



# Skills and Training Services (STS)

## Local Operating Procedure

### Extension/Deferral, Break in Learning, Withdrawal, PPED Policy

#### Version Control Sheet

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Name	Job Role	Date	Signature
Mike Hampton	Quality Improvement and Audit Manager	17/10/2023	<i>M. Hampton</i>

#### Change Control

Any requested changes to this document should be emailed to: [mike.hampton@serco.com](mailto:mike.hampton@serco.com)

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## Introduction

The term “learner,” within this policy, is used to describe all learners and apprentices involved with Skills and Training Services, this also includes those learners enrolled with subcontractors.

This policy outlines Skills and Training Services’ policies and processes involved in extension/deferral requests, breaks in learning, return to learning, withdrawals, and past planned end date (PPED). The policy aims to ensure that learners are fully supported throughout their chosen programme and Skills and Training Services remains compliant with funding requirements.

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## Scope

This policy applies to all learners, including those enrolled with subcontractors.

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Learner Support Policy
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - Prevent Policy
  - Assessment Policy
  - Behaviour, Disciplinary and Expectations Policy
  - Attendance and Punctuality Policy
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## Extension

An extension gives learners formal permission to hand in the assessment task(s) after the published deadline for the module, without incurring a penalty. A maximum extension of 5 working days may be granted depending on the reason for the request (any deviance to this will be agreed by the Skills and Training Services Programme Manager in the first instance). Acceptance is at the discretion of Skills and Training Services and any partner organisation involved with the learners’ course; learners do not have an automatic right to an extension.

Reasons to request an extension might include:

- Short illness
- Work related pressures beyond what is typical
- Unexpected family event such as illness of a child

Confirmation of acceptance, including the length of extension will be emailed to the learner using the email address from which the request came. Applications must be submitted before the assessment task deadline and cannot be accepted once the deadline has passed.

All requests for extension must be documented in the extension form (as per Appendix A).

Learners must hand in assignment/s by the extension deadline, whether the work is completed or not. This will be marked and moderated according to the Assessment Policy and feedback will be provided. If a referral is received, the learner will be given 4 weeks to complete and resubmit. This will then be marked and moderated.

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## Deferral

Studying and working can be demanding, meaning that at times, a learner may be unable to meet the deadline for submission. Deferrals allow learners to defer submission of their assignments until the next submission opportunity, which is usually the deadline set for modules. All requests for deferral must be supported by evidence, which might be a letter from a GP, line manager, employer, mentor, or other forms of evidence which illustrate the challenges faced.

To request a deferral, complete the form (at the end of the document – Appendix B) and email it to the relevant programme mailbox (as stated within Appendix B).

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## Break in Learning (BIL)

Before any BIL is processed Skills and Training Services has the commitment to investigate all possible solutions with the learner/employer to keep the learner engaged on programme, this may include (not exhaustive):

- Discussion on reasons for request, what barriers are in place and what can be done to support/overcome these
- Fitness to study discussions (as below)
- Discussion with the employer (where appropriate) to identify support they can offer

All requests for a BIL must be approved before they are fully agreed with the learner/employer and entered the Serco MIS. All requests for BIL must be approved by the Skills and Training Services Head of Skills Delivery.

At times there will be a requirement to extend the BIL. All applications to extend the BIL must be via the set BIL extension form and must be approved by the Skills and Training Services Head of Skills Delivery before entering the new data into the MIS.

For apprenticeships a BIL must be used where there is no planned learning within the calendar month (also includes off the job training, English, maths).

A BIL request can come in for various reasons, however there are rules on when these can be implemented. Reasons for a BIL to be recorded can include (as per BIL form):

- Medical Reasons\*
- Operational\*\*
- Parental Leave
- Employment Change\*\*\*
- Redundancy
- Special Circumstances\*\* (can include religious trips)

\*May be sensitive so requires a Safeguarding log entry rather than detail on the actual form

\*\* Detail required

\*\*\* Please check latest funding rules on requirements

BIL must not be used:

- for short absences such as holidays and short-term illness.
- when the learning aim is past planned end date (out of funding).
- when the learning aim is still within the qualifying period (contract specific), for example Skills Bootcamps 14 days, Apprenticeships 42 days – please see individual funding rules for requirements.

- for those apprentices with a term-time only contract, where we do not require a break in learning for the month of August.
- For when a learner is made redundant from their employer (apprenticeships) – in this scenario please consult the funding rules. If you have any queries, please contact the Skills Data Analyst & Funding Manager.

When recording a BIL you must:

- Complete the BIL form (contract specific)
- Have evidence that the learner has agreed to the BIL, and a planned return date is in place
- For apprenticeships, ensure evidence of the employer agreement to the BIL is in place
- Provide evidence of the last learning that matches the BIL date to be recorded i.e., learner signed attendance record.
- Update the ILR as per funding rules. If you have any queries, please contact the Skills Data Analyst & Funding Manager.

Each funder/contract will have separate rules/requirements for BIL, so ensure you familiarise yourself with these. For example:

- DfE state for Skills Bootcamp:
  - “You and the learner can agree to suspend learning while the learner takes a break from learning. This should be discussed with your contract manager before final agreement with the learner”.
- Apprenticeships state for 2023/24:
  - “The provider must use a break in learning where there is no plan for any active learning (off-the-job training or English / maths training) to take place in every calendar month of the practical period”.
  - “The only exception to this is for those apprentices with a term-time only contract, where we do not require a break in learning for the month of August”.
  - “We have clarified that when an apprentice takes a break in learning and returns to the same apprenticeship, they will return to the same funding rules they were following prior to their break”.

If you have any queries, please contact the Skills Data Analyst & Funding Manager.

Skills and Training Services will remain in contact with the learner that is on BIL on a regular basis. The purpose of this is to:

- Check on the welfare of the Learner, this may be via the Learner directly or the line manager (whichever is most appropriate)
- Discuss a return to learning date and any changes. Where there is a change to the planned return date the BIL extension form must be completed.

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### **Reinstatement/Return to Learning:**

When the learner returns to learning, you will need to re plan the delivery of any remaining training and/ or assessment following a break, a new programme aims (if required), learning aim(s), new planned end date should be created as in the guidance below. The original learning aims must not be reopened.

When recording a learner has returned from BIL you must:

- Complete the Return to Learning Form (contract specific)
- Record the date they have restarted learning/returned from BIL
- Provide evidence of the return to learning date that matches the return/reinstated date to be recorded i.e., learner signed attendance record.

- The evidence provided (as above) must be for the same learning aim (and all aims) that they were originally enrolled on and a BIL was processed against.
  - Update the learner's learning plan to reflect the new dates
  - Update the apprenticeship agreement, with the employer
  - Update the Apprenticeship training plan/commitment statement
  - If the learner starts a different learning aim, then the learning aim that was processed as a BIL must be set as withdrawn.
  - If the learner does not return, then the learning aim/s must be withdrawn.
  - Update the ILR as per funding rules. If you have any queries, please contact the Skills Data Analyst & Funding Manager.
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## Withdrawal

Before any withdrawal is processed, Skills and Training Services has the commitment to investigate all possible solutions with the learner/employer to keep the learner engaged on programme, including:

- Discussion on reasons for request, what barriers are in place and what can be done to support/overcome these
- Fitness to study discussions (as below)
- Discussion with employer (where appropriate) to identify support they can offer

All proposed withdrawals must be approved before they are fully agreed with the learner/employer and entered the Serco MIS. All requests for withdrawal must be approved by the Skills and Training Services Head of Skills Delivery.

A withdrawal request can be created for various reasons; however, these must be clearly documented.

Reasons for withdrawal can include (as per withdrawal form):

- Course not as expected
- Employment change
- Lack of progression
- Medical Reasons\*
- Operational\*\*
- Personal reasons\*
- Special circumstances \*\*

\*May be sensitive so requires a Safeguarding log entry rather than detail on the actual form

\*\* Detail required

Each funder will have their own rules around withdrawal, so please ensure the relevant contract funding rules are followed. If you have any queries, please contact the Skills Data Analyst & Funding Manager.

When recording a withdrawal, you must:

- Complete the Withdrawal Form (contract specific)
  - Record the last date of learning/actual end date (withdrawal date)
  - Provide evidence of the withdrawal date that matches the return/reinstated date to be recorded i.e., learner signed attendance record.
  - Update the ILR as per funding rules. If you have any queries, please contact the Skills Data Analyst & Funding Manager.
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## Fitness to Study

The health and wellbeing of all learners is a priority for Skills and Training Services. To ensure that the learner has the capacity to fully engage with the chosen programme of study, without a negative impact

on their wellbeing, a detailed discussion will take place throughout the 'learner journey', this will include:

- expression of interest stage
  - initial onboarding stage
  - progress reviews
  - attendance at workshops
  - when a potential BIL or withdrawal is proposed
  - when the learner returns to learning after a break in learning
  - ad hoc when the needs arise/concerns are raised
- When a concern is initially raised, as discussion will take place – this can include the skills coach and tutors initially. The outcome of this discussion can result in (not exhaustive):
- agreed no further action required
  - referral to the safeguarding team – in line with the safeguarding policy & prevent policy
  - adapting the learning plan to fit in with the emerging needs, this may also include additional support needs – in line with the Learner Support policy
  - agreeing a BIL
  - agreeing a withdrawal

In the event the tutor and skills coach require the case to be escalated, this must be escalated to the relevant Programme Lead who will investigate further and provide further support on an agreeable outcome.

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### **Past Planned End Date (PPED)**

Where a learner is approaching their planned end date or has past their planned end date (PPED) these require additional monitoring and action:

- All aims that are approaching the planned end date (within 3 months) must have regular updates on progress reported and action plans in place. This will be provided by the Programme Leads to the Skills and Training Services Quality Improvement and Audit Manager and Skills and Training Services Head of Skills Delivery.
  - All aims that are PPED will be entered onto the 'at risk' register and must have regular updates (weekly) on progress reported and action plans in place. This will be provided by the Programme Leads to the Skills and Training Services Quality Improvement and Audit Manager and Skills and Training Services Head of Skills Delivery.
  - With all aims that are PPED the Apprenticeship Agreement must be revised to include the revised planned end date.
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### **Funding Rules**

Apprenticeships [Apprenticeship funding rules 2023 to 2024 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Skills Bootcamps (DfE) [Skills Bootcamps - funding and performance management guidance for Jaggaer projects 7338 and 7698 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

**Appendix A – Application for Extension**

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Course Title</b>	
<b>Module Code(s)/Unit Name</b>	
<b>Module/Unit Deadline (Submission Date)</b>	
<b>Reason for the request</b>	
<b>State the number of extra days required</b>	

Please email your completed form to:

<b>SBP Apprenticeship</b>	<a href="mailto:sbpa@serco.com">sbpa@serco.com</a>
<b>CDMA for Schools</b>	<a href="mailto:cmdaschools@serco.com">cmdaschools@serco.com</a>
<b>Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship</b>	<a href="mailto:taa@serco.com">taa@serco.com</a>
<b>SLA for SBPs</b>	<a href="mailto:cmdaschools@serco.com">cmdaschools@serco.com</a>



**Appendix B – Application for Deferral**

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Modules/units which you wish to defer</b>	
<b>Briefly outline the reason for requesting a deferral and attach the supporting evidence.</b>	
<b>Signature and date:</b> By signing this, you are confirming that the details provided above are an accurate and true statement of your current situation.	
<b>Contact Email</b>	

Please email your completed form to:

<b>SBP Apprenticeship</b>	<a href="mailto:sbpa@serco.com">sbpa@serco.com</a>
<b>CDMA for Schools</b>	<a href="mailto:cmdaschools@serco.com">cmdaschools@serco.com</a>
<b>Teaching Assistant Apprenticeship</b>	<a href="mailto:taa@serco.com">taa@serco.com</a>
<b>SLA for SBPs</b>	<a href="mailto:cmdaschools@serco.com">cmdaschools@serco.com</a>