

## **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**

### **ASSESSMENT DEADLINES: COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION IN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

POLICY

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# 1 PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT IN RELATION TO COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION

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Assessment is underpinned by the **principles of assessment** including the *fair* principle (equal opportunity for all learners) and **consistent** principle (consistency in approach to assessment across ETBs, programmes and modules). As such, 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. The provider'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 2.2)**. 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.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

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### 2.1 COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION

The Programme Coordinator can enable learners who:

- **have been prevented from undertaking a specific assessment activity** because of extenuating circumstances, to apply to defer the assessment, i.e. to be allowed to complete the assessment activity on another occasion.

*or*

- **felt their performance has been seriously impaired** because of extenuating circumstances, to apply to repeat the assessment, i.e. to be allowed to sit the assessment activity on at an alternative sitting. In extenuating circumstances, a learner may feel that his/her performance has been seriously impaired and may apply for compassionate consideration due to extenuating circumstances. In such cases, supporting relevant evidence/documentation must accompany the application (see 2.2). 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 5).

### 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 conserved 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 Programme Coordinator or Centre Manager (in extenuating cases, the Programme Coordinator or Centre 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 (Appendix 1)

**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**

*or*

- **RIP.ie or other source (if requested)**

### 3 PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT IN RELATION TO ASSESSMENT DEADLINES: COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION IN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

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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, 2013 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 (2013) principles for assessment.

#### 3.1 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

### 3.2 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.

### 3.3 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.

### 3.4 QUALITY

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

### 3.5 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. The provider'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 Section 3.3). 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

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### 4.1 THE PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

- The Programme Coordinator is required to ensure all Learning Practitioners are made aware of their roles in relation to planning, conducting and concluding assessment. In the request for compassionate consideration, the Programme Coordinator or person formally designated by the Programme Coordinator, is responsible for the management of the application process.

### 4.2 THE LEARNING PRACTITIONER

- The Learning Practitioner is required to inform learners of assessment deadlines in advance (notice boards, etc.). Where a learner misses an assessment deadline, the Learning Practitioner 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 Learning Practitioner is required to inform and meet<sup>1</sup> with the Programme Coordinator or a person formally designated by the Programme Coordinator 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 (e.g. 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 appropriate application form (see Appendix 2).
- The learner is required to provide relevant supporting evidence/documentation (see 2.1) of the extenuating circumstances which they felt:

**may have prevented or may prevent him/her** from either:

- **completing** an assessment activity (Learner Record, Collection of Work, Project, Assignment or Skills Demonstration), or
- **missing** a practical assessment (Examination or Skills Demonstration)

*or*

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

- a practical assessment (Examination or Skills Demonstration).

This must be provided within a reasonable **defined** timeframe after the assessment deadline date of application (recommended timeframe: within 2 days<sup>2</sup> after date of application).

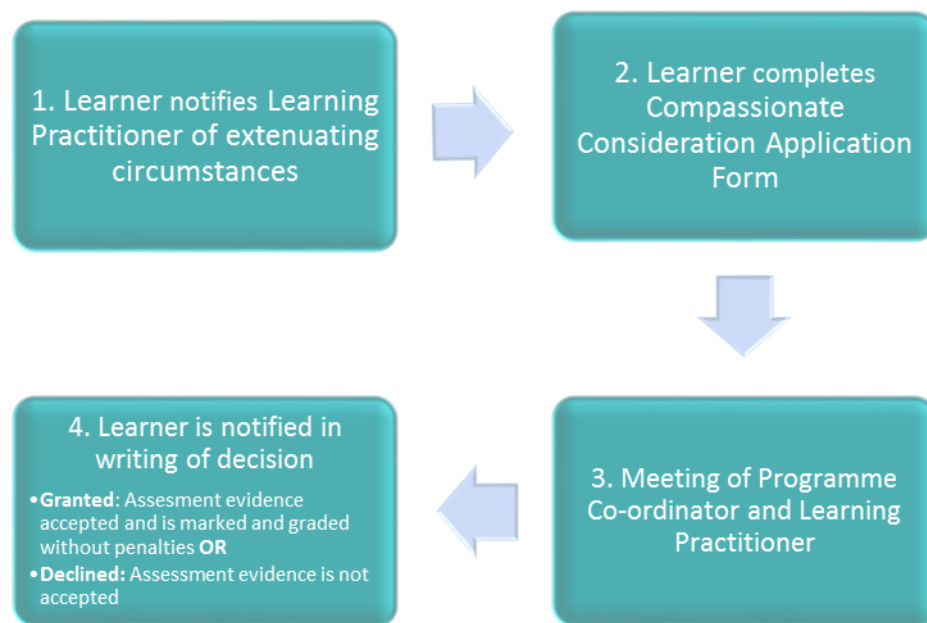
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<sup>1</sup> In the case of Outreach or Distance Learning Programmes, the Learning Practitioner may be unable to meet with the Programme Co-ordinator and as such may communicate via phone and/or email.

<sup>2</sup> In exceptional cases, the Programme Co-ordinator or Centre 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.

## 5 COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION PROCEDURE

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**Figure 1.1 Compassionate Consideration Procedure**

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

The Learning Practitioner informs the learner of Compassionate Consideration procedure.

2. The learner completes the **Compassionate Consideration Application Form** (see Appendix 2) and returns it to the Programme Coordinator or the person formally designated by the Programme Coordinator, within a reasonable

**defined** timeframe (recommended timeframe: within two (3) working days<sup>3</sup>).

This application **MUST** be accompanied with relevant supporting evidence/documentation (see 2.3) and must state the **extenuating circumstances** that occurred.

3. A meeting between the Programme Coordinator or the person formally designated by the Programme Coordinator and the Learning Practitioner is arranged to discuss the application and decide on the outcome.

The Programme Coordinator or the person formally designated by the Programme Coordinator and Learning Practitioner must judge each application for compassionate consideration or extenuating circumstances on its own merits.

In the event of extenuating circumstances, considerations include:

- Details of extenuating circumstances
- Severity of circumstances
- Application from learner
- Relevant supporting evidence/documentation
- Nature of the assessment activity (Assignment, Project, Learner Record, Collection of Work, Skills Demonstration and Examination)

4. The learner is informed in writing (or other appropriate format) of the outcome of the meeting, granted or declined within a **defined** timeframe (recommended timeframe: **within one (1) working day and not more than three (3) working days**).

**a) Granted:**

- If the decision is that the compassionate consideration application has been **granted**, the revised schedule for the assessment activity is agreed between the Learning Practitioner 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.
- **Examination:** Where the application is successful, in the event that the assessment activity is an examination, please note that a new examination paper, marking scheme

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<sup>3</sup> In exceptional circumstances, the Programme Coordinator or designated person may extend this

and set of outline solutions is devised. The original examination paper will not be re-used.

- **Learner Evidence (Assignment, Project, Learner Record, Collection of Work and Skills Demonstration):** Where the application is successful, the learner evidence is accepted by the Programme Coordinator/ Designated Person or Learning Practitioner 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 Programme Coordinator/ Designated Person or Learning Practitioner will refuse to accept the assessment evidence from the learner (Levels 4-6). The learner the right to appeal this (see Section 5).

## 6 COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION APPEALS

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The learner has the right to appeal the decision in relation to compassionate consideration application decision. Appeals must be made within a defined timeframe (within one (1) working day of the decision. In exceptional circumstances, the Programme Coordinator may extend this). All appeals must be made in writing using the Appeals Application Form (see Appendix 3). The Appeals process is processed in line with ETB appeals procedures.

## APPENDIX 1: STATEMENT FROM PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR OR CENTRE MANAGER

In some cases, the Programme Co-ordinator or Centre 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.

STATEMENT FROM PROGRAMME COORDINATOR/DESIGNATED PERSON Re APPLICATION FOR COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION	
<b>Programme Coordinator/specially designated person Name:</b>	
<b>Learner Name:</b>	
<b>Course/Programme:</b>	
<b>Module(s):</b>	
<b>Declaration:</b>	
I can confirm that there are confidential extenuating circumstances which pertain to this learner which have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ prevented him/her from undertaking a specific assessment activity <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>or</li> <li>○ seriously impaired his/her performance<sup>4</sup> <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

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<sup>4</sup> In extenuating circumstances, a learner may feel that their performance has been seriously impaired and may apply for compassionate consideration due to extenuating circumstances. In such cases, **relevant evidence/documentation** must support the application (see 2.1) and the application for same must be **granted**. Where the application has **not** been granted, the original result of the assessment will apply.

APPENDIX 2: COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION APPLICATION FORM

<b>COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION</b> in extenuating circumstances  <b>APPLICATION FORM</b>	
<b>Part A: This section must be completed by the Learner</b>	
<b>Centre Name:</b>	
<b>Learner Name:</b>	
<b>Learner Address:</b>	
<b>PPS Number (only necessary if requested for identification purposes):</b>	
<b>Course/Programme:</b>	
<b>Module(s):</b>	
<b>Tutor/Learning Practitioner:</b>	
<b>Types of Assessment:</b>	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"/>
<b>Assessment Due Date(s):</b>	
<b>Reasons for requiring the extension:</b>	
<b>Relevant supporting evidence/documentation included (see 2.)</b> <i>Relevant supporting evidence/documentation must be included in your application</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Details of supporting relevant evidence/documentation:</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

This application form must be submitted to the Programme Co-ordinator or designated person

<b>COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION</b> in extenuating circumstances	
<b>Part B: (Office Use) This section must be completed by the Programme Co-ordinator or specially designated person.</b>	
<b>Programme Co-ordinator/ Designate Person Name:</b>	
<b>Receipt date of application:</b>	
<b>Learning Practitioner Name(s):</b>	
<b>Date of meeting with Learning Practitioner(s):</b>	
<b>Application prior to or after the assessment activity/deadline:</b>	Prior to <input type="checkbox"/> After <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Criteria:</b>	<b>Details:</b>
▪ Details of extenuating circumstances	
▪ Severity of circumstances	
▪ Application from learner	
▪ Relevant supporting evidence/documentation	
▪ Nature of the assessment activity	
<b>Application:</b>	Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Declaration:</b>	
I can confirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A meeting with the Learning Practitioner to discuss the compassionate consideration application has taken place</li> <li>▪ There is sound evidence to grant or decline the application for compassionate consideration based on criteria above</li> <li>▪ If granted, the granting of compassionate consideration will not give the learner in question an unfair assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the assessment</li> <li>▪ I will inform the learner in writing of the decision regarding compassionate consideration</li> </ul>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	



**COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION**  
in extenuating circumstances

**Part C: This section must be completed by the Programme Co-ordinator/ Designated Person and returned to the Learner and a Copy given to the Learning Practitioner.**

*\*This section should accompany relevant assessment material when submitted.*

<b>Learner Name:</b>	
<b>Course Details:</b>	
<b>Date of Decision:</b>	
<b>Outcome:</b>	Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If granted, details of extended deadline etc.</b>	
<b>Any Additional Information</b>	

APPENDIX 3: APPEALS APPLICATION FORM

(ASSESSMENT DEADLINES: SHORT-TERM EXTENSION/COMPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION)

<b>APPEALS APPLICATION FORM</b> (Assessment Deadlines: Short-term Extension/Compassionate Consideration)	
<b>Part A: This section must be completed by the Learner</b>	
<b>Nature of Appeal:</b>	Compassionate Consideration <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment Deadline <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Centre Name:</b>	
<b>Learner Name:</b>	
<b>Date of Application:</b>	
<b>Reason for Appeal:</b>	
<b>Reason why decision was declined:</b>	
<b>Details of supporting evidence provided:</b>	
<b>Date of Application:</b>	

<b>Part B: (Office Use) This section must be completed by the relevant ETB Manager</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Receipt date of application:</b>	
<b>Application:</b>	I can confirm that a review of the application has been completed and that the Appeal is: Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reason:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	