

Case Study on CMETB's Response to Covid-19



CMETB's response to Covid-19 – QA, Teaching, Learning and Assessment Case Study Template

FET Centre/Service Name:	Quality Assurance Team, CMETB
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Centre/Service Background:	The Quality Assurance Department at CMETB is a relatively new team, established in 2017. It currently comprises of six members of staff with roles across management, compliance, Training Standards, Data Reporting, Research and Evaluation and co-ordination.

<p>Requirements (as a result of Covid-19):</p>	<p>Alternative Assessment is the term given to the assignments, demonstrations or online assignments used to replace traditional examinations or practical assessments during the COVID -19 emergency period. This approach to learner assessment was applied in CMETB centres and services when it became apparent that social distancing and COVID- 19 restrictions would prohibit the use of standard assessment methodologies.</p>
<p>Approach Taken:</p>	<p>To support and guide the application of Alternative Assessments instruments within its provision, CMETB developed a staged process to the introduction of these alternative assessments. In practice, a two-stage formal approval process was utilised to ensure good governance and quality application.</p> <p>Stage 1: In the first instance an audit was carried out by service of all provision and centres asked to identify which programme could be moved over to alternative assessment and those, due to their applied or regulatory nature that would need to be deferred. These lists were taken to the CMETB FET Management & Quality Council and those modules and programmes identified for alternative assessments were approved and progressed to stage two of the process. The attached Module Assessment Audit Template was the tracking tool devised for this purpose.</p> <p>Stage 2: At centre level, the Centre Manager worked with tutor to devise alternative assessments. This involved the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessors (teachers/tutors/instructors) were asked to consider alternative forms of assessment once sanction was given from the review of the audit documentation reviewed by the FET Management & Quality Council to proceed. 2. Assessors were required to devise assessment instruments which would assess the same learning outcomes as the examination. These were peer reviewed and stress tested for potential issues with assessment malpractice. 3. The assessor was then guided to complete Form 2, appendix 2, detailing the proposed change to assessment and how these met the learning outcomes

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Assessors were then asked to submit their assessment instruments (brief, marking scheme, etc.) along with Form 2 to their Head of Centre. 5. A summary of all assessment changes was documented by the Centre Manager and submitted to CMETB's FET Management & Quality Council for approval. The Centre Manager completed Form 1, appendix 2, and used this as the summary reporting instrument at the FET Management & Quality Council meeting. 6. The Academic integrity/cheating checks need to be in place where a switch was made from a controlled assessment, such as an examination, to a less controlled assessment, e.g. online submission of assignments, required additional resources and these were identified along with an undertaking from the Centre Manager that this extra resourcing would be in place. 7. Following a meeting of CMETB's FET Management & Quality Council, centres were advised of the assessments which had been approved or Centres were asked for further information in relation to applications made in order to achieve approval. 8. Centres were required to keep copies of all locally devised assessments and the corresponding mapping documents on file for the External Authentication process. <p>Once CMETBs FET Management & Quality Council were satisfied with their processes, these were published as part of a CMETB Business Contingency Plan. The document was shared with QQI and published on the CMETB website.</p>
<p>Results:</p>	<p>In practice, because lockdown occurred towards the end of the academic year the majority of alternative assessments were developed by converting end of year examinations into alternative assessments, peer reviewing them and approving them through the colleges/centres QA governance structures. This approach took place on programmes and courses where knowledge and/or skills could be displayed by the learner either through a written assessment or by demonstrating the skill, recording it and forwarding it to the assessor. Learners needed to have access to the requisite technology to complete alternative assessments and where this was not possible, or personal circumstances did not allow, learners were given the option to defer.</p>

	<p>While CMETB staff made every effort to accommodate learners, a small number on specialist programmes and courses with specific mandatory practical demonstrations were unable to complete all modules – example include Hairdressing and Childcare. It is the intention of CMETB that they will be facilitated to complete these modules when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted along with those students that have chosen to defer.</p> <p>To support the development of Alternative Assessment across all CMETB services, a Guide to Writing Alternative Assessments was published by Quality Assurance. Additional guidance documentation was also published in respect of alternative IV and EA processes where required. All of these initiatives were then reviewed as part of an analysis carried out on CMETB’s Covid-19 response. Feedback was gathered from tutors, staff and learners across services and this is now being used to inform future responses particularly in an Online/Blended context.</p> <p>To ensure the integrity and credibility of the awards the CDET COVID-19 Quality Assurance processes tracked the use of Alternative Assessments across services. The IV, EA and RAP processes all recorded and verified the correct application of Alternative Assessment to ensure the learning outcomes were met. Learners were also provided with the opportunity as is normal practice to lodge an appeal if they were dissatisfied with their result or process. Appeal numbers were in practice down on last year inferring general learner satisfaction with both processes and grades.</p> <p>To date, Alternative Assessments have primarily been used in PLCs and for learners working to progress from Youthreach for example but as CMETB emerges from lockdown, we will gradually complete all remaining assessments.</p>
Benefits:	<p>The maximum number of Learners practicable under the circumstances got their programmes completed.</p>

	<p>As per the EA reports, standards were maintained despite the rapid requirement to move to on-line assessments.</p> <p>Procedures were not compromised. Alternative methodologies were put in place where traditional processes could not be used.</p> <p>Being forced to move so suddenly to online assessment assisted learners and tutors in taking significant strides in engaging with online technology which is becoming a new norm for us all and the learning are being used to inform the CMETB Blended Learning Strategy and Operational Framework.</p>
<p>Lessons for teaching, learning and assessment:</p>	<p>The key lessons learned include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement for Contingency Planning for the need to go online – Blended Learning Frameworks and Virtual Weeks to acclimatise teachers and staff to working in an online environment. • Development of plans to assist with inclusion and access in an online context. • Broadening of Quality Assurance Policies and Processes to facilitate a wider Blended Learning teaching, learning and assessment environment.

Please complete this template in full and submit to michaeldonohoe@cmetb.ie before **Friday 21st August 2020**.