



Agriculture

- BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture
- NPTC Level 2 Diploma in Agriculture
- NPTC Level 3 Diploma in Work-based Agriculture/Level 3 Apprenticeship in Agriculture
- NPTC Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Agriculture/Level 2 Apprenticeship in Agriculture
- Multi-Skilling Programme

The agriculture sector is one of the largest employers in Northern Ireland and produces a gross output of just under £1.5 billion each year. With the current challenges and opportunities facing the agricultural industry it is essential that those considering a career in this sector are capable of adapting to change and availing of market opportunities. Agriculture courses at Greenmount Campus are highly practical and business focused and aim to develop students' skills to enable them to work either on the home farm or to pursue a career in the agriculture sector.

Facilities

The Greenmount Campus Estate provides an outstanding natural resource and is used by students to undertake 'learning by doing' projects across all courses.

The Estate encompasses:

- The Farm Development Centre, a 152 hectare mixed lowland farm with 180 dairy cows and replacements, 200 ewes and 30 hectares of arable crops and potatoes.
- The Livestock Development Centres comprises of the Abbey Farm, a 90 hectare lowland unit with 50 suckler cows and 200 finishing cattle and the Hill Farm, a 1,000 hectare unit, with 110 suckler cows and 1,100 ewes.
- The Organic Unit, a 36 hectare lowland farm with 25 suckler cows, 75 ewes and 4 hectares of crops.



"...the practical skills I learned gave me a lot of experience, which I now use on my home farm."

Career profile: John McCabe

"There was very little of the National Diploma that I didn't find useful. In my first year the practical skills I learned gave me a lot of experience, which I now use on my home farm. In my final year I really enjoyed the farm visits that we went on each week. It was good to see around some of the best farms in the country, and talk to the farmers about how they are improving their farming techniques to increase profitability. During the second year of my course I completed a period of work placement, and at the Awards Day Ceremony went on to win the Hall Cup for work experience."

BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture (formerly known as the National Diploma in Agriculture)

The Extended Diploma is a three-year sandwich course, equivalent to three A Levels, designed to provide the knowledge and skills essential for a career in the land-based sector. The course combines practical skills on the college farms, classroom theory and one year of industry work experience.

Course content

Years 1 & 3 units include:

- Agricultural environment
- Animal health
- Beef, sheep and dairy production
- Business management
- Estate skills
- Grassland management
- Investigative project
- Land-based machinery operations
- Land-based workshop practice
- Livestock breeding and nutrition
- Options in dairy, beef and sheep, crop and organic production
- Pollution and waste control management
- Principles of land-based machinery
- Principles of plant and soil science
- Work-related experience in the land-based industries

During Year 2, students undertake a 52 week work placement and develop skills in commercial decision making, enterprise management and problem solving.

Entry requirements

Normally five GCSE subjects at Grade C or above, including Mathematics, English and a Science subject or equivalent qualifications are required. Applicants must also demonstrate that they have the equivalent of one year's relevant industry experience, which can be acquired prior to leaving school.

or

Level 2 Diploma in Agriculture at Merit level or above, or an equivalent qualification and normally Grade C in English and Mathematics or equivalent.

or

Applicants who can demonstrate significant relevant industry experience will also be considered. These applicants may be required to submit work-based evidence and undertake written assessments and/or practical competence tests as part of the assessment.

Fact file:

Course duration:

Three years full-time including one year work placement in Year 2.

Course location:

Greenmount Campus.

Contact details:

Head of Branch:

Dr Michael Mullan

Telephone:

028 9442 6660

Email:

michael.mullan@dardni.gov.uk

BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma

Progression opportunities and career destinations

This course provides students with an opportunity to progress onto the Foundation Degree in Agriculture and Rural Studies or the Honours Degree in Agricultural Technology. There is a wide range of employment opportunities for graduates. These include supervisory posts in the feed, agrochemical and fertiliser sectors as well as herd and farm management roles.



Student profile:
Aaron Noble

"I have always enjoyed working on our suckler farm at home and decided to enrol on the Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture to gain a qualification in agriculture. The course, which was recommended to me by a past student, offers a good mix of learning in the classroom and practical work on the college farm. I have particularly enjoyed the visits arranged to other farms which have given me the opportunity to see how other farmers manage their business. It has also been great meeting new friends from all over Northern Ireland. I'm completing my work experience this year on a dairy farm in Omagh."



NPTC Level 2 Diploma in Agriculture (formerly known as the National Certificate in Agriculture)

This is a one year full-time course that covers a wide range of farm enterprises. It is ideal for those who want to work on a farm. Students will learn practical crop and livestock skills both on the college farms and in the classroom and also have the opportunity to undertake work experience one day per week.

Course content

The emphasis is on the application of skills and knowledge and over half of the course is practical. Students complete work experience one day per week for the duration of the course.

This course includes the following units:

- Environmental and land-based business
- Introduction to animal and plant husbandry
- Introduction to farm animal production
- Introduction to grass and forage crop production
- Introduction to the principles of land-based machinery
- Livestock skills
- Tractor driving
- Undertake work related experience in the land-based industries

Students who have not attained a Grade C or above in English and Mathematics at GCSE or equivalent qualifications, have to complete Essential Skills in Numeracy and Literacy.

Entry requirements

Normally three Grade Cs or four Grade Ds at GCSE or equivalent. Preference will be given to applicants with English or Mathematics at Grade C or above plus the equivalent of one year's relevant industry experience, which can be acquired prior to leaving school.

Progression opportunities and career destinations

This course provides students with an opportunity to progress onto the NPTC Level 3 Apprenticeship or the BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture course. After completing this course the majority of students are normally employed in the day-to-day operations on the farm or have the skills to work in a variety of jobs in the feed, agrochemical and fertiliser sectors.

Fact file:

Course duration:

One year full-time.

Course location:

Greenmount Campus.

Contact details:

Head of Branch:

Dr Michael Mullan

Telephone:

028 9442 6660

Email:

michael.mullan@dardni.gov.uk

NPTC Level 2 Diploma



Graduate profile:
Catherine McKeown

"Living on a beef and sheep farm in Ballymena, I have always had a keen interest in working outside on the family farm. I really enjoyed studying on this course. I met a lot of new friends at Greenmount and there was always something to do. Within the course the best thing was getting outside and working on the farm learning new practical skills. I hope to progress onto the BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture next year."

NPTC Level 3 Diploma in Work-based Agriculture/Level 3 Apprenticeship in Agriculture

This course provides education and training to Level 3 and gives applicants the flexibility to combine work and education. The course reinforces production and management skills in a chosen livestock enterprise.

Course content

Students study one of the following livestock enterprises:

- Beef and sheep production
- Milk production

and cover nutrition, grassland management, housing, records, animal health, selecting stock and, if applicable, milking. There is also the opportunity to achieve additional awards.

Students who have not attained a Grade C or above in English, Mathematics or ICT at GCSE or an equivalent qualification, have to complete Essential Skills in Numeracy, Literacy and Information and Communication Technology.

Entry requirements:

NPTC Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Agriculture.

or

NPTC Level 2 Diploma in Agriculture or equivalent qualification.

or

Applicants who can demonstrate significant relevant industry experience will also be considered. These applicants may be required to submit work-based evidence and undertake written assessments and/or practical competence tests as part of the assessment.

Start earning now

As an apprentice you will be in paid employment with an employer from the beginning of the programme. The hours worked and the amount paid will be agreed with your employer before you start employment.

Progression opportunities and career destinations

This course provides students with an opportunity to progress onto the Foundation Degree in Agriculture and Rural Studies. On completion of the course students will have the necessary skills to work in a variety of businesses connected with farming and practical agriculture jobs.

Fact file:

Course duration:

78 weeks day-release, including work experience.

Course locations:

Greenmount Campus and Enniskillen Campus.

Contact details:

Course Manager:

Kenneth Johnston

Telephone:

028 9442 6769

Email:

kenneth.johnston@dardni.gov.uk

NPTC Level 3 Diploma/Level 3 Apprenticeship



Graduate profile:
Samuel Johnston

"I come from an engineering background and wanted to gain more knowledge and experience working with livestock since I have built up my own suckler herd over the last couple of years. The course has helped develop my knowledge on a wide range of topics and I gained practical skills. I learned a lot from visits to different farms and I really enjoyed the study tour to Scotland. The course was flexible. I took some time out during my studies and I spent six months working on a large farm in Australia."



NPTC Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Agriculture/Level 2 Apprenticeship in Agriculture

This course places an emphasis on practical skills associated with livestock production, grassland husbandry and machinery. Students attend class one day per week with the other four days being spent on the work experience provider's farm. Students may also be required to attend block release classes at Greenmount Campus in the first year to complete additional training.

Fact file:

Course duration:

78 weeks day-release, including work experience.

Course location:

Greenmount Campus and outcentres.

Contact details:

Course Manager:

Kenneth Johnston

Telephone:

028 9442 6769

Email:

kenneth.johnston@dardni.gov.uk

Course content

Basic skills include:

- Animal health and welfare
- Animal selection and breeding
- Feeding livestock
- Keeping farm records
- Milking (optional)
- Routine treatments, for example, dosing, injecting
- Tractor operation

and two subsidiary subjects from:

- Emergency first aid
- Foundation module of pesticide application
- Manual handling
- Sheep shearing

Students who have not attained a Grade C or above in English and Mathematics at GCSE or equivalent qualifications, have to complete Essential Skills in Numeracy and Literacy.

Entry requirements

Normally two Grade Cs or three Grade Ds at GCSE or equivalent.

Preference will be given to applicants with English or Mathematics at Grade C or above plus the equivalent of one year's relevant industry experience, which can be acquired prior to leaving school.

Start earning now

As an apprentice you will be in paid employment with an employer from the beginning of the programme. The hours worked and the amount paid will be agreed with your employer before you start employment.

Progression opportunities and career destinations

This course provides students with an opportunity to progress onto the Level 3 Apprenticeship in the enterprise of their choice or onto the BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Agriculture to gain additional supervisory skills.



NPTC Level 2 Diploma/Level 2 Apprenticeship



Student profile:
Scott Thompson

"I live in Cross in Co. Londonderry where we farm 180 pure-bred now almost fully Pedigree registered cows. Whilst completing my Level 2 Work-based Diploma in Agriculture, I spent a number of weeks last summer in Australia working on farms gaining experience and learning different approaches to farming. The course equipped me really well for both the farm at home, and for the possibility of working abroad. I learned 'everyday skills' such as dehorning, injecting and calving skills on the programme along with the information on feeding and nutrition which I find particularly useful."

This programme aims to provide young people with the opportunity not only to gain a trade but also to train in agriculture. This means that they will have the necessary skills and knowledge to secure employment off the farm and to farm on a part-time basis.

Fact file:

Course duration:

59-78 weeks (depending on the main programme category).

Course location:

Greenmount Campus.

Contact details:

Course Manager:

Kenneth Johnston

Telephone:

028 9442 6769

Email:

kenneth.johnston@dardni.gov.uk

Course content

Students undertake two Level 2 courses, one in Livestock Production called a NPTC Diploma in Work-based Agriculture and the other in their chosen trade area, for example: joinery, plumbing, plastering, bricklaying or motor mechanics. Training in the trade area will normally be delivered through day-release and work experience, organised by another training organisation.

Agriculture course delivery

Students attend Greenmount Campus for six one-week blocks. Free accommodation and bus transport will be provided (subject to approval).

Skills undertaken include:

- Grassland
- Health and safety
- Livestock husbandry and nutrition
- Machinery skills and maintenance
- Record keeping

Entry requirements

NPTC Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Agriculture:

Normally two Grade Cs or three Grade Ds at GCSE plus the equivalent of one year's relevant industry experience which can be acquired prior to leaving school.

Work-based Diploma in the trade area:

Applicants must meet the entry requirements for 'ApprenticeshipNI' or 'Training for Success' set by the Training Organisation providing training in their trade area.

Progression opportunities and career destinations

This course provides students with an opportunity to progress onto a Level 3 Apprenticeship in their trade area or a Level 3 programme in Agriculture. Most trainees will be in work or will gain full-time employment in their chosen trade area and farm part-time.



Student profile:
Martin McKay

"Multi-Skilling has been very useful to me. I was always interested in studying engineering at college, but because I come from a farm, I had an interest in agriculture too. The Multi-Skilling programme allowed me to gain a qualification in both subjects at the same time! It was difficult balancing two courses of study and home commitments, but I really enjoyed working between both programmes. I learnt so much and it's definitely benefiting me on our farm."