

Student Guidance on Exceptional Circumstances (ECs)

If you feel that your performance in any assessment has been impacted by your circumstances; or have been absent from an assessment without having deferred it; or have submitted an assessment late without an agreed [extension](#), you must submit Exceptional Circumstances (ECs) for consideration. ECs are the only way the Exam Board can consider information about mitigating circumstances particular to you.

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](#).

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, or if you were unable to submit the assessment at all, you must submit ECs.

You will need to give a clear supporting statement for your EC submission, with a clear rationale why you were not able to defer the assessment or request an extension, and evidence that corroborates your statement. The [Standards of Evidence](#) (SoE) table has been updated for 2022/23 to show what evidence 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.

ECs will be considered by the relevant Exam Sub-Board at the point your results are ratified. You will not normally be informed about the outcome of any EC submission, unless any action is required from you, such as sitting a discounted failed or absent assessment. Aside from considerations around late submission penalties, ECs will never change an assessment or course mark. For further information about what ECs can and can't do, please refer to the [EC website](#).

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 complete the assessment or declare yourself fit to sit. 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 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 submit ECs 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 accepted** by the Exam Board:

- 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
- 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 examination(s);
- Not being aware of relevant LSE policies, procedures or regulations;
- Poor time management.

Evidence provided by LSE staff

The revised 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 EC submissions. 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 EC submissions, 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 submission is required, you should contact staff as soon as you feel able to do so.

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.

Deadline and late submission of ECs

The EC submission deadlines are listed on the [EC website](#), and will depend on your programme of study and whether you are taking resit assessments. You must submit ECs and any supporting evidence by this deadline to ensure they can be passed on to the Exam Board before your results are ratified. You should wait to submit your ECs until you have gathered any supporting evidence you wish to submit. If you do not have supporting evidence by the time of the EC deadline, you should still submit ECs with what you have available.

If you did not submit ECs in time and have **failed or been absent from an assessment**, you should follow the [appeals process](#) by the relevant deadline. Late ECs cannot be accepted for failed or absent assessments once results have been ratified and released to you.

If you did not submit ECs in time and have **final failed your degree** overall, you should follow the [appeals process](#) by the relevant deadline. Late ECs cannot be accepted for Final Fail classifications once results have been ratified and released to you.

If you are a **continuing student** (i.e. have not yet been awarded your degree) and did not submit ECs in time for any **passed borderline courses**, you can still submit ECs and should do so as soon as possible. These will be considered at the point of classification if you have a borderline mark profile at this point. If you are unsure whether this applies to you, please contact the Student Regulations Team via the [online enquiries form](#).

For further information about the borderline criteria for students that submit ECs, please refer to the relevant [Classification Scheme](#) and [EC website](#).

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