



Value Chain Analysis of Functional Foods and Medicinal & Aromatic Plants

Walsh Scholarship Reference Number: 2024298

University: Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin)

Funding: Teagasc

Research Institution: Teagasc

Location: Teagasc Ashtown, Dublin 15

Proposed Start Date: May 2026

Project Summary

Rising consumer demand for functional foods and medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) has created a need for integrated analysis of value chains to support nutritional, therapeutic, and economic outcomes. This Master of Research project will examine the value chains of selected functional foods, including oats and seaweeds, and medicinal and aromatic plants such as chamomile and peppermint, from primary production through processing to consumption.

The project will follow a structured, multi-phase research approach. Initial stages will involve baseline value chain mapping and engagement with relevant stakeholders. This will be followed by nutritional and bioactive profiling at key stages of processing to assess changes in product composition. Economic and market analyses will evaluate feasibility, opportunities for value addition, and potential for market expansion, supported by consumer preference studies.

Findings from each phase will be integrated to develop practical frameworks that support sustainable production and commercialisation. The project will generate value chain maps, economic insights, and evidence to inform business development and policy relevant to functional foods and MAPs.

Supervision

The student will be supervised by Dr Dilip Rai (Teagasc), with academic supervision from Dr Uma Tiwari (Technological University Dublin). The supervisory team brings complementary expertise in functional foods, bioresources, and agri-food value chain analysis, providing a strong academic and applied framework for the project.

Research Environment

You will be registered at Technological University Dublin and based at the Teagasc Food Research Centre, Ashtown, for the duration of your studies. The centre provides access to interdisciplinary expertise, stakeholder networks, and analytical resources supporting research in food systems and value chain development.

Candidate Profile and Eligibility

Applicants should ideally:

- Must hold at least 2.1 Honours degree or equivalent in Food Science, Agriculture, Biotechnology, Business, Environmental Science, Economics, or a related discipline
- Demonstrate an interest in agri-food systems, bioresources, or sustainable supply chains
- Have the ability to analyse qualitative and quantitative datasets; software handling and mathematical knowledge are desirable
- Familiarity with stakeholder mapping, interviews, or participatory research methods is an advantage.

All applicants, whose first language is not English, are required to have an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of >6.0 or a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test score of >92 (internet based). More details regarding English requirements can be found at



<https://www.tudublin.ie/study/international-students/entry-requirements/english-language-requirements>

Funding Details

This is a fully funded two-year Masters funded by Teagasc, including:

- €25,000 annual stipend
- University fees covered up to €6,000 per annum

How to Apply

Applicants should complete the [online application form](#) by **5:00pm on Wednesday, 18 March 2026**. Applications must include a curriculum vitae and a 1 page statement of motivation submitted as part of the online application.

Interviews

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview in early to mid-April 2026. Online interviews can be accommodated.

Further Information

Informal enquiries are welcome and may be directed to: **Dr Dilip Rai** – dilip.rai@teagasc.ie or **Dr Uma Tiwari** (uma.tiwari@tudublin.ie)

Further information on the Walsh Scholars Programme is available at:

<https://www.teagasc.ie/about/research-innovation/the-walsh-scholars-programme/about-the-programme/>