



# ASSESSMENT DEADLINE EXTENSIONS: IN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PROCEDURE

Division	Further Education and Training
Policy Area	Quality Assurance: Assessment Policy
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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
1. List of Figures .....	3
2. Definitions.....	4
2.1. Assessment Deadlines.....	4
2.2. Missed Assessment Deadlines .....	4
2.3. Short-term Extension .....	4
2.4. Compassionate Consideration Extension.....	4
2.5. Extenuating Circumstances .....	4
2.6. Supporting Relevant Evidence/Documentation.....	5
<b>3. Principles of Assessment in Relation to Assessment Deadlines.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.6. Principles of Assessment.....	6
3.6.1. Validity .....	6
3.6.2. Reliability .....	6
3.6.3. Fairness .....	6
3.6.4. Quality.....	6
3.6.5. Transparency .....	7
<b>4. Assessment Deadlines Roles and Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1. The Provision Co-ordinator .....	8
4.2. The Assessor.....	8
4.3. The Learner .....	8
<b>5. “EXPECTED” Missed Assessment Deadline Process .....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1 Submission of Learner Assessment Evidence with a Specific Assessment Deadline (e.g. Project, Learner Record, Assignment or Collection of Work and Continuous Assessment) .....	9
5.2 Examination (Theory or Practical) or Skills Demonstration on a Specific Date.....	10
<b>6. “UNEXPECTED” Missed Assessment Deadlines Process. ....</b>	<b>10</b>
6.1. Submission of Learner Assessment Evidence with a Specific Assessment Deadline (e.g. Project, Learner Record, Assignment or Collection of Work and Continuous Assessment).....	11
6.2. Examination (Theory or Practical) or Skills Demonstration on a Specific Date .....	11
6.3. Application Process.....	11
<b>7. Appeals .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## 1. List of Figures

Figure 1 Expected Missed Assessment Deadlines Process .....	9
Figure 2 Unexpected Missed Assessment Deadlines Process.....	10
Figure 3 Assessment Extension Application Process .....	11

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1. Assessment Deadlines

Assessment deadlines are planned in advance of assessment and adhere to the assessment plan for the programme or module. Learners **must** be made aware of assessment deadlines including submission dates for assessment evidence and dates of practical assessments (e.g. Examination, Skills Demonstration, etc.) prior to, or as soon as is feasibly possible, in the programme or module (e.g. assessment plan, notice boards, etc.). These assessment deadlines should allow the learner adequate time in which to fully complete the assessment tasks.

### 2.2. Missed Assessment Deadlines

The term “missed assessment deadline” refers to:

- Failure to submit assessment evidence on or in advance of agreed assessment deadline, and/or
- Failure to attend an Examination or Skills Demonstration

Missed Assessment Deadlines can be categorised as “**Expected**” (see Section 5) or “**Unexpected**” (see Section 6).

### 2.3. Short-term Extension

The term “short-term extension” refers to a **defined timeframe**: an assessment deadline will be extended within this timeframe **1 – 5 working days**.

### 2.4. Compassionate Consideration Extension

The term “compassionate consideration extension” refers to an extension granted if the extenuating circumstances are expected to extend beyond a short-term extension. The timeframe for this is determined on a case by case basis by the Provision coordinator or designated person.

### 2.5. Extenuating Circumstances

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

- Personal illness (with medical certificate)
- Illness/care of child or dependent relative (with medical certificate)
- Extreme bad weather
- Bereavement
- Involvement in an accident
- Serious personal/emotional circumstances

## 2.6. 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 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 [Short-term Extension Statement from Provision](#))
- or**
- **Other source (if requested), for example RIP.ie.**

Relevant evidence/documentation from a qualified professional practitioner (e.g. medical practitioner) should support an application but will not guarantee an assessment extension.

All information provided in relation to extenuating circumstances will be treated in strictest confidence and in accordance with the principles of GDPR.

### **3. Principles of Assessment in Relation to Assessment Deadlines**

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.

#### **3.6. Principles of Assessment**

##### **3.6.1. 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

##### **3.6.2. 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

##### **3.6.3. Fairness**

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.

##### **3.6.4. Quality**

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

### **3.6.5. Transparency**

Transparency in assessment ensures that assessment policies and procedures provide clarity to all relevant stakeholders.

Assessment deadlines are dates that are planned in advance of assessment and should be adhered to. In order to ensure the fair and consistent assessment of learners, the following process should be followed in relation to the deadlines for submission of learner evidence. 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 be granted an extension to an assessment deadline under extenuating circumstances. 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. Assessment Deadlines Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1. The Provision Co-ordinator<sup>1</sup>

The Provision Co-ordinator must ensure that the Assessor and the learner are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to assessment deadlines (e.g. Learner Handbook<sup>2</sup>, notices, etc.).

In the event of a missed assessment deadline, the Provision Co-ordinator or designated person is responsible for the management of the application to extend the deadline.

### 4.2. The Assessor

Assessment deadlines are identified by the Assessor and communicated to learners in advance of assessment (notice boards, etc.) and included in the **02\_Module Outline template** (Quality Assurance (QA) requirement). Learners are expected to present assessment evidence on or in advance of the deadline identified by the Assessor unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Where a learner attempts to submit assessment evidence after a deadline, the Assessor **must not** accept the assessment evidence unless there are **proven** extenuating circumstances and either a Short-term Extension or Compassionate Consideration Application has been granted. Both Short-term Extension and Compassionate Consideration Applications must be processed by the Provision Co-ordinator or designated person.

### 4.3. The Learner<sup>3</sup>

Assessment deadlines are communicated to learners in advance of the assessment deadline (assessment plan, notice boards, VLE, etc.).

At the commencement of the programme all learners should make themselves familiar with their responsibilities in relation to assessment deadlines as per their programme requirements.

**Important:** The learner is responsible for the submission of assessment evidence for an assessment activity within the deadline specified (**on** or **in advance** of the deadline).

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of Consortium-led Apprenticeships, Provision Co-ordinator refers to the Programme Manager/Principal or designated person with responsibility for QA of assessments, e.g., TSO.

<sup>2</sup> The *Learner Handbook* is currently under development.

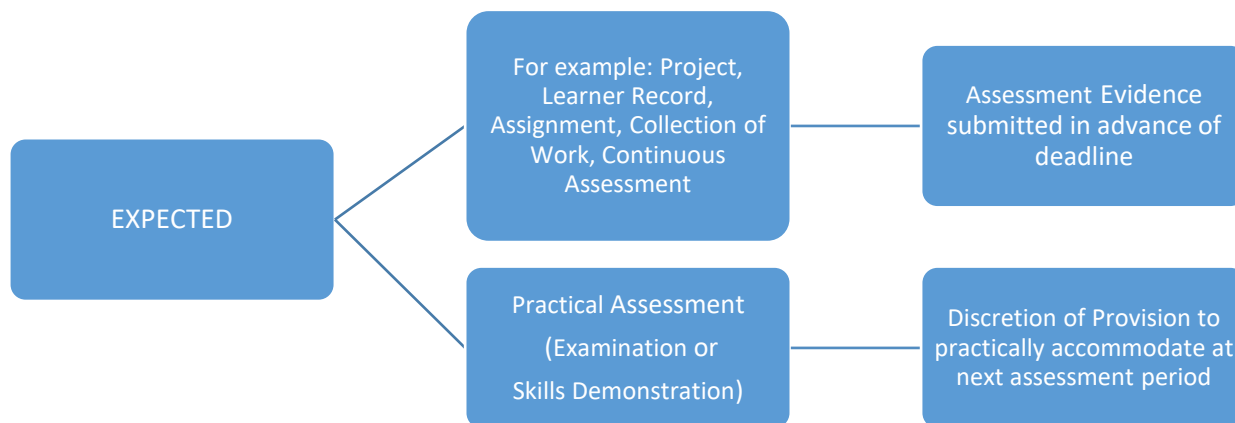
<sup>3</sup> In the case of Consortium-led Apprenticeships, learner refers to the apprentice.



## 5. “EXPECTED” Missed Assessment Deadline Process

Any **expected** missed assessment deadlines should follow the process outlined in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 Expected Missed Assessment Deadlines Process**



“**Expected**” missed assessment deadlines **include**, but are not limited to: holiday, court appearance, job interview, medical appointment, wedding, graduation, family event, pre-planned event, etc.

On occasion, prior to the commencement of the course or once the assessment dates have been distributed to learners, the learner may discover that there is a planned assessment deadline which they are unable to meet (for example, due to a clash of dates, where an appointment/arrangement had been made prior to the publication of an assessment deadline). The following process should be followed in relation to an expected missed assessment deadline or practical assessment (see Figure 1).

### 5.1 Submission of Learner Assessment Evidence with a Specific Assessment Deadline (e.g. Project, Learner Record, Assignment or Collection of Work and Continuous Assessment)

In the case of an expected missed assessment deadline, the learner is responsible for submitting assessment evidence (Project, Learner Record, Assignment or Collection of Work and Continuous Assessment) **in advance** of the assessment deadline.

However, if they are unable to submit evidence in advance due to extenuating circumstances the learner can apply for a:

- Short-term Extension (1-5 days)  
or
- Compassionate Consideration Extension (time required is more than 5 days – period of extension is decided by the Provision Co-ordinator on a case by case basis)

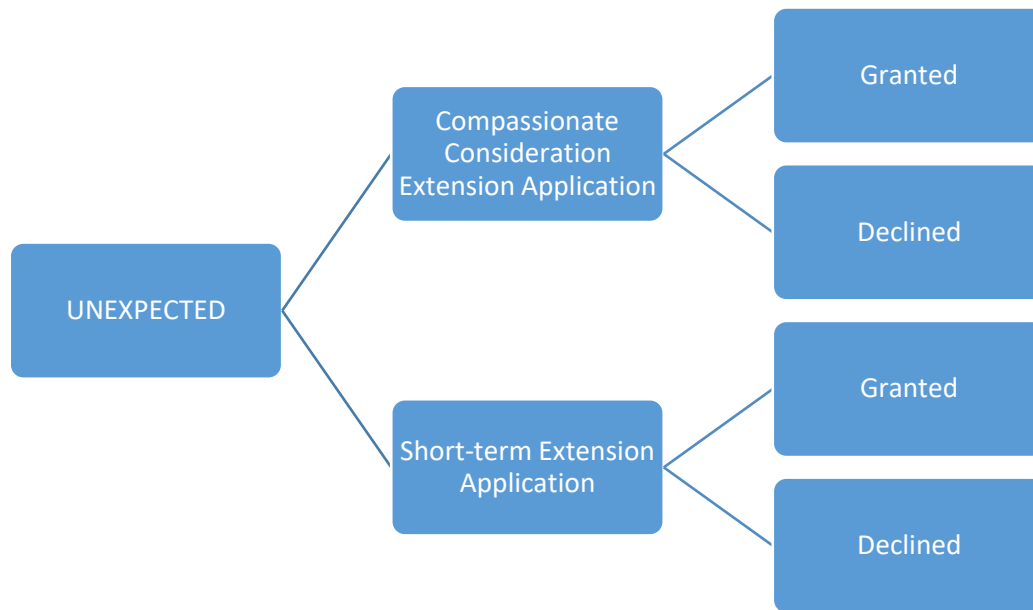
## 5.2 Examination (Theory or Practical) or Skills Demonstration on a Specific Date

In the case of an expected missed assessment on a specific date for an Examination or Skills Demonstration, it is at the discretion of the Provision as to whether they can practically accommodate the learner at an alternative sitting at the next assessment period<sup>4</sup>.

## 6. “UNEXPECTED” Missed Assessment Deadlines Process.

In the event that, due to unforeseen circumstances, a learner has missed/will miss an assessment deadline, the following process should be followed in relation to an unexpected missed assessment deadline or Examination (Theory or Practical) /Skills Demonstration (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2 Unexpected Missed Assessment Deadlines Process**



“**Unexpected**” missed assessment deadlines **include**, but are not limited to: illness (with medical certificate), involvement in an accident, etc. For further details relating to extenuating circumstances, see Section 2.5.

<sup>4</sup> For Consortium-led Apprenticeships, this will be determined by the Programme Schedule.

### 6.1. Submission of Learner Assessment Evidence with a Specific Assessment Deadline (e.g. Project, Learner Record, Assignment or Collection of Work and Continuous Assessment)

- Short-term Extension  
or
- Compassionate Consideration Extension using the application form.

### 6.2. Examination (Theory or Practical) or Skills Demonstration on a Specific Date

In the case of an unexpected missed assessment on a specific date, Examination or Skills Demonstration, it is at the discretion of the Provision as to whether they can practically accommodate the learner at an alternative sitting at the next assessment period<sup>5</sup>.

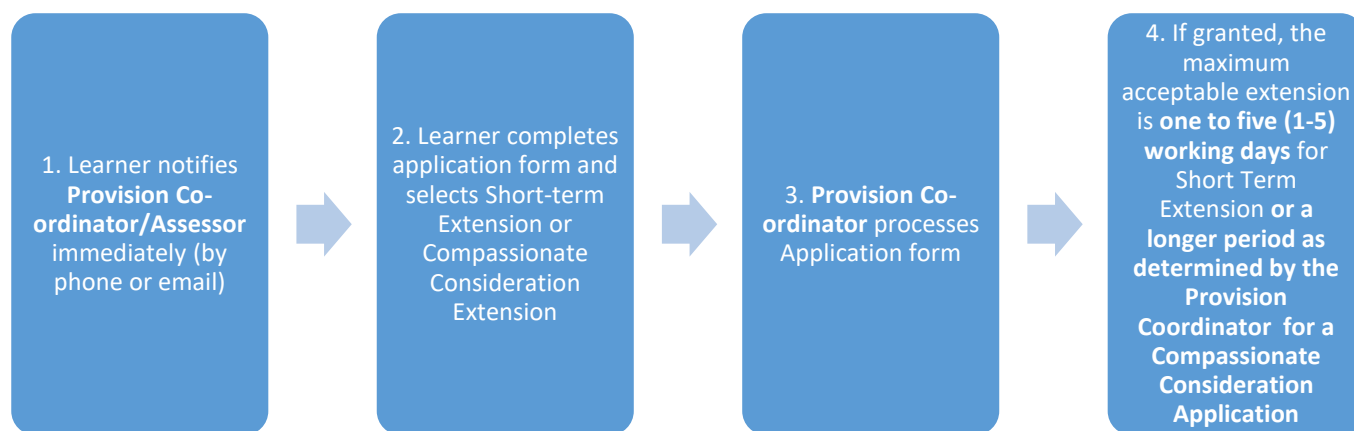
### 6.3. Application Process

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**Figure 3 Assessment Extension Application Process**

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Assessment Deadline Extension applications should follow the process outlined below.



In the event that a learner may be aware that they will miss an impending assessment deadline or has missed an assessment deadline, the following process must take place within a **defined timeframe maximum of two (2) working days**.

#### Process Steps:

#### 1. Learner notifies Provision Co-ordinator or designated person immediately (by phone or email)

In the event that a learner **may miss** an impending assessment deadline or **has missed** an assessment deadline, the learner must notify the Provision Co-ordinator or designated person immediately (by phone or email). The Provision Co-ordinator or designated person will give due consideration to the learner.

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<sup>5</sup> For Consortium-led Apprenticeships, this will be determined by the Programme Schedule

In **some** cases (where assessment evidence is required in hard copy), the learner **may** be eligible to submit the assessment evidence via email or other electronic method and subsequently submit the hard copy evidence (Assignment, Project, Collection of Work or Learner Record). If the Provision Co-ordinator and Assessor agree that the assessment evidence sent via email or other electronic method is acceptable, the learner does not need to proceed with the application for a Short-term Extension.

## 2. Learner completes Assessment Extension Application Form

The learner must complete an application form (with support as needed), selecting either “Short-term Extension” or “Compassionate Consideration”. Where relevant evidence/documentation is available, the learner must submit the evidence to the Provision Co-ordinator.

## 3. Provision Co-ordinator processes Application

The Provision Co-ordinator must complete the relevant part of the form and process the application based on the circumstances and evidence (if any). The Provision Co-ordinator must either grant or decline the application for an extension of assessment deadline. It is at the discretion of the Provision Co-ordinator to grant or refuse an extension. A learner can appeal the outcome (see Section 7).

## 4. Learner and assessor are informed in writing (or another appropriate format) of the outcome.

### a) **Granted:**

If **granted**, the maximum acceptable extension is as per the defined timeframe for short term and compassionate consideration application apply. See sections 2.3 and 2.4.

### **If an Assessment Extension is granted:**

Where the application is successful, the learner evidence is accepted by the Provision Co-ordinator/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**

In the case of unexpected non-attendance at an Examination (Theory or Practical) or a Skills Demonstration, it is at the discretion of the Provision as to whether the Provision can practically accommodate the learner at a re-sit within the next assessment period<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> In the case of Consortium-led Apprenticeships, re-sits must be scheduled promptly within the programme schedule – recommended timeframe, within two weeks of the issuing of results.

b) **Declined:**

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

- If the learner is submitting an Assignment, Learner Record, Collection of Work, Project then the Provision Co-ordinator or Assessor will refuse to accept the assessment evidence from the learner for marking/grading.
- If this declined application is for non-attendance at an Examination (Theory or Practical) or Skills Demonstration the following applies:
  - If the learner subsequently fails to attend this will be considered a missed first attempt as per the *Repeat of Assessment Procedure*. Results for the second and final assessment opportunity will be capped at 50%

## 7. Appeals

The learner has the right to appeal the assessment deadlines application decision. Appeals must be made within a defined timeframe (three (3) working days) of the decision. All appeals must be made in writing using the correct 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/sites/default/files/2021-10/quality-assuring-assessment-guidelines-for-providers-revised-2013.pdf>

[accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024].