



[Guide for Mentors: 2016/17](#)

Welcome to The Future Is Food team...

We are delighted to have you take part in this exciting Transition Year Unit which encourages students to gain a better understanding of the Irish artisan and speciality food sector, as well as the wider food industry. The aim is that students will gain valuable insights into managing a small food company, and a greater awareness of how their food is produced. The Unit also demonstrates that a career in the Irish food sector is open to all students with an interest in food and enterprise. Your role as Mentor could make the difference in setting young people on the road to a career in the Irish Food Industry.

Background

'The Future is Food' was developed by the TASTE Council in collaboration with Bord Bia. It was designed by educators and is recognised by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum & Assessment).

A core element of the Unit is that schools will be matched with a local food producer or food professional, who will act as a Mentor for the students. All of the skills, knowledge, and experience that you possess are an essential part of the students' overall learning, and we hope that both of you will be inspired by the process.

Project Options

Schools participating in 'The Future is Food' have the choice of two options of how to complete the Unit. These are known as Option A, which is practical, and Option B, which is research based. Here is a brief outline of how these Options differ:

- **Option A:** This is a **practical** module that requires students to develop, produce, market and sell an artisan or speciality food product. The role of the Mentor is to inspire, provide expertise and to support the students in creating their new product and bring it to market. **[This module requires food production and access to their school kitchen. Ideally schools will visit the Mentor on his/her premises].**



• **Option B:** This provides students with an experience of ‘a day in the life’ of a food producer or chef – using the Mentor’s own artisan or speciality products as examples. If the school is choosing this option, they will assist the Mentor with market research and product development from their own perspective (e.g. form a support group). **[This module is more paper-based and does not require food production or access to a kitchen, but may benefit from access to an ICT room. Ideally schools will visit the Mentor on his/her premises].**

Steps for being a Mentor

1. Based on the details you supplied at the time of registration, and wherever possible, you will be matched with a school in your preferred geographical location.
2. You will be provided, via email, with the details of your matched school, including the name, contact telephone number and email address of your class teacher. It is very important that you contact your class teacher as soon as possible to have a brief chat about the Unit, what you can offer the class, and to facilitate your first visit to school.
3. It is important to arrange a visit to the school as soon as possible, or as is suitable for both yourself and your school's timetable. We understand that both you and the school will be very busy, so you may not get through to one another straight away. As teachers are in their classrooms, they may not be available to take a call, and may not always get the messages you leave with a secretary. If the teacher does not answer or is unavailable, please try again. You can also try to send emails. Overall, it is important to be clear in your communication with one another. Be aware that it may take a bit of perseverance to get through to your teacher.
4. At this stage, schools may or may not have decided which Option they are going to do. Your specialism may inspire a particular direction and play a key part in which Option they choose. Once the school has chosen their Option, you should adapt to facilitate their project needs as required.
5. The first visit should take place at the agreed date, time and place. It is estimated that each visit should take between 40 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the school’s timetable. It is for yourself and the class teacher to decide how many visits you will make to/from the school, as is suitable to your own schedule. Some schools may not require as much contact as others, and there is no set formula for how this works. The first visit is intended to be introductory, however, so it is



advised that you speak to your teacher to compare schedules and to arrange how many visits you are both able to offer/facilitate. It is a good idea to arrange your next date, at the end of the first visit. Please be aware that all schools will have varying timetables, so you should speak to your teacher about this at the start of the year.

6. During your visits, the class will be interested in hearing more about you and your business. You might want to prepare something to present to them, and be ready for lots of questions! You might like to bring some samples of your produce for the students to try, or set up an interactive cooking lesson, where you can make a product together. This is all about providing a greater understanding about the innovative and dynamic things you do, getting interactive, and supporting the students through their projects.

Evaluation

At various stages of the school year, we will be in touch to gather some feedback on your 'The Future Is Food' experience. This is an opportunity for you to give suggestions on what worked well about the Unit, and what could potentially be improved going forward. This is vital for the long term success of 'The Future Is Food', so we really appreciate your opinions and would be grateful for your responses.

By this point, you will have spent the year engaging with the Unit and getting to know your allocated school. As such, you will be really well informed about 'The Future Is Food' and your role as a Mentor, so we would love to have you involved again come the next school year. If you have had a successful relationship with your class teacher and would like to keep working with your allocated school, you can contact the Mentor Office to indicate this.

Lessons Covered

The Unit has been split into 4 sections, which are outlined for you below. This will give you an idea of the work that the school will be completing. As a professional in the food industry, you will possess expertise in many of these areas, which will be of benefit to teachers and students alike. With this in mind, there are many ways that you can assist during your visits, so please speak to the teacher about how you can help.



Section One: This section will explore the basis of setting up a **mini company** and how to communicate effectively. It will provide students with an overview of how mini companies are run, introduce the concept of **teamwork** and explore how effective **communication** is linked to successful teamwork.

Section Two: This section will develop the students' awareness of **food sourcing**, and introduce students to the **TASTE Council of Ireland, Bord Bia** and the wider Irish food industry. It will also introduce Bord Bia's '**Origin Green**' initiative, explaining what it is, and how aspects of the initiative will form important links to their wider food projects. Crucially, it is aimed at exploring enterprise in the food industry, demonstrating to students how their own skills and hobbies could potentially evolve into an **artisan** food business or career in the food industry.

Section Three: This section is broken into two Options, A & B. As you have seen, Option A is about **creating** a food product, and Option B is about the **marketing, production or processes** of an existing product. If required, you may be able to help the teacher decide which Option to take, and should adapt to support the class based on their chosen Option.

Section Four: In this section, students will **reflect** on their learning outcomes over the course of their project. Students should be able to show a broad, balanced understanding of their project and **potential opportunities for development**, just as they would in the business world. Depending on which Option they chose, they may **evaluate** their sales event, or deliver a formal **presentation** to you on their findings.

Key Themes

During the course of the Unit, students will encounter three recurrent themes. These are the cornerstones of 'The Future Is Food', so it is essential that you familiarise yourself with them. You should discuss these themes with the students, and how they relate to your business or role specifically. You might want to think about how you can bring the themes to life through your visits. Promoting these aspects will inform the next generation on the benefits of buying sustainable, local produce, and help to develop their food conscience. These key themes are as follows:

Artisan - 'The Future is Food' allows students to examine the term "Artisan" and what it means in terms of the FSAI guideline for its use relating to all foods placed on the Irish market. This guideline is as follows:



The terms 'artisan' or 'artisanal' should only be used on foods or in advertising of foods that can legitimately claim to meet all of the following criteria:

1. The food is made in limited quantities by skilled craftspeople
2. The processing method is not fully mechanised and follows a traditional method
3. The food is made in a micro-enterprise at a single location
4. The characteristic ingredient(s) used in the food are grown or produced locally, where seasonally available and practical

If you are an artisan producer, this is something that you could think about examining with the students, raising important topics such as craftsmanship, contribution to local community and environment.

Entrepreneurship - 'The Future is Food' also educates students in the processes of designing, launching and running a food business. It allows students to demonstrate their entrepreneurial skills both theoretically and practically. If you are a food entrepreneur or businessperson, you could think about how to engage students in various aspects of your company and the importance of the Irish food industry to the local community, environment, and to the economy.

Food Sustainability - A sustainable food system is a collaborative network that integrates several components in order to enhance a community's environmental, economic and social well-being. As part of The Future is Food Unit, students will learn about sourcing raw materials, manufacturing processes, and social sustainability. They will also learn about the Origin Green programme, an initiative developed by Bord Bia. It is the first nationwide programme focusing on achieving a range of objectives across food sustainability.

If you have any further questions, you can contact 'The Future Is Food' Mentors Office on (01) 614 3607 or via email to helena.collinsebordbia.ie

Once again, we would like to thank you for your involvement with the project, and are excited to hear about all the wonderful things you will bring to 'The Future is Food'.

