

Overarching arrangements adopted by Kerry ETB
Issue 1

COVID-19 CONTINGENCY PLANNING

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Issue 1 – March 2020

Kerry ETB Further Education and Training Colleges/Centres closed the evening of March 12th, and remain closed until March 29th, subject to Department of Education and Skills review. As part of its risk management strategy, Kerry ETB recognises that situations can emerge where circumstances require the rescheduling of programme delivery and/or the deferment of assessment. In such situations, Kerry ETB operates contingency planning, led by the Senior Management Team.

Contingency plans are currently operational for the period 12th through to 29th March¹, and will be extended beyond this period to ensure the appropriate response to learners. Kerry ETB will issue a further update to this document, in the event that normal operations at FET Colleges/Centre continue to be interrupted post March 29th.

Changes to programme delivery

Where practicable- class work is assigned to learners and guidance given by instructors/tutors regarding continuing learning in the home environment. Delivery will shift to online, where the programme is judged to be suitable-. Whilst it may be the case that a number of programmes are suitable– it is expected that the range will be relatively small². Due to the vocational focus of a high number of Kerry ETB programmes and the importance of skills development, **there is an interruption to learning**. Programme schedules are under review to **identify the cohort of learners who may be materially delayed in completing their course**, because of the closure of specialist facilities at FET Colleges/Centre³. The review of programme schedules will also identify the cohort of learners who may be materially delayed in completing their course, because of their capacity to continue learning in the home environment due to issues associated with technology capacity⁴. On foot of the review of programme schedules and the consideration of the needs of learners- **contingency plans will include revised programme schedules and/or the deferment of assessment**. Kerry ETB will communicate any changes to a learner's programme schedule at an early opportunity- informing learners individually of the intended change(s). **Core programme staff at FET Colleges/Centres will continue to use the centre/campus facilities and resources to provide ongoing support to learners.**

Work based learning- including work placement

All teaching, learning and assessment activities scheduled for work based settings are deferred. A review of programme schedules will **identify the cohort of learners who may be materially delayed in completing their course, because of a significant interruption to work based learning**. It is expected that a high number of programme schedules will require revisions to work based learning⁵. **Revised programme schedules will have regard to award requirements- specifically the requirement that learners must have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skill and competence and have some assessments carried out in the work place setting.**

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² Factors mitigating against the shift to online include (but are not excluded to), the attainment of education goals (MIPO's), and the alignment of online learning with the programmes pedagogic model

³ Specialist facilities include electro mechanical workshops, professional kitchens, media facilities, hairdressing and beauty therapy training rooms, sports halls/gyms etc.

⁴ Limitations relating to technology capacity include accessibility and/or digital literacy

⁵ All Kerry ETB programmes at NFQ Level 5 and 6 include a work based element (2 week block of work experience in a work based setting). All Kerry ETB Traineeships require 30% of all learning to be work based. All Kerry ETB Apprenticeships require 50% of all learning to be employer based.

Practical assessment and Examinations

Access to specialist practical facilities for scheduled assessment events will be disrupted as assessment is deferred. The deferment of assessment events is tracked and recorded in contingency plans and reviewed by the Senior Management Team. Assessment events will be rescheduled. Those **learner groups whose course assessment requires specialist practical facilities will be prioritised in the first instance.** Due consideration will be given to the suitability of switching from a controlled assessment (e.g. examinations- including practical examinations), to a less controlled assessment. **The use of an alternative assessment, which would allow identified learning outcomes; previously assigned to the examinable component of a given programme, to switch to being assessed by assignment will be considered.** Such alternative assessment will be reviewed by the Kerry ETB Quality Assurance Governance Board⁶ and recommended to the Quality Council for approval.

Submitting learner results for certification

It is the intention of Kerry ETB to **submit learners for each certification period.** Contingency plans will allow for managers at FET Colleges/Centres to access QBS remotely to manage the work relating to certification of learners. Kerry ETB will communicate any changes to the QQI certification timetable⁷ at an early opportunity- informing learners individually of the intended change(s). Staff at FET Colleges/Centres will provide **information and advice to those learners who intend to progress to further study, and whose applications to Higher Education Institutes may be effected by changes to the QQI certification timetable.**

⁶ The work undertaken by the QA Governance Board in respect of the use of an alternative assessment, will be informed by core programme teaching and instructing staff from FET Colleges/Centres

⁷ <https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Key%20Dates%202020.pdf>