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Education and Training Board

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

# **Further Education and Training Services Reasonable Accommodations for Learners with Disabilities Policy**

CUMHACHTÚ TRÍ FHOGHLAIM AGUS  
DUL CHUN CINN DO CHÁCH

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH LEARNING  
AND PROGRESSION FOR ALL

[www.cmetb.ie](http://www.cmetb.ie)

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## 1 Context

Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board (CMETB) is committed to ensuring that learners with disabilities have as complete and equitable access to all facets of CMETB Further Education and Training (FET) Services life as can reasonably be provided. This is in accordance with the [Disability Act 2005](#) and the [Equal Status Acts 2000](#) (as amended). The Equal Status Act 2000 requires education and training establishments to provide reasonable accommodation to meet the needs of a learner who has a disability, which is detailed in Section 4: Discrimination on Ground of Disability.

In the context of teaching, learning and assessment, Reasonable Accommodation is the term for the adaptation of teaching, learning and assessment as necessary to cater for the needs of learners whose personal situation means that the teaching, learning and assessment would otherwise be unfair, for example, learners with a disability, or other learners whose individual circumstances are referred to in equality legislation.

The grounds include:

- learning difficulty.
- deaf or having a hearing impairment.
- blind or visually impaired.
- physical difficulty (including mental health or behavioural difficulties along with physical difficulties).
- any grounds covered by current legislation.

Please note that Reasonable Accommodation guidelines for other awarding bodies, for example Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), supersede guidelines in this document.

Reasonable Accommodation in teaching, learning and assessment will only be applied when a learner can demonstrate with appropriate evidence or documentation that, because of a specific need, the learner cannot participate on equal terms, under

standard learning or assessment conditions, with their peers.

Adaptations of teaching, learning and assessment for a learner may be implemented by CMETB FET Services without having to request permission from QQI. Other awarding bodies may have different requirements and, in such cases, CMETB FET Services must adhere to the specific awarding body guidelines.

The adaptations may include the following, or other reasonable adaptation:

- modified presentation of assignments/examination papers, for example, enlargements.
- scribes or readers.
- Sign Language interpreter.
- rest breaks.
- adaptive equipment or software.
- use of assistive technology.
- additional time for assessment.
- separate room or space for assessment.

The implementation of these adaptations will ensure that all learners can learn and be assessed on an equitable basis. Each CMETB FET Service is responsible for their implementation and any associated costs incurred.

## **2 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the provision of Reasonable Accommodations for learners with disabilities on a course with any of CMETB FET Services.

### **3 Benefits**

The policy explains how Reasonable Accommodations are granted and communicated to all relevant stakeholders. The policy demonstrates CMETB FET Services compliance with relevant national legislation and policies.

### **4 Scope**

This policy applies to all learners with disabilities on a course with any of CMETB FET Services. This includes all learners who are registered on a course with any of the following services for the duration of their course:

- Cavan Institute.
- Monaghan Institute.
- Youthreach (Cavan, Monaghan, Cootehill, Castleblayney, Kingscourt, and Carrickmacross).
- Training Services (including Tanagh Outdoor Education and Training Centre)
- Adult Education Services.
- Loughan House Open Prison.
- Supply Chain Logistics and Procurement Centre.

### **5 Principles**

CMETB FET Services will strive to create an environment where learners are comfortable in disclosing a disability and are provided with opportunities to do so at various stages throughout their time on their course.

CMETB FET Services endorses the principles of inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment.

CMETB FET Services will strive to ensure that its courses and programmes are as inclusive and as accessible as possible.

Learners with disabilities who are registered on a CMETB FET Services course will have access to appropriate academic Reasonable Accommodations or additional services as determined by a needs assessment carried out by a nominated staff member in the Service and in accordance with the individual's evidenced disability (see Section 9 Appropriate Evidence).

The learner, the academic staff, and Programme or Educational Needs Coordinators are key partners in the development and provision of Reasonable Accommodations, which enable the learner's participation in all teaching, learning, and assessment.

## **6 Definitions**

### **6.1 Disability:**

The legal definition of disability stipulated in the [Employment Equality Act 1998](#) and Equal Status Acts (2000) as amended, is as follows:

- “the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body,
- the presence in the body of organisms causing or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness,
- the malfunction, malformation, or disfigurement of a part of a person's body,
- a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
- a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions, or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour.

And shall be taken to include a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future, or which is imputed to a person.”

A disability is significant, long term or enduring in nature, lasting longer than a year.



## **6.2 Reasonable Accommodation:**

A Reasonable Accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to a disability or a significant ongoing illness.

As per The Equal Status Act 2000: “Discrimination includes a refusal or failure by the provider of a service to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities, if without such special treatment or facilities it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail himself or herself of the service.”

Factors influencing the determination of what is reasonable will include:

- the effectiveness of taking particular steps in enabling the learner to overcome the relevant disadvantage.
- whether the steps would significantly compromise the academic standards or professional practices associated with the course of study.
- health and safety issues.
- the effect on other learners.
- the financial and other costs to the institution.

For the purpose of this policy, Reasonable Accommodations are defined as an amendment or adjustment to the learner’s teaching, learning and assessment which enables them to participate fully in their education.

## **7 Policy**

CMETB FET Services welcomes applications from prospective learners with disabilities and is committed to making Reasonable Accommodations to enable learners to fully participate in learner life.

Learners with disabilities are encouraged to disclose their disability to the Programme Co-ordinator or the Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinators and all FET service staff are

facilitators in the process of advising and/or providing Reasonable Accommodations and can be viewed as a resource for both learners and the centre in the identification and implementation of Reasonable Accommodations in teaching, learning, and assessment.

Reasonable Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis through a needs assessment (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). This is carried out by a nominated staff member in the FET service. A needs assessment takes into account the nature of the disability, course requirements, and individual differences. The agreed Reasonable Accommodations are reported in the Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS).

The Reasonable Accommodations in question will be put in place unless a specific rationale is provided for not implementing it.

LENS reports can be reviewed and amended if, for example, circumstances change, or additional information is provided. The learner or academic staff member with permission from the learner can contact the Centre at any time to request a review or update the learner's LENS report.

This LENS report will be securely stored and accessible to the appropriate staff only, in line with the data protection legislation and CMETB data protection policies.

All CMETB FET staff will maintain appropriate confidentiality (as per Data Protection legislation and CMETB policies) of records and communication concerning learners with disabilities. Learner's personal data, including special category data will be disclosed to third parties in line with the CMETB Privacy Notice and Data Processing Policy which can be accessed on the CMETB website [Data Protection – Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board \(cmetb.ie\)](https://www.cmetb.ie/Data-Protection-Cavan-and-Monaghan-Education-and-Training-Board).

## **8 Responsibility**

The academic teaching, learning, and assessment responsibilities within this policy lie primarily with the relevant Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

Learners with disabilities have a responsibility to proactively disclose their disability to the Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator, provide the required disability evidence, and follow CMETB FET service's procedures if they wish to obtain Reasonable Accommodations in order to fully participate in the programme.

### **8.1 The Programme Co-ordinator or Educational Needs Co-ordinator**

The Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator must co-ordinate and assess the application for Reasonable Accommodation. The Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator must also inform the learner of the outcome of their application. If an application is successful, the Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator must work with the Learning Practitioner (and other relevant persons if required) to accommodate the learner while strictly adhering to the assessment principles and the standard of knowledge, skill and competence required for certification.

### **8.2 The Learning Practitioner (Teacher/Tutor/Instructor)**

Once an application for Reasonable Accommodation is approved, the Learning Practitioner (and other relevant persons) are required to plan and implement alternative or adapted teaching and assessment to accommodate the learner while strictly adhering to the assessment principles and to the standard of knowledge, skill and competence required for certification.

## **8.3 The Learner**

### **8.3.1 Specific Needs**

The learner is required to inform the centre by identifying themselves as a person with specific needs and requesting the provision of alternative assessments or other supports that best meet their needs prior to the commencement of the course or soon after. This will allow Reasonable Accommodation to be assessed and facilitated as far as possible. CMETB FET services will make every effort to provide Reasonable Accommodations depending on the duration of the course and the amount of notice given by the learner. The Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator will make arrangements for a needs assessment to be done.

### **8.3.2 Temporary Circumstances**

The learner is required to inform the centre by identifying themselves, as soon as possible, as a person requesting the provision of alternative or adapted assessments or other support that best meet their needs due to temporary circumstances (for example due to an injury of temporary nature). This will allow Reasonable Accommodation to be assessed and facilitated as far as reasonably possible. The Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator will make arrangements for a needs assessment to be done.

## **9 Appropriate Evidence**

The learner is required to submit relevant evidence or documentation related to their disability and needs. Examples of relevant evidence or documentation necessary for application for reasonable accommodation in assessment include but are not limited to:

- Consultant Medical report.
- Educational Psychologist Report (age appropriate for Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) funding).
- Occupational Therapist Report.

- Copy of letter issued by State Examinations Commission outlining accommodations granted.
- Letter from Special School, for example, Holy Family School, Cootehill.
- Letter from support service or other education provider such as National Learning Network (NLN) Cavan or Monaghan.
- Other reports for example,
  - WRAT (Wide Range Achievement Test) V.
  - WAIS (Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale) IV.
  - Woodcock-Johnson IV (WJIV).
  - Tests administered by the learner's previous school or education provider.
- Tests (for example, WRAT V or WJIV) administered by Educational Needs Co-ordinator or nominated staff member of CMETB FET services.

Examples of relevant evidence or documentation which by themselves do not qualify the individual learner for application for Reasonable Accommodation application include:

- English is not the first language of the learner.
- Literacy ability.
- Injuries or disabilities that do not have an impact on the learner's ability to demonstrate the required standard of knowledge skill and competence.
- Letter from a GP.

For the purposes of the Fund for Students with Disabilities, please refer to the Fund for Students with Disabilities Guidelines for Education and Training Boards (Version 1.0/2022).

## 10 Disclosure and Confidentiality

CMETB FET services encourages learners with disabilities to disclose information on their disability to the Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator before they apply for their course or at any point during their studies. Such disclosure is encouraged so that the centre can work with the learner to ensure that reasonable accommodations are identified and facilitated in consultation with the learner. An electronic record of the learner's contact with the centre is held securely in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts (1988-2018), and information provided to the centre is regarded as 'sensitive or special category personal data'.

The information may also be used for statistical and monitoring purposes without the learner's identity being revealed. Any documentation or information presented in disclosing a disability is held by the Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator, and specific medical or other documentation will not be disclosed to any third party except where necessary to provide Reasonable Accommodations.

Where a learner requests, and is granted any form of Reasonable Accommodation, such as extra time in exams, or permission to record lectures, the centre will, in consultation with the learner, disclose relevant information to the individuals in those centres or services responsible for providing or facilitating learners in accessing such accommodations. In such instances, only information relevant to the particular situation will be disclosed. Permission to share learner information with other relevant staff will be sought from the learner during Needs Assessment.

Further information on how CMETB FET service will process learner's personal data is outline in the Privacy Notices and Data Processing Policy which can be accessed on the CMETB website: [Data Protection – Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board \(cmetb.ie\)](https://cmetb.ie/Data-Protection-Cavan-and-Monaghan-Education-and-Training-Board).

## **11 Reasonable Accommodation**

### **11.1 Needs Assessment**

Based on appropriate evidence of a disability and information obtained from the learner on the impact of their disability and their academic course requirements, the Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator will identify supports designed to meet the learner's disability support needs. Reasonable Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the disability, course requirements, and individual differences.

The following areas are addressed:

#### **1. Course details and basic student information gathering**

- a. Name, Contact details and so forth.
- b. Review the documentation provided by the learner such as psychological or medical reports, and so forth.
- c. Review the course to identify demands on the learner and potential issues for example, anticipated workload, assessments, method of course delivery, location of course, physical environment, fieldwork or lab work, work placement.
- d. Risk assessments if required should be carried out in relation to point c. above. These may be short term or long-term risk assessments.

#### **2. The learner interview – identification of impact of disability and potential supports.**

- a. Previous support: arrangements made at post-primary school, if any.
- b. Current difficulties: difficulties the learner anticipates that they have or may have with their course requirements.
- c. Access to equipment and IT (Information Technology) facilities.
- d. Appropriate academic and disability support. These might include, for example, accessible class venues, in-course support, subject tuition, examination support arrangements, and extended library loans.
- e. What has worked well in the past. The learner is the expert.

### **3. Reporting**

- a. The Needs Assessment Report is written up and signed off by the nominated person and the learner (and parent or guardian if appropriate).
- b. Recommended accommodations should be specific and listed in order of priority.
- c. The Needs Assessment document is kept in a secure location by the Centre and is only accessible to relevant staff.

The Needs Assessment process also helps determine whether the learner is eligible for disability support through relevant disability funding such as the Fund for Students with Disabilities for specialist disability support, assistive technology, or transport.

#### **11.2 Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) Reports**

Following the needs assessment, the learner's Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator updates the Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) detailing the Reasonable Accommodations to be implemented for the learner. The LENS is held securely by the centre and is only accessible by the Programme Co-ordinator or Educational Needs Co-ordinator and appropriate staff. Only relevant learner information will be shared on the LENS. The learner can be given an individual Learning Educational Needs Summary document upon request.

#### **11.3 Professional Learning Educational Needs Summary (PLENS) Reports**

Learners with disabilities on professional courses, for example, courses with work placement, may require additional disability support on placement. Following the needs assessment, the learner's Course Co-ordinator may prepare an Individual Professional Learning Educational Needs Summary (PLENS) detailing the Reasonable Accommodations to be implemented. These Reasonable Accommodations are determined in consultation with the Placement Co-Ordinator.



The information outlined in the PLENS is communicated to the relevant academic staff.

#### **11.4 Review of Support**

Learners can contact the Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator for a review of their support at any time during their course if the impact of their disability changes or they do not feel the Reasonable Accommodations in place adequately address their needs. This process provides learners with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the quality of support received while attending their course. It also allows learners to request changes to their support provision where additional support is required or support is no longer necessary.

#### **11.5 Communication of Reasonable Accommodations to Centre Staff**

Following the needs assessment and the submission of appropriate evidence of a disability by the learner, the LENS report can be viewed by the relevant academic staff. Centres should ensure that the LENS is only shared with staff who are required to implement Reasonable Accommodations within the Centre.

#### **11.6 Dissemination of the LENS and ensuring Implementation of Reasonable Accommodations**

It is the responsibility of each Centre to have an effective dissemination and implementation system in place to allow for information on Reasonable Accommodations to be securely circulated to all relevant academic and administrative staff for example, those organising examinations and timetabling.

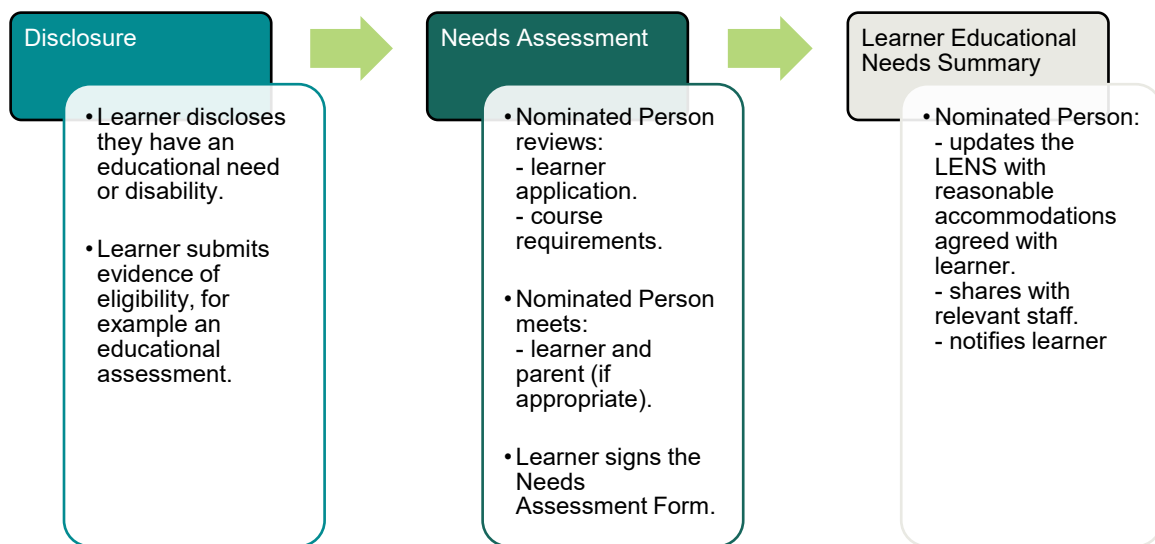


Figure 1 Reasonable Accommodation Process

## 12 Appeal of Reasonable Accommodation

If a learner has completed their needs assessment and are unhappy with reasonable accommodations offered in teaching and learning, they may appeal through the Learner Appeals Application form for Teaching and Learning (Appendix 5).

## 13 Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment

CMETB acknowledges that Reasonable Accommodation in assessment is a natural extension of Reasonable Accommodation in teaching and learning. All efforts will be made to provide continuity in accommodations that have already been approved.

CMETB also recognises a learner may disclose an additional need prior to their assessment. In this case, the provision of reasonable accommodation will adhere to the Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Policy.

This policy covers areas such as rest breaks, additional time, digital supports available, interpreters, and so on. For further information, please refer to the [Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Policy](#).

## **14 CMETB Access Officer**

Section 26 of the Disability Act 2005 requires each public body to nominate at least one member of staff to act as Access Officer to arrange for and co-ordinate the provision of assistance and guidance to people with disabilities in accessing its services.

Learners having difficulty in accessing CMETB services or programmes may seek the assistance of the CMETB Access Officer by phoning 047 30888 or emailing [AccessOfficer@cmetb.ie](mailto:AccessOfficer@cmetb.ie)

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## **Appendix 1: Guidelines for Staff providing Reasonable Accommodations in Teaching and Learning**

**Always be guided by [Universal Design principles](#) when designing coursework.**

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles and guidelines that aim to develop expert learners by using a variety of teaching methods in order to lower barriers to learning and give all learners equal opportunities to succeed. By applying the principles of UDL in our FET programmes, we build in flexibility that addresses learners' strengths and needs. (SOLAS ETBI and AHEAD, 2021)

### **General Points**

- Provide lecture notes, in a suitable format, in advance of the class. Providing notes or slides before lectures helps learners to focus and engage in class rather than becoming stressed and overwhelmed with notetaking. This may allow for more time to be spent listening and understanding, for example, mathematical equations in class when support is available.
- Give clear and explicit instructions on what is expected of them for assignments and assessments, possibly providing an example of good work.
- Highlight the main point of a lecture.
- Provide information in more than one way (for example, visual, and verbal explanations and so on.).
- Provide reading lists in advance and assistance with prioritising readings for learners who require additional time to go through the content. Producing a prioritised, annotated reading list can help learners to focus on the most important readings.
- Avoid the sole use of written tutorial or lab work as some learners with dyspraxia / Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) may only be able to write using a computer. Preferably, allow all learners to submit tutorial worksheets through a Word document. Provide simple instructions on how to submit work.
- Permit the learner to use assistive technology in the classroom.

- Consider the exam needs of the learner for assessment (for example, does the learner require a computer, assistive technology, or scribe?).
- Support the learner if they have difficulties meeting deadlines.
- Provide a clear timeline for the term (for example, when classes are, assignment deadlines and so on). Inform the learner about any changes to timetables as soon as possible.
- Give notice of changes in routines where possible (for example, change of class time or location, deadlines).
- Some learners may be uncomfortable with giving presentations in front of other learners. Offering to listen to the presentation privately or allowing the learner to complete an alternative assessment can be helpful.
- Group work can also be particularly difficult:
  - Guide all learners about how to effectively communicate within a group.
  - Give learners a template which allows them to complete all steps of the group work.
  - Spend some time with the groups to ensure they start in a structured manner.
- Design course material so that it is accessible or can be made available in an alternative format on request. Refer to the AHEAD website for [Creating Accessible Documents](#), which provides guidelines for Word, PDF, websites, and PowerPoint slides. Microsoft Word files can be easily manipulated by the learner into a format that suits them.
- Provide additional explanatory notes to mathematical equations and numeracy content so the learner can go over this after class (understanding the why and how).
- Read PowerPoint slides aloud and describe any diagrams or visual aids with data or numerical content attached.
- Always provide 'Alt text' for pictures, photographs, logos and so on in PowerPoint and Word documents.

- Provide the learner with an ISL interpreter or speed-text operator, with a glossary of terminology to help the learner understand the content. This allows the learner and ISL interpreter to decide on a sign for a term which does not have one.
- Provide the opportunity for learners to discuss draft assignments. This helps learners to meet deadlines and increase their confidence in their work.
- Offering breaks during longer classes or labs can help learners who are struggling with fatigue and concentration difficulties.
- Consider the needs of learners with physical disabilities when booking rooms and organising events (for example, is the building or room accessible?).
- Avoid the use of invasive lighting in the teaching environment and class content (flashing lights, bright lights) which may trigger a seizure. If doing so, please inform the learner in advance of the class/tutorial/practical.

The following documents can be referred to

- CMETB Further Education Services Disability Awareness Information for Staff Supporting Learners with Difficulties (Cavan and Monaghan ETB, 2023).
- AHEAD Teaching and Learning. Making Learning Accessible for Students in Further Education and Training (AHEAD, 2016).

## Appendix 2: Reasonable Accommodations in Assessment

### Individualisation

As a rule, an adaptation to the form of delivery, which makes learning possible, will also assist in making assessment possible. The learner is usually the best authority on what form of delivery is the most effective for them and the same method(s) may then be possible during any assessment. However, **it is important that the standard of work required by the assessment is not diminished. Only the method(s) by which the learner demonstrates their attainment of the standard can be adjusted.** Special assessment arrangements or adaptations are not intended to and should not reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment or compromise the standard.

### Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks either inside or outside the assessment area should be allowed as is appropriate. A rest break can be flexible according to individual needs, for example ten minutes every hour as opposed to one 20-minute period during a three-hour assessment. The time so used should not be deducted from the time allowed, where specified to complete the assessment. Rest breaks should not exceed 20-minutes per three-hour examination.

### Extra Time

In the case of assessments that are based on time, additional time of ten (10) minutes per hour, or part thereof, is allowed for:

- learners with a visual impairment.
- learners with specific learning difficulties or physical needs.
- learners where a scribe has been sanctioned.
- learners who meet the eligibility criteria for the use of a recording device or a word processor but who are unable to make use of these aids under examination condition.

In the case of apprenticeships, where assessment is based on time, additional time of up to 25% is the usual rule of thumb (SOLAS Further Education Authority, 2016).



Table 1 Additional time allocation for apprenticeship assessment

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Additional Time Allowed</b>
Practical – P1 13 hours plus 1 grade capped hour	3 hours and 15 minutes
Practical – P2 7 hours plus 1 grade capped hour	1 hour and 45 minutes
Practical – P3 6 hours plus 1 grade capped hour	1 hour and 30 minutes
Theory – T1 2 hours	30 minutes
Theory – T2 2 hours	30 minutes

## **Readers**

A reader is a person provided to assist a learner with a disability by reading assessment questions aloud without suggesting the answer. They, on request, will read to the learner:

1. The entire or any part of the assessment
2. Any part of the learner's answers (exactly, as they are 'spoken')

Readers are typically used by people with visual impairments, people who tire easily, people who have extreme muscle weakness and people with learning difficulties. Only one reader per learner is permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

Alternatively, if the learner would prefer to use a software package such as Read and Write, Gold, this can be facilitated.

## **Writers or Scribes**

A writer is a person who will, on request, write the answers exactly as given or dictated by a learner. They may also act as a reader and is often used in similar circumstances to a reader. As in the case of a reader, only one writer per learner is

permissible and the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

### **Sign Language Interpreters**

Sign Language Interpreters must be qualified to interpret Sign language. Only one Sign Language Interpreter per learner should be used. The assessment for learners (usually those who are Deaf or hard of hearing) should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel. Care should be taken to ascertain which sign language (Irish Sign Language or British Sign Language) the learner uses and a suitable person proficient in this sign language should be identified.

For extra transparency it may be necessary to videotape the assessment for translation later. Similarly, some learners may prefer to sign their answers directly to video. A signed response should be transcribed to print by someone proficient in sign language. Any words or phrases re-interpreted for the learner should be underlined and noted in the question paper.

### **Use of Bilingual Dictionaries**

As per the State Examination Commission guidelines, '[Use of Bilingual Dictionaries in the 2023 Certificate Examinations S01/23](#)', CMETB FET Services permits the use of bilingual translation dictionaries in examinations by learners whose first language is not English or Irish. Where the use of a bilingual dictionary has been approved by a centre, learners may use their own dictionaries provided these are free from additional personal notes or notation during the examinations. The bilingual dictionaries must be made available for inspection by the examination centre invigilator before the commencement of each examination session.

Subjects in which the use of dictionaries is not permitted:

1. The learner's first language, for example, a candidate whose first language is French will not be permitted to use the dictionary in the French examination.
2. English.
3. Irish.

## Dictionary Specification

Bilingual translation dictionaries between the learner's first language and English or Irish (that is, without explanation of terms or definition) are permitted.

Electronic bilingual dictionaries, translators, wordlists, or glossaries are not permitted.

## **Computers or Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

The use of computers by learners with a disability may be necessary as their primary means of communication, for example for learners with physical impairments for whom writing is difficult, for learners with visual impairments or blindness and for learners with learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

The definition of a 'computer' generally refers to hardware or software which facilitate effective communication for people for whom this may not otherwise be possible. It may be standard equipment, such as the use of word-processing software by someone with motor difficulties which impede handwriting or may be specially adapted, for example speech synthesisers and text enlargement software/hardware for people with visual impairments.

Where voice-activated software is used, the assessment should take place in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel. It is the responsibility of the assessment or training location to supply the appropriate hardware or software.

## **Audio-recording**

Audio-recording assessments and responses are useful in some cases, for example, visual impairment or motor difficulties. The centre should supply the assessment recording and a blank recording device to learners at the same time as other learners. However, to minimise disruption to learners, the person should either use headphones or complete their assessment in a separate room or area. Such provision may give rise to the need for extra assessment supervision personnel.

### **Braille, Braille-mate, Braille 'n speak, Braille 'n print, and so forth**

Braille is generally, though not extensively, used by learners who are blind or visually impaired. It is advised that the Braille machine is attached and adapted to a printer which will produce a printed text. The responses of the learner should not be printed until after the end of the assessment time, as the noise levels may be too high for other learners. The assessment or training location should supply the printer, braille paper or the computer print-out paper.

### **The use of CCTV (closed circuit television)**

This is a technological aid that magnifies print. It is usually used for learners with visual impairments. The learner can read the assessment paper as well as their answers from a TV screen. The learner uses the base under the screen to write and this is simultaneously magnified on the screen.

### **Enlarged Print to A3 size**

Some learners, usually those with visual impairments, may simply require their assessment papers in enlarged print, such as on A3 size paper.

### **Examination Papers in Colour**

Some learners, especially those who have dyslexia or visual impairments, may require their assessment paper in a colour other than black and white - for example, black on yellow, or black on grey. A gloss or high sheen coated paper may also be unsuitable. The learners themselves should be consulted.

### **Other Technologies**

The whole area of new technologies and access to information is rapidly changing. The opportunities for learners to demonstrate their abilities are increasing with the advent of assistive devices which with practice can type onto a computer screen a person's spoken word. Such technologies are also becoming more accessible in terms of general availability and price. Learners can also access 'Dictate' in MS Word or other reader software such as Read and Write, Gold. The learner will need adequate practice prior to the examination.

## Separate Room

Learners who have provided relevant documentation (see Section 9 Appropriate Evidence) for additional supports should be able to access a separate room from the examination hall / skills demonstration room should their condition require it to ensure that the learner is not disadvantaged.

Alternative venues should be fully accessible to learners with disabilities.

Table 2 Venue type as per learner requirements

Types of venues required	Who for and Set up
Low distraction venues	Learners with sensory processing difficulties and certain mental health needs or smaller venues with dividers to allow for low distraction.
Individual Venues	Individuals using specialist technology, using a scribe or with significant disability needs.
Computer Lab	All learners using a computer.

The physical space available should be appropriate for the effective provision of the reasonable accommodations, for example:

- A large table to accommodate enlarged papers, braille material, or technological aids.
- Adequate floor space for manoeuvring wheelchairs, mobility aids, crutches, canes, and any other physical aid.
- Access to power points for equipment or assistive technology

The following document can also be referred to.

- DAWN Principles, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities (Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN), 2019).

### **Appendix 3: Guidelines for Granting Reasonable Accommodations to Learners with a Disability who Have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty**

These guidelines have been informed by the criteria applied by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in Ireland and by the criteria applied by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in the UK.

These guidelines are intended to assist Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) but are equally applicable to FET when determining the examination accommodations that may be required by learners with a disability who have a reading, writing, or spelling difficulty. The need for a particular accommodation is determined through the needs assessment process, taking account of the learner's individual needs and the impact of the disability in an examination setting.

In a small number of complex cases, where the learning profile of the learner falls outside of these guidelines, there is more than one disability, or other mitigating circumstances that are deemed to constitute a significant barrier to performance – appropriate examination accommodations may be awarded based on the expertise, and at the discretion of, the Programme or Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

1. Learners with a disability who demonstrate a lower-than-average writing, reading, working memory or processing speeds (that is at or below a standard score of 89 / 23<sup>rd</sup> percentile) may require extra time in examinations.
2. Learners with a disability who demonstrate one or more of the following may require a computer in examinations:
  - a lower-than-average writing speed (below 15 words per minute (wpm))
  - a speed of processing at or below a standard score of 85 / 16<sup>th</sup> percentile
  - a level of legibility that would make the paper unreadable to an examiner

3. Learners with a disability who have a spelling attainment at or below a standard score of 70 / 2<sup>nd</sup> percentile may require the use of a scribe.
4. Learners with a disability whose reading speed, accuracy or comprehension is at or below a standard score of 85/ 16<sup>th</sup> percentile may require a reader in examinations.

## **Appendix 4: Guidelines for Examiners When Marking Scripts from Learners with a Disability Who Have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty**

The following is taken from the DAWN Principles, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examination to Students with Disabilities.

A learner with a disability who has a reading, writing, or spelling difficulty can be disadvantaged when assessment takes the form of a written, timed examination.

Learner's written work may contain:

1. Surface errors in spelling and grammar such as inaccuracies in the use of tense, grammatical agreement, plurals, spelling and punctuation.
2. Structural flaws including:
  - weak sequencing of ideas, paragraphs, and sentences;
  - unclear expression of cause and effect; and
  - lack of competence in using abstract language or lack of awareness of writing genre.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration when marking the examination script of a learner with a reading, writing, or spelling difficulty:

1. Read the script quickly to judge the learner's underlying understanding of the topic. Then, assess their performance against the learning outcomes. If the script contains all the required elements but does not introduce them in a clear logical order, avoid penalising the learner for a lack of structure in their writing unless this is a stipulated competency being assessed.
2. Errors in spelling do not necessarily mean that the learner is confused about the meaning of the word or its function in their writing. Generally, such errors do not lead to ambiguity and should not be penalised when subject knowledge is being assessed.



3. Lexical errors, such as “coarse” for “course,” do not mean that the learner is confused about the meaning of the words. This kind of error should not be penalised unless it leads to ambiguity.
4. Grammatical errors, for example, incorrect tense endings, lack of subject-verb agreement and incorrect word order may not affect the meaning of the sentence.

For example: “Some of the features of Socratic dialogues were they seek definitions of abstract ideas, cross examining beliefs to expose contradictions and he used to use questioning to bring the pupil to recognise the truth.” Here the learner’s meaning is clear, the errors do not lead to ambiguity and the learner should not be penalised.

5. Learners with difficulties in reading, writing, and spelling might not always use punctuation as a tool to clarify meaning. Scripts may contain long sentences that are difficult to follow with indiscriminate punctuation or no punctuation at all. Very short sentences or fragments of sentences might also be produced.

For example: “The study considered three main areas of research. The effects of frequent drug use the role of the family in the offenders behaviour and the impact of custodial sentences on reoffending.” In this case the learner’s meaning is clear, but errors in punctuation can lead to ambiguity which will be reflected in the mark awarded.

6. Some learners may have restricted vocabulary and use a far more limited range of words than one would expect. Avoid penalising learners who may have an immature style of writing unless written communication is a specified learning outcome.
7. Where grammar and spelling are core competencies of a course, a learner’s work must be marked based on accuracy in the language and therefore these marking guidelines will not apply.

8. In all subjects, if a learner's errors make a material difference to the meaning of their work, it will not be possible to classify them as surface errors that do not incur penalty. For instance, if a nursing learner writes hypertension instead of hypotension, this will affect the mark awarded.
9. In all subjects, if the surface errors or structural flaws make the learner's work so ambiguous that it is impossible to decipher the meaning, then this diminishes their ability to demonstrate the module's learning outcomes and this would be reflected in the marks awarded.

## Appendix 5: Learner Appeals Application Form for Reasonable Accommodation in Teaching and Learning

**Part A: To be completed by the learner and returned to the Programme Co-ordinator by a specified deadline.**

Centre Name:	
Programme Code/Title:	
Learner Name:	
Learner Address:	
Learner PLSS number:	[for example, XXXXXXL]

<b>Details of appeal application</b> (please provide full details of reasons for appeal):

Candidates wishing to appeal a process must complete this form and return to the Programme Co-ordinator [Insert name and address of centre here], on or before xx/xx/xx.

Appeals received after this date will not be processed.

Learner Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Programme Co-ordinator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Programme Co-ordinator's Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B: To be completed by the Independent Reasonable Accommodation Appeals Committee.**

Independent Appeals Committee Members:		
Details:		
Date received:		
Outcome of decision:	Successful / Unsuccessful	
Date:		
Decision Details:		
Independent Appeals Committee Signatures and Date:	Signature	Date

**The decision of the Independent Appeals Committee is final.**



**cmeth**

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