**Implementing a new method of assessment at LSE – key considerations**

New conditions or methods of assessment may require new considerations and departmental decisions. This document offers three levels of guidance;

* ***Information*** on current LSE regulations and practice
* ***To decide:*** areas where different practices are possible, and which departments are required to decide, ideally at the same time as the new assessment method is approved
* ***To consider:*** areas in which decisions are not mandatory, but which are useful to consider in advance of using a new form of assessment

This guidance is intended to promote consistency of student experience, and support academic and professional service staff.

## Word-length and assessment duration

There are no regulations regarding the word-length or duration of an assessment. There is also no formula for correspondence between methods, for example an essay of X words being equivalent to a presentation of X minutes. There are some existing norms within LSE: a full unit course is often assessed by a 3 hour exam, a half unit course by a 2 hour exam. For assessed essays, word-length increases across years of study.

Some word-length ranges for essay-assessed full unit courses:

* First year: 2 X 2-3000 word essays
* Final year: 2 X 3-5000 word essays
* Extended essay or dissertation: 7-10,000 words

Decide wordlength or duration base on the needs of the assessed task, and communicate this rationale to students.

***To consider:***

Word length and assessment duration should take into account:

* the task itself: how much time/wordage does the student need to demonstrate their ability?
* Student workload, including preparation, which should be roughly equal for all courses
* Departmental consistency: many departments use the same word-length/duration for assessments at the same level

## Weighting

There are no regulations on what weighting to assign an assessment.

The percentage should aim to reflect the work required of the student.

***To consider:***

Giving ‘token’ percentages for work that is essentially formative, to make submission more likely (such as allocating 10% of the final grade for a substantial essay), is discouraged as it may cause students to mis-allocate their time.

Assigning a percentage weighting to an assessment makes it subject to particular rules - if you are using several low-percentage tasks, see the guidance on ***S*maller assessment tasks, below**.

## Anonymity

Assessment should be anonymised where possible. Where anonymity is not possible (including in participation and presentations) the marking and moderation methods should ensure fairness and reliability. It is possible to use assessment conditions or methods which are not anonymous if they offer a clear pedagogic benefit. For example, requiring a student to devise their own summative essay question and discuss it with their tutor removes the anonymity of the marking, but has positive benefits.

## Can summative work be a revised version of formative work?

There are no regulations on this, but School practice generally avoids it. The exception is for dissertations, where parts of a draft are sometimes assessed formatively. For other courses, a task which supports the summative work but is not a full draft may be as effective (e.g. an essay plan, annotated bibliography, or draft abstract).

If Turnitin is used for the submission of formative work may later be included in summative work, the Moodle assignment can be set [to not send the formative work to the Turnitin repository](http://lti.lse.ac.uk/turnitin-faqs/), preventing false negative reports.

## Preparation for assessment

Students should be given clear advance guidance for every assessment, including marking criteria. Past questions should be made available where possible.

## Late submission

For summative work, LSE has a standard late submission penalty of a reduction of 5 marks out of 100 per 24 hour period until the work is submitted. The process for considering whether to grant an extension or to waive a penalty may be decided by an individual department (see 49-54 of the [General Academic Regulations](https://info.lse.ac.uk/Staff/Divisions/Academic-Registrars-Division/Teaching-Quality-Assurance-and-Review-Office/Assets/Documents/Calendar/GeneralAcademicRegulations.pdf).)

***To decide:***

**How will the departmental policies** **on extensions and waiving penalties work for any new assessment conditions or methods?**

How will the department apply late submission regulations to methods where there is an additional element of time constraint (e.g. take-home assessments)?

**[This involves proposing a change to General Academic Regulations.]**

## Attempts and resits

If the student does not make a valid attempt at a component, they must resit that component, even if their other results, averaged, attain a pass mark.

If a student does not pass the course, the current expectation is that they resit all failed components, even if they could potentially pass by resitting fewer components.

Resits should use the same method as the original assessment where possible.

For non-repeatable assessments such as participation or group-work a different method can be used. This method should assess the same intended learning outcomes.

[LINK to Erik Blair’s paper on suggested alternatives]

***To decide:***

**What constitutes a ‘valid attempt’ in a particular method?** LSE understand a valid exam attempt to be attendance at that exam, but for other methods this is at the discretion of the Departmental sub-board of examiners.

**What will the resit method be for each assessment?**

## Marking

Any summative assessment should be marked through one of the three accepted approaches of marking moderation: double-blind marking, sighted double marking, and moderated single marking. This is required across all weightings and methods of assessment. (See the [Assessment Toolkit section on Marking and moderation](https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Teaching-and-Learning-Centre/Assessment-Toolkit/Marking-and-moderation) for information including marking non-repeatable assessments.)

Graduate Teaching Assistants arepermitted to mark summative work.

***To decide:***

**How will all methods be marked/moderated,** including non-repeatable assessments?

**Are departmental marking criteria valid for new assessment methods?** Alternatively, will criteria for new methods be created, which relate to the main departmental criteria?

**Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

LSE has a responsibility to all students to ensure that they are supported to achieve the course outcomes. The  [Assessment Toolkit section on Accessible assessment](https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Teaching-and-Learning-Centre/Assessment-Toolkit/Accessible-assessment) offers key information relating to the questions below, and individual [Assessment conditions](https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Teaching-and-Learning-Centre/Assessment-Toolkit/Assessment-conditions/Assessment-conditions) and [Assessment methods](https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Teaching-and-Learning-Centre/Assessment-Toolkit/Assessment-methods/Assessment-methods) in the toolkit have more specific guidance.

***To decide:***

**What changes may be required for this condition or method of assessment?** This could include changes in circumstance, modifications to assessment and providing an alternative assessment.

**Are any new or revised marking criteria as inclusive as possible?** Do they focus on the outcomes of the course, and avoid assessing activities or behaviours which are less relevant, and which may not be possible for all students?

***S*maller assessme**n**t tasks**

If several smaller assessments are set throughout the course, these can either be given individual percentage weightings, or grouped in a dossier/portfolio which carries the percentage weighting. Both practices are currently used in LSE. Some courses also select the best four marks from six pieces, or similar.

Allocating individual weightings to the pieces introduces additional requirements, as the student must:

* make a valid attempt at every task
* resit any that they do not submit
* if they do not pass the course, resit any that they fail (see the guidance on Attempts and resits, above.

This may increase administrative and academic workloads for the assessment, particularly in cases of student non-submission.

***To decide:***

**Will individual pieces carry a percentage weighting,** or is a portfolio/dossier model more suitable? If the portfolio/dossier model is chosen, departments should decide:

* **what constitutes a valid attempt, both in terms of the number and content of individual pieces**?
* **Does each submission date still use the same penalty process as a summative coursework submission?** Is there a final date for submitting all pieces in the portfolio/dossier?

***To consider:***

Frequent smaller assessment tasks may have varied effects on students:

* increase student participation and engagement throughout the course
* reduce student stress during the traditional exam period but raise it during term-time
* If there are multiple deadlines, students with poor health or other pressures may need to apply more often for deferrals or extensions due to exceptional circumstances.
* It may require careful scheduling to avoid creating ‘crunch’ points
* it may change the profile of marks, for instance making it harder for a student to attain high marks over all pieces