Component Specification

Capstone for Agriculture

NFQ Level 6

6N20464

1. Component Details

Title	Capstone for Agriculture
Teideal as Gaeilge	Buaic-chúrsa Talmhaíochta
Award Class	Minor
Code	6N20464
Level	6
Credit Value	15
Purpose	The purpose of this award is exclusively associated with the Advanced Certificate in Agriculture. The award will be available to those learners who have demonstrated the knowledge, skill and competence prescribed in this award specification. Specifically, achieving the capstone minor award requires evidence of integrate learning involving the expected learning outcomes (ELOs) specified by all the minors required to qualify for this major and the demonstrated achievement of this awards expected learning outcomes.
Learning Outcomes	Learners will be able to:

1. Assess and benchmark a farming business against national performance figures, EU and Irish legislation and the Department of Agriculture requirements

2. Appraise farming activity in terms of health and safety and environmental impact

3. Appraise the effect and benefits of agriculture business decisions to enhance performance

4   Assess the natural resources available at farm level and develop appropriate actions to improve farm performance while both protecting and harnessing these resources in a sustainable manner

5   Assess how a farm manager can develop a farm holding in the context of personal organisation, the holding's resources and market requirements within natural, economic and legal constraints

6   Formulate a farming strategy and devise a farm business plan in line with best practice, to develop a given agriculture situation while complying with current EU directives and national legislation, and requirements of the various relevant governmental departments and regulatory bodies

7   Evaluate current farming practice for a given farming situation and recommend improvements

8   Formulate a plan to maximise business advantage utilising natural resources available for a given agricultural situation

9   Follow a logical practical sequence, prioritise and cost works required for proposed changes to a given farm situation

10 Evaluate likely effects on the environment, energy usage and carbon emissions, pre and post proposed farm business plan

11 Predict the effects of economic variance on the proposed farm plan

12 Defend conclusions following a strategic review of a given agricultural business situation

13 Reflect on the impact of the knowledge, skills and competences attained in relation to developing in the role of a farm manager

14 Research sources of information and supports to enable a person to self-up-skill and self-update

Assessment

General Information   Details of FET assessment requirements are set out in [Assessment Guidelines for Providers.](#)

All FET assessment is criterion referenced. Successful achievement of the award is based on learners attaining the required standards of knowledge, skill or competence.

The techniques set out below are considered the optimum approach to assessment for this component. In exceptional circumstances providers may identify alternative assessment techniques through the provider's application for programme validation which are **reliable** and **valid** but which are more appropriate to their context.

Assessment of a number of components may be integrated across programmes for delivery, provided that the learning outcomes of each minor award are assessed.

Group or team work may form part of the assessment, provided each learner's achievement is separately assessed.

All providers are required to submit an assessment plan as part of their application for programme validation. Assessment Plans will include information relating to scheduling and integration of assessment. See current FET validation guidelines at www.qqi.ie.

Assessment Techniques   In order to demonstrate that they have reached the standards of knowledge, skill and competence identified in all the learning outcomes, learners are required to complete the assessment(s) below.

The assessor is responsible for devising assessment instruments (e.g. project and assignment briefs, examination papers), assessment criteria and mark sheets, consistent with the techniques identified below and FETAC's assessment requirements.

Programme validation will require providers to map each learning outcome to its associated assessment technique. See current FET validation guidelines at www.qqi.ie.

All learning outcomes **must** be assessed and achieved

Project   100%

Description

Project

A project is a response to a brief devised by the assessor. A project is usually carried out over an extended period of time. Projects may involve research, require investigation of a topic, issue or problem or may involve process such as a design task, a performance or practical activity or production of an artefact or event.

The assessor will devise a planning project for a given agriculture situation to all of the learning outcomes. The project must include

1) An appraisal of key agricultural physical and financial performance indicators and current practices

2) An evaluation of options to develop a given agriculture situation, taking account of available natural resources while maximising genetic advantage

3) Possible development strategies resulting from a range of the following: participation in discussion groups, farm and industry visits, work practice and personal experience

4) A medium term realistic strategy to develop the physical and financial performance for a given agriculture situation with proposals to change current farming practice, and to manage, reduce or control risk, taking account of best practice in husbandry, breeding / varietal selection, safety, health and welfare, utilisation of available natural resources, EU and national environmental legislation, identification of risk, processor and market requirements

5) Prioritisation and costing of proposed strategy

6) An Integrated pest management plan for the proposed changes

7) Feasibility and oral defence of conclusions

8) Reflection on knowledge, skills and competences required of a farm manager

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Learners may be assessed on the basis of their prior knowledge and experience. Providers must be specifically quality assured to assess learners by this means. To do so they must complete B10, see Provider's Quality Assurance Guidelines and be included on the Register of RPL approved providers. See RPL Guidelines at www.fetac.ie for further information and registration details.

Grading

Pass	50% - 64%
Merit	65% - 79%
Distinction	80% - 100%

Specific Validation Requirements

None

Supporting Documentation

1. Publications from: The Health and Safety Authority of Ireland
2. Publications from: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
3. Publications from: Teagasc, The Agriculture and Food Development Authority
4. Publications from: My Farm My Plan – Planning for My Future. Teagasc 2014.

Access

To access programmes leading to this award the learner should have reached the standards of knowledge, skill and competence associated with the preceding level of the National Framework of

Qualifications. This may have been achieved through a formal qualification or through relevant life and work experience.

Transfer Successful completion of this component award enables the learner to transfer to programmes leading to other certificates where this component is a mandatory or an elective requirement.

2. FET Award Standards

QQI award standards are determined within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), http://www.nfq-qqi.com. QQI determines standards for the education and training awards that it makes itself and that are made by providers to whom it has delegated authority to make an award. Providers offering programmes leading to QQI awards **must** have their programme(s) validated in accordance with current validation policy (see www.qqi.ie).

Award standards are designed to be consistent with the NFQ's award classes i.e. major, special purpose, supplemental and minor awards. They are expressed in terms of **learning outcomes** i.e. concise statements of what the learner is expected to know or be able to do in order to achieve a particular award. Learning outcomes for FET awards are contained within the associated specifications:

AWARD CLASS	STANDARDS	AWARDS
Major Award	Certificate Specification	Certificate (Levels 1 to 5) Advanced Certificate (Level 6)
Supplemental Award	Supplemental Specification	Supplemental Certificate (Level 3 to 6)
Special Purpose	Specific Purpose Specification	Specific Purpose Certificate (Levels 3 to 6)
Minor Award	Component Specification	Component Certificate (Levels 1 to 6)

Award standards are thresholds, they describe standards of knowledge, skill or competence to be acquired, and where appropriate, demonstrated, by a learner before an award may be made.

Award standards will be reviewed from time to time as necessary. Minor changes may be made by the QQI executive outside the review cycle where necessary. Changes to standards are published on QQI's website. Providers with validated programmes and providers with delegated authority to make awards are responsible for monitoring relevant standards and making necessary responses to changes.

3. FET Credit

Every FET certificate and component specification includes an FET credit value (Table 1). FET credit is quantified in multiples of 5 FET credits (up to 50 hours of learner effort). Learner effort is based on the time taken by typical learners at the level of the award to achieve the learning outcomes for the award. It includes all learning time involved including: guided learning hours, self-directed learning and assessment.

Table 1: FET Credit Values

NFQ Level	Major Awards Credit Values	Default Credit Values Minor Awards	Other Permitted Minor Award Credit Values	Special Purpose and Supplemental Award Credit Value Ranges
1	20	5	10	
2	30	5	10	
3	60	10	5,20	>5 and<60
4	90	10	5,15,20	>5 and<90
5	120	15	5,10,30	>5 and <120
6	120	15	5,10,30	>5 and <120

Guide to Level

Learning outcomes at this level include a comprehensive range of skills which may be vocationally-specific and/or of a general supervisory nature, and require detailed theoretical understanding. The outcomes also provide for a particular focus on learning skills. The outcomes relate to working in a generally autonomous way to assume design and/or management and/or administrative responsibilities. Occupations at this level would include higher craft, junior technician and supervisor.

Strand	Sub-strand	Nature of learning
Knowledge	Breadth	Specialised knowledge of a broad area
	Kind	Some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking, with significant underpinning theory
Know How & Skill	Range	Demonstrate a comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools
	Selectivity	Formulate responses to well defined abstract problems
Competence	Context	Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts
	Role	Exercise substantial personal autonomy and often take responsibility for the work of others and/or for the allocation of resources; form and function within, multiple and complex heterogeneous groups.
	Learning to Learn	Learn to evaluate own learning and identify needs within a structured learning environment; assist others in identifying learning needs
	Insight	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others.

Extract from 'Determinations for the Outline National Framework of Qualifications': NQAI