

## **QA 6.7 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES PROCEDURE**



### **Purpose of Procedure**

In the interest of fair and consistent assessment of learning Cork ETB operates a strict deadline policy. However, from time to time there may be extenuating circumstance that impact on a learner ability to complete an assessment.

The purpose of this procedure is to outline how learners can apply to defer an assessment activity (i.e. complete the assessment on another occasion) in the case of temporary, exceptional circumstances that prevents them from undertaking a specific assessment activity at that time.

### **Scope of Procedure**

This procedure applies to all further education and training provision provided by Cork ETB colleges and centres or by organisation funded by Cork ETB to provide further education and training, whether accredited or unaccredited.

### **Responsibilities**

Coordinators<sup>1</sup> are responsible for:

- Making information regarding applying to defer assessments due to extenuating circumstances available to learners
- Managing the application process confidentially
- Making fair decisions based on the impact of the extenuating circumstances on the learners' ability to perform the assessment activity
- Informing the Principal/Centre Manager

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<sup>1</sup> The term Coordinator is used as a general term to indicate the person responsible for coordinating this course. This may be a designated course coordinator in some centres, a Training Centre Assistant Manager, Principal or Deputy Principal, Adult Literacy Organiser, Community Education Facilitator, BTEI Coordinator, Resource Worker, Director of Adult Education, a community partner organisation.

### Assessors are responsible for:

- Ensuring that learners are aware of this procedure
- Liaising with the coordinator with regard to making a decision regarding deferral.
- Marking deferred assessment against the award standard in the normal way, irrespective of the extenuating circumstances

### The learner is responsible for:

- The learner is required to keep up-to-date with relevant assessment deadlines and consequences for missing same
- Familiarising themselves with Cork ETB Assessment Procedures
- In cases of exceptional circumstances that prevent a learner from completing an assessment activity they should apply in writing to defer the assessment activity and provide the appropriate evidence to support their application.

## **Procedure Details**

### **6.7.1 What are Extenuating Circumstances?**

In relation to assessment, Extenuating Circumstances are exceptional conditions that temporarily prevent a learner from completing an assessment activity or that would seriously impair a learner's performance in an assessment. Extenuating circumstances must:

1. Be unexpected
2. Be beyond the learners' control
3. Have a significant impact on an assessment performance

These are some possible examples of extenuating circumstances:

- a physical injury or emotional trauma during a period four to six weeks previously
- a physical disability or chronic or disabling condition such as epilepsy, or other incapacitating illness of the learner
- recent bereavement of close family member or friend
- severe accident

- terminal illness of a close family member
- serious medical problems (either physical or mental)
- if you are a victim of serious crime
- transport difficulties such as an accident
- legal proceedings requiring your attendance
- other extenuating circumstances

The following are examples of what are **not** extenuating circumstances:

- Where a learner has a disability or a specific learning requirement this should be catered for under **QA 6.6 Reasonable Accommodation in assessment of learners with specific needs** unless there is a change in circumstances during the year, which could be classified as extenuating circumstances.
- Minor illnesses e.g. coughs, colds or being under the influence of substances
- Poor time management
- Examination nerves or self-diagnosed stress

### **6.7.2 Application Procedure**

When a learner wants to apply to defer an assessment activity due to extenuating circumstances, they should:

- notify their Assessor
- complete **6.7a – Application to defer an Assessment Activity due to Extenuating Circumstances** and
- submit their application to the course coordinator

In certain programmes a learner may require support to complete this application. An application should be submitted no later than two weeks after the date of the assessment activity.<sup>2</sup> A learner can use one application to apply for deferrals in a number of assessments if the same circumstances applies to a number of assessments.

The application should be completed with a view to providing sufficient information for a Coordinator to make a fair decision and it must be supported

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<sup>2</sup> In exceptional cases, the Coordinator may extend this date due to the specific circumstances that may prevent the learner from obtaining the relevant evidence/documentation within the allowed timeframe.

with written evidence. A medical certificate must be attached to the application when applying because of ill-health.

Learners should be confident in the knowledge that CORK ETB staff will treat personal information in the strictest confidence and will not disclose information in any way beyond what is required to deal with a claim.

### **6.7.3 Decisions relating to assessment deferral due to extenuating circumstances**

Cork ETB aims to provide fair and consistent treatment of all learners. It is essential that CORK ETB academic standards are not undermined by any action or provision in relation to extenuating circumstances. The Coordinator needs to find a balance between ensuring that (a) the learner is not unfairly disadvantaged because of exceptional circumstances and (b) ensuring that the learner does not gain significant advantage when compared with other learners.

Coordinators should liaise with the relevant assessor regarding whether to grant or refuse a deferral due to extenuating circumstances. In deciding, the Coordinator should consider the severity of the circumstances and the nature of the assessment activity in making their decision, their decision must be based on the impact on the learner to complete an assessment, not the impact of the extenuating circumstances on the individual.

### **6.7.4 Follow on from Decision**

The Learner is informed in writing of the outcome of their application within two weeks. Where approval for a deferral of an assessment activity is not granted the assessment can be completed in the normal way, if the timeline permits, and any penalties for late submissions will apply.

When approval is granted the 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, and/or resources, this revised schedule may roll into a subsequent certification period.

In the case deferred examinations and skills demonstrations, a different examination paper and brief must be used.

Opportunities to defer an assessment activity are dependent on the nature of the activity and the practical and/or operational issues involved. It is acknowledged that there may be specific constraints on centres that prevent them from offering rescheduled assessment opportunities to learners.

The assessor should mark the assessment according to the normal criteria without making allowances for the extenuating circumstances of the learner.

Decisions can be appealed in writing to the Principal/Centre manager within one week of the learner being notified of the decision.

Where possible the centre should ensure that the learner is guided to pastoral care, counselling or support as appropriate.

### Document Details

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### 6.7.a – Application to defer assessment(s) due to Extenuating Circumstances



Please complete this form, if you wish to apply for a deferral of assessment(s) due to extenuating circumstances.

Please see your learner handbook for further information on this procedure.

Learner Name:			
Address:			
Telephone No:			
Email address:			
Centre/College			
Course			
Modules and codes			
Assessment Type(s):	Examination <input type="checkbox"/>	Project <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Skills Demonstration <input type="checkbox"/>	Learner Record <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Assignment <input type="checkbox"/>	Collection of Work <input type="checkbox"/>	
Assessment Title(s):		Due Date:	
Details of extenuating circumstance preventing assessment completion			
Please state the type of supporting evidence you are providing			
Learner Signature			
Date			

**6.7b – Cover note for deferral of Assessment(s) due to Extenuating Circumstances**

The following extension/deferral was granted to this learner based on the approval of their application based on extenuating circumstances in line with section 6.7 of Cork ETB Quality Assurance Policy.

Learner Name:		
Class/Code:		
Component(s)		
Assessment details:		
Applied for:	Extension <input type="checkbox"/>	Deferral <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of extension or deferral of assessment activity:		
Approved by:	Name:	Role:
Date:		