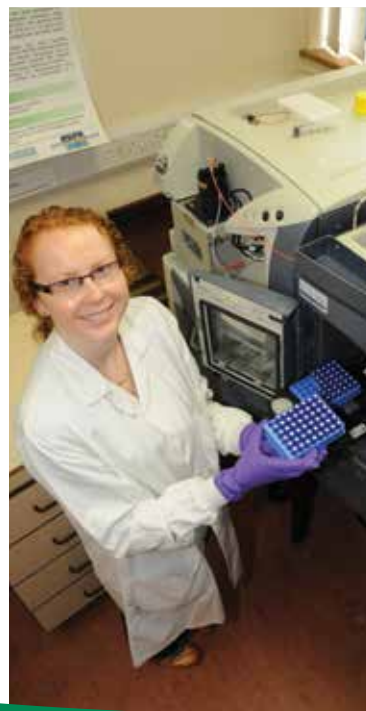


RECRUITMENT POLICY AT TEAGASC





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Teagasc, the Agriculture and Food Development Authority, is the national body providing integrated research, advisory and training services to the agriculture and food industry and rural communities.

Our future success depends on attracting and identifying the best candidates and, to help achieve this, our employment policies and practices are of the highest standard. We want to be an employer of choice within the agri-food sector, with highly skilled, motivated, innovative staff who are adaptable and committed to personal development, and are recognised for their contribution to organisational and industry development.

We ensure that our employment policies and practices are of the highest standard. All appointments are made on merit and through fair and transparent recruitment processes.

1. Equal opportunities at Teagasc

We are committed to equality of opportunity in our employment procedures. This ensures that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, colour, race (nationality or ethnic or national origins) and membership of the travelling community, as outlined in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and Equal Status Act, 2000.

Employees are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their capability, suitability and according to the requirements of the post.

Recruitment/selection

Qualifications and requirements, such as experience, aptitude and potential, are in line with what is necessary to fill the position. This eliminates discrimination in the recruitment process.

Application forms only require necessary and relevant information.

Selection procedures, where used, relate directly to the genuine requirements of the post.

Advertising posts at Teagasc

All Teagasc posts are open to suitably qualified applicants, in accordance with and subject to the provisions of the Employment Equality Acts, 1977 and 1998.

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

Advertisements for posts are given the widest possible circulation, consistent with our policy

of providing equal access to all jobs. This does not preclude local advertising of positions, where appropriate.

Interview panels

Members of our interview boards are taught competency-based interviewing techniques. This prevents discrimination in the interview process. We also ensure that interview panels are gender inclusive, as far as possible.

Equal pay

We are an equal opportunities employer and we fully subscribe to the principle of equal pay as defined in the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act of 1974. This entitles men and women to equal pay and benefits.

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

Dignity at work

We recognise our responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 and the Employment Equality Act, 1998. We therefore accept that all staff are entitled to be treated with respect and that the work environment allows staff to perform their duties free from intimidation/bullying and sexual harassment from other staff members and from clients, customers or other business contacts.

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 Human Resources Department.



2. Job specifications

Our job specifications outline the main duties and responsibilities of the role. They also detail the qualifications, skills, knowledge and behavioural competencies required to do the job. They do not provide a definitive list of the tasks associated with the role but are a useful guide for the hiring manager when assessing applications and deciding who the best applicants to call for interview are.

3. Application forms

Application forms are used for the majority of job vacancies. We only consider applications received on the appropriate application form for the relevant role. A hiring manager may sometimes ask for a curriculum vitae as an alternative to an application form.

The application form only looks for information relevant to the role. The hiring manager uses the information in the application form during both the shortlisting and interview processes to decide the most suitable candidate for the role.

4. Advertising

Teagasc, as a public sector organisation, makes sure that all externally advertised competitions are advertised to the widest possible audience, taking budgetary considerations and the type of vacancy into account. We advertise all vacancies on our website and/or selected websites/print media relevant to the type of role.

5. Shortlisting

Shortlisting is a preliminary step in the recruitment process. We look at each candidate's application to make sure, firstly, that they meet the essential criteria. Secondly, shortlisting finds candidates who have the most appropriate qualifications, skills and experience for the role.

Shortlisting also helps achieve a manageable and realistic number of candidates for interview, where there is a large number of applicants.

We ensure that the outcome of the shortlisting process is clear and justified in the context of the role's specific criteria. If candidates are not shortlisted for interview, we can give them feedback, on request.



6. Interviews

We use a competency-based interview method to choose the most suitable candidate for a role. This finds, through a structured interview process, the candidate whose competencies most closely match the competencies required for the role.

Competency is defined as the behaviours that employees must have, or must acquire, to achieve high levels of performance. The competency-based interview predicts future behaviour by seeking evidence of how a candidate performed in the past. It also looks at how and what the candidates have achieved to date.

Teagasc is committed to providing training in competency-based interview techniques to all relevant staff.

7. Interview boards

The interview board's role is to assess the suitability of each candidate by focusing on the key competencies for the role. The size of the interview board reflects the level and type of post being filled.

Interview boards are, as far as possible, gender-balanced and include the hiring manager and a relevant external expert.

Board members, in particular the board member chairing the interview, are trained in competency-based interviewing techniques, as far as is practicable. Written notes are taken on each candidate being interviewed.

Questions during the interview focus on the competencies to be assessed, with care taken to ensure fairness for each candidate.

8. Panels

Sometimes we run competitions to form a panel of suitably qualified candidates to fill vacancies which may arise in the future; for example, Agricultural Development Officer and promotion posts. This reduces the need to run multiple competitions where a number of similar roles are expected to be filled.

An interview board may also list more than one interviewee as being suitable for a post, ranking them in order of suitability. This means another recruitment competition is not necessary if the first person offered the post does not accept it, or where the person who takes up the post leaves it in a short space of time.

When candidates are placed on a panel, we let them know in writing and we also tell them their ranking on the panel. Vacancies which arise are filled from the panel in order of merit, i.e. the person placed first on the panel is offered the first vacancy to arise. This can vary to take account of candidates' stated geographical preferences and/or suitability to a particular role.

Panels arising from a panel competition (e.g. Agricultural Development Officer panel, Education Officer panel) stay in place for 24 months from when they are formed. All other panels stay in place for 12 months from when they are formed, unless otherwise specified.

9. References

We contact at least two referees before offering employment to a successful candidate. Candidates need to list three relevant referees on a Referee Consent Form, one of which must be their current or most recent employer.

We usually talk to referees by phone to verify the candidate's employment history, as well as to get a greater insight into their skills, knowledge and abilities from someone who has knowledge of or has actually seen them carry out their job.

When we let candidates know that they have been successful at interview, they need to give us written consent to contact the referees listed on the Referee Consent Form. Referees are not contacted without candidates' prior knowledge and consent. Appointments are subject to getting satisfactory references.

We ask for one academic reference from all candidates for Research grade posts. Candidates need to give one written academic reference from a university supervisor before the interview date.



10. Contract of employment

When candidates formally accept the new role, we send them a contract of employment detailing all the terms and conditions of employment, including job title, work location, pay grade, annual leave, sick leave, pension, etc. They need to sign and return the contract, along with all other relevant documentation which may be requested, before they take up employment.

11. Employment of young persons

The Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996 is designed to protect the health of young workers and ensures that work carried out during school years does not put young people's education at risk. Teagasc complies with this Act.

12. Data protection

Teagasc complies fully with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1988, as amended by the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. Data on individuals is retained only for the duration permitted under the Data Protection Acts and only for the purpose for which it was obtained.

13. Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 1997 (FOI) allows the public obtain official information, consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals. Under the Act anyone has the right to:

- access records held by Teagasc
- have inaccurate/incomplete information on their personal records corrected
- obtain reasons for decisions affecting them

14. Appeals process

We facilitate feedback to applicants who are unsuccessful in either securing an interview or being offered a post. This allows them to improve and develop for any future opportunities. If they are unhappy with the outcome of a recruitment process, they can ask to have the decision reviewed.

15. Monitoring

We ensure that all policies and procedures are in line with best practice and legislative requirements. The gathering of statistical data to monitor progress of this policy occurs annually. This audit highlights any deficiencies in the policy's practices and procedures.

16. Further information

Further information about Teagasc can be found on our website (www.teagasc.ie).

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