



cm etb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
an Chabháin agus Mhuineacháin
*Cavan and Monaghan
Education and Training Board*

CAVAN AND MONAGHAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD

**CMETB BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN
IN RESPONSE TO
COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

Document last updated 10/06/2020

CMETB FET Management & Quality Council

Interim Quality Assurance policy regarding the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) crisis.

1.0 Introduction

At CMETB, our top priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of all of our learners, tutors and administration staff.

During the COVID-19 crisis, staff of CMETB schools, colleges and centres will strive to continue the provision of services to learners within guidelines and as directed by decisions made by the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education and Skills, and the Health Service Executive.

CMETB recognises that this situation has given rise to the need for the rescheduling of programme delivery, online programme delivery and/or the deferral or changed method of assessment. In these circumstances, the Senior Management Team, are constantly reviewing and updating their contingency plans based on the most up-to-date information available. Contingency plans are currently operational until the 12th April and these will be extended beyond this period as required to ensure an appropriate response to learners.

2.0 Changes to programme delivery as affected by the Corona Virus

Assignments/Portfolios

Where reasonably practicable, class work will continue to be assigned to learners and guidance given by tutors remotely (post, telephone, online) to assist with continued learning in the home environment. This approach will endeavour to ensure that any learner who wishes to, and is in a position to engage, will, in so far as possible, not be materially disadvantaged.

In so far as is practicable, learners should continue with their assignments and portfolio work. If this is not possible, students should evoke CMETB's Compassionate Consideration Policy (Late Submissions Policy in the context of Cavan Institute). The policy should be applied where a learner's ability to participate in this form of assessment is compromised due to the following circumstances:

- Self-isolation on the advice of a medical practitioner (evidence of the practitioner's name may be sufficient where access to a GP's surgery/hospital is not possible/where testing is carried out by paramedics at the home)
- Caring for a relative affected by COVID 19 (evidence as above).
- Bereavement.

In these circumstances, provisions will be made for the learner to continue their studies and participate in rearranged assessment on their return.

Work based learning including work placement

As part of contingency planning, CMETB in conjunction with the other 15 ETBs across the country, is currently working with QQI through ETBI to examine a variety of ways to accommodate those learners who cannot fully complete a Work Experience or Work Practice component because of the sudden and enforced shut down of many work places. CMETB are currently waiting on confirmation of the principles for accommodating such learners to be agreed through this channel with QQI.

Due to the vocational focus of much of the CMETB programme offering and the associated importance of skills development, a cohort of learners may be materially delayed in completing their course. They are defined by QQI as groups such as *Healthcare Support, Early Childhood Care and Education who have separate individually mandatory components which require learners to be in an award relevant workplace where skills and appropriate to that workplace are attained and assessed*. These programmes circumstances will not be covered by the QQI measures to mitigate the impact of Covid-19, (QQI March 27th, 2020) *and so programmes leading to such awards cannot be completed without suitable practice placements*. (QQI, 27th March 2020).

Update March 2021 - Workplacements

Under *Measures to Mitigate Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Programmes Leading to QQI Awards V2*, published by QQI on 15th March 2021, temporary alternatives to placement for strongly vocational awards are now in place.

In the context of strongly vocational awards such as those referred to above, where practice placements are not feasible on account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and where practicable alternative arrangements for meeting the learning outcomes as outlined in the standards can be established by providers, these may be considered for approval by the QQI executive in consultation with key stakeholders and any regulators. CMETB have alternatives in place through this mechanism for reduced placement hours and or simulation. These will be advised to learners at centre level.

Specialist Facilities and Practical Assessments

Due to the closure of specialist facilities at FET Colleges and Training Centres, access to hairdressing and beauty therapy training rooms, engineering suites and IT Labs with specialist software including Sage and Solidworks, will mean these students may also be materially delayed in completing their programme of study.

The deferment of assessment events will be tracked at centre level, recorded in contingency plans and reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

Examinations

Due consideration will be given to the suitability of switching from controlled assessments to less controlled assessments. This would mean the use of alternative assessment which would allow identified learning outcomes, previously assigned to the examinable component of a given programme to switch to being assessed by an assignment or open book exam or an online exam. Such alternative assessment will be reviewed by CMETB's FET Management & Quality Council as outlined in section 3.

3.0 CMETB Business Contingency Planning Process

CMETB have adopted the following processes in order to deal with the challenges to assessment presented by these evolving circumstances.

In the first instance, CMETB have documented all identified risks associated with changes to assessment practices in developing its approach to contingency planning for assessment. The following process for developing a response was agreed having due regard for these risks:

1. All centres to make contact with students to ascertain their individual status with respect to health and wellbeing, access to technology and any other such circumstances that might impact on their ability to engage with remote working.
2. Students to be reassured that if they are unable to engage with their assessments, alternative arrangements will be put in place to assist them with completion at a future date.
3. All centres to complete an audit of their programmes to identify:
 - A. Programmes that require assessment for progression
 - B. Level of assessment that has already been undertaken and what assessment is outstanding
 - C. Programmes that require final stage assessment, leading to an award on the National Framework of Qualifications e.g. PLC and Youthreach. The latter will be prioritised.
4. Once programmes are prioritised, tutors will complete a form making recommendations for alternative assessments. The tutors must detail the same learning outcomes that will be assessed through the alternate means and have due regard to control in terms of academic integrity when making these suggestions
5. These proposed changes will be reviewed by the centre managers, peer reviewed and then brought to the FET Management and Quality Council for approval.
6. The principles underpinning alternative assessment decisions include:
 - a. Learning outcomes-based approach – attainment of explicitly defined learning outcomes as defined in section 9 of module descriptors.
 - b. Integrity of assessment – overseen by appropriate governance structures.

- c. Proportionality – arrangements reflect the significance and weighting of the assessment to the programme type and stage.
 - d. Supports for staff and students in the conducting of the assessment.
 - e. Public confidence and transparency maintained by adopting realistic and reliable alternative assessment methods and by transparently communicating these plans to all stakeholders especially learners.
7. For Youthreach programmes with a learner group that have additional needs and challenges, CMETB will seek to put in place alternative assessments in the first instance. Should delay be prolonged, it may evoke a Quality Assessment Summary (QAS) as devised by CDETb to bridge some marking in order to balance the grades of students between practices pieces which are complete and final pieces which are not.
 8. For programmes which have only recently commenced (e.g. part time BTEI and Evening Provision), CMETB recognises that it may not be possible to complete delivery online and assess alternatively. Therefore, these programmes will be suspended and resume following reopening of centres. Tutors will however maintain contact with learners during the closure period.
 9. There are some programmes delivered under contracted training, which may be completed online. CMETB will work with the contractor to ensure this is carried out in a manner that adheres to principles set out in point 6 above.

4.0 Relevant Policies

CMETB's Compassionate Consideration Policy (Late Submissions Policy in the context of Cavan Institute) should be circulated to all learners and staff. All should be informed of the procedure. The policy should be applied where a learner's ability to participate in assessment is compromised due to the following circumstances:

- Self-isolation on the advice of a medical practitioner (evidence of the practitioner's name may be sufficient where access to a GP's surgery/hospital is not possible/where testing is carried out by paramedics at the home)
- Caring for a relative affected by COVID 19 (evidence as above).
- Bereavement.

Provisions should be made for the learner to continue their studies and participate in rearranged assessment on their return.

5.0 Submitting learner results for certification

It is the intention of CMETB to submit learners for each certification period. Contingency plans will allow for managers at CMETB FET Colleges and Centres to access QBS remotely to manage the work relating to the verification of learners where required.

In the event that QQI add in additional certification periods as part of their response to COVID-19 and CMETB will communicate any changes at the earliest possible opportunity to learners via their centre teams.

In addition, staff will provide information and advice to those learners who intend progressing to Higher Education and whose applications to Higher Education Institutions may be affected by changes to the QQI certification timetable.

6.0 Additional Notes

- CMETB's focus is on maintaining standards and quality throughout the period of disruption. To this end, all existing Quality Assurance Policies and procedures must be observed as normal during this period.
- All regulations regarding GDPR, Assessment Malpractice and good practice should be applied as is currently the case, should a decision be taken to continue delivery online.
- The situation is very fluid. Updates will be circulated through the following channels:
 - CMETB Website
 - Service Websites
 - Emails to Learners
- As per statement issued by the Department of Education and skills, all staff and students are urged to practice social distancing and to minimise physical contact with

each other, to help avoid the spread of COVID 19. This should include minimising social contact, avoid meeting up and keeping physical space between persons

- Staff and learners should source all advice be it teaching and learning or health advice from authoritative sources – Centre manager, HSE or Department of Skills websites.

7.0 Updates

This is an evolving situation and unprecedented times for us all. Our focus will be on supporting each other as a community of teaching and learning practice as we charter a course for successful outcomes for everyone. CMETB will issue further updates to this document as the situation evolves.

First published - 30/03/2020

Updated – 15.03.2021

OEM Apprenticeship Update and Contingency Plan during Covid19

Date 22nd May 2020

During the COVID19 crisis, the Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) Apprenticeship management and tutors will strive to continue provision of services to learners within guidelines and as directed by decisions made by the Minister for Health, the Minister for Education and Skills, and the Health Service Executive.

OEM Apprentices completed their On the Job element of 1st Year and had returned to their workplace prior to the outbreak of Covid19. They are scheduled to complete 4 Work Task Assessments during their On the Job phase, Year 1. Successful completion of the Assessments and the Work Task Assessments is a requirement for progression within this programme to year/phase 2

Due to the Covid19 lock down some of the Apprentices lost a number of weeks of work experience this had an implication on the Work Task Assessment schedule. The Work task Assessment schedule was reviewed with the Apprentices, Mentors and Employers, a revised schedule was agreed, and the agreement was signed off at a CSG meeting on the 20th May 2020. When revising the schedule consideration was given to ensure that no undue pressure was placed on any stakeholder

This contingency plan (revised schedule) for Group 1 provides for:

- (a) No delay in moving into Stage 2
- (b) Allows programme to continue as 'normal' with respect to work based assessments albeit the time for completion has been reduced. This has been scheduled in consultation with employers. *(See attached schedule)*
- (c) Acknowledges that some apprentices have not missed as much time as others
- (d) Plans for the avoidance of interference with future group timetables.
- (e) Reinforces positive messaging to current and future employers
- (g) Does not penalise the learners
- (h) Ensures the integrity of the requirement that learners must pass year one to progress to year two – it is only the time available to complete assessments that is reduced.
- (i) Is in line with the national craft apprenticeships in relation to Covid-19 restrictions in so far as "the national restrictions will not affect apprentices' record of time-served, where relevant.

OEM management and tutors continue to remotely support the apprentices on a regular basis in support of these contingency arrangements. Planning is underway for year 2 currently. This is being worked through in consultation with the apprentices, employers and the mentors assigned to the apprentices and is being developed on a scenario basis with due regard to ongoing government and HSE advise. This Contingency Plan will be updated when these plans are finalised.

Approved by FET Management & Quality Assurance Council 10th June, 2020

