

## Student Guidance on Deferrals

You should normally submit your assessments or sit your exams at the first opportunity as this gives you the best opportunity to show your full academic potential and achieve the highest mark you can. However, you should not attempt an assessment if you are in any doubt about your capacity to perform to the best of your ability.

If you find yourself in a situation where you are not able to attempt or complete an assessment, or obtain a suitable [extension](#), you should request a [deferral](#). All deferral requests received on time will be considered by the Student Services Centre (SSC) rather than your academic department.

You should be aware that LSE has a **fit to sit/submit policy** – meaning when you attempt a summative assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to complete it (e.g. by submitting work, you are declaring yourself fit to submit, by entering the exam room, you are declaring yourself fit to sit the exam). “Fit” in this context does not only apply just to physical or mental health, but other factors which may affect your academic performance. You need to decide if you are fit and able to submit and if you are not, you should defer.

You will need to give a reason for your deferral request, with a clear supporting statement, and evidence that corroborates your statement. The [Standards of Evidence](#) (SoE) shows the type of evidence that will normally be required when you request an [extension](#), [deferral](#) or [Exceptional Circumstances](#) (ECs). Whatever evidence you submit, it is crucial that it confirms, either explicitly or implicitly, the impact upon you of your circumstances at the relevant times (for example, your assessment deadline) and is supplied by an independent third party that witnessed the impact or where the circumstances/timing are such that the impact can be clearly implied.

Decisions about whether or not to approve a deferral request will be made solely on your statement and the corroborating evidence you submit. Decision makers must be able to confirm your statement by looking at the evidence and so you should ensure that you submit sufficient relevant evidence.

LSE's preferred form of evidence is that provided by independent third parties as detailed in the SoE table. Where possible, you should submit evidence from independent third parties not connected to you or the LSE; for example, a GP, medical consultant etc. Such evidence is likely to be the most persuasive when decision makers are considering your case.

Please note, a letter written by an independent third party that simply repeats what you have informed them of will not be sufficient. Rather, the evidence needs to confirm their opinion regarding the impact your circumstances have on your ability to sit an assessment or meet the deadline. You should make every effort to obtain independent corroborating evidence of the impact your circumstances have on you. It is best not to rely on statements of support from LSE staff if possible. There are certain specific circumstances where staff can provide supporting evidence,

which are highlighted in the SoE. The circumstances concerned will dictate what they can reasonably be expected to provide to corroborate your statement. More information about staff providing evidence is provided below.

As the circumstances which might lead you to request a deferral are unique to you, it is impossible to say what will count as acceptable circumstances or evidence. However, the following non-exhaustive list details circumstances that are unlikely to be acceptable as reasons for a deferral:

- A description of a medical condition without reasonable supporting evidence (medical or otherwise);
- Medical circumstances that occurred outside the relevant assessment period;
- A medical condition supported by 'retrospective'/'post-dated' medical evidence; e.g. a doctor's note which states that you were seen after the illness occurred;
- If there is a reasonable case that your circumstances were foreseeable or preventable;
- Long term health condition for which you are already receiving adjustments;
- Minor illness or ailment, which in a work situation would be unlikely to lead to absence from work;
- Holidays;
- Internships;
- Unexpected work commitments (unless you are part time and can demonstrate the need to work is unexpected);
- IT problems (including with LSE computer/server/printing facilities);
- Poor practice e.g., no back up of electronic documents;
- Being unaware of the dates or times of submission deadlines or exam(s);
- Not being aware of relevant LSE policies, procedures or regulations;
- Poor time management;

#### Evidence provided by LSE staff

The SoE table clarifies that in limited circumstances, LSE staff might be able to provide evidence in support of student requests, such as, where it is not possible for you to obtain sufficient external evidence. Staff are not obliged to provide evidence. In these cases, Academic Mentors, Student Counsellors, Mental Health Advisers, or Disability Advisers might be able to provide a statement as evidence in support of requests to defer an assessment. Please note that staff in these roles can only provide supporting evidence if:

1. You have engaged with them sufficiently prior to the affected assessment(s) such that they are fully conversant with your situation and there is evidence of such meetings and/or correspondence.
2. The staff member is satisfied that there will be an adverse impact on your ability to submit coursework or sit an exam.
3. You have engaged with them proximately to the assessment(s) concerned so they can comment on your circumstances at that time, including any deterioration in your circumstances etc., and the likely impact upon you with regard to your ability to engage with your studies/assessments.

4. You cannot, for good reason provide other independent evidence to demonstrate that your circumstances were unforeseen, outside of your control and had a significant impact on your ability to study and/or take assessments.

Staff will not simply confirm what you have told them about any impact upon you. Furthermore:

- Staff members cannot provide or confirm a medical diagnosis - please do not ask them to do this. Staff will not be expected to comment on the quality or appropriateness of your evidence
- Staff must be given adequate notice to respond to enquiries about deferrals, and when a statement in support of your application is required. It is your responsibility to allow a reasonable amount of time. Staff should be given as much notice as possible to respond to enquiries. When a statement in support of your application is required, you should contact staff as soon as you feel able to do so
- Staff members cannot determine if you are fit or not to submit and you should not ask them to confirm this. Your fitness to sit/submit will be determined by the decision maker of the process concerned (extension request, deferral request etc.) based on your statement and the corroborating evidence

To be clear, the person providing the evidence (whether external or internal) does not necessarily need to be able to confirm your circumstances. However, for their evidence to be worthwhile, they must be able to attest to having witnessed the impact of the circumstances on you at the time in question; unfortunately, simply repeating what you have said, will not be helpful.

If you do not defer and you decide retrospectively that your circumstances had a significant detrimental impact on your performance in a way you could not have fully anticipated, you should submit ECs. ECs are the only way the Exam Board can consider information about circumstances particular to you.

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