



Assessment Deadlines Policy:

Learner requests for extensions

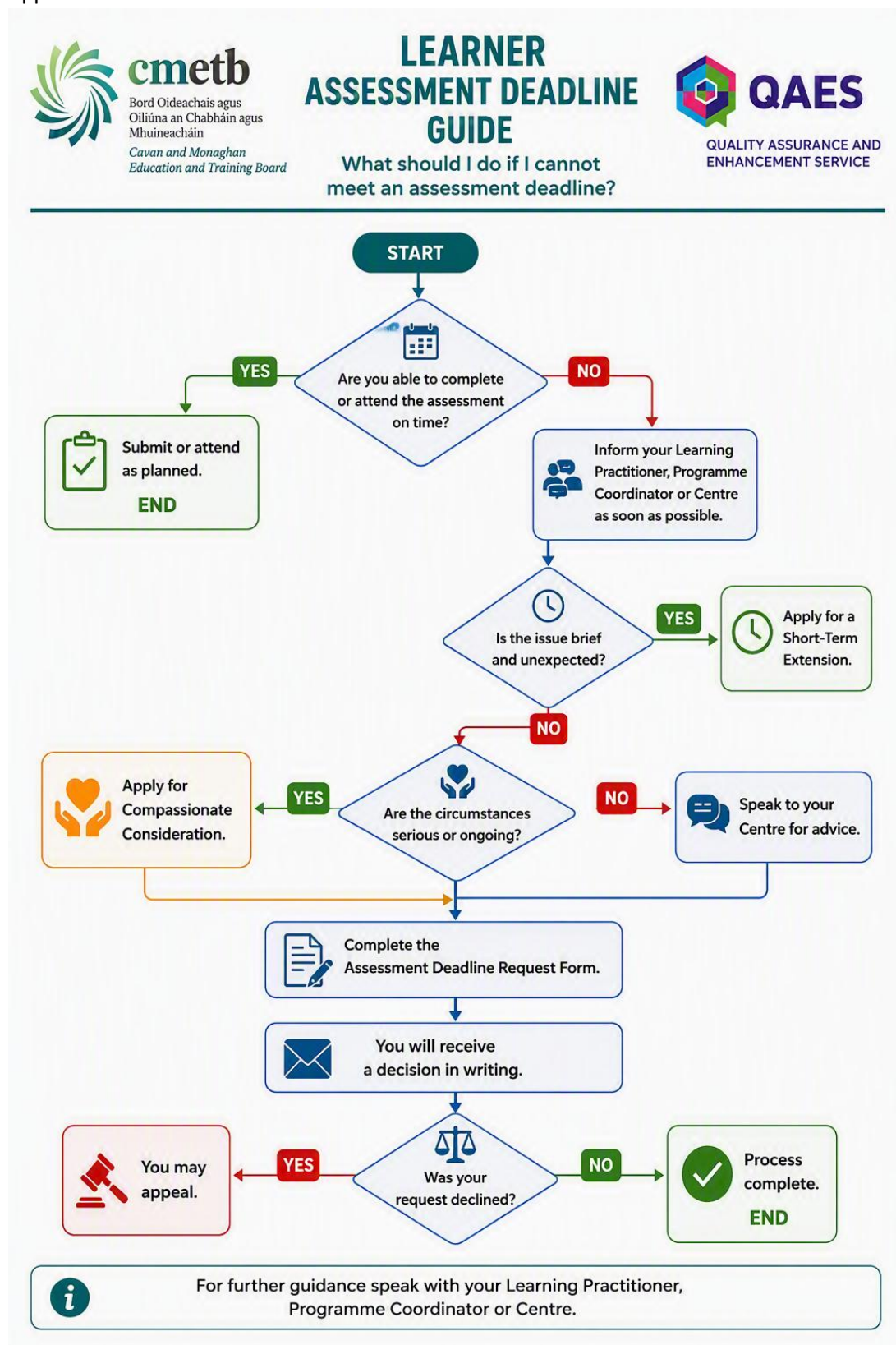
Version	Date	Developed reviewed by	Summary of Changes	Approved By	Ratification Date
1.0	2017	ETBI National Handbook	Original Policy basis	QA Working Group	2023
2.0	CMETB QA Working Group	22 September 2026	Amalgamated previous short-term extension and compassionate consideration policies	FET MGMT QC 06.10.2026	SMT 19.10.2026

Version 2 This policy is an amalgamation of the previous Compassionate Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances and Short-term extension to deadlines policies. The revision removes duplication, aligns procedures, clarifies responsibilities, and establishes a single source of guidance for learners and staff. Previous standalone policies are withdrawn and superseded by this document.

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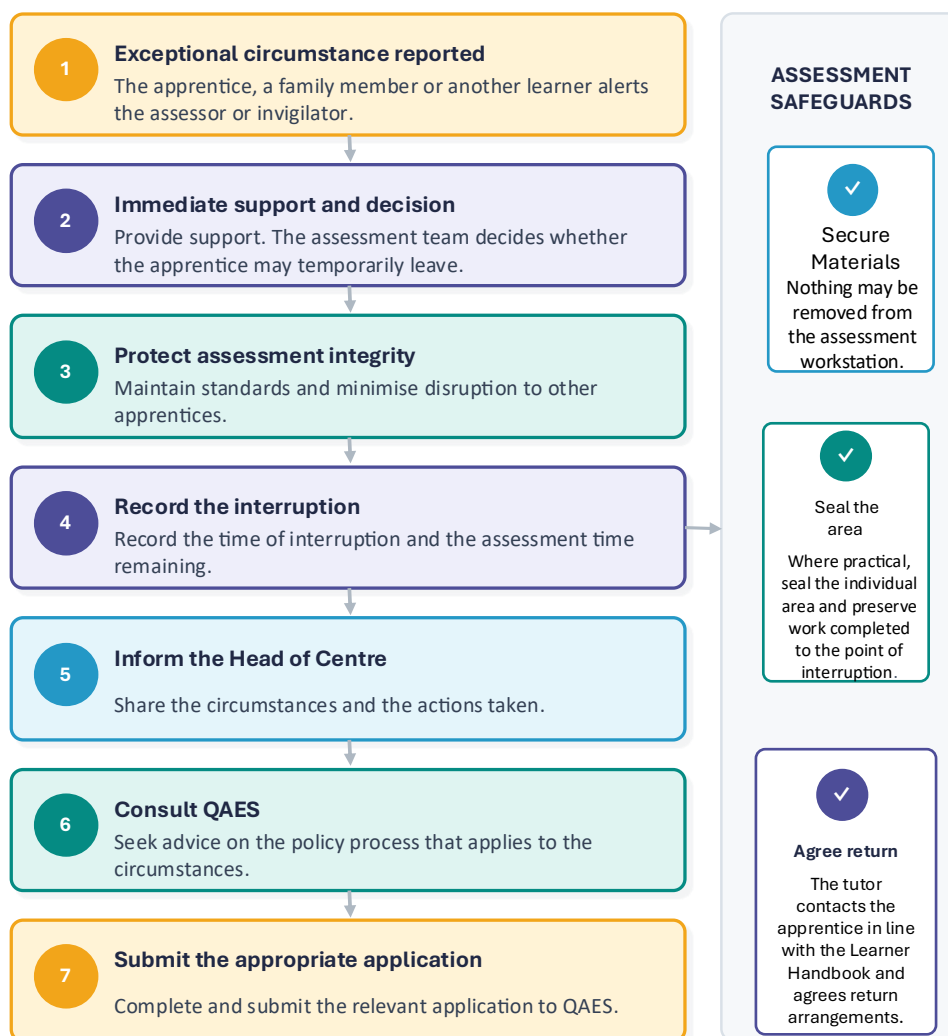


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GUIDANCE ON INTERRUPTION TO APPRENTICE PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

A clear response pathway for fair, safe and consistent assessment practice



Key principle: learner wellbeing and assessment integrity must be considered together.

CMETB Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service

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1. Assessment Submissions

1.1 Purpose

This policy has been written to provide clear guidelines for staff and learners on assessment deadlines. This policy amalgamates and replaces CMETB's previous policies on short-term extensions to assessment deadlines and compassionate consideration in extenuating circumstances. It provides one consistent framework for managing assessment deadline requests across CMETB FET provision.

This policy sets out the responsibilities around assessment deadlines, the value of clear communication and what to do when unexpected issues arise that may impact meeting these deadlines. The policy ensures that academic standards can be maintained while supporting learners who encounter expected or unexpected circumstances.

The policy aims to highlight the importance of maintaining quality assurance throughout the assessment journey. All relevant evidence, forms, and records of decisions must be retained, irrespective of the assessment submission context. Assessment briefs, marking and greater decision making should be clear and consistently applied and documented. The CMETB Results Approval Panel (RAP) will allow for discussion of any special circumstances and compliance with policy.

1.2 Scope

The direction given in this policy is for all CMETB FET programmes unless otherwise stated. The guidelines therefore impact both staff and learners teaching or studying QQI programmes. The policy details procedure in relation to continuous assessment; the submission (either digitally or in person) of

- projects
- assignments
- reports
- presentations
- skills demonstrations
- portfolios

Apprenticeship programmes run at CMETB follow the guidelines set out by SOLAS in the SOLAS Craft Apprenticeship Assessment Rules¹ and Quality Manual. Only if a solution cannot be found through the SOLAS documentation, should the CMETB policies be applied. Consortium led programmes will also be subject to the policy where CMETB is the lead provider.

1.3 Principles of Assessment in Relation to Assessment Deadlines

Quality assured assessment means checking whether a learner has met the national standards of knowledge, skill, and competence needed for an award. The focus is on judging the learner's work against these standards, not against other learners. It also means that every learner is assessed fairly and consistently, using the same criteria against the same expectations. Quality assured- assessment follows agreed principles that guide how assessment is planned, carried out, and reviewed. The principles used in this document are based on the assessment principles set out in the QQI *Quality Assuring Assessment – Interim Guidelines for Providers (2025)*.²

CMETB is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment that supports learner success. When implementing this policy, CMETB will apply the principles of accessibility, inclusion and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Decisions made under this policy should seek to remove unnecessary barriers to assessment while maintaining the validity, reliability, fairness and integrity of the assessment process. Learners requiring additional supports should also be referred to relevant CMETB policies and procedures, including Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment where appropriate.

1.3.1 Validity

Validity means making sure an assessment measures what it is supposed to. The task should assess the specific knowledge, skills, or competences needed for the award.

Assessment is valid when:

¹ [Solas | Learning Works | Craft Apprenticeship Quality Insurance and Manuals](#)

² QQI [quality-assuring-assessment-interim-guidelines-for-providers-2025.pdf](#)

- Assessment is fit for purpose, for example, a practical skill is checked through a practical assessment and not just through written work
- Learners can produce clear evidence that shows whether they meet the required standard for the award
- Assessors can make confident decisions based on the learner evidence provided
- The assessment is accessible to all learners who have the potential to meet the standard, without unnecessary barriers

1.3.2 Reliability

Reliability in assessment means that the results are accurate and consistent. The knowledge, skills and competence should be measured in a way that is trusted and can be repeated. For example, if the same assessment were carried out again under similar circumstances, the conditions would be the same.

Reliability in assessment happens when:

- The assessment uses valid methods that measure what they are meant to measure
- Assessment conditions are the same for everyone, so no learner is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged
- The learner's evidence is dependable, clear and shows their ability
- Assessment conditions remain the same over time, no matter who assesses the work, where it is assessed or when it is done.

1.3.3 Fairness

Fairness in assessment means every learner has an equal and fair chance to show what they can do. Fairness supports the principles of validity and reliability by making sure assessments are designed and run in a way that does not advantage or disadvantage anyone. This includes giving learners access to the resources or equipment they need, designing assessments that are fair to everyone, and having clear policies and procedures in place to ensure fair treatment across all assessment activities.

1.3.4 Quality

Quality in assessment means having checks in place to make sure assessment is fair, consistent, and carried out properly. This includes internal verification, external authentication and results approval processes.

Quality assurance supports the QQI principles by making sure every learner's work is assessed fairly and consistently, and in line with the national standards for the award.

To support fairness, learners may be given an extension to a deadline if they experience genuine extenuating circumstances. In these cases, the learner should not be disadvantaged because of their situation — but likewise they also should not receive an unfair advantage over other learners.

1.3.5 Transparency

Transparency in assessment means that all assessment rules, processes, and expectations are clear and easy for everyone to understand.

2. Definitions

2.1 Assessment Deadlines

Assessment deadlines are necessary to ensure QQI modules and programmes can be completed within the necessary timeframe. Once submitted, each piece of assessment undergoes a quality assurance process of marking, internal verification and external authentication. This ensures the correct marks are awarded for the learner work submitted. Setting class deadlines for submission of assessment ensures fairness to all learners in that group.

Learners must be made aware of assessment deadlines including submission dates for assessment evidence and dates of practical assessments (e.g. Examination, Skills Demonstration, etc.) prior to, or as soon as possible, in the delivery of programme or module (e.g. assessment plan, notice boards, etc.). These assessment deadlines should allow the learner enough time to fully complete the assessment tasks. Any changes made during the year to assessment deadlines should also be clearly communicated to learners. Learners are expected to submit assessment evidence within the deadline identified by the assessor unless there are extenuating circumstances³.

³ Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2025) *Quality Assuring Assessment: Interim Guidelines for Providers*. Available at: <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2026-01/quality-assuring-assessment-interim-guidelines-for-providers-2025.pdf> (Accessed: 03 February 2026).

2.2 On Time Submission

This refers to work submitted on or before the expected deadlines.

2.3 Missed Assessment Deadlines

The term “missed assessment deadline” refers to:

- Failure to submit assessment evidence on or in advance of agreed assessment deadline,
without an approved extension or agreed alternative arrangement, and/or
- Failure to attend an Examination or Skills Demonstration

For the purposes of fair and consistent decision-making, missed assessment deadlines are categorised based on **when the learner became aware of the issue and when they notified the centre**.

Missed assessment deadlines due to planned and communicated absence include, but are not limited to:

- court appearance,
- job interview,
- medical appointment,
- wedding,
- graduation,
- family event,
- pre-planned event, etc.

The learner is expected to let the centre know of a planned absence as soon as possible. The learner may be offered another opportunity to complete the missed exam or skills demonstration (using different assessment questions if appropriate) at a time that is agreed between the learner and centre.

A missed assessment deadline is considered *arising unexpectedly* where circumstances occur **close to or on the assessment deadline** and could not reasonably have been anticipated by the learner.

- illness (with medical certificate),
- involvement in an accident, etc

2.4 Late Submission (Without Prior Approval)

This is work that is submitted after the deadline and without prior approval through a short-term extension or notification of an extenuating circumstance. Such late submissions may be subject to penalties or capped marks (service dependent).

2.5 Short-term Extension

A once-off extension for an unexpected short-duration issue. See Section 4 for the short-term extension process. It is best practice for these types of requests to be made prior to the assessment deadline or event.

2.6 Compassionate Consideration Extension

Compassionate consideration is an arrangement that may be approved where serious or ongoing extenuating circumstances affect a learner beyond the timeframe of a short-term extension. See Section 5 for the full process.

2.7 Deferral

A deferral is an approved arrangement that allows a learner to postpone an assessment activity or the submission of assessment evidence until a later agreed date. A deferral may be considered where serious or ongoing extenuating circumstances mean that a reasonable extension would not give the learner sufficient time to complete the assessment. The new assessment arrangements must be agreed with the learner and recorded in accordance with this policy.

2.8 Reasonable Accommodations

Assessment deadline arrangements are distinct from Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment. Learners requiring ongoing supports due to disability, long-term health conditions or specific educational needs should be directed to the CMETB Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Learners

Learners must

- plan their time to ensure they submit work before or on the assessment deadline
- check with their tutor if they are unsure of the assessment submission date or how to submit their work

- request a short-term extension before the deadline if required
- apply for compassionate consideration for extenuating circumstances if a serious, unexpected issue arises, as soon as is practicable
- only submit work that is their own and follows CMETB Academic Integrity guidelines.

3.2 The Learning Practitioner

The learning practitioner must

- provide clear written deadlines for every assessment task
- communicate any changes made to submission dates
- signpost learners to supports that can assist with their study skills
- treat learner requests fairly and consistently following the guidance of this policy

3.3 The Programme Coordinator

The programme coordinator must

- consider each request fairly and consistently
- record the decision and reasons
- inform the learner in writing, including how to appeal if declined
- consider and approve or decline proposed deferral arrangements, consulting the Centre or Service Manager/Head where the case is complex or where the deferral may affect programme completion or certification.

3.4 Centre or Service Manager/ Head

The centre or service manager must

- support the consistent application of this policy
- provide guidance on complex cases or deferrals
- ensure appeals are reviewed by someone not involved in the original decision
- approve, or provide documented oversight of, complex deferral arrangements, including arrangements that may extend beyond the current assessment or certification cycle.

3.5 Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service

Quality assurance and enhancement service must

- maintain the policy, forms, guidance and templates;
- provide guidance to staff on the consistent application of the policy; and
- monitor implementation and identify areas requiring clarification or review;
- periodically review anonymised data relating to assessment deadline requests, outcomes, deferrals and appeals to identify trends, promote consistency and inform continuous improvement activities.

3.6 Results Approval Panel

The Results Approval Panel must

- consider approved assessment arrangements, including deferrals, where they are relevant to results;
- confirm that results are processed in line with the approved arrangements;
- confirm that an appropriate record of the decision and revised arrangement is available;
- identify any deferred or outstanding assessment outcomes affecting results approval or certification; and
- record and refer any concerns about compliance or consistency for appropriate follow-up.

4. Short-term Extensions

4.1 Eligibility and Circumstances

A short-term extension request should where possible, be submitted before the assessment submission deadline date. This is typically a one-off extension for an unexpected issue outside of the learner's control. Examples include:

- Personal illness
- Illness/care of child or dependent relative
- Force majeure (unforeseeable event that prevents performance in short-term)
- Extreme bad weather

Typically, a short-term extension will allow an additional short period for submission to be made. An application for a short-term extension will not guarantee this is granted.

Learners should not seek short-term extensions on a regular basis to extend their opportunity to submit. In circumstances where learners seek out multiple extensions, the learner may be invited to meet with an appropriate staff member to discuss available supports.

4.2 When an application should be made

A learner should ideally apply for a short-term extension **before the assessment deadline**, or as soon as the learner becomes aware that an unexpected short-duration issue may prevent submission on time.

Where the learner could not reasonably apply before the deadline, the circumstances may be considered under the compassionate consideration process in Section 5.

Making an application does not automatically mean that an extension will be granted.

4.3 Evidence Requirements

The learner should provide a brief explanation of the circumstances affecting the assessment submission.

Supporting evidence may be requested where it is relevant and proportionate. Evidence from a medical or other qualified professional is not normally required for a short-term extension unless it is necessary to support fair decision-making.

Any personal information provided must be treated confidentially and managed in line with data protection requirements.

4.4 Submission and decision process

The learner must submit the completed Short-Term Extension Application Form to the Learning Practitioner, Programme Coordinator or other designated staff member.

The decision-maker must:

- review the information provided by the learner;

- consider whether the circumstances were unexpected and outside the learner's reasonable control;
- consider whether granting an extension would maintain fairness for all learners;
- grant or decline the application without unnecessary delay;
- record the decision and the reason for it; and
- inform the learner of the decision in writing.

Where further information is required, the learner should be given a reasonable opportunity to provide it.

4.5 Possible Outcomes

The application may be:

- **granted**, with a revised assessment deadline agreed and confirmed to the learner in writing; or
- **declined**, with the reason for the decision and information about the appeal process provided to the learner in writing.

Where a short-term extension would not give the learner sufficient time, the learner may be directed to the compassionate consideration process in Section 5. If serious or ongoing circumstances mean that an extension is not appropriate, a deferral may be considered.

4.6 Notification and Record Keeping

The learner must be informed of the decision as soon as possible and in writing.

Where the application is granted, the written notification must include:

- the revised assessment deadline;
- the assessment or module covered by the extension; and
- any conditions attached to the extension.

Where the application is declined, the written notification must include:

- the outcome of the application;
- the reason for the decision; and
- information about how and when the learner may appeal.

The application, decision, revised deadline and related correspondence must be recorded and stored securely in line with CMETB data protection and record-retention

requirements. Information about the learner's circumstances must only be shared with staff who need it to carry out their role

4.7 Appeal

A learner may appeal where their application for a short-term extension has been declined.

The learner must submit the completed Short-Term Extension Appeal Form as instructed by the tutor. The appeal should explain why the learner believes the original decision should be reconsidered and should include any additional relevant information or supporting evidence.

The appeal must:

- be considered by an appropriate manager who was not involved in the original decision;
- review whether the policy and decision-making process were applied fairly and consistently;
- take account of the original application and any additional relevant information;
- be decided without unnecessary delay; and
- be communicated to the learner in writing, including the outcome and the reason for the decision.

The appeal outcome may be to:

- uphold the original decision; or
- overturn the original decision and approve a short-term extension.

The appeal decision must be recorded and managed confidentially in line with CMETB data protection and record-retention requirements.

5. Compassionate Consideration Extension

5.1 Eligibility and Circumstances

Compassionate consideration may apply where serious or ongoing extenuating circumstances affect a learner's ability to complete or attend an assessment and a short-term extension would not provide sufficient time.

Extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness;
- bereavement;

- involvement in an accident;
- extreme weather; or
- serious personal circumstances.

Each application will be considered individually, taking account of the nature and impact of the circumstances and the requirements of the programme.

5.2 When an application may be made

A learner should apply as soon as possible after becoming aware that serious or ongoing circumstances may affect, or have affected, their ability to complete an assessment by the deadline.

An application may be made before or after the assessment deadline, depending on the circumstances.

5.3 Evidence Requirements

The learner should provide relevant supporting evidence where this is reasonably available. This may include a statement from a medical practitioner, legal professional, Programme Coordinator or another appropriate source.

Where obtaining independent evidence would cause difficulty or additional hardship, a Programme Coordinator or Centre Manager may provide a confidential supporting statement. Supporting evidence does not guarantee that an application will be granted.

5.4 Submission and decision process

The learner must submit the Compassionate Consideration Application Form to the Programme Coordinator or designated staff member.

The decision-maker must consider:

- the nature and impact of the circumstances;
- the information and evidence provided;
- the assessment affected; and
- whether the proposed arrangement would maintain fairness for all learners.

The decision and reasons must be recorded and communicated to the learner in writing.

5.5 Possible Outcomes

The application may be:

- **granted**, with an extended deadline or other appropriate assessment arrangement;
- **declined**, with reasons and information about the appeal process provided; or
- **referred for consideration of a deferral**, where an extension would not give the learner enough time.

The agreed outcome must be appropriate to the learner's circumstances and the requirements of the programme.

5.6 Deferral Arrangements

Where an extension would not provide sufficient time, a deferral may be considered. A deferral must be approved by the Programme Coordinator or other designated decision-maker. Complex deferrals, including those that may affect programme completion or certification, must be referred to the Centre or Service Manager/Head.

A deferral must be for the shortest reasonable period necessary, taking account of:

- the learner's circumstances;
- the assessment and programme requirements;
- the availability of another suitable assessment opportunity;
- internal assessment and quality assurance schedules; and
- applicable results approval and certification timelines.

The revised assessment date or alternative assessment arrangement must be agreed with the learner and confirmed in writing. Where it is not possible to set a revised date immediately, the record must state when and by whom the arrangement will be reviewed.

A deferral is not an exemption from completing the assessment requirements for the award.

5.7 Notification and Record Keeping

The learner must be informed of the decision as soon as possible and in writing.

The notification must include the outcome, the reason for the decision and details of any revised assessment arrangements. Where an application is declined, the learner must also receive information about the appeal process.

Information about the learner's circumstances must be treated confidentially and only shared with staff who need it to carry out their role. All information must be managed in line with CMETB data protection and record-retention requirements.

Where a deferral is approved, the record must include:

- the assessment or module affected;
- the reason for the decision;
- the approval date and decision-maker;
- the revised assessment date or arrangement;
- any review date or conditions;
- any implications for programme completion or certification; and
- confirmation that the learner was informed in writing.

The record must be made available to relevant staff involved in assessment processing, quality assurance and results approval, while protecting confidential information about the learner's circumstances.

5.8 Appeal

A learner may appeal where an application for compassionate consideration has been declined.

The appeal must:

- be submitted using the relevant appeal form within the stated timeframe;
- explain why the original decision should be reconsidered;
- be considered by an appropriate manager who was not involved in the original decision; and
- be decided and communicated to the learner in writing without unnecessary delay.

The appeal may uphold or overturn the original decision. The outcome and reasons must be recorded.

5.9 Apprenticeship-specific circumstances

Apprenticeship assessments must normally follow the relevant SOLAS or consortium assessment rules.

Where a practical assessment is interrupted by serious and unexpected circumstances, the incident must be recorded and referred to the Programme Coordinator or Centre Manager. Any decision about completing, rescheduling or deferring the assessment must follow the applicable apprenticeship requirements.

6. Understanding the Differences in Extensions Requests

Factors	Short-term Extension	Compassionate Consideration Extension
Issue / Circumstances Experienced	Brief, unexpected issue	Serious, unforeseen circumstance
Duration	Expected to resolve quickly	Expected to impact beyond a short time
Timing	Request made before the deadline	Requested as soon as possible after the incident
Decision Process	Tutor/learning practitioner	Tutor/Programme Coordinator/Head of Centre
Possible Outcome	One-off, additional short extension	Longer extension or if more appropriate deferral
Evidence	Minimal evidence, documentation	More substantial evidence

7. Conclusion

Learners are expected to engage proactively with tutors and coordinators where they have trouble managing time, workload, or assessment demands. CMETB provides a range of learner supports to assist in such circumstances, and early engagement is essential to enable appropriate guidance and support to be offered. Where staff require clarification or support in the application of this policy, advice should be sought from the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Service (QAES) or the relevant Centre or Service Head to ensure consistent and fair implementation across provision.

Appendix 1 Assessment Deadline Request Form



FORM A: ASSESSMENT DEADLINE REQUEST

Short-Term Extension or
Compassionate Consideration



Use this form if circumstances may affect your ability to complete or attend an assessment on time. Complete Sections 1-5. A staff member will complete Section 6.

1. Learner details

Learner name	
Centre / service	
Programme / course	
Module(s)	
Learning Practitioner / Tutor	

2. Type of request

☐ Short-Term Extension	☐ Compassionate Consideration
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If you are unsure which option applies, speak to your Learning Practitioner, Programme Coordinator or designated staff member.

3. Assessment details

Assessment title / activity	
Assessment type	☐ Assignment ☐ Project ☐ Examination ☐ Skills Demonstration ☐ Other
Original deadline / date	

4. Circumstances

Briefly explain the circumstances affecting your ability to complete or attend the assessment:

Learner statement	
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5. Supporting information

☐ Supporting information attached
☐ Supporting information is not currently available
☐ I would like to discuss this with a staff member

For a short-term extension, professional evidence is not normally required unless it is necessary for fair decision-making. For compassionate consideration, provide relevant supporting information where reasonably available.

Learner signature	
Date	

6. Staff decision

Decision	☐ Granted ☐ Declined ☐ Refer for deferral consideration
Revised deadline / arrangement	
Reason for decision	
Decision-maker	
Role	
Signature	
Date	

The learner must receive the decision and reasons in writing. If declined, provide the relevant appeal form and confirm the appeal deadline.

Appendix 2 Assessment Deadline Appeals Form



FORM B: ASSESSMENT DEADLINE APPEAL

Appeal of a declined request



Use this form to ask for a declined assessment deadline request to be reconsidered. Submit it within the timeframe stated in the policy and decision notification.

1. Learner and original request

Learner name	
Centre / service	
Programme / course	
Original request	☐ Short-Term Extension ☐ Compassionate Consideration
Date decision received	
Assessment / module affected	

2. Reason for appeal

Explain why you believe the original decision should be reconsidered:

Reason for appeal	
--------------------------	--

3. Additional information

☐ Additional information attached	☐ No additional information attached
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Details, if applicable	
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Learner signature	
Date	

4. Appeal review and outcome

Appeal reviewer	
Role	
Conflict check	☐ I was not involved in the original decision
Outcome	☐ Original decision upheld ☐ Original decision overturned
Reason for appeal outcome	
Revised deadline / arrangement, if applicable	
Signature	
Date	

The appeal outcome and reasons must be communicated to the learner in writing and recorded securely.

Appendix 3 Assessment Deadline Supporting Statement



FORM C: SUPPORTING STATEMENT

For staff supporting an assessment deadline request



Use this form where independent supporting information is unavailable or where a staff statement is appropriate. Record only information necessary to support the decision.

1. Statement type

☐ General assessment deadline request
☐ Apprenticeship practical assessment interruption

2. Learner and assessment details

Learner name	
Centre / service	
Programme / apprenticeship	
Module(s) / assessment affected	
Original assessment date / deadline	

3. Staff member completing statement

Name	
Role	
Contact details	

4. Relevant circumstances and impact

Brief factual statement	
How the circumstances affected the assessment	

5. Apprenticeship interruption details, if applicable

Date and time assessment started	
Date and time of interruption	
Assessment completed before interruption	
Assessment remaining	
Immediate action taken	

6. Staff declaration

- ☐ The information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- ☐ Only information relevant to the assessment deadline request has been included.
- ☐ The information must be handled confidentially and shared only with staff who need it for their role.

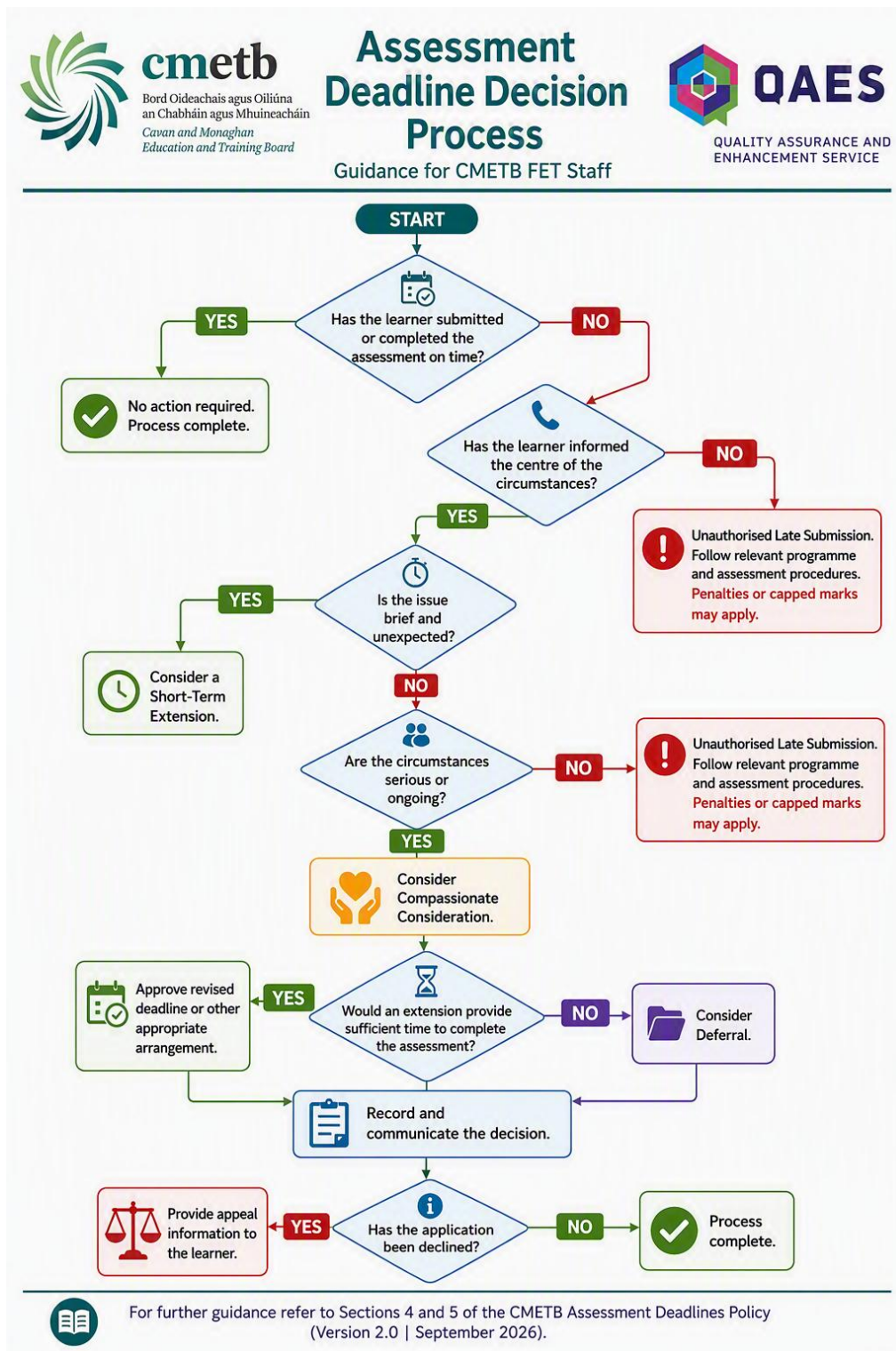


Signature

Date

This statement supports the application but does not determine the outcome. The authorised decision-maker must record the decision on Form A.

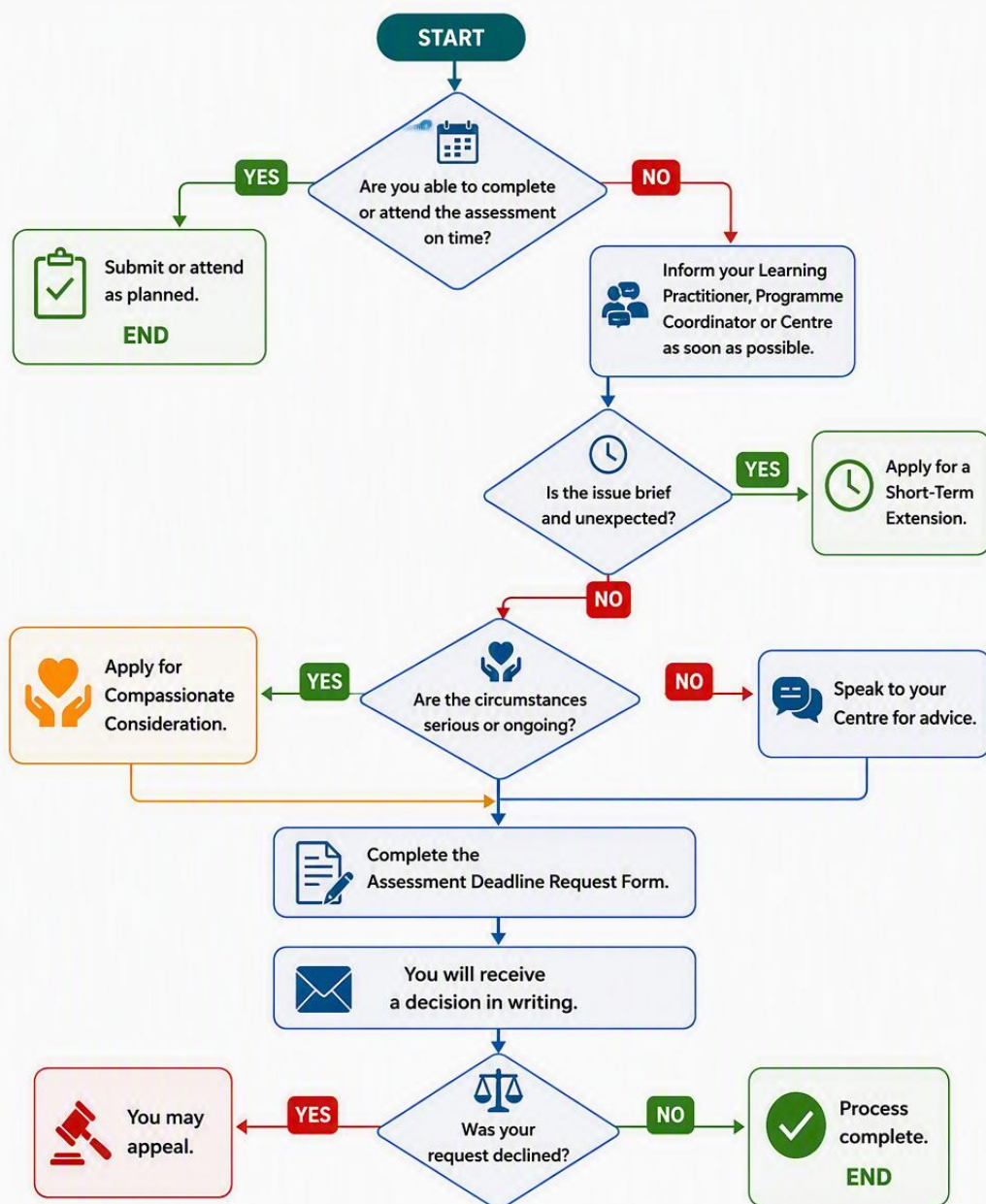
Appendix 4. Assessment Deadline Staff Decision Process



Appendix 5 Learner Assessment Deadline Guide

LEARNER ASSESSMENT DEADLINE GUIDE

What should I do if I cannot
meet an assessment deadline?



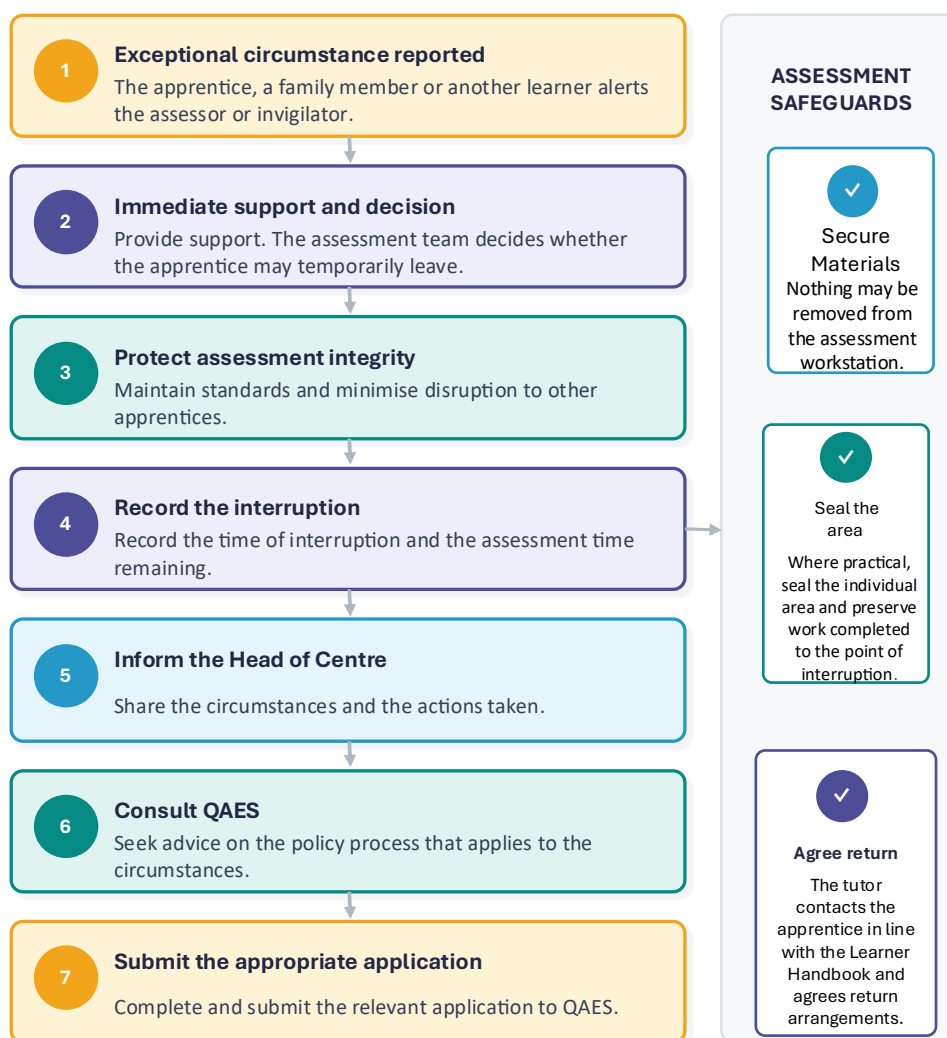
For further guidance speak with your Learning Practitioner, Programme Coordinator or Centre.

Appendix 6 Interruption to Apprenticeship Practical Examination Process



GUIDANCE ON INTERRUPTION TO APPRENTICE PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT

A clear response pathway for fair, safe and consistent assessment practice



Key principle: learner wellbeing and assessment integrity must be considered together.