

Appendix:

REFERENCES

Butler-Henderson, K., & Crawford, J. (2020). A systematic review of online examinations: A pedagogical innovation for scalable authentication and integrity. *Computers & Education*, 104024.

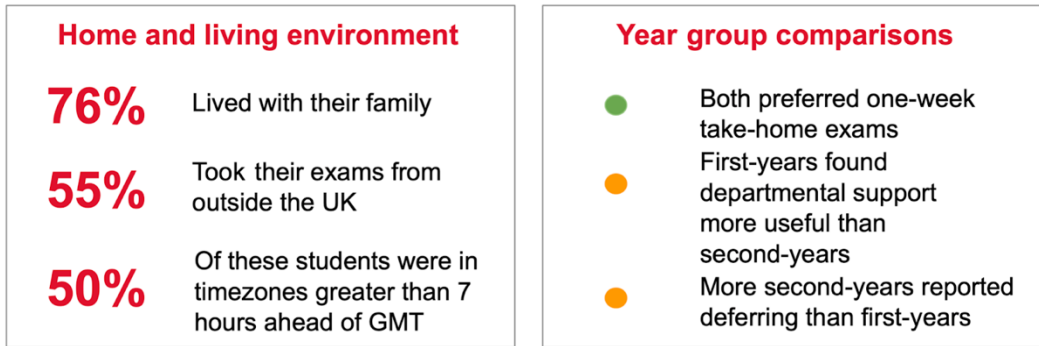
Ilgaz, H., & Adanır, G. A. (2020). Providing online exams for online learners: Does it really matter for them?. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(2), 1255-1269.

OECD (2020), "Remote online exams in higher education during the COVID-19 crisis", OECD Education Policy Perspectives, No. 6, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f53e2177-en>.

Luna-Bazaldua, D., Liberman, J. and Levin, V., 2020. *Moving high-stakes exams online: Five points to consider*. [online] World Bank Blogs. Available at: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/moving-high-stakes-exams-online-five-points-consider>

Survey Results

Key demographics



Q1 - What year were you in during the 2020 Online Examinations?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What year were you in during the 2020 Online Examinations?	1.00	2.00	1.50	0.50	0.25	38

#	Answer	%	Count
1	UG Year 1	50.00%	19
2	UG Year 2	50.00%	19
	Total	100%	38

Q2 - What mode did your online examinations take place? (Social Policy Papers Only) Please select all that apply

#	Answer	%	Count
1	24 Hour Papers	16.67%	11

4	1 Week Take Home Papers	57.58%	38
5	Coursework	25.76%	17
	Total	100%	66

Q25 - Where did you take your 2020 Summer Exams from?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Where did you take your 2020 Summer Exams from? - Selected Choice	1.00	2.00	1.55	0.50	0.25	38

#	Answer	%	Count
1	UK	44.74%	17
2	Outside the UK (please specify the country):	55.26%	21
	Total	100%	38

Q25_2_TEXT - Outside the UK (please specify the country):

Outside the UK (please specify the country): - Text

Malaysia

Singapore

GMT+1

Bangkok

China

Germany

Hong Kong

Netherlands

Poland

Malaysia
Germany
France
China
South Korea
Germany
Singapore
Poland
Portugal
Pakistan
Singapore
Singapore

Q3 - What form of accommodation did you live in during the 2020 online examination period?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What form of accommodation did you live in during the 2020 online examination period? - Selected Choice	1.00	4.00	2.87	0.61	0.38	38

#	Answer	%	Count
1	LSE Student Hall	7.89%	3
2	Private Student Hall	2.63%	1
3	Private Flat / House	84.21%	32
4	Others	5.26%	2
	Total	100%	38

Q3_4_TEXT - Others

Others - Text

My parents house

Parent's home

Q4 - Did you live with anyone else during this period?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Did you live with anyone else during this period? - Selected Choice	1.00	4.00	2.84	0.67	0.45	38

#	Answer	%	Count
1	I lived alone	7.89%	3
2	I lived with friends / flatmates	7.89%	3
3	I lived with family	76.32%	29
4	Others	7.89%	3
	Total	100%	38

Q4_4_TEXT - Others

Others - Text

Boyfriend and mum

My boyfriend and his family, and then his cousin and her family

Boyfriend

Q5 - While preparing for your summer exams, what form of support did you make use of from the school or department?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	LSE Life Workshops	10.42%	5
2	Office Hours	25.00%	12
3	Moodle Forums	16.67%	8
4	Departmental Administrative Staff	16.67%	8
5	LSE Student Wellbeing Services	4.17%	2
6	None	22.92%	11
7	Others	4.17%	2
	Total	100%	48

Q5_7_TEXT - Others

Others - Text

LSE organised study groups

Q6 - Was the support provided adequate and/or useful?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Was the support provided adequate and/or useful?	1.00	4.00	2.29	0.92	0.85	31

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Very useful	19.35%	6
2	Moderately useful	45.16%	14
3	Slightly useful	22.58%	7

4	Not useful at all	12.90%	4
	Total	100%	31

Q7 - Why? (Please specify the mode of support in your answer)

Why? (Please specify the mode of support in your answer)

-

It was good to have a point of contact with the department

Moodle Forums have a variety of relevance in the questions being asked there.

forum for discussion

Unused

The help was available, and we received several emails with information about support available

Didn't use any (so couldn't comment on last question to be fair)

I felt a little alone towards the end, perhaps it was just first year and not being as used to the university, but I relied more on my peers than any teachers towards the end.

they were nice

N/A

It was unclear that SP201 would require redoing the entire project from scratch.

Jake and Claire were exceptionally helpful, my AM however left on maternity leave so I had a lack of help from her unfortunately.

LSE LIFE Moodle had good advice on college level essay writing and I was able to contact a capable adviser when needed. I especially liked that the adviser was also a student and their experience helped me a lot.

Office hours with ISPP teachers is always useful for me, and LSE 1-1 sessions help me to write essays

I dont remember what I utilised so please discard my above answers

Office hours are extremely useful as is LSE life for helping with your studies

Office hours are very useful!

It's quite hard to attend OH online due to the technical issues

N/A

Well, I felt a little left alone with the entire situation. Despite I of course understand the complexity of the situation - having office hours during the April break would have helped me a lot...

.

Helped me understand

Opportunity to talk to teachers online

Yes because the responses provided were timely and in depth to aid my understanding

N/A

It was personal 1-to-1 feedback which helped me identify flaws in my essay to work on.

My academic mentor, Clare and Jake, and UMO mentor from DWS were super helpful helping me deal with mental health issues.

Teachers were supportive and helpful and understanding of situation

Q21 - Why not? (Please specify the mode of support in your answer)

Why not? (Please specify the mode of support in your answer)

-

They were not as responsive as I had liked but I imagine there was a lot going on at the time

Some questions on Moodle Forums were irrelevant to my queries.

-

Unused

Accessibility was reduced due to the pandemic situation, and due to the sudden change from in-person to online communication

Didn't use any (so couldn't comment on last question to be fair)

N/a

general situation was hard

N/A

n/a

N/A

I would like to see concrete examples of good essays on Moodle, and especially to see annotations and references in-text about the strengths and shortcomings

N/A

I dont remember what I utilised so please discard my above answers

-

I only went to one workshop

revised entirely by myself

N/A

No answer

.

V chaotic + very little time available

Difficult to adapt to the new setting, especially as I was living with a lot of people

N/A

N/A

NA.

there were not many office hours available in spring break

Q8 - What mode of examination did you prefer?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	What mode of examination did you prefer?	1.00	3.00	2.24	0.57	0.32	29

#	Answer	%	Count
1	24 Hour Paper	6.90%	2
2	1 Week Take Home Paper	62.07%	18
3	Coursework	31.03%	9
4	No preference	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	29

Q9 - Why did that mode work for you?

Why did that mode work for you?

1 week papers worked really well for essay papers as it gave us enough time to refer to readings and think through more nuanced arguments. It was also a lot less pressure to be able to write essays across the week.

It was difficult getting into the "school mode" when I was stuck at home and I like to do a lot of activity/meditation to prepare myself. I have trauma from school and exams and being at home was mentally quite draining; being in school typically puts me in the right zone but not when I was at home. It allowed me some flexibility, which was needed since living with family it's hard to find a time when I can focus in peace and calm.

More flexible, does not create exam-like stress, which reduces performance and is detrimental to mental and physical health. With 1 week take home papers, students are better able to demonstrate their understanding of the topic studied

A lot easier to manage with family emergency on the side

It was such a relief to not have 24 hours to produce 2/3 essays. The week gave me time to structure my answers and really develop an understanding of what I was saying rather than cram learning content and an exam being more of a memory test.

shorter lasting stress

It gave me time to think about my answers

A whole week is a bit long and you start to get lost in it all. 24 h is just enough time to make you feel comfortable without having too much time!

Because I live in a flat with only two bedrooms. One used by my brother for his work and the other used by my dad for his work. I was relegated to the living room which is very hard to study in. So the one week time allowed me to adjust with them and do the exam where I was able to focus.

Had enough time to come up with really high-quality answers

I was able to set my own schedule and set it around times I couldn't work

I have a very strong preference for the week take home paper. It is discriminatory towards students who struggle with time management. I am neurodiverse and have poor time-keeping skills, so it was very helpful to have the full week to work on my paper

I have caring responsibilities for my disabled brother, so I have to be on call to care for him at any moment of the day. the coursework was a good option for me because I had the freedom to leave at any time if he needed me.

1 week take home papers give you adequate time to produce your best work and are not too stressful.

The one week take home exam enabled to not be too stressed and really write everything that I had learned throughout the year without automatically regurgitate knowledge that I had learned by heart studying online has already been a big struggle and lots of obstacles happened besides from just technical issues. The online teaching quality is not as ideal as in-person so definitely the mode of exam should adjust as well, given that the study mode changes dramatically during Covid-19, it is equitable and impartial to reduce our pressure and allow more flexibility.

Coursework took a lot of the pressure off my shoulders - I was struggling mentally because I had to stay inside all day and prepare for exams. Coursework gave me a longer timespan to divide up my work into manageable bits

It made the situation feel the least stressful and enabled me to make the best of the bad situation.

I forgot to tick coursework earlier as well as 1 week but it doesn't let me go back. I preferred coursework because I had time to work on it and I could do my best. In the exam there was limited time, even though it was a week I had another paper to do that week and there was a lot of stress in the house.

At home difficult to arrange a specific time window so everyone is quite and won't disturb you

I could spend a lot of time and effort on each topic, making my answer much more balanced and thoughtful.

It allowed me to work efficiently and type out answers at an easier pace given I am not well acquainted with typing out exam answers still.

Able to write exam properly, week structure also helpful as I'm dyslexic.

I think that it gives me time to process information and write my best work.

I had enough time to plan ahead my schedule and I could deal with unforeseen circumstances.

I did the best in it

It allowed me to develop my argument in a more nuanced way.

coursework enabled me to plan and arrange my time between different subjects better

Q27 - Why did other modes not work for you?

Why did other modes not work for you?

Doing it in one day would be too much pressure and I would not have been able to perform my best in essay papers in 24 hours.

I hate timed exams, they are an ineffective way of measuring critical thought.

I think 24h is not enough given the imperfect "exam conditions" some of us have at home.

Other modes did work, but 24 hours was sometimes limited for exams with long and complicated essay questions. Coursework was actually another useful form of examination, although completion became less feasible due to difficulties in learning specific skills (such as quantitative and data coding skills) through online platforms.

It's hard to go through 24 hrs of exam when there are potential emergencies and when not living alone, it's hard to control noise and stuff for an exam environment

I think 24 hour exams would seriously stress me. The pressure of it being open book means that it can feel like the end of the world if anything that's unexpected comes up, so having as much time as possible to really clearly answer your questions means that even surprise content, or questions you were unaware of, feel more approachable. I am someone who takes a long time to write essays anyway, I get extra time in exams and timing is an issue for me, so a week long puts a safety net in place for me.

kept working on them

Not considerate of the situations that we were living in and time constraints

A whole week felt too long and allowed you to get side-tracked.

Too short of a time and hard to find space alone in the flat, so 24 hours was not good for me.

Year Long coursework, which I have to do this year, is an awful idea because of the cumulative burden and stress it places on me. I am saying this in reference to SP201

it is true that it was tiring to do the week paper; all the stress was prolonged for a week and it wasn't easy to get to sleep with the exams and covid

with a 24 hour exam I was at a disadvantage because I had to leave the exam to care for my brother, which gave me less time to complete it

24 hour exams are far too stressful

The coursework worked really well too, I really appreciated this mode of exam

Because the quality of online teaching is not as good as we were in-person, given that the teaching we received, I do think we shouldn't be pressurized with a limited amount of time to finish the exam.

1 Week Take Home Papers were difficult because I was constantly worried about late submissions and were back-to-back. 2 weeks of full days staring at my screen and writing essays were quite pressuring and stressful.

For coursework you have to prepare too long in advance and without adequate support this can be hard. 24 hours exam can be quite stressful...

In the exam there was limited time, even though it was a week I had another paper to do that week and there was a lot of stress in the house.

Exactly as above

Too stressful because of limited amount of time

N/A

24 hr exam was fine for sociology and social policy, as it's short answer questions, but would have been inappropriate for essay based questions.

It worked okay, but it can be a bit more stressful because the whole period you're thinking about the work you've got to hand in.

I faced unforeseen circumstances and I was doing poorly mentally.

24 hour was too time pressured and the 1 week one did not work because of overlapping with other exams

Other modes were examining what I could remember rather than how I thought through a particular argument.

24 hour exams were alright but would not be suitable for writing two essays given the implicitly higher expectations

Q10 - Did having the option to defer your papers help you better manage the examination process?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Did having the option to defer your papers help you better manage the examination process?	1.00	4.00	2.48	1.30	1.70	29

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes, very much so	34.48%	10
2	Yes, somewhat	20.69%	6
3	No, not at all	6.90%	2
4	I did not defer any papers	37.93%	11
	Total	100%	29

Q12 - How would you rate the support available during the deferral process?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Academic Support	1.00	5.00	2.38	1.03	1.06	29
2	Wellbeing Support	1.00	5.00	2.62	1.00	0.99	29

#	Question	Excellent		Good		Average		Poor		Very Poor		Total
1	Academic Support	24.14%	7	27.59%	8	37.93%	11	6.90%	2	3.45%	1	29
2	Wellbeing Support	17.24%	5	20.69%	6	48.28%	14	10.34%	3	3.45%	1	29

Q14 - Did you face any barriers to performing during the online examinations?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Technical Difficulties (e.g. difficulties accessing Moodle, uploading work, etc.)	10.20%	5
2	Unconducive Home Environments (e.g. lack of quiet or adequate study space, etc.)	28.57%	14
3	Mental Health Strain (e.g. increased stress, anxiety, isolation, etc.)	48.98%	24

4	No Difference	6.12%	3
5	Other Factors	6.12%	3
	Total	100%	49

Q14_5_TEXT - Other Factors

Other Factors - Text

Many of my personal problems affecting my mental health got really worse during the pandemic. I felt like I needed more proactive support from the side of the department. I know it was available to me, which I'm really thankful for, but sometimes it's really hard to reach out, and I would be really grateful if someone reached out to me instead.

Ramadan at the same time, I was fasting so it was difficult with the pandemic as well

My grandpa died during the one week exam but the department were extremely helpful and supportive so I was still able to perform well in the exams.

Q15 - Was LSE or the department able to do anything to alleviate any of these troubles?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Was LSE or the department able to do anything to alleviate any of these troubles?	1.00	4.00	2.38	0.85	0.72	29

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes, very much so	10.34%	3
2	Yes, somewhat	55.17%	16
3	No, not at all	20.69%	6
4	I did not face significant troubles	13.79%	4
	Total	100%	29

Q16 - In what ways was the support from the school or department helpful or unhelpful?

In what ways was the support from the school or department helpful or unhelpful?

The constant reassurance from emails from the department and the platform to communicate easily with them took a lot of anxiety off at the time. I also had issues with my microsoft account and, compounded with the moodle site having login issues, I could not submit my exam paper via the exam portal. My department let me to submit via email anonymously without any hassle.

I didn't really reach for help, as per above-mentioned reasons.

The department was helpful by providing up to date information and keeping students updated on upcoming changes

Department was helpful for changing exams to 1 week mode

I was able to fill in an exceptional circumstances form

nothing they could do. although school could have had different exam policy. (no-detriment policy)

Advising me on the option to defer

Deferral process was helpful. Lack of contact hours was unhelpful.

7 day exam to facilitate my troubles

I did not receive any support, but the decision to format the exams as week long take home papers was helpful

The teachers were attentive with their office hours

they gave me an extension but it was only for a few days, which I felt wasn't really enough time because of the load of my caring increased immensely during the pandemic (because my brother is vulnerable to the virus). the other option I had was to defer which I didnt want to do because it wouldn't make any difference to me, since I always would have caring responsibilities no matter what time I take the exam

they were so helpful

I didn't seek any help because I didn't think there was anything they could do.

They allowed me an extension for the exam deadline

No

Good support from the teachers

Being efficient in helping me with concepts that I did not understand and were the cause of my worry helped alleviate it

N/A

The social policy department was particularly supportive in comparison to other departments (my outside options) and I really appreciate that.

Helpful in that they were understanding

In what ways was the support from the school or department helpful or unhelpful?

The constant reassurance from emails from the department and the platform to communicate easily with them took a lot of anxiety off at the time. I also had issues with my microsoft account and, compounded with the moodle site having login issues, I could not submit my exam paper via the exam portal. My department let me to submit via email anonymously without any hassle.

I didn't really reach for help, as per above-mentioned reasons.

The department was helpful by providing up to date information and keeping students updated on upcoming changes

Department was helpful for changing exams to 1 week mode

I was able to fill in an exceptional circumstances form

nothing they could do. although school could have had different exam policy. (no-detriment policy)

Advising me on the option to defer

Deferral process was helpful. Lack of contact hours was unhelpful.

7 day exam to facilitate my troubles

I did not receive any support, but the decision to format the exams as week long take home papers was helpful

The teachers were attentive with their office hours

they gave me an extension but it was only for a few days, which I felt wasn't really enough time because of the load of my caring increased immensely during the pandemic (because my brother is vulnerable to the virus). the other option I had was to defer which I didnt want to do because it wouldn't make any difference to me, since I always would have caring responsibilities no matter what time I take the exam

they were so helpful

I didn't seek any help because I didn't think there was anything they could do.

They allowed me an extension for the exam deadline

No

Good support from the teachers

Being efficient in helping me with concepts that I did not understand and were the cause of my worry helped alleviate it

N/A

The social policy department was particularly supportive in comparison to other departments (my outside options) and I really appreciate that.

Helpful in that they were understanding

Q26 - In what ways was the support from the school or department unhelpful?

In what ways was the support from the school or department unhelpful?

Honestly I think they did everything they could and I have nothing but praises

I didn't really reach for help, as per above-mentioned reasons.

School was unhelpful with technical difficulties to upload exam on time when model crashed

N/a

-

N/A

see above

N/A

-

the LSE was not able to attenuate my home-life stresses

I didn't seek any help because I didn't think there was anything they could do.

There was no emotional support and I had to give detailed evidence though it was very personal

None

none

N/A

N/A

Q17 - Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your 2020 Online Examinations Experience?

Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your 2020 Online Examinations Experience?

Nope

I had a particular experience connected to deferrals. It was helpful insofar as it prevented some of my long term assessments from colliding with each other. On the other hand, postponing exams until summer effectively postponed them until the time when I felt even more disconnected from school and everything in general, what definitively affected my exam performance. Additionally, the environment in which I was (disturbed by my family members who were all also working from home, but effectively alone in my small room) exacerbated my existing mental health issues. All these feelings I had also

increased with time, so when around May I was able to sort of cope, around August I wasn't coping at all. In retrospect, I think I would prefer to have my exams collide than to write anything in the summer.

Online examinations should continue after the pandemic ends, as they are fairer, more effective and are better for students' mental and physical health

N/A

I think the fact there wasn't a no detriment policy like so many other universities had was a real shame for everyone. I feel at a disadvantage compared to other students in the UK due to this.

None

no

It was helpful especially for people like me where it is difficult to work alone and find space

The policy around extensions should be less strict, I believe an extension of up to 8 days should be granted immediately. Additionally, turning in a paper late by less than 12 or 24 hours should not be penalized under these circumstances and late submissions after should be discussed with the student to see if it is reasonable to avoid penalizing them.

I think it is INCREDIBLY important to note that the week-long exams equalised the academic challenge of examinations for neurodiverse students struggling with time management

1 week exams and coursework are definitely the best options

No

To help with planning, Timetables should be published earlier...

It was extremely stressful. I did not do as well I could have done because of the external circumstances I was in.

I am unhappy about the new adjustments - 3hrs to complete a paper

it would be better to have a lot of courseworks seeing the situation, rather than take-home exams. Some of my friends do not have exams as they carried out creative courseworks such as podcasts throughout the year.

N/A

No

Focus group interview guide

LSE CHANGE MAKERS: How did Social Policy Students Experience the 2020 Summer Online Examinations?

Sarah Ang
Shu Yan Tan
Ericia Lian

Focus Groups

Group size: 5-6 pax

Group 1: [Date / Time]

Link:

Participants

Name	Contact
1.	

Discussion Guide

Introduction:

- Greetings and introductions
- General purpose of discussion
 - To better understand your experiences of the online examination process and the support that you had received during this period of time. Our purpose of the study is to better address student wellbeing and provide feedback for the department going forward
- Recording and confidentiality:
 - We will be recording the zoom call for the purpose of transcription and reference
 - All information that is collected and used will be kept anonymous and confidential, and used solely for the purpose of this research project.
 - Please do help us by filling in the virtual consent form
- Ground rules

Part 1: Barriers to performance

- We would like to begin by first asking everyone for their general impressions of the online examinations last year / this year (i.e., generally positive? Challenging? etc.?)
- What were the major challenges, if any, that you faced during the examination period, including examination preparation and during the examination itself?
- From Survey:
 - The most common barrier faced was mental health strain, followed by unconducive home environments
 - Of the respondents who selected “unconducive home environments”, all lived in private flats/houses, and all but one lived with family members
- How was it different preparing for the exams?
- Most social policy examinations that took place were 1-week long coursework examinations (with the exception of SP110/SA101). What did you think of this mode of examination?
 - Was it more / less challenging?
 - Do you think it was an accurate representation / assessment of your learning?

Part 2: Support

- Did you use or access any of the support available from the school / library / department?
 - Assessment Support: LSE Life, LSE Careers, etc.
 - Mental health Support: Spectrum, counselling, disability & wellbeing service
 - Academic support: office hours, academic mentors
 - Department office (Jake & Clare)
- Why / why not?
- In what ways were they / were they not helpful?
- What suggestions would you make to improve student welfare
 - A suggestion previously brought up was more proactive support

Comparisons / Going Forward

- (If not previously raised) How would you compare your online examination experience this / last year compared to other years?
- Would you support online examination formats going forward? (yes/no/yes on what conditions)

Conclusions

- Final questions / experiences / suggestions?
- Thank you!