Assessment Policies: Exceptional Circumstances Policy 2018-2019
(For new 1st year Undergraduate students starting 2018-2019)

Overarching Framework
Students may experience circumstances which are unforeseen and outside of their control that have a significant impact on their assessment academic performance e.g. in an exam or other form of summative assessment. Such circumstances might include, but are not limited to, illness, being victim to a crime, injury, personal/family problems or bereavement. The School defines exceptional circumstances in the General Academic Regulations as “sudden, unforeseen, out of the student’s own control and proximate to the assessment(s) in question”

The School offers four options for students whose assessment performance is affected by such circumstances.

Before an assessment deadline or examination sitting

1. **Extensions**: this applies to coursework and dissertations/projects only. Students who experience exceptional circumstances before an assessment deadline may apply for an extension.

2. **Deferral**: This applies when a student has received tuition but:
   i) is unable to submit an assessment by the published deadline or within the 10 working days allowed by an extension or
   ii) has determined they cannot sit an examination before entering the examination room due to unforeseen and proximate circumstances and wishes to postpone the assessment to another opportunity. This will normally be in the In-Year Resit and Deferral Assessment Period (IRDAP). The student may request a deferral before or on the day of an assessment, but not after the assessment completion deadline.

After an assessment deadline or examination sitting

3. **Exceptional Circumstances**: This applies to students who have attempted the assessment but believe their performance has been affected by circumstances beyond their control. This can include missing a coursework/project deadline. However, students who do not attend an examination without first seeking to defer will be marked as absent, which will count as one of their attempts at the assessment.

4. **Repeat Teaching (RT)**: A student who feels that circumstances prevented them from fully engaging with the teaching they received, and who have attempts remaining, may apply for RT. The student would be re-assessed in line with standard assessment pattern for the course(s) being taken e.g. in the January exam period or during term time and not in the IRDAP. Students may apply for RT upon receipt of their results.

This document should be read in conjunction with the School’s policy and procedures on Extensions, Deferrals and Repeat Teaching.
The Exceptional Circumstances Policy

Regulations Underpinning this Policy

- General Academic Regulations (for new Undergraduates starting 2018-2019)
- Regulations for Undergraduate Degrees (for new Undergraduates starting 2018-2019)
- Code for Good Practice in Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Appeal Regulations

1. **Exceptional Circumstances: Scope and Purpose**

1.1. Students must submit their assessments and sit their exams at the deadlines or times prescribed by the School. It is recognised that exceptional, serious and acute problems can arise that may genuinely affect a student’s ability to fulfil these requirements.

If a student experiences such difficulties prior to a deadline or exam sitting, the Extension Policy (for coursework only) or Deferral Procedures should be followed. The School determines that by submitting an assessment or by entering the exam room a student is declaring themselves able to attempt the assessment.

1.2. However, if a student has attempted an assessment and experienced difficulties which they feel may have had an impact on their performance, they may submit details of their exceptional circumstance for consideration by the Sub Boards of Examiners within the following deadlines:

- **January exams**: no later than seven calendar days after a student’s last exam;
- **Summative assessments during term time**: no later than seven calendar days after the submission deadline of a student’s last assessment;
- **Summer exams**: no later than seven calendar days after a student’s last exam.
- **In-Year Resit and Deferral Assessment Period (IRDAP)** no later than five days after the submission deadline of your last assessment in this period. This could be an exam or coursework.

1.3. If the seventh calendar day after the last assessment falls on a Bank Holiday, an EC submission form and evidence will still be accepted on the next working day after the bank holiday. Any documentation submitted after this deadline may not be considered by Sub-board of Examiners.

1.4. This policy applies to all forms of summative assessment which counts towards a degree classification. It does not apply to formative assessment.

2. **General Information, Requirements and Entitlements**

2.1 LSE academic regulations state that that students should request an Extension or Deferral prior to the assessment deadline wherever possible and the Sub-boards of Examiners reserve the right to determine whether or not it was appropriate for the student to attempt the assessment or whether they should have sought an extension or deferral.
2.2 LSE operates a ‘Fit to Sit’ Policy. Students are strongly advised not to sit an exam or undertake an assessment if they feel unable to do so.

2.3 EC submissions must be supported by adequate evidence. Please refer to the standards of evidence for the types of evidence required.

2.4 Students may submit ECs in relation to any assessment or component of assessment and must list on the EC form each component of assessment they wish to be considered.

2.5 If less than all components of assessment for a course are affected by ECs, the student will be expected to attempt and complete all other components in accordance with published deadlines.

2.6 Sub-boards of Examiners cannot guess, assume or predict how a student’s circumstances might have affected them. Therefore, students need to write a statement explaining how they feel the circumstances affected their wellbeing and their performance in an assessment or exam.

2.7 If the ECs are of a kind where the student feels their performance was affected because they were worried about somebody else’s wellbeing (for example a very sick relative), where possible they should provide evidence of that illness. However, in such cases the School will also need evidence of how these circumstances specifically impacted the student’s own wellbeing. Therefore, students should also provide information and evidence relating to the impact of these circumstances on their own health and wellbeing.

2.8 Submitting an EC form to the Student Services Centre is the only way for students to make the relevant Sub-boards of Examiners aware of their circumstances when it considers their results.

2.9 The School will consider all EC submissions in confidence. Information submitted through the EC procedure will only be made available to staff who are directly involved with the process.

2.10 Individual marks will never be changed as a result of ECs. For first year students, the Sub-board of Examiners can only consider ECs if a student has failed a half or full unit course, or been unable to complete all components of a course e.g. failure to submit an assessment or sit an exam and resulting in a Zero Incomplete mark. The Sub-board of Examiners may recommend that the failed, absent or non-submitted course mark be discounted i.e. removed from the student’s academic record, or a further exceptional attempt at the assessment be awarded. If the Sub-board wishes to make this recommendation they do so to the School Board of Examiners (SBE) as below:

- that an attempt at an assessment be discounted so the student may take it again. Where a first attempt is discounted, the student will be provided the opportunity to resubmit any failed components of that course. The marks for any passed components will be banked and contribute to the new mark. The mark for the new attempt will not be capped at a Pass. Where a resit attempt is discounted, the student will be allowed a further opportunity to attempt any failed components of that course. The new overall mark achieved will be capped at a Pass. All discounted attempts will take place during the IRDAP in the same academic year as the original attempt. Discounted resit attempts will take place within the IRDAP of the following academic year.

- that the student may be granted an additional attempt at an assessment. Where a resit attempt is discounted, the new mark achieved will be capped at a Pass. All discounted
attempts will take place during the IRDAP in the same academic year as the original attempt. Additional resit attempts will take place within the IRDAP of the following academic year.

2.11 It is an important part of the exceptional Circumstances procedure that information about exceptional circumstances are submitted before results are known. This is so that the Sub and School Exam Boards can properly consider them at the point of classification and if necessary suspend the regulations before results are formally released.

2.12 Exceptional circumstances that are not declared within the seven day deadline normally cannot later be taken into account, i.e. they cannot be used as the basis for an appeal unless there is an extremely compelling reason why the circumstances were not declared to the School within the seven day deadline.

2.13 Failing a course or failing to be awarded a degree is not considered to be evidence that the assessment was affected by exceptional circumstances.

2.14 For all continuing students who pass all of their courses, their submitted EC form will be filed and considered at the point of final classification. At this point, if the student has a borderline mark profile, the Sub-board of Examiners may consider whether to award a higher degree classification than their overall mark profile would ordinarily allow.

2.15 Any re-assessment approved will be undertaken without tuition and no fees are applied. Students may be offered, but are not automatically entitled to, additional tutorials or supervision. Students undertaking additional or discounted assessment attempts will have access to LSE’s facilities such as the library, LSE Life and other learning resources for study support, although there may be limited availability of some resources during LSE holiday periods.

2.16 Students with a declared disability will receive the Reasonable Adjustments or Individual Examination Adjustments (IEA) awarded for all other assessments when taking additional or discounted attempts. Please see here for information regarding applying for Individual Exam Adjustments or an Inclusion Plan.

2.17 The EC procedure is available to students at all levels of study.

3. Procedure for Submitting an Exceptional Circumstances Form and Evidence

3.1 Students must complete an Exceptional Circumstances Form. This must be accompanied by appropriate official corroborating evidence as set out in the School’s Standards of Evidence procedure.

3.2 The form must be submitted to the Student Services Centre (SSC). It is the student’s responsibility to provide all relevant documentation.

3.3 Students who can obtain corroborating evidence, but will not be able to submit the evidence within the seven day deadline must still complete and submit the form and clearly note on the form that the evidence will follow shortly. The evidence must then be submitted as soon as possible.
3.4 Where a student is unable to meet the evidence **standard** as set out in section 4.1 above, they must submit any corroborating evidence they do have within the normal deadline or as soon as possible. It is not possible for Sub-boards of Examiners or the School Board of Examiners to consider evidence once results have been formally ratified. Therefore, evidence must be submitted in good time.

3.5 Students are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with their Academic Mentor, in order to ensure full support and referral to other appropriate sources of support. However, students must ensure they also submit an EC form and evidence to the SSC.

3.6 Students will be sent an email to their LSE account confirming that their request has been received and a record that an EC form has been submitted will be kept.

3.7 Where students have submitted assessments throughout the academic year and/or main summer exam period and submitted ECs relating to a failed course, the ECs will be considered at the end of the academic year. If the ECs do not relate to a failed course they will be considered at the end of the degree programme when the Sub-board of Examiners determines the overall degree classification.

3.8 In cases where a student takes an assessments during the IRDAP and submits ECs relating to a failed course, the ECs will be considered in September.

3.9 Where a discounted attempt at an assessment has been approved, the fail or absence mark will not appear on the student’s profile in LSE for You or on their final transcript. If a discounted attempt has been granted and the student can be re-assessed, or if they have exhausted all attempts at the assessment and have been granted an exceptional third attempt, the Results Team will inform the student of this by email.

3.10 Where a student is aware of their circumstances before their results are known they must submit an Exceptional Circumstances Form within the seven day deadline.

4. Format and Marking of Re-assessment Due to ECs

4.1. Students will be assessed under the syllabus of the original assessment.

4.2. Additional or discounted attempt tasks will be as rigorous as the first assessment, and measure the same learning outcomes and breadth of subject matter.

4.3. Where it is not possible to exactly replicate the first format of assessment for a discounted or additional attempt e.g. a group project, an alternative method of assessment can be set with the agreement of the External Examiner. The alternative assessment will be as rigorous as the original assessment in the same way as above.

5. Students with Long-Term Health Conditions

5.1. Where a student has a longer-term health condition, they must contact **Student Disability and Wellbeing Service** directly as soon as possible so that LSE can ensure that reasonable adjustments are implemented to support study and assessments.

5.2. Sub-boards of Examiners and the School Board of Examiners will not be notified of any **Individual Exam Adjustments (IEAs)** that a student has in place or of their health condition. The **Disability and Well-Being Service** will not pass on any information about a student’s circumstances to these Boards. Therefore, students must submit an Exceptional
Circumstances Form if they feel that even with the IEAs in place, their performance in the assessment was impacted or if there are other circumstances which they wish to bring to the attention of the Boards.

5.3. Students who have informed their Department in person about a long-term health condition, or their experience of exceptional circumstances, must still submit an EC form with evidence. All marks and exceptional circumstances are considered anonymously at Board meetings and therefore, the only way in which circumstances can be considered by the Boards is by submitting an Exceptional Circumstances form with evidence to the Student Services Centre. This includes if a student has requested and was granted an extension but still feels that their performance was impacted by circumstances beyond their control.

6. Sources of Support

6.1. If a student experiences difficulties and requires advice, they may wish to approach their Supervisor or Academic Mentor in the first instance. Please note, however, that any information given to the department will only be made available to the Sub-board if the student submits an Exceptional Circumstances Form.

6.2. If a student would like further support in relation to sexual violence, including sexual harassment, a Safe Contact will be able to refer them to LSE and external specialist sources of support.

6.3. For specific advice on submitting the Form, and on degree and classification regulations, students should contact the Advice Team.

6.4. The Students’ Union Advice Service can also provide independent advice.