



Masters (MAgrSc) in Innovation Support

September 2011 – July 2013

Funded by the Teagasc Walsh Fellowship Scheme

Aim:

To equip graduates with the skills and knowledge to be effective in building the capacity of farmers to adopt new practices and technologies. The experience gained on this programme will equip them well for future roles in advisory services, technical consultancy and education delivery. The experience and learning will be of value to Teagasc and the agriculture industry in advancing the specific knowledge required for modern and effective innovation support systems.

Programme:

1. Taught Modules
2. Action Research and Thesis

Phase 1: Taught Modules

In the first phase of this programme, students will register as MSc students in the School of Agriculture & Food Science at University College Dublin and spend the period September to December 2011 based at UCD undertaking a combination of practical and theoretical training on a range of topics relevant to their chosen study. Students will complete 3 to 5 modules (comprising 25 credits), two of which are mandatory:

- Research Methods
- Statistics

Other subjects appropriate to the study being pursued will be chosen by the student with the approval of their academic supervisor. Students will be examined in all modules undertaken.

Students will also participate in a series of workshops in the September - December 2011 period on Innovation Support Skills covering areas such as group facilitation, one-to-one support, use of social media and learning theory.

Phase 2: Action Research and Thesis

This phase of the programme begins January 2012 and ends June 2013 during which time the students will be based at a suitable Teagasc advisory office location and will be expected to assist advisory colleagues in the delivery of the local advisory programme while also completing their research work and thesis. While based in Teagasc facilities students can expect to allocate approximately 50% of their time to their studies.

Outline timetable

Sep. 2011 to Dec. 2011

Taught modules and workshops - UCD

Jan. 2012 to Jun. 2013

Action research, field work and thesis write up

Note: Students will be also expected to participate in innovation workshops in UCD between September 2012 and December 2012.

Proposed Research Topics for 2011-2012 Intake:

The intake of up to 10 postgraduate students in September 2011 on this Programme is limited to topics which deal with effective and efficient knowledge transfer / exchange and capacity building of front-line producers. The following is the list of topics from which the research projects undertaken by the students will be selected:

- (i.) Use of social media network / online discussion groups in advisory / education work.
- (ii.) Use of GIS / smart phone / video / photography to aid future advisory / education work.
- (iii.) Use of CRM techniques to improve service provision to farmers.
- (iv.) Improving uptake of profit monitor / financial tools by tillage farmers and advisers.
- (v.) Assessing the potential of drystock discussion groups as an effective extension tool.
- (vi.) Assessing potential for a grass budgeting service for drystock farms.
- (vii.) Assessing progress in inter farm contract rearing / trading services.
- (viii.) Identifying success factors for partnerships and share farming.
- (ix.) Assessing the role of distance learning and online / electronic based teaching in agricultural training.
- (x.) Assessing learning by agriculture students during practical learning periods.
- (xi.) Assessing the role of forest owner associations in effective knowledge transfer.
- (xii.) Assessment of best farming practices to maintain a soil nutrient status.
- (xiii.) Assessment of farm practices around the management of upland grazing areas.

The topics selected for research will be examined with a view to assessing how they contribute to agricultural extension and education work carried out by Teagasc.

Payment

The value of the Walsh Fellowship is €21,000 per annum out of which the recipient pays college fees. Students are paid monthly and are exempt from income tax. No PRSI or pension deductions are made. Travel expenses are paid at reduced rates. Subsistence, where eligible, is on the basis of vouched receipts only. Students participating in this Fellowship Programme will be paid for a maximum of 21 months.

Application Requirements and Form

Applications are invited from graduates with a minimum 2.2.Honours B.Agr.Sc. (or equivalent) degree. Applications from graduates with pass level degrees coupled with significant and appropriate work experience in the sector will also be considered.

Application Forms are available from Karen Holland by e-mailing: karen.holland@ucd.ie

The deadline for receipt of completed application forms is 5pm on Wednesday 20th July, 2011. Completed Application Forms should be submitted in electronic form to

karen.holland@ucd.ie *or* by post to:

Karen Holland, School of Agriculture, Food Science & Veterinary Medicine, School Office, Veterinary Science Centre, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4

Interviews

Interviews are planned to take place in mid August 2011. Where short listing is required, only applicants called for interview may to be contacted.

For further information on this programme contact:

Dr. Jim Kinsella, School of Agriculture & Food Science, UCD - jim.kinsella@ucd.ie

Dr. Tom Kelly, Teagasc – tom.kelly@teagasc.ie