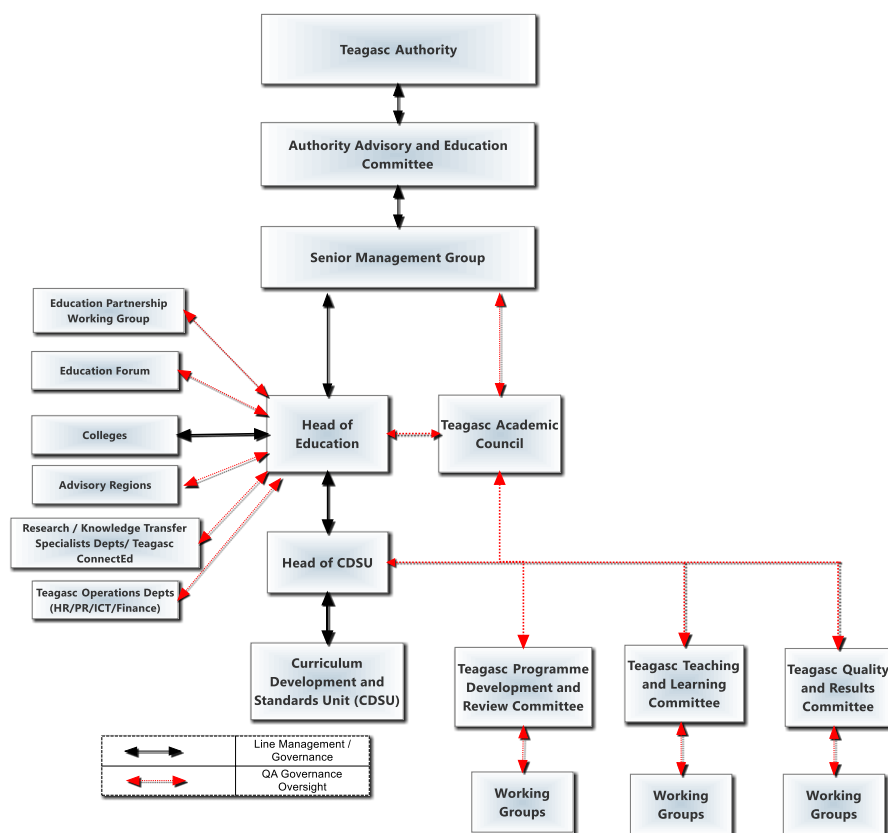

Figure 1 Teagasc Education Quality Assurance Governance Structure

3. Membership

The membership representative structure of the Council is established by the Teagasc Authority. Permanent council members will be automatically appointed by virtue of their office. Non permanent members will be approved by the Academic Council.

*Teagasc Academic Council Membership**

1. Head of Education	Permanent (chair)
2. Head of Curriculum Development Standards Unit (CDSU)	Permanent (vice chair)
3. Education Programme Administrative Officer	Permanent
4. National Learning Support Specialist	Permanent
5. National Apprenticeship Programme Specialist	Permanent
6. Senior Management Group nominee (non-Education)	3 year membership
7. College Principal	3 year membership
8. Private College Principal	3 year membership
9. Regional Advisory Manager	3 year membership
10. Education Officer	3 year membership
11. Teacher	3 year membership
12. College Technician	3 year membership
13. Curriculum Development Standards Unit (CDSU) representative	3 year membership
14. Learner	Registered Teagasc Learner
15. Learner / Recent graduate**	3 year membership

* Apart from learner representatives, members must be permanent employees
** A learner representative may   retain their membership for a period of up to three years following their graduation. However at least one of the learner representatives must be a currently registered learner.

Selection Procedure
The Teagasc Academic Council will have 15 members and will reflect gender balance. The Teagasc Head of Education will submit Teagasc Academic Council membership nominees to the Senior Leadership Team for approval, and subsequent ratification by the Teagasc Authority.

The following are key elements of the membership structure and selection procedures:

- The Academic Council oversees nomination and election processes for term limited members.
- Term limited members serve on the Teagasc Academic Council for a period of 3 years. They are required to step down after this period. After an interval of 3 years they can be proposed for re-appointment for a further 3 years.

- A member may resign or retire from the Council by informing the Chairperson in writing of their decision. The Council will approve a replacement member in line with the membership structures of the Council.

4. Functions of the Teagasc Academic Council

The Teagasc Academic Council and its standing committees are concerned with academic governance and its role will be as follows:

1. To oversee academic standards and quality assurance processes for Teagasc education and training programmes.

2. To oversee further education academic programme development and review processes.

3. To oversee assessment and examination procedures and ratification of external examiners.

4. To promote teaching and learning in Teagasc education to include oversight of initiatives aimed at improving the learner experience and education staff pedagogical capacity.

5. To make recommendations on teaching and learning aimed at improving learner engagement and the learning experience.

6. To give oversight to higher education apprenticeship programme development, delivery, assessment and quality assurance processes in Teagasc.

7. To oversee the development, maintenance and publication of academic-related Quality Assurance policies, procedures and learner regulations.

8. To advise on education self-evaluation processes for Teagasc Education programmes and review key performance indicator outcomes for Teagasc training programmes within a closed loop governance system.

9. To advise on the key performance indicator and academic benchmarking necessary for the continuous improvement of Teagasc education activities.

10. To advise Teagasc Senior Leadership and the Teagasc Authority as necessary in respect to changes required to the Teagasc education quality assurance governance structure.

5. Conduct of Business

To ensure efficient operation of the Teagasc Academic Council:
- The Teagasc Head of Education chairs meetings. In their absence, the vice chair will chair Council meetings.
- The Council will normally meet twice times per year. Additional meetings can be scheduled if required.
- A Quorum for a Council meeting will be eight members which must include four term limited members.
- The Council may co-opt one or two additional members for a maximum of one year if deemed necessary by the Council.

- Depending on the agenda, others may be invited to be present for part or all of a meeting.
- Secretarial support will be provided to the Council.
- Decisions will normally be made by consensus. Should a vote be necessary, the Chair will have the casting vote
- The Teagasc Academic Council meeting minutes will be circulated to the Teagasc Senior Management Group and the Authority Advisory and Education Committee.
- The Council will on its establishment have the following standing committees:
  - Programme Development and Review Committee
  - Teaching and Learning Committee
  - Quality and Results Committee
- The Council can amend its meeting procedures as necessary.
- The Council will confine itself to academic and quality assurance matters.

Appendix 6 Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee - Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee

The Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee is established under the Teagasc education quality assurance governance structure. Its role and responsibilities as delegated to it by the Teagasc Academic Council are to oversee the planning and coordination of staff training and to advise on appropriate teaching resources, methodologies and assessment practices. This document outlines the terms of reference for the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee with respect to membership, functions and conduct of business.

2. Membership

The Teagasc Head of Curriculum Development and Standards will submit the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee membership nominees to the Teagasc Academic Council for approval.

The Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee will consist of 9 members, and will reflect gender balance.

Teaching and Learning Committee Membership		Term of Membership
1	National Education In-service Training Coordinator (Chair)	Permanent CDSU member
2	Education Resource Specialist (Vice Chair)	Permanent CDSU member
3	IT Resource Specialist	Permanent CDSU member
4	Learning Support Specialist	Permanent CDSU member
5	College Principal / Assistant Principal	3 years membership
6	Teacher / Technician	3 years membership
7	Education Officer	3 years membership
8	Learner	3 years membership
9	External expert	3 years membership

Selection Procedure:

The following are key elements of the selection procedure:

- The Academic Council will agree the process of how nominations for term limited members are proposed for the Committee.
- Five term limited members will serve on the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee for a period of 3 years. They will be required to step down after this period. After an interval of 3 years they can be proposed for re-appointment for a further 3 years.

- A member may resign or retire from the Committee by informing the Chair of the Committee in writing of their decision. The Head of Curriculum Development and Standards will propose a replacement member for approval of the Academic Council in line with the representative membership structure of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

3. Functions of the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee

The Committee is concerned with overseeing the planning and coordination of staff training and to advise on appropriate teaching resources, methodologies and assessment practices under the direction of the Teagasc Academic Council and with guidance from the Teagasc Curriculum Development and Standards Unit (CDSU). Its role embraces Teagasc education programmes other than apprenticeships.

1. Ensuring teaching and learning practice is consistent with programme requirements.
2. Maintaining and developing teaching practice in line with national and international advances in pedagogical practice, to include a range of delivery modes and assessments methodologies. consistent with Teagasc educational goals.
3. Oversee and advise on education technical and pedagogic staff in-service training/continuous professional development; including pedagogic qualifications for education staff.
4. Identify and assist the development of supports, services and teaching and learning resources to enhance the learner experience.
5. Oversee the support of staff in the effective use of virtual learning platforms and Quercus.
6. Coordinate and oversee action responses to learner, graduates and staff feedback on teaching and learning.
7. Liaise with Teagasc committees and working groups where relevant.

4. Conduct of Business

To ensure the efficient operation of the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee:

- The committee reports to the Teagasc Academic Council. Meeting agendas and minutes are circulated to the Head of Curriculum Development and Standards and the Teagasc Academic Council.
- The National Education In-service Training Coordinator will chair the committee. In their absence the vice chair will chair committee meetings.
- The committee will normally meet twice per year. Additional meetings can be scheduled if required.
- Secretarial support will be provided to the committee.
- Decisions will normally be made by consensus. Should a vote be necessary, the Chair will have the casting vote.
- A Quorum for a Committee meeting will be five members which must include three term-limited members.

V0.5 26/03/2025

- The Terms of Reference for the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee can be reviewed and may be amended after consultation and approval by the Teagasc Academic Council.

Appendix 7 Teagasc Quality and Results Committee - Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Teagasc Quality and Results Committee

The Teagasc Quality and Results Committee is established under the Teagasc education quality assurance governance structure. Its roles responsibilities as delegated to it by the Teagasc Academic Council are to oversee quality assurance and results procedures for Teagasc further education programmes.
This document outlines the terms of reference for the Quality and Results Committee with respect to membership, functions and conduct of business.

2. Membership

The Teagasc Head of Curriculum Development and Standards Unit (CDSU) will submit the Teagasc Quality and Results Committee membership nominees to the Teagasc Academic Council for approval.

The Teagasc Quality and Results Committee will consist of 8 members, and will reflect gender balance.

	Quality and Results Committee Membership	Term of Membership
1	National Verification and Standards Specialist (Chair)	Permanent CDSU member
2	National Practical Learning Period Specialist (Vice chair)	Permanent CDSU member
3	National Education Administrator	Permanent member
4	College Principal / Assistant Principal	3 years membership
5	Teacher / Technician	3 years membership
6	Education Officer	3 years membership
7	Learner / Graduate	3 years membership
8	External expert	3 years membership

Selection Procedure:

The following are key elements of the selection procedure:

- The Academic Council will agree the process of how nominations for term limited members are proposed for the Committee.
- Two CDSU staff will have permanent membership on the committee.
- National Education Administrator will have permanent membership.
- Five term limited members will serve on the Teagasc Quality and Results Committee for a period of 3 years. They will be required to step down after this period. After an interval of 3 years they can be proposed for re-appointment for a further 3 years.

- A member may resign or retire from the Committee by informing the Chair of the Committee in writing of their decision. The Head of Curriculum Development and Standards will propose a replacement member for approval of the Academic Council.

3. Functions of the Teagasc Quality and Results Committee

This committee is concerned with overseeing quality assurance and results procedures for Teagasc further education programmes under the direction of the Teagasc Academic Council and with guidance from the Teagasc Curriculum Development and Standards Unit (CDSU). Its role embraces Teagasc education programmes other than apprenticeships.

1. Oversee the development, review and approval of Teagasc education quality assurance policies and procedures in line with QQI guidelines and best national and international practice.
2. Oversee academic quality and results procedures for Teagasc education and training programmes.
3. Review summary findings of course independent authentication reports, identify risks therein and make recommendations in regard to Teagasc education quality improvement plans.
4. Make recommendations arising from feedback from staff and learners/graduate surveys.
5. Advise on key performance indicators and academic benchmarking relevant for Teagasc education programmes.
6. Advise on evaluation of education quality standards and results procedure in all Teagasc further education activities.
7. Liaise with Teagasc committees and working groups where relevant.

4. Conduct of Business

To ensure the efficient operation of the Teagasc Quality and Results Committee:

- The Committee will report to the Teagasc Academic Council. Meeting agendas and minutes are circulated to the Head of CDSU and the Teagasc Academic Council.
- The National Verification and Standards Specialist will chair the committee. In their absence, the vice chair will chair committee meetings.
- The Committee will normally meet twice per year. Additional meetings can be scheduled if required.
- Secretarial support will be provided to the committee.
- Decisions will normally be made by consensus. Should a vote be necessary, the Chair will have the casting vote.
- A Quorum for a Committee meeting will be five members which must include three term-limited members.

- The Terms of Reference for the Teagasc Quality and Results Committee can be reviewed and may be amended after consultation and approval by the Teagasc Academic Council.

Appendix 8 Teagasc Programme Development and Review Committee

1. Purpose of the Teagasc Programme Development and Review Committee

The Teagasc Programme Development and Review Committee is established under the Teagasc education quality assurance governance structure. Its role and responsibilities as delegated to it by the Teagasc Academic Council are to oversee the development of proposed new education programmes and the review of Teagasc further education programmes.

This document outlines the terms of reference for the Programme Development and Review Committee with respect to membership, functions and conduct of business.

2. Membership

The Teagasc Head of Curriculum Development and Standards Unit (CDSU) will submit the Programme Development and Review Committee membership nominees to the Teagasc Academic Council for approval.

The Teagasc Programme Development and Review Committee will consist of 8 members, and will reflect gender balance.

	Programme Development and Review Committee Membership	Term of Membership
1	Head of CDSU (Chair)	Permanent member
2	National QA Coordinator (Vice Chair)	Permanent member
3	National Education Resource Specialist	Permanent member
4	College Principal / Assistant Principal	3 years membership
5	Teacher/Technician	3 years membership
6	Education Officer	3 years membership
7	Learner	3 years membership
8	External Expert	3 years membership

Selection Procedure:
The following are key elements of the selection procedure:

- The Academic Council will agree the process of how nominations for term limited members are proposed for the Committee.
- Four term limited members will serve on the Teagasc Teaching and Learning Committee for a period of 3 years. They will be required to step down after this period. After an interval of 3 years they can be proposed for re-appointment for a further 3 years.
- A member may resign or retire from the Committee by informing the Chair of the Committee in writing of their decision. The Head of Curriculum Development and Standards will propose a replacement member for approval of the Academic Council.

3. Functions of the Programme Development and Review Committee:

This committee is concerned with overseeing the development and review of Teagasc education programmes under the direction of the Teagasc Academic Council and with guidance from the Teagasc Curriculum Development and Standards Unit (CDSU). Its role embraces Teagasc education programmes other than apprenticeships.

1. Establish frameworks for the development of sanctioned Teagasc further education programmes.
2. Oversee review of curricula of existing Teagasc further education programmes as directed by the Teagasc Academic Council.
3. Ensure that the processes of programme development and review conforms to Teagasc quality assurance procedures and sanction processes.
4. Present education programmes to the Teagasc Academic Council for their consideration prior to submission to QQI for validation.
5. Liaise with Teagasc committees and working groups in relation to curriculum development and review.

4. Conduct of Business

To ensure the efficient operation of the Programme Development and Review Committee:

- The Committee will report to the Teagasc Academic Council. Meeting agendas and minutes are circulated to the Head of Education and the Teagasc Academic Council.
- The Head of CDSU will chair the committee. In their absence, the vice chair will chair committee meetings.
- The Committee will normally meet twice per year. Additional meetings can be scheduled if required.
- Secretarial support will be provided to the committee.
- Decisions will normally be made by consensus. Should a vote be necessary, the Chair will have the casting vote.
- A Quorum for a Committee meeting will be five members which must include three term-limited members.
- The Terms of Reference for the Programme Development and Review Committee can be reviewed and may be amended after consultation and approval by the Teagasc Academic Council.