

LSE is committed to supporting students flexibly and equitably, whilst also safeguarding the value of your degree for your future lives and careers by maintaining standards. You can see a summary of actions below.

Redesign of assessments

- Exams have been redesigned from traditional methods to diverse types of assessment taken within longer assessment periods, so that you can show what you have learned with greater flexibility and less time pressure
- Where academically appropriate, internal examiners have dropped or reweighted assessments to reduce assessment workloads

Enhancement and increased flexibility within policies

- LSE's policies have been adjusted so that students can:
 - Request an extension with a supporting statement - evidence will not necessarily be required, however it may assist with your request
 - If you need to defer one or more assessments you can opt to do so, without the need to provide any evidence and without having to request permission to defer from your Department, though you should still discuss any plans to defer with your Academic Mentor.
- The evidence requirements for Exceptional Circumstances relating to COVID-19 have also been simplified. All examiners will assume a general level of COVID-19 related disruption to students' preparation for and performance in assessment. This will include:
 - Increased stress and anxiety caused by the pandemic
 - Reduced contact with friends and family
 - Lack of access to physical resources (libraries)
 - Classes moving to online teaching
 - Academic advice moving online.
- Students do not need to submit exceptional circumstances for the impact of these general circumstances. Instead, examiners will review course marks against historical performance data and adjust marks upwards where they find variations in the performance of this year's cohort.
- The performance of some students, however, will be affected by specific COVID-19 related circumstances, such as:
 - Been ill with COVID-19
 - Experienced the exacerbation of an existing health condition, including a mental health condition, due to the pandemic situation
 - Experienced the death or serious illness of someone close to you
 - Taken on exceptional caring responsibilities due to COVID-19
 - Been required to carry out more paid work than usual, as a "key worker" (e.g. in healthcare, retail, delivery)
 - Experienced significant and prolonged problems with access to teaching and learning materials, e.g. due to connectivity, power, or equipment issues.

- Students should submit Exceptional Circumstances in these and similar cases, together with an explanation about why they were unable to defer.
- LSE recognises that it is not always possible to obtain proximate evidence and this may be particularly true when there is extra strain on health services. If students are impacted on an individual level during the assessment period, for all or any assessments, they should still submit a claim for Exceptional Circumstances and their overall degree outcome will be considered in light of this.

Supportive marking processes

- Mark schemes and marking criteria, the guidelines examiners use to mark assessments, will be reviewed and updated as needed. This is to account for any changes to redesigned assessments, recognising that students should not be in any way disadvantaged by the revised formats, which might be unfamiliar to you. Examiners will assume the general impact of COVID-19 circumstances has affected students, without the need for them to submit exceptional circumstances.
- Once assessments are marked, all marks at the course-level will be compared against previous cohort marks. Normally, this will be for at least the previous 5 years. Where historical data isn't available, such as with new courses, examiners will use a range of other mechanisms such as formative/summative results from the current cohort in the relevant course and historical course level results from other courses with similar content.
- Marks will be reviewed with the possibility of adjustment for the whole cohort if they are below the historical average as a direct result of current COVID-19 circumstances. Marks will only be adjusted up because of this review and not down.

Exam Boards

- Exam Boards are responsible for confirming students' results, progression and award classification where appropriate. They ensure the academic standards and integrity of courses, programmes and awards.
- Exam Boards also consider students' anonymised Exceptional Circumstances and determine what action can and should be taken in each case, whilst ensuring that any decision is fair and equitable.
- Exceptional circumstances that might result in the award of a higher degree classification will be considered when a student's final degree is calculated, no matter whether this is in 2020 or in future years. The definition of those student mark profiles that are considered borderline to the next higher degree classification for the 2020 cohort will be more generously defined.

If you have further questions or need advice, find out about support available across LSE [at this link](#).