



# **ASSESSMENT DEADLINES: COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION PROCEDURE IN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES (FULL-TIME PROVISION)**

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## 2. Definitions

### 2.1. Compassionate Consideration

Learners can apply for Compassionate Consideration to **defer** an assessment i.e. to be allowed to complete/submit the assessment activity on another occasion, if they feel that extenuating circumstances may have prevented or may prevent them from undertaking/completing a specific assessment activity. In such cases, supporting relevant evidence/documentation must accompany the application (see 2.3).

or

Learners can apply for Compassionate Consideration to **repeat** an assessment activity i.e. to be allowed to sit the assessment activity at an alternative sitting, if they feel that extenuating circumstances seriously impaired their performance. In such cases, supporting relevant evidence/documentation must accompany the application (see 2.3). The application is then processed and either granted or declined. Where the application has been declined, the original result of the assessment will apply. Learners have the right to appeal this decision (see Section 6).

### 2.2. Examples of extenuating circumstances (Compassionate Consideration)

Extenuating circumstances are situations or events which unexpectedly interfere with a learner's ability to complete or sit an element of assessment. Extenuating circumstances under which **may be considered** include, but are not limited to:

- recent physical injury or emotional trauma
- physical disability or chronic/disabling condition such as epilepsy, glandular fever, severe effects of pregnancy or other incapacitating illness of the learner
- recent bereavement of close family member or close friend
- personal injury certified by a medical practitioner
- domestic crisis
- certified mental health issue
- serious illness of a close family member
- serious illness of child or other family member for whom the learner is primary carer
- other extenuating circumstances

Examples of circumstances which are **unlikely to be considered** include, but are not limited to:

- typical symptoms associated with exam stress
- minor illnesses such as a common cold
- holidays
- IT and/or computer failure (excluding in an examination)
- English is not the first language of the learner

Any application in relation to compassionate consideration requires the learner to provide supporting relevant evidence/documentation (see 2.3) of the extenuating circumstances.

### 2.3. Supporting Relevant Evidence/Documentation

Supporting relevant evidence/documentation refers to:

- **A statement from a qualified professional practitioner.** Examples of statements from a qualified professional practitioner necessary for consideration of compassionate consideration include, but are not limited to:
    - Statement from medical practitioner (e.g. doctor, psychologist, etc.)
    - Statement from An Garda Síochána/legal professional
    - Statement from Provision Co-ordinator
      - In extenuating cases, the Provision Co-ordinator or Provision Manager may be aware of circumstances whereby the learner may be unable to obtain a statement from another qualified professional (e.g. due to financial constraints) and may complete a statement for the learner while maintaining confidentiality (see [Compassionate Consideration Statement from Provision](#)).
- or*
- **Other source (if requested), for example RIP.ie.**

All evidence must be on headed paper and must be legible, stamped and dated. All evidence must relate to the specific application for extenuating circumstances being made.

### **3. Principles of Assessment in Relation to Compassionate Consideration**

Quality assured assessment ensures that, in criterion referenced assessment, “learners are assessed, and the assessment judgment is made based on whether the learner has reached the required national standards of knowledge, skill and competence for the award” (QQI, Revised 2018, p.5). Central to quality assured assessment is the assumption that learners are assessed in a fair and consistent manner in line with the award standard. Quality assured assessment ensures adherence to the principles of assessment.

The following sets forth the principles of assessment which apply to this document: these principles are based on the QQI (Revised 2018) principles of assessment.

#### **3.1 Principles of Assessments**

##### **3.1.1 Validity**

Validity is a fundamental assessment principle ensuring that an assessment measures what it is designed to measure: the relevant standard of knowledge, skill or competence required for an award should be assessed.

Validity in assessment occurs when:

- Assessment is fit for purpose (i.e. a practical assessment assesses a practical skill)
- Learners can produce evidence which can be measured against the award standard
- Assessors can make accurate assessment decisions
- Assessment is accessible to all candidates who are potentially able to achieve it

##### **3.1.2 Reliability**

Reliability in assessment ensures that assessment measurement is accurate: the knowledge, skills and competence which the assessment measures should produce reliable and accurate results. Reliability in assessment ensures that results are consistent under similar conditions.

Reliability in assessment occurs when:

- The assessment is based on valid assessment techniques
- Assessment conditions are consistent
- Learner evidence is reliable
- Results are consistent over time across various assessors, contexts, conditions and learners

##### **3.1.3 Fair**

Fairness in assessment supports the validity and reliability principles and provides equal opportunity to all learners. Fairness in assessment ensures learners have access to appropriate resources/equipment in assessment; assessment design and implementation are fair to all learners; and policies and procedures exist to ensure fair assessment of learners.

### **3.1.4 Quality**

Quality in assessment ensures that all assessment processes are quality assured.

### **3.1.5 Transparency**

Transparency in assessment ensures that assessment policy and process provide clarity to all relevant stakeholders.

In order to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of learners, the following procedure should be followed in relation to compassionate consideration in extenuating circumstances. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Quality Assurance System overarches these principles and ensures learner achievement is assessed in a fair and consistent way in line with the national standards for the award.

In order to ensure fairness and consistency across all assessment activities, learners may apply for compassionate consideration in relation to their assessment. Such compassionate consideration could include, deferring an assessment activity or providing an extension to an assessment deadline and will only be granted in extenuating circumstances with supporting relevant evidence/documentation (see 2.3). In these circumstances, the learner must not be unfairly disadvantaged as a result of extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, the learner must not gain significant advantage when compared with other learners.

## 4. Compassionate Consideration Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1. The Provision Co-ordinator

The Provision Co-ordinator is required to ensure all Assessors are made aware of their roles in relation to planning, conducting and concluding assessment. In the request for compassionate consideration, the Provision Co-ordinator, or designated person, is responsible for the management of the application process.

### 4.2. The Assessor

The Assessor is required to inform learners of assessment deadlines in advance (Learner Handbook<sup>1</sup> notice boards, etc.). Where a learner misses an assessment deadline, the Assessor should **not** accept assessment evidence after that date and should inform the learner of the compassionate consideration process in which s/he can engage.

In the request for compassionate consideration, the Assessor is required to inform and meet<sup>2</sup> with the Provision Co-ordinator in order to process the learner application.

### 4.3. The Learner

The learner is required to keep up-to-date with relevant assessment deadlines and consequences for missing same (Learner Handbook<sup>1</sup> notice boards, etc.).

In the event of extenuating circumstances, the learner is required to complete the application for compassionate consideration using the guidelines in this document and the [Compassionate Consideration Application Form](#).

The learner is required to provide relevant supporting evidence/documentation (see 2.3) of the extenuating circumstances which they felt **may have prevented or may prevent him/her** from either:

- **completing** an assessment activity by the schedule date (Learner Record, Collection of Work, Project, Assignment or Skills Demonstration), or
- **attending** a practical assessment on the schedule date (Examination or Skills Demonstration)

or

**seriously impaired or may seriously impair his/her performance**) in:

- a practical assessment (Examination or Skills Demonstration).

This supporting evidence/documentation must be provided within a reasonable **defined** timeframe after the assessment deadline date of application, **within 2 days and no more than 2 weeks<sup>3</sup> after date of application**.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Learner Handbook* is currently under development

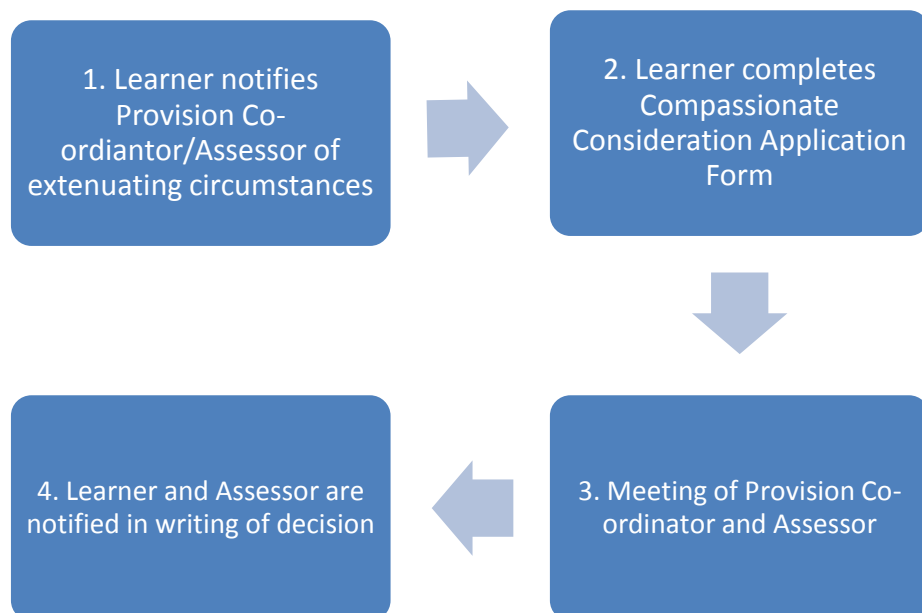
<sup>2</sup> In the case of Outreach or Distance Learning Provisions, the Assessor may be unable to meet with the Provision Co-ordinator and as such may communicate via phone and/or email.



## 5. Compassionate Consideration Procedure

Where a learner requires compassionate consideration in relation to an assessment deadline the process outlined in Figure 1 should be followed.

**Figure 1 Compassionate Consideration**



1. The learner notifies the Provision Co-ordinator/Assessor of the extenuating circumstances which they felt:
  - a) **may have prevented or may prevent him/her** from either:
    - **completing** an assessment activity by the schedule date (Learner Record, Collection of Work, Project, Assignment or Skills Demonstration), or
    - **attending** a practical assessment on the schedule date (Examination or Skills Demonstration)
  - or
  - b) **seriously impaired or may seriously impair his/her performance** in:
    - a practical assessment (Examination or Skills Demonstration).

The Assessor informs the learner of compassionate consideration procedure.

2. The learner completes the [Compassionate Consideration Application Form](#) and returns it to the Provision Co-ordinator within a reasonable **defined** timeframe **one (1) working day**<sup>4</sup>. This application **MUST** be accompanied with relevant supporting evidence/documentation (see 2.3) and must state the **extenuating circumstances** that occurred.

<sup>3</sup> In exceptional cases, the Provision Co-ordinator or Provision Manager may extend this date due to the specific circumstances which may prevent the learner from obtaining the relevant evidence/documentation within the allowed timeframe.

<sup>4</sup> In exceptional circumstances, the Provision Co-ordinator may extend this

3. A meeting between the Provision Co-ordinator and the Assessor is arranged to discuss the application and decide on the outcome.

The Provision Co-ordinator and Assessor must judge **each application for compassionate consideration** on its own merits.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, considerations include:

- Details of extenuating circumstances
  - Relevant supporting evidence/documentation
  - Nature of the assessment activity (Assignment, Project, Learner Record, Collection of Work, Skills Demonstration and Examination)
4. The learner and assessor are informed in writing (or other appropriate format) of the outcome of the meeting, (granted or declined) within a defined timeframe **one (1) working day**.

a) **Granted:**

- **Revised schedule for assessment activity:** If the decision is that the compassionate consideration application has been **granted**, a revised schedule for the assessment activity is agreed between the Assessor and the learner. Every attempt to facilitate this in the current assessment period will be made. However, due to time constraints, the nature of the assessment activity, and/or resources, this revised schedule may roll into a subsequent certification period.
- **Examinations:** Where a compassionate consideration application has been granted, in the event that the assessment activity is an examination, a new examination paper, marking scheme and set of outline solutions must be devised: the original examination paper will not be used.
- **Learner Evidence (Assignment, Project, Learner Record, Collection of Work and Skills Demonstration):** Where a compassionate consideration application has been granted, the learner evidence is accepted by the Provision Co-ordinator or Assessor and **should be marked and graded in accordance with the standards for the award**. The actual marks and grade awarded are determined solely on the basis of the evidence submitted in accordance with the standards for the award. **There is no mark/grade penalty under this procedure.**

b) **Declined:**

If the decision is that the compassionate consideration application has been **declined**, the following outcomes will apply:

- If the learner is submitting an Assignment, Learner Record, Collection of Work, Project or Skills Demonstration, then the Provision Co-ordinator or Assessor will refuse to accept the assessment evidence from the learner for marking/grading.
- If an application is for non-attendance at a practical assessment (Examination or Skills Demonstration) no new date will be offered.
- If an application refers to a learner's performance being impaired in a practical assessment the original result will stand.

The learner has the right to appeal (see Section 6).

## 6. Compassionate Consideration Appeals

The learner has the right to appeal the compassionate consideration application decision. Appeals must be made within a **defined** timeframe (**one (1) working day**) of the decision (in exceptional circumstances, the Provision Co-ordinator may extend this). All appeals must be made in writing using the [Compassionate Consideration Extension Appeals Application Form](#).

Assessment evidence must be submitted with the application form and retained by the Provision Co-ordinator until the completion of the appeals process.

All Appeals will be processed by the External Appeals Office located in the Quality Assurance Support Service Office.

**Decisions on appeals are final.**

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## References

QQI (2018 Revised) *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers*. Ireland: QQI. Available from: <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Quality%20Assuring%20Assessment%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Providers%20Revised%202013.pdf> [accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019].