

Appeals Guidance Notes 2021/22

Before you submit an appeal

Please note, you may only appeal against results that have been formally ratified rather than provisional marks. It is also worth bearing in mind that in recent years, over 90% of all appeals which LSE received each academic session were unsuccessful; the vast majority of these were rejected because the candidates were unable to provide a good reason for not submitting [Exceptional Circumstances](#) within the normal seven day deadline.

Continuing students:

If you still have assessments to complete before you graduate (i.e. first and second year undergraduate, or a first year student on a two year postgraduate programme) , you can only appeal against a mark of Absent, Incomplete or Fail. If your circumstances do not relate to a failed course, then you are not eligible to submit an appeal.

However, you still have time to submit this information to the School under the Exceptional Circumstances procedure. This is because it can be considered by your Sub-Board at the end of your final year. Please see the School's [Exceptional Circumstances Procedure](#) for more information. You must submit this information within seven days of your last assessment in your final year at the very latest.

Mark Check Request

There is a separate provision to request an administrative mark check if you have either failed a course or you are no more than 3 marks away from the next higher classification boundary in a single course. Please see the following link for information on making an [Administrative Mark Check Request](#). If you intend to do this, your request must be submitted within the following deadlines:

- For ratified results published in July, administrative mark check requests must be submitted by **28 July 2022**
- For ratified results published in September, administrative mark check request must be submitted by **03 October 2022**.
- For results published in November, administrative mark check requests must be submitted by **29 November 2022**.

Please note that this process is completely separate from the appeal procedure. It is your responsibility to submit a Mark Check Request through LSE for You within the deadline.

Data and Confidentiality

The Assessment Regulations Team (ART) will process your personal information in line with the School's [Data Protection Policy](#).

Before proceeding with an appeal, please ensure that you read the full information about data and confidentiality on the [main appeals web page](#). If you have any questions about confidentiality or use of data in the appeals process, please contact the [Assessment Regulations Team](#).

Deadlines

A strict deadline applies to all appeals – please check the [main appeals web page](#) for up to date information about the deadline for your programme. All appeals and supporting evidence must be received by the ART by no later than 23:59 on the date specified for your programme. Any appeals or evidence received after this time will not be accepted.

Please note it can take up to 90 working days in which to conclude an appeal.

Submitting an appeal

A) How and when do I need to submit my appeal?

You have ten working days from the release of your ratified results on LSE for You in which to submit an appeal. You must complete an appeal submission form and send it together with any supporting evidence via ssc.appeals@lse.ac.uk

Please note that you must submit all of the information and evidence that you want the School to consider when you first make your appeal submission. If for any reason you are unable to submit evidence for any of the factors you believe affected your academic performance, this should also be flagged in your appeal form.

You may wish to seek independent, impartial advice from the LSE Students' Union Advice Centre before submitting your appeal. Their contact details can be found here; <http://www.lsesu.com/advice/>

B) On what basis can I submit my appeal?

You can make an appeal for one or both the following reasons (known as grounds in the appeals regulations):

(Paragraph 2.1.1) that the Exam Board did not follow the correct procedure such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if the correct procedure had been followed ('Procedural error');

For example, this might include that you think the Exam Board did not properly consider your exceptional circumstances.

Please also note that you **cannot** base an appeal on the questioning of academic judgement (for example, you if don't agree with the marks or feedback you have been given by one or more examiners).

and/or

(Paragraph 2.1.2) that there is new information about Exceptional Circumstances (ECs) that affected the examination outcome. The School's General Academic

Regulations state that "such circumstances would normally be sudden, unforeseen, out of the student's own control and proximate to the assessment(s) in question"

Paragraph 2.2 of the regulations stipulates that if you are appealing under 2.1.2, you must provide:

2.2.1. Evidence of the exceptional circumstances that affected the assessment in question, and;

2.2.2. Evidence of a good reason for not reporting those circumstances at the time, as set out in the procedure for submitting exceptional circumstances.

Under Paragraph 2.2 it will then be up to the ART to decide whether or not you have provided a good reason for not submitting information about your circumstances to the School on time through the [Exceptional Circumstances](#) procedure. If it determines that you have not provided a good reason then your appeal will be rejected regardless of the exceptional circumstances.

C) What evidence should I submit with my appeal under paragraph 2.2?

You must attach corroborating evidence of your circumstances with your appeal submission form when you submit via ssc.appeals@lse.ac.uk

Please see the [Standards of Evidence](#) guidance for more detailed information about the type of acceptable evidence.

It is your responsibility to attach all relevant documentation and to obtain an official translation at the time of submission.

If there is evidence that you have presented fraudulent documentation to the School the matter will be referred to the [Disciplinary Regulations for Students](#).

The School will not obtain any documentation on your behalf. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes any evidence which you may have submitted in support of other measures – e.g. such as obtaining extensions, etc.

Where the circumstances concern your health and wellbeing, the School expects corroborating documentation to clearly and concisely set out your symptoms, diagnosis and the period of time during which your health was affected. The School may not be able to consider evidence that was not written at the time of the assessment which you say was affected.

The School cannot attach any weight to technical medical reports, X-rays, prescriptions or photographs of your condition.

Due to data protection **we cannot accept information relating to a third party** (unless it is a death certificate). Rather, where the circumstances are that you were worried about a family

member/situation or a close friend, you will need to submit evidence to show how these circumstances specifically affected you and your exam performance. Any evidence we receive containing information relating to a third party cannot be considered as part of your appeal unless that party has given their express consent and will be destroyed.

D) How is my appeal processed?

You should receive an acknowledgement e-mail from the ART within 1-3 working days once your appeal submission has been submitted.

The ART will first determine whether or not you have identified valid grounds for an appeal, based on your submission and the evidence you have provided. Any relevant information from your academic record and/or academic Department will also be considered.

The ART will then decide if:

- you do not have a valid reason for appeal and it should be dismissed; or
- you do have a valid reason for appeal and your appeal should be considered by the relevant Exam Board

E) What happens next if the Assessment Regulations Team determines I do not have valid grounds for an appeal?

The ART will send you an e-mail explaining the reasons for why your appeal has been rejected under Stage One of the Appeal regulations.

Once you have received this decision you will have 10 working days in which to request a review of the decision under Stage two of the Appeal regulations on the following grounds:

(Paragraph 10.1.1.) A review of the appeal procedure already followed;

(Paragraph 10.1.2.) A consideration of whether the outcome of the appeal was reasonable in all circumstances;

(Paragraph 10.1.3.) Consideration of new relevant evidence, which the student was unable, for valid reason(s), to provide earlier in the process.

Any request to reconsider your appeal, even where new evidence is available, will not be considered if received after the 10 working day deadline. The outcome message will provide you with details of the deadline and how to resubmit an appeal.

Any appeal received by the deadline under Stage Two will automatically be passed to the Academic Registrar or a senior deputy. They will be asked to consider whether or not your appeal should be dismissed.

If the Academic Registrar or a senior deputy decides to dismiss your appeal, the ART will contact you to notify you of the outcome by issuing a 'Completion of Procedures' (CoP) letter, formalising the reason(s) for why your appeal was rejected.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal it will be open to you to make a complaint in writing to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#), having made sure that you have completed stages one and two of the appeal process if applicable. The OIA is an

independent body which looks in to the complaints from students against universities in England and Wales.

F) What happens if the Assessment Regulations Team determines that I have valid grounds for an appeal?

If your appeal is accepted, the ART will notify you of this decision by e-mail. This is the end of the appeal procedure. If you are dissatisfied with the way your appeal was handled up until this point you may request a review under Stage Two as per section E above.

If your appeal is accepted as you have identified valid grounds, the ART will pass your submission to the relevant School Board Chair of Examiners (either Undergraduate or Graduate). It is not possible to request a review of the School Board Chair's decision. For the avoidance of doubt the ART's decision to accept your appeal should not be taken as an indicator of the Chair's subsequent decision.

G) What type of decision may be given by the School Board Chair?

When the School Board Chair has considered all the information presented, they will either:

- uphold the Examination Board's original decision; or
- make a new decision. This decision could be to:
 - award you a degree; *or*
 - award you a higher degree classification; *or*
 - Discount (treat as a retrospective deferral) a failed course; or
 - allow you to take another attempt at a course or courses, or parts of a course or courses that you have previously failed.

If the Chair makes a new decision to award you a degree or a higher degree classification, the original marks for individual courses and parts of courses will not be changed. If you have already received your degree certificate you will need to provide photographic evidence that you have destroyed your original certificate before we can issue a new one.

The Chair's decision will be final. The ART will send you an e-mail to confirm the Chair's decision.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Appeal Process

1) What decisions can I appeal against?

You can appeal against the following decisions:

- a final degree classification;
- a decision not to award you a degree or to class you as a 'Final Fail';
- a mark or grade of Absent, Incomplete or Fail.

Please note, individual marks can never change as a result of an appeal and the School does not allow students to resit courses which they have passed.

2) On what grounds can I submit an appeal?

There are only two reasons (known as grounds) under which you may submit an appeal:

- *(Paragraph 2.1.1) that the Exam Board did not follow the correct procedure such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if the correct procedure had been followed ('Procedural error'); and/or*
- *(Paragraph 2.1.2) that there is new information about Exceptional Circumstances (ECs) that affected the examination outcome. The School's General Academic Regulations state that "such circumstances would normally be sudden, unforeseen, out of the student's own control and proximate to the assessment(s) in question"*

3) Can I appeal if I do not agree with the mark(s) I have been given for a particular course?

No. The School's view is that there are three acceptable approaches to marking which provide a highly rigorous assessment procedure: double-blind marking; sighted double marking; and moderated single marking, involving a second examiner. External examiners also review scripts from across the full range of marks for each course to ensure that the internal marking is consistent and of an appropriate standard.

During the marking process, and when your results are considered by the Exam Board, only candidate numbers are used. Therefore, examiners are unaware of your identity when your marks are determined.

The School is confident that its approach to the marking of students' summative work is sufficiently robust and therefore you are not able to call into question the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners. This means you cannot submit an appeal on the basis that you believe you have been given an inadequate mark by your examiners. There is no provision in the School's regulations for an assessment to be re-marked. However, it may be possible to request an administrative mark check. Please see the information under '*Before you submit an appeal*' above.

4) I submitted Exceptional Circumstances within the deadline but they don't appear to have been considered by the School. Can I submit them again as an appeal?

No. If you submitted an Exceptional Circumstances form to the School within the seven day deadline, then it will already have been carefully considered by the Sub-Board of Examiners responsible for your programme. Therefore, it is not possible to reconsider the same circumstances as part of an appeal.

5) I submitted Exceptional Circumstances on time but I now have new supporting evidence. Can I submit this to the School as part of my appeal?

Yes, but the School will need to determine whether or not the evidence you provide in your appeal contains brand new information which may have led the Sub-Board to make a different decision if it had seen this evidence at the appropriate time.

You will also need to provide a valid reason for why you did not submit this information to the School within the normal Exceptional Circumstances deadline.

6) I believe that circumstances beyond my control impacted on my exam performance but I did not inform the School about these circumstances at the time. Can I do so now?

For the majority of cases it is now too late for the School to consider your circumstances unless you can provide evidence of your circumstances (under paragraph 2.2) and a compelling reason for not informing the School within the seven day deadline.

You also need to have a borderline mark profile (please see section 9 below). For appeals made on basis of achieving a higher award, you must have a borderline mark profile in order to be considered. If your profile is not borderline the School cannot consider it regardless of the type or severity of your circumstances. This is because even if you had submitted Exceptional Circumstances on time your mark profile must be borderline for the Exam Board to be able to consider your circumstances.

7) What if I was unaware of how my circumstances impacted on my performance at the time?

The School operates a *fit to sit/submit* policy, where a student who attempts an assessment is declaring themselves fit enough to do so.

The School has various processes in place to assist you if you experience problems (ill health, family problems etc.) during the course of your studies. For example, you could apply for Individual Exam Arrangements if you have a long term health condition or disability. If you have circumstances which may affect your performance, you could apply for an extension in some circumstances or defer your assessments to the next exam session or interrupt your studies to the next academic year.

Since these processes are in place, the School's view is that when you attempted your assessment(s) you decided you were fit enough to do so.

If you felt that your academic performance had been affected by circumstances beyond your control, and those circumstances started after you commenced the assessment, you could have submitted [Exceptional Circumstances](#) to the School. This would have allowed the Sub-Board of Examiners to have considered whether or not your performance may have been affected by your circumstances.

The School expects all students to submit their Exceptional Circumstances within seven days of their final assessment. Timely submission allows Sub-Boards of Examiners to review individual cases within the context of all other cases from students on the same programme. This ensures that all students were treated equally.

This is why, if you are presenting new information about your circumstances to the School now, as an appeal after the release of your results, you will need to provide a compelling reason for why you did not submit an Exceptional Circumstances form to the School within the seven day deadline.

Results which were lower than you expected cannot be taken as an indication that there was a procedural error with the processing of your marks, nor that your performance was impaired.

8) Can I appeal if I believe a procedural defect took place during my exam?

If you believe a procedural defect occurred that negatively affected your exam performance then it was open to you to alert your Sub-Board about these circumstances through the School's Exceptional Circumstances procedure within the seven day deadline. Therefore, if you submit an appeal about a procedural defect during an assessment, you will need to provide information about what happened and a compelling reason for not submitting this information through the Exceptional Circumstances procedure within the seven day deadline.

9) What possible outcomes can I expect if my appeal is upheld?

Individual marks are never changed as a result of exceptional circumstances. Rather, for finalists, the normal classification rules can be suspended so that you are awarded a higher degree classification than your overall mark profile would ordinarily allow. Such cases would only occur where the Sub-Board believes that, as a result of your circumstances, your performance fell marginally short of a higher degree classification.

If you are a first or second year student and the Sub-Board believes that your circumstances have resulted in you failing or being absent from an exam, it may recommend that your failed or absent attempt be discounted (i.e. removed from your academic record) or a further exceptional attempt be awarded.

Sub-Boards and School Boards of Examiners are looking for very specific conditions before the normal application of the classification rules can be suspended. Such conditions may include that a student must;

- a) be very close to the next higher classification boundary (normally within 3 marks of a single full unit course; or 15 marks on aggregate for undergraduate students; or 10 marks on aggregate for postgraduate students),
- b) have marks in that higher classification range,
- c) clearly be able to show that the assessment(s) in question were significantly and negatively affected by exceptional circumstances which were unforeseen and beyond your control,
- d) be able to show that his/her performance in the affected assessment(s) was significantly out of line with their performances in other, unaffected assessments.

In light of these specific criteria, suspensions of regulation cases are very rare.

10) What if my appeal is rejected? Will I have the opportunity to make any further submissions?

Yes. Though only if your situation corresponds to the eligibility criteria for challenging your appeal outcome detailed under Section E – i.e. Paragraphs 10.1.1-10.1.3 of the Appeals Regulations.



11) If I am eligible, will accepting my degree certificate or attending a graduation ceremony affect the consideration of my appeal in any way?

If your appeal is upheld and this results in an adjustment to your degree classification, the School will simply re-issue you with a new degree certificate upon receipt of your original certificate. Accepting the original degree certificate or attending the graduation ceremony will not prejudice your appeal submission in anyway.

12) Are there any other points to note?

Whilst we shall do our best to try to adhere to the timescales set out in the School's regulations it is not always possible to do so. Where it looks like the School will be unable to process the appeal on time, the ART will inform you of the delay and the new time frame.

Please note that there is no requirement or expectation for you to be in London or the UK during the appeals process. All submissions must be made in writing. There is no scope within the appeals regulations to make a face-to-face presentation. Whilst the ART is happy to provide generic advice about the appeals procedure, it is unable to provide advice about individual cases.