



**University College Dublin**

## **REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

**Periodic Quality Review**

**UCD-Teagasc Collaborative Programmes**

**February 2024**

**Approved by UMT on 24/09/2024**

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**Appendix 1:** UCD-Teagasc Response to the Review Group Report

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## **Summary findings of the Review Group**

The Review Group has identified a number of key findings in relation to areas of good practice operating within the UCD-Teagasc Collaborative Programmes and areas which the Review Group would highlight as requiring future improvement. The main section of this Report sets out all observations, commendations and recommendations of the Review Group in more detail.

*Please note that the numbers below refer to the relevant paragraph in the body of the report.*

### **Examples of good practice**

The Review Group identified a number of commendations, in particular:

- 3.10 The Review Group commends the strong relevant industry, academic and research experience that the teaching staff and module coordinators based at UCD and in Moorepark clearly evidenced.
- 4.9 The Review Group recognises and commends UCD and Teagasc on the exceptional opportunities which are provided to students for gaining relevant industry experience through the practical application of current research at Teagasc's Moorepark Food Research Centre in Fermoy, Co. Cork.
- 4.10 The Review Group noted the exceptionally positive verbal feedback provided by students on their studies, and the overall positive interpersonal relationships between Teagasc staff, UCD staff and students, in particular in relation to their respect for the staff and experience they gained from being at Moorepark.
- 4.12 The experiential learning gained from relevant work placements, in Ireland, New Zealand and other countries operating pasture-based dairy systems, is highly commended by the Review Group.
- 5.7 The Review Group observed and commends the diverse employment opportunities for graduates.

### **Recommendations for future improvement**

The Review Group would suggest that the following recommendations be prioritised:

- 2.8 The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the BAgSc Dairy Business programme expired in September 2017. This covers the governance of the relationship between UCD and Teagasc and the fee arrangements and it is imperative that an up-to-date MOA (and, if necessary or appropriate, as deemed by the relevant authority within UCD, a retrospective one) is put in place as soon as possible. This process should commence immediately.
- 2.9 Under the MOA up to September 2017, the governance process for running the BAgSc Dairy Business programme references formal and regular meetings of the Programme Management Team, which need to take place, and which must be documented and minuted.

- 3.11 Academic governance and programme management should be informed by the UCD Academic Regulations and programme requirements. For example, a UCD PDARF7 Form for the discontinuation of the Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management (NFQ level 7) programme must be completed and submitted to the relevant committee(s) in UCD, and exit strategies must be documented for students who do not succeed on the first attempt or have extenuating circumstances and need to take the assessment after the programme (as validated by UCD) has ceased.
- 3.12 Formal recognition of the contribution of Moorepark staff to teaching and student learning should be acknowledged by UCD through adjunct appointments, at appropriate levels, which should facilitate access to UCD library systems, and other potential benefits, such as access to courses and materials for continual professional development (CPD), not limited to but especially Teaching and Learning support. This is highly recommended as a matter of urgency for the benefit and security of the students and staff who are involved in the ongoing delivery of this collaborative programme.
- 4.13 The Review Group recommends that there is an annual updating and revision of all Module Descriptors (e.g. learning outcomes and all assessment strategies) to transparently reflect the current module and programme content.
- 4.15 The Programme Management Team should undertake a review of overall assessment to ensure a wider range of assessment modes are used, with the application of Bloom's Taxonomy and pedagogy that reflects the programme year of progression and learning outcomes. Assessment outlines should make use of grading rubrics and create the opportunity for provision of formative written feedback to students on assessments and for all modules.

# 1. Introduction and Context

## Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Periodic Quality Review of the University College Dublin (UCD)-Teagasc Collaborative Programmes, the site visit for which was undertaken on 27-28 November 2023.

## The Review Framework

- 1.2 Irish Universities have collectively agreed a framework for their quality review and quality improvement systems, which is consistent with both the legislative requirements of the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*, and international good practice (e.g. *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015*). Quality reviews are carried out in academic, administrative and support service units.
- 1.3 The purpose of Periodic Quality Review is to assist the University to assure itself of the quality of each of its constituent units, and its collaborative programmes, and to utilise learning from this developmental process in order to effect improvement, including:
- To monitor the quality of the student experience, and of teaching and learning.
  - To monitor research activity, including management of research activity; and assessing the research performance with regard to research productivity, research income, and recruiting and supporting doctoral students.
  - To identify, encourage and disseminate good practice, and to identify challenges and how to address these.
  - To provide an opportunity for areas to test the effectiveness of their systems and procedures for monitoring and enhancing quality and standards.
  - To encourage the development and enhancement of these systems, in the context of current and emerging provision.
  - To inform the University's strategic planning process.
  - The output report provides robust evidence for external accreditation bodies.
  - The process provides an external benchmark on practice and curriculum.
  - To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure the quality and standards of its awards. The University's implementation of its quality procedures enables it to demonstrate how it discharges its responsibilities for assuring the quality and standards of its awards, as required by the *Universities Act 1997* and the *Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012*.

## The Review Process

- 1.4 Typically, the review model comprises four major elements:
- Preparation of a Self-Assessment Report (SAR);
  - A visit by a Review Group that includes UCD staff and external international experts. The site visit will normally take place over a two or three day period;
  - Preparation of a Review Group Report that is made public;

- Agreement of an action plan for improvement (Quality Improvement Plan) based on the Review Group Report's recommendations. The University will also monitor progress against the Quality Improvement Plan.

Full details of the review process can be found on the UCD Quality Office website: [www.ucd.ie/quality](http://www.ucd.ie/quality).

## **The Review Group**

- 1.5 The composition of the Review Group for the quality review of the UCD-Teagasc Collaborative Programmes was as follows:
- Dr Margaret Fitzsimons, Dean of the Institute of Banking (IOB), a Recognised College of UCD (Chair)
  - Assistant Professor Joyce Senior, UCD School of Education (Deputy Chair)
  - Associate Professor Jean Margerison, University of Nottingham (UK)
  - Professor Chris Reynolds, University of Reading (UK)
- 1.6 In addition to the Self-Assessment Report, the Review Group considered documentation provided by UCD and Teagasc during the site visit. The review site visit schedule is included as Appendix 2.
- 1.7 This Review Group Report has been read and approved by all members of the Review Group.

## **Preparation of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR)**

- 1.8 In February 2023, the UCD Quality Office met with the Programme Director, who is a Professor in the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science, to discuss the quality review process. The Programme Director assembled a Self-Assessment Report Coordinating Committee (SARCC) to develop the SAR. The Programme Director liaised with the UCD Quality Office throughout the self-assessment process, providing nominees for external reviewers, proposing dates for the site visit and sharing drafts of the emerging SAR.
- 1.9 The documents necessary for the review were all available within UCD and the Programme Director, in consultation with the SARCC, wrote the report. Teagasc were consulted at an early stage to finalise the site visit timetable for the review. The SAR was sent to the SARCC for review in early October and the Programme Director met with members of the SARCC individually on a number of occasions to explain the quality review process and get input into the SAR. The SARCC met as a group on 6 October (via Zoom) prior to submitting the report to the UCD Quality Office on 4 November 2023.

## **The University**

- 1.10 University College Dublin (UCD) is a large and diverse university whose origins date back to 1854. The University is situated on a large modern campus about 4 km to the south of the centre of Dublin.
- 1.11 The University Strategic Plan (to 2024) states that the University's mission is: "to contribute to the flourishing of Dublin, Ireland, Europe and the world through the excellence and impact of

our research and scholarship, the quality of our graduates and our national and global engagement; providing a supportive community in which every member of the University is enabled to achieve their full potential”.

1.12 The University is currently organised into six Colleges and 37 Schools:

- UCD College of Arts and Humanities
- UCD College of Business
- UCD College of Engineering and Architecture
- UCD College of Health and Agricultural Sciences
- UCD College of Social Sciences and Law
- UCD College of Science

1.13 As one of the largest universities on the island of Ireland, UCD supports a broad, deep and rich academic community in Science, Business, Engineering, Health Sciences, Agriculture, Veterinary Medicine, Arts, Law, Celtic Studies and Human Sciences. There are currently more than 38,000 students, including over 2,000 PhD students, over 5,000 international students in overseas operations, and over 10,000 international students on the main UCD campus, with 144 nationalities in total represented in the student body. (Source: UCD Institutional Research, [statistics for academic year 2022-2023](#)).

### **UCD-Teagasc Partnership**

1.14 There is a long history of collaboration and cooperation between UCD and Teagasc in areas such as research, teaching and technology transfer activities. The most recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UCD and Teagasc was signed in May 2020 and it outlined a proposal to work together on three areas of engagement, namely Education and Talent Development; Research and Innovation; and Corporate Social Responsibility.

1.15 One key element of the partnership is the Teagasc-funded Walsh Scholar PhD students registered with UCD. The Walsh Scholarships programme is Teagasc's postgraduate development programme, with some 140 students pursuing PhD programmes at any one time across multiple universities in Ireland. Walsh Scholar students are located at Teagasc sites around the country with a Teagasc supervisor and a UCD supervisor. There are more Teagasc Walsh Scholar students registered with UCD than any other Irish third level institution (c.40% of c.250 students registered with UCD).

1.16 There is extensive collaboration between UCD and Teagasc in research projects funded for example by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Science Foundation Ireland. This collaboration extends beyond the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science to other Schools and Institutes in UCD such as the Schools of Veterinary Medicine, Computer Science, Biological and Environmental Sciences, the Institute of Food and Health, the Earth Institute, and the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics.

1.17 There are also two collaborative Masters programmes (MAgrSc in Agricultural Innovation Support and MAgrSc in Agricultural Extension and Innovation, both based in the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science) with 10-25 students registered each year.

- 1.18 In 2022, UCD launched a new NFQ Level 9 Professional Diploma in Researcher Development which is also overseen by the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science and designed and developed in association with Teagasc specifically for Post-Doctoral Fellows employed by Teagasc.
- 1.19 The BAgrSc in Dairy Business (NFQ Level 8) - a UCD Honours Bachelors Degree Award - has existed since 2009 and the Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management (NFQ Level 7) - validated by UCD - operated from 2012-2023. From the 2023 intake onwards, the Dairy Farm Management programme will change to a Farm Management Apprenticeship programme with no connection to UCD, and with a direct link between Teagasc and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) regarding certification.
- 1.20 Teagasc has representation on the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science External Advisory Board and UCD personnel contribute to many Teagasc initiatives and Teagasc programme reviews.



## **2. Collaborative Partnership Arrangements/Memorandum of Agreement**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 2.1 There is extensive collaboration between Teagasc and UCD in research, teaching and technology transfer activities. The Review Group observed that the success of this collaboration is driven and supported by the positive inter-personal relationships between staff at Teagasc and at UCD.
- 2.2 The MoU dated May 2020 indicates that a strategic partnership oversight committee was to be put in place, to include the Teagasc Director and UCD President, and was expected to meet at least once per year or as required. The MoU stipulates that the role of Chair of the committee will be held by the UCD President or the Teagasc Director based on the location of the meeting. Each area of engagement will have a working group which will adopt an appropriate meeting schedule and these groups will have a lead from both UCD and Teagasc that will manage activity, achieve objectives and report on progress to the committee. The extent to which these provisions have been implemented was unclear to the Review Group.
- 2.3 The UCD Programme Director has *ad hoc* verbal communication with the Teagasc Administrator on both the running of the BAgSc in Dairy Business (NFQ Level 8) and the Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management (NFQ Level 7). Thirteen groups of Dairy Business students have spent a trimester in Teagasc's Moorepark Food Research Centre in Fermoy, Co. Cork to date.
- 2.4 UCD and Teagasc had a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed in January 2014, effective from September 2012 for a five-year period (September 2017). The Review Group notes there is not an up-to-date MoA and the expired one, in so far as it refers to Programme Management Team meetings, is not being adhered to.

### **Commendations**

- 2.5 The students speak extremely highly of the teaching and practical experience they receive at Moorepark, in industry and on work placement.
- 2.6 The modules delivered at UCD, Teagasc experience and teaching in Moorepark, and the national/international work experience, combine to demonstrate the commitment shown to the collaborative delivery of the programme by all parties concerned. This operates in an extremely beneficial way to support student progression, in terms of the education, insight into research and knowledge transfer, industry experience and practical work experience that students gain.
- 2.7 It is commendable to see that a consistent number of students have recognised the Dairy Business pathway as a valuable pathway to employment. This is clearly evidenced by the number of students that have chosen to enter this education programme across recent years, who graduate into a vibrant industry with a wide range of employment opportunities clearly demonstrated by student career progression over the previous few years.

## **Recommendations**

- 2.8 The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for the BAgrSc Dairy Business programme expired in September 2017. This covers the governance of the relationship between UCD and Teagasc and the fee arrangements and it is imperative that an up-to-date MoA (and, if necessary or appropriate, as deemed by the relevant authority within UCD, a retrospective one) is put in place as soon as possible. This process should commence immediately.
- 2.9 Under the MoA up to September 2017, the governance process for running the BAgrSc Dairy Business programme references formal and regular meetings of the Programme Management Team, which need to take place, and which must be documented and minuted.

### 3. Programme Governance, Administration and Staffing

#### General Comments and Context

- 3.1 Student numbers in Dairy Business have remained steady (between 19 and 24 students) since it began in 2009. Dairy Business had a denominated CAO entry code from 2009-2021 (DN252), meaning that students choose the entry route when they entered UCD. Students now enter Agricultural Science in Stage 1 and decide on their degree programme at the end of Stage 1.
- 3.2 The expired MoA sets out processes of governance and administration for the Dairy Business programme that includes regular meetings of the Programme Management Team, but the Review Group was provided with limited documentation of programme management processes or systematic review of module content, Module Descriptors, assessment approaches, student feedback, pastoral support and teaching staff development processes.
- 3.3 The administration of the programme currently relies on *ad hoc* communication between the UCD and Teagasc Programme Directors and established mechanisms for communication and pastoral support.
- 3.4 There are eight trimesters on the Dairy Business programme with students spending one of these trimesters in Moorepark. Five modules are delivered in Moorepark accounting for 30 credits in total and each of these modules has a UCD and Teagasc Module Coordinator.
- 3.5 Students are based in the Paddy O’Keeffe Innovation Centre for the advancement of Irish Grassland and Dairying during the trimester in Moorepark. The facilities include a purpose-built lecture theatre for 120 people, which is fitted with SMART board technology, along with a computer room that contains 40 PCs that are available for students to use for an extended period of each day. Students also have access to a shared cafeteria where they can meet colleagues and staff.
- 3.6 The exam questions for each module are prepared by staff at Teagasc, passed from the Module Coordinator at Teagasc to the Module Coordinator at UCD, and then checked by the UCD Dean of Agriculture, and then by the External Examiner. All the reviewed exam papers and final student grades are submitted to the Agriculture and Food Science Programme Board, and the UCD Programme Director usually submits an Annual Programme Monitoring Report to the UCD Quality Office.
- 3.7 The Review Group noted that the Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management, which operated from 2012-2023, will change to a Farm Management Apprenticeship programme from the 2023 intake onwards and will no longer have any connection to UCD.
- 3.8 The informal relationship between individual Teagasc staff teaching on the programme and UCD was very positive and facilitated through open channels of communication. However, the formal status of Teagasc staff in relation to UCD was unclear, and this has an impact on access to institutional resources at UCD by these Teagasc staff members.

## **Commendations**

- 3.9 The effective running of the innovative programme in Dairy Business Management is based on strong collaborative and verbal communication skills that capitalize on a long standing and close collaborative relationship between UCD and Teagasc. This collaboration uses established methods of work practice and delivers teaching, practical classes, industry visits, knowledge transfer skills and work experience, which allows a range of learning methods to be applied effectively.
- 3.10 The Review Group commends the strong relevant industry, academic and research experience that the teaching staff and module coordinators based at UCD and in Moorepark clearly evidenced.

## **Recommendations**

- 3.11 Academic governance and programme management should be informed by the UCD Academic Regulations and programme requirements. For example, a UCD PDARF7 Form for the discontinuation of the Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management (NFQ level 7) programme must be completed and submitted to the relevant committee(s) in UCD, and exit strategies must be documented for students who do not succeed on the first attempt or have extenuating circumstances and need to take the assessment after the programme (as validated by UCD) has ceased.
- 3.12 Formal recognition of the contribution of Moorepark staff to teaching and student learning should be acknowledged by UCD through adjunct appointments, at appropriate levels, which should facilitate access to UCD library systems, and other potential benefits, such as access to courses and materials for continual professional development (CPD), not limited to but especially Teaching and Learning support. This is highly recommended as a matter of urgency for the benefit and security of the students and staff who are involved in the ongoing delivery of this collaborative programme.

## **4. Curriculum Design, Admissions and Assessment**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 4.1 The course offers a strong programme of appropriate material, including taught, practical and work experience, that allows modules to reflect the current state of scientific knowledge and current industry practice, and the direction of travel of the dairy industry in Ireland, which has been and continues to be reflected in student numbers and employment opportunities in an area of strategic importance to the economic and environmental stability of Ireland as a whole.
- 4.2 It was noted that there have been no major changes to the Module Titles and Module Descriptors for modules delivered by staff based at Teagasc since the programme began.
- 4.3 The substantive content of the five modules (totalling 30 credits) delivered by Teagasc is updated by Teagasc Module Coordinators on an almost annual basis, to reflect changes in current practice due to ongoing research, milk processor farm assurance requirements and national and international policies.
- 4.4 The assessments described in the Module Descriptor for each module have remained similar in recent years, mainly comprising MCQs, and this did not accurately reflect the assessment currently being applied during the delivery of the modules. There was a considerable amount of continual assessment, formative and summative, which is being carried out during the delivery of each module. These include Practical (cow calving); Presentation; Report; Literature Review; Case study; MCQ), and the time allowed and percentage contribution to overall assessment should be included in the Module Descriptor. This detail is essential for the internal and external evaluation of student workloads, the amount, type and range of assessment being applied and consistency across modules delivered within the taught programmes at UCD and for comparison with similar courses delivered externally.
- 4.5 The Module Descriptors did consistently describe a large percentage of assessment for the final summative exam component, however there has been little change in the pedagogical terminology applied in the exam papers over the last few years, which are long (2 hours) for the number of credits available on each module and carry a high percentage of the assessment for each module. This limits the potential to provide formative feedback to students.
- 4.6 The limited number of credits available for each module and the amount of continual assessment actually being applied represents a significant risk of students being over-assessed, which limits the potential development and performance of students. Moreover, over-assessment of students leads to unsupportable workloads for teaching staff, which often limits the opportunity to provide appropriate amounts of formative feedback, which is essential to student development.
- 4.7 The complete lack of formative feedback was evidenced on some major elements of continual assessment, while in other modules continual assessment that was given excellent formative feedback carried too little weighting to have a significant effect on the overall final module grade.

- 4.8 Greater accuracy and transparency of continual assessment can be used to implement a better and more appropriate workload distribution for students and staff, with use of a wider range of learning and assessment methods.

### **Commendations**

- 4.9 The Review Group recognises and commends UCD and Teagasc on the exceptional opportunities which are provided to students for gaining relevant industry experience through the practical application of current research at Teagasc's Moorepark Food Research Centre in Fermoy, Co. Cork.
- 4.10 The Review Group noted the exceptionally positive verbal feedback provided by students on their studies, and the overall positive interpersonal relationships between Teagasc staff, UCD staff and students, in particular in relation to their respect for the staff and experience they gained from being at Moorepark.
- 4.11 The Dairy Business qualification provides the relevant knowledge, practical skills and work experience that prepare students for a wide range of employment opportunities provided by a vibrant and dynamic global industry, which is supported by the inclusion of specific modules that address the issues of environmental impacts/legislation and policy changes as an attribute, along with a strong focus on business, economics and the practical application of business management.
- 4.12 The experiential learning gained from relevant work placements, in Ireland, New Zealand and other countries operating pasture-based dairy systems, is highly commended by the Review Group.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.13 The Review Group recommends that there is an annual updating and revision of all Module Descriptors (e.g. learning outcomes and all assessment strategies) to transparently reflect the current module and programme content.
- 4.14 The Programme Management Team should consider the inclusion of a greater proportion of grassland, fodder and alternative forage crop establishment and management in the curriculum. This would follow on from the Year 1 module on soils, to better prepare students for the Year 3 research-led module on grassland management and animal nutrition and industry engagement at Moorepark and Year 4 modules at UCD. Modules also need to reflect public concerns by incorporating an increased focus on the environment, sustainability, animal health and welfare, the need for better animal housing and the use of precision technologies, which are rapidly evolving, along with a more international perspective.
- 4.15 The Programme Management Team should undertake a review of overall assessment to ensure a wider range of assessment modes are used, with the application of Bloom's Taxonomy and pedagogy that reflects the programme year of progression and learning outcomes. Assessment outlines should make use of grading rubrics and create the opportunity for provision of formative written feedback to students on assessments and for all modules.

- 4.16 Staff involved in teaching must be given adequate support and training to deliver learning, teaching, assessment and formative feedback, which is appropriate to the year of the programme, using support materials such as Bloom's Taxonomy and assessment rubrics, along with a wider range of forms of assessment that facilitate formative student feedback. This should reflect the module learning outcomes in line with the level of student educational development and specific educational needs. The development of assessment strategies should comply and engage with supports offered by UCD Teaching and Learning.
- 4.17 The opportunity to provide formative feedback must be enhanced whenever possible and students must receive adequate amounts of written individualised formative feedback on all continual assessment in line with UCD Academic Regulations, i.e. within 20 working days of submission, and clearly apply appropriate rubrics that reflect the module learning outcomes.

## **5. Student Supports**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 5.1 An underlying ethos of care and respect for the students' wellbeing and learning was very evident from meetings with staff and students.
- 5.2 Students gave extremely positive feedback on the support they received in both UCD and Moorepark. In particular, the Employee Assistance Programme, support finding accommodation, health and safety, manual handling programmes and the Eolas student study room in Moorepark were referenced.
- 5.3 The Review Group observed that there was a general lack of evidenced student feedback. The primary mechanism utilised for this is the UCD feedback on modules system but there was low engagement with this by students.
- 5.4 The Review Group was informed by programme management staff that there is a high percentage of students on the UCD-Teagasc Collaborative Programmes with neurodiverse needs, so it is important that these needs are supported in relation to both the teaching, learning, range of assessment modes and the practical aspects of Professional Work Experience.

### **Commendations**

- 5.5 Student numbers for the BAgrSc Dairy Business have been consistently steady (between 19 and 24 students) and the progression and retention of these students has been 95-100% which is extremely positive.
- 5.6 Students spoke very positively about the programme and accessibility of staff and required support.
- 5.7 The Review Group observed and commends the diverse employment opportunities for graduates.

### **Recommendations**

- 5.8 Several recommendations were made during the last Quality Review and the subsequent Quality Improvement Plan regarding the development of an "explicit framework and communications plan to make clear what academic and pastoral supports are available and how they can be accessed by staff, students and host farmers". This recommendation still applies and should be implemented. In particular, explicit details regarding student academic and pastoral care supports, both at school/programme and university level, should be outlined in a Student Handbook. Similarly, a formal protocol which outlines the process and steps to take by host farmers to raise issues regarding a student's progress should be clearly documented. This could be achieved using a one-page flow chart.
- 5.9 A Student Handbook should also outline the programme aims, structure, Module Descriptors, modes of assessments, academic integrity as well as links to the most relevant UCD policies



and details of UCD and Teagasc facilities. The Programme Management Team should leverage the supports available within UCD, including UCD Global, Access and Lifelong Learning, and other supports which can provide continuity of support through the student's experience in UCD, at Teagasc and on work placement. The Student Handbook should document these supports covering all formal and informal mechanisms.

- 5.10 A Student Professional Work Experience Handbook which clearly outlines policies, procedures and practical information relating to all placements should also be developed. In particular, written details regarding the New Zealand placement need to be provided well in advance and include detailed information on the practical aspects such as a potential cost of living guide, transport provision and requirements, rental and food costs and other important practical information. As part of this Student Professional Work Experience Handbook, it is recommended that a formal Placement Plan is included. This will include specific goals/learning outcomes which are discussed and agreed with the placement co-ordinator and host/mentor farmer and which can be subsequently referred to and used as a framework for placement review meetings. A list of contacts, and an outline of procedures for potential re-location of placements and/or a return to the student's home country, should be provided.
- 5.11 To encourage feedback from students, the Programme Management Team should consider alternative methods of encouraging students to engage with the current feedback systems, and/or consider other approaches that have been or can be applied, such as focus groups, telephone calls, exit interviews and perhaps technology in class, e.g. slido.
- 5.12 In relation to enhancing accessibility for all students and particularly neurodiverse students, the UCD Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Programme and the Digital Badge in UDL provides teaching staff with a sustained opportunity to critically reflect on their teaching methods and make changes to practice, teaching materials and assessment modes by embedding UDL. The Programme Management Team should encourage all staff teaching on the BAgrSc Dairy Business programme to avail of these UDL supports.

## **6. Quality Assurance Arrangements**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 6.1 The UCD-Teagasc Collaborative Programmes undergo a review, co-ordinated by the UCD Quality Office, every seven years. The first review took place in 2012 and the second in 2016. An Annual Programme Monitoring Report is required to be submitted to the UCD Quality Office, and a composite report for all collaborative programmes is considered by the UCD Academic Council Quality Enhancement Committee (ACQEC). In addition, there are ongoing quality/curriculum reviews in the university and in individual schools that consider the quality of each programme. Dairy Business is subject to these reviews as with any other BAgrSc programme.
- 6.2 The Review Group is aware that the Quality Improvement Plan from the last review was drafted but it is unclear if it was finalised.

### **Commendations**

- 6.3 In terms of partnership and governance, there is regular, informal communication between the UCD and Teagasc Programme Directors and between the UCD and Teagasc Module Coordinators. In addition, there is a more formal meeting of the Programme Directors each January to discuss the upcoming trimester and issues arising.
- 6.4 The Annual Programme Monitoring Report is essential as a very useful tool for quality assurance and can be used as a means for programme review.

### **Recommendations**

- 6.5 There is a lack of evidence of programme evaluation, evolution, actions taken and responses to the previous review in 2017 and the Review Group recommends that all these points are completely closed off and evidenced through the new Quality Improvement Plan arising from the current review.
- 6.6 It is recommended that there is a schedule of annual Programme Management Team meetings between relevant UCD and Teagasc staff and that there are formal records of the agenda and minutes (see also recommendation 2.8). These meetings should also be used to monitor ongoing progress against the Quality Improvement Plan arising out of this review.
- 6.7 There is a lack of evidence of actions taken in response to the previous review in 2017 in relation to alternative mechanisms for students and host farmers to provide feedback. Linked to recommendation 3.9, it is recommended that the Programme Management Team explore alternative ways to use Brightspace to obtain and increase student feedback (e.g. focus groups, telephone calls, exit interviews, slido) in a more systematic and effective manner. This feedback should relate to both the academic and professional placement elements of the programme. The actions taken in response to the feedback should be documented at Programme Management Team meetings.

- 6.8 In relation to the Professional Work Experience and farm placements, it is recommended that the criteria for determining 'technically excellent dairy farms' is documented and included in the Student Professional Work Experience Handbook. Linked to this, students should be facilitated to provide anonymous feedback on both the placement and the host farmer.
- 6.9 When on placement abroad, the schedule and mechanism for formal UCD liaison and group tutorials with the students should be documented.

## **7. Marketing and Alumni Activities**

### **General Comments and Context**

- 7.1 Most students on the BAgrSc Dairy Business programme come through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Whilst student numbers have continued to be on target and there does not appear to be a desire to grow student numbers, marketing the successes of the programme will have reputational benefits for both UCD and Teagasc.
- 7.2 UCD attends Teagasc events such as the Moorepark Open Day that attracts approximately 10,000 attendees and takes place every second year, with the last event in 2023. This provides UCD with the opportunity to market the Dairy Business and related degree programmes.
- 7.3 This programme has several key strengths with UCD faculty and campus, the experience for students in Moorepark and the opportunity for a practical farmland placement abroad.

### **Commendations**

- 7.4 The UCD website indicated an inclusive approach and an extensive selection of colourful and appropriate material that was in keeping with a traditional multicultural city campus.
- 7.5 Student numbers have remained relatively constant for a number of years.
- 7.6 Word of mouth from students on the programme is extremely positive and the Review Group heard from the students their strong endorsement for this programme.

### **Recommendations**

- 7.7 A marketing strategy should be developed that highlights the successful collaboration between UCD and Teagasc and the contributions and successes of BAgrSc Dairy Business programme alumni.
- 7.8 The Programme Management Team should take advantage of the opportunity to highlight where sustainability is being addressed across all modules which would be attractive to prospective students and employers.
- 7.9 It is essential that a more inclusive approach to UCD graduate profiles on the UCD website is developed by the inclusion of at least one graduate from agriculture and/or dairy business.
- 7.10 UCD and Teagasc should consider other opportunities for the partnership beyond the BAgrSc Dairy Business programme, such as the Professional Diploma for Postdoctoral Researchers.

## UCD-Teagasc Response to the Review Group Report

Thank you for providing us with your comprehensive report. We appreciate the time and effort you invested in the report and want to thank you for your insights and recommendations.

We are committed to reviewing in detail all the recommendations in the report and assessing how effectively they can be implemented with our colleagues in Teagasc while considering the possible implications for the 13 other undergraduate programmes in the School of Agriculture and Food Science.

We have reviewed the priority recommendations identified by the Review Group and the initial proposals/comments from UCD and Teagasc are outlined below:

### **Recommendation 2.8:**

*The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the BAgrSc Dairy Business programme expired in September 2017. This covers the governance of the relationship between UCD and Teagasc and the fee arrangements and it is imperative that an up-to-date MOA (and, if necessary or appropriate, as deemed by the relevant authority within UCD, a retrospective one) is put in place as soon as possible. This process should commence immediately.*

**Comment:** We are making progress in updating the MOA and this will be completed in the coming weeks.

### **Recommendation 2.9:**

*Under the MOA up to September 2017, the governance process for running the BAgrSc Dairy Business programme references formal and regular meetings of the Programme Management Team, which need to take place, and which must be documented and minuted.*

**Comment:** Annual meetings of the Programme Team will be scheduled and minutes recorded.

### **Recommendation 3.11:**

*Academic governance and programme management should be informed by the UCD Academic Regulations and programme requirements. For example, a UCD PDARF7 Form for the discontinuation of the Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management (NFQ level 7) programme must be completed and submitted to the relevant committee(s) in UCD, and exit strategies must be documented for students who do not succeed on the first attempt or have extenuating circumstances and need to take the assessment after the programme (as validated by UCD) has ceased.*

**Comment:** The PDARF7 has been submitted for approval. Exit strategies will be documented for students who do not succeed on the first attempt or have extenuating circumstances.

### **Recommendation 3.12:**

*Formal recognition of the contribution of Moorepark staff to teaching and student learning should be acknowledged by UCD through adjunct appointments, at appropriate levels, which should facilitate access to UCD library systems, and other potential benefits, such as access to courses and materials for continual professional development (CPD), not limited to but especially Teaching and Learning support. This is highly recommended as a matter of urgency for the benefit and security of the students and staff who are involved in the ongoing delivery of this collaborative programme.*

**Comment:** Formal recognition for Teagasc staff through adjunct positions is a priority item for discussion between the PD, Dean/Head of School and Prof Laurence Shalloo in Teagasc Moorepark. In the

meantime, we will work with Teagasc Moorepark to confirm the list of all those delivering into the programme and the contribution of each person identified.

**Recommendation 4.13:**

*The Review Group recommends that there is an annual updating and revision of all Module Descriptors (e.g. learning outcomes and all assessment strategies) to transparently reflect the current module and programme content.*

**Comment:** Module descriptors will be an agenda item at the annual meeting and revised where necessary.

**Recommendation 4.15:**

*The Programme Management Team should undertake a review of overall assessment to ensure a wider range of assessment modes are used, with the application of Bloom's Taxonomy and pedagogy that reflects the programme year of progression and learning outcomes. Assessment outlines should make use of grading rubrics and create the opportunity for provision of formative written feedback to students on assessments and for all modules.*

**Comment:** As part of the curriculum review in the School of Agriculture and Food Science, assessment strategies across all programmes in the School are being considered. The outcomes of this will be discussed with the PD and Module Coordinators in Moorepark.

The Programme Team in UCD and Teagasc will now prepare a Quality Improvement Plan outlining how the relevant report recommendations will be implemented.



### UCD/Teagasc Collaborative Arrangements

1. UCD BAgrSc Dairy Business Degree Programme
2. Teagasc Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management (NFQ Level 7, validated by UCD)

**Review Site Visit: 27-28 November 2023**

OVERVIEW
Submission of Self-Assessment Report (SAR) & Appendices to UCDQO <b>(6 November 2023)</b>
SAR and Review Documentation circulated to RG members <b>(6 November 2023)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Collaboration /document sharing: <b>Google Drive</b></li> </ul>
Review Group Briefing meeting (via Zoom) <b>(13 November 2023)</b>
Review Group feedback on the SAR, via Preliminary Comments Template <b>(17 November 2023)</b>
<b>Review Site Visit: 27-28 November 2023</b>
<b>Review Group Report: Aim for completion by end of December 2023</b>

## Timetable

**Monday, 27 November 2023**

**Venue: Boardroom, Agriculture and Food Science Centre, UCD**

09.00-10.00	Tea/coffee on arrival Review Group (RG) Planning Meeting to discuss SAR Preliminary Comments, Site Visit Timetable, Roles for meetings/questions, additional information requests, etc.
10.00-10.30	RG meeting with the <b>UCD Registrar and Deputy President</b>
10.30-11.15	RG meeting with the <b>Dean/Head of the UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science</b> Tea/coffee for meeting
11.15-12.00	RG meeting with the <b>UCD School of Agriculture and Food Science, Head of Section - Animal and Crop Sciences</b>
12.15-13.00	RG meeting with the <b>UCD Programme Co-ordinator – BAgrSc Dairy Business</b>
13.00-14.00	RG Lunch
14.00-15.00	RG meeting with <b>Module Co-ordinators – BAgrSc Dairy Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Herd Health and Applied Dairy Nutrition</li><li>● Grassland Management and Applied Dairy Nutrition</li><li>● Dairy Systems</li><li>● Dairy Business Project</li><li>● Applied Dairy Breeding and Fertility</li><li>● Dairy Business Professional Work Experience</li><li>● Teagasc-Kildalton representative</li></ul>
15.00-16.00	RG meeting with <b>UCD Students &amp; Alumni – BAgrSc Dairy Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Stage 2</b> and <b>Stage 4</b> students; and <b>Alumni</b></li></ul>
16.00-16.30	RG <b>Tour of UCD Facilities</b>
17.00-18.30	RG <b>Dinner</b> & Informal meeting to discuss any matters arising, preparation for day two including RG roles for meetings/questions, additional information requests, etc.
18.30	<b>Travel to Cork</b>



## **Tuesday, 28 November 2023**

**Venue: Shanacloon Room, Paddy O’Keeffe Building, Moorepark (Fermoy, Co. Cork)**

09.00-09.45	Tea/coffee on arrival Zoom meeting with <b>Stage 3 students – BAgSc Dairy Business</b> in Ireland & New Zealand, co-ordinated by Dairy Business Professional Work Experience Module Co-ordinator
09:45-10.30	Zoom meeting with <b>Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management students</b> , co-ordinated by PDDFM Programme Director
10.30-11.15	<b>RG Tour of Moorepark Facilities</b>
11.15-12.15	RG meet <b>Teagasc/UCD Programme Management Team – BAgSc Dairy Business &amp; Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management</b> (NOTE: The Professional Diploma programme is no longer validated by UCD from Sept 2023 intake onwards; 10 continuing students to complete in 2024) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Head of the Animal and Grassland Research and Innovation Programme in Teagasc and module coordinator for Dairy Systems, a module taught in Teagasc Moorepark</li><li>• Teagasc Administrator</li><li>• Senior Principal Research Officer – Quantitative Geneticist, Teagasc</li><li>• Principal Research Officer – Veterinary, Teagasc</li><li>• Senior Research Officer, Teagasc</li><li>• PDDFM Programme Director</li></ul>
12.15-14.00	RG Working Lunch – Key initial commendations/recommendations & Review Group Report drafting session
14.00-14.30	RG meet <b>Teagasc Head of Education</b> , via Zoom
15.00-15.15	<b>Exit Presentation</b> to feedback initial outline commendations and recommendations (via Zoom)
15.15	<b>RG Departs</b>