

HE Student Examinations Handbook 2019 - 2020

**(For students studying for University of Essex awards at
South Essex College)**

Revised September 2019

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SECTION 1 BEFORE THE EXAMINATIONS

Checking that you are correctly entered for the examinations

The examination timetable will be published on Canvas and on the external College website, it will also be emailed to your College student email accounts. This will give times, dates and venue for your examinations. Prior to the main examination period students are asked to specifically check the electronic version of the timetable and their individual allocated exams to ensure that they are entered for the correct modules.

- Please report any errors **immediately** to the Course Programme Leader responsible for your programme or email heexaminations@southessex.ac.uk

Requesting special arrangements for examinations

Students with an educational or health-related condition may apply to the Examinations team for special examination arrangements using the application form available on Canvas. The deadline for submitting your request is given on the form and it is your responsibility, not your tutors, nor the Student Support Services office to notify our examinations team of any arrangements necessary prior to the deadline.

Your application is considered along with any supporting evidence (if this is not available at the time of submitting your application indicate that it will follow and send this as soon as it arrives) please do not let this delay your initial application. For more information on the support available, please refer to Student Support Services at hesupport@southessex.ac.uk.

If your application is approved, the Examinations team will put in place specific arrangements for your examinations. The applications take some time to assess and you should not assume that appropriate arrangements can be made at the last minute. Applications must be supported by documentary evidence from yourself or a qualified assessor (if this is not available at the time of application please state still being processed).

- Continuing students must re-apply each academic year in order that any changes in circumstances can be applied
- New students must submit their application as soon as possible after starting the programme using the Special Examination Arrangements form available on Canvas. This must be sent to the Examinations team as soon as possible (deadlines for these to be received are published on the Assessment Year Planner available in the student handbook and online and on the form).

If you have any queries regarding special considerations please contact the Examinations team on 220814 or email heexaminations@southessex.ac.uk.

SECTION 2 PREPARING FOR EXAMINATIONS

When are my examinations?

All end of module and resit examinations are organised by the examinations team and will take place between the dates below for 2019-20:

Month of examination	Final date of submission	All programmes - End of module examinations
January Exam Series 13th – 17th January 2020	Monday 2nd December 2019	All programmes - End of module examinations
May Exam Series 25th –29th May 2020	Monday 27th April 2020	All programmes - Resit Examinations (where approved by Examination Boards)
August (Resit Exam Series) 10th –14th August 20120	Not necessary to apply these will be carried forward from the above exam series	Resit dates subject to change

What days and times are exams scheduled for?

- Exams will be held on Mondays through to Fridays inclusive, normally starting at 09:30 (morning sessions) and 13.30 (afternoon sessions) daily. Precise times and dates will be given within the published examination timetable

How many Exams must I take per week?

The College applies the following guidelines to the exam schedule, and it aims to meet these guidelines wherever possible:

- Students will be required to take only one exam per day
- Where practicable a day between examinations will be afforded

When is the timetable published?

About two weeks in advance of the exam period.

The examination timetables are published on Canvas, the College website and sent to college student email accounts. The timetable will show:

- Module Code and Title
- Exam Date and Day
- Exam Start - Finish Times & Venue

Contact the Exams Office at heexaminations@southessex.ac.uk (01702 220420) if you have any queries regarding your examination timetable

Please check the timetable **carefully**, it is your responsibility to inform the Examinations team **immediately** (01702 220420) or email them at heexaminations@southessex.ac.uk if you think there are any errors. Please also notify them if you do not receive a timetable. If you have been granted special examination arrangements this will also be notified to you in writing.

Where are my exams held?

Information regarding the venue for your examinations will be published in plenty of time for you to find any venues that you are not familiar with. Make sure you know where the exam venues are.

- **Do not leave it until the morning of the exam!** Students in the past have missed exams because they went to the wrong venue.
- Large exams may be spread over several rooms or held at an external venue, so it is important that you check the form and don't assume you will be sitting with your friends or that it will be held at Luker Road.

How long are my exams?

Your exams could be between 1 and 3½ hours' duration, depending upon the individual module. Most exams are of 2 or 3 hour duration. Your Course Team Leader or Module Leader should advise you during the year, but the examination timetable you receive will show the exact start and finish time of each of your exams.

If you have been granted special considerations for your examinations, this may include the provision of additional time, usually calculated as additional minutes per hour. Your letter will show the correct duration for each of your exams, with additional minutes per hour included where necessary.

- It is important that you look carefully at your own timetable/letter and don't rely on your class-mates' information, as it may be different to yours!

Don't forget your Student ID Card

What will I need to take to my exams?

You will be required to display your student ID card on your desk whilst undertaking the examination.

In some examinations you may be allowed to bring items such as relevant text books or notes. Your Course Team Leader or Module Leader should advise you of such entitlements during the year.

- You must provide your own pens, pencils and calculators (if applicable). **Your pens and pencils must be contained in a clear pencil case.**
- Statistical tables will be provided where the exam requires them.

Can I use a calculator?

Calculators are permitted in some examinations. Your Course Team Leader or Module Leader should advise you during the year whether a calculator can be used in the examination for particular modules.

Some calculators and other electronic devices that function as a calculator, enable the user to store textual information. If you take stored information into an exam, on your calculator, you will be reported for committing an academic offence (cheating) because it is against University regulations to “introduce any written, printed or electronically stored information into an examination”. See section 5 for more information.

- Calculators are **not** provided by the Examinations team.
- The instructions of each exam paper will state if a calculator is allowed.
- Calculators will be checked during examinations.
- Your batteries can be easily drained if the memory needs to be cleared by our staff. Please bring spare batteries with you.
- Make sure there is no writing on your calculator or its case. If any is found you **will** be reported for suspected cheating.

Can I use a dictionary in my exams?

Dictionaries may only be used where the instruction of the examination paper permits that a dictionary of a specified type may be used by all students taking the exam, or where agreed in advance by special examination arrangements.

Electronic dictionaries are not permitted in the examinations and if you take one to the examination you will be reported on suspicion of committing an Academic Offence.

What if I am ill when revising for my exams or am unable to attend an exam due to illness?

It is very important that even if your revision is disrupted because of illness, you still try and prepare for the examinations as best you can and attend them if you are well. If you do not turn up, you will be marked absent and you will receive zero for the examination.

You have an opportunity to inform the Extenuating Circumstances Panel if you feel that your performance has been **significantly** affected by illness, by completing an Extenuating Circumstances form (See Section 6 for more information on this topic). If you are ill and unable to attend an examination it is important that you visit your GP to request that they complete the proforma attached to Form B Extenuating Circumstances claim form. (this is essential for missed examinations)

SECTION 3 ARRIVING AT THE EXAM VENUE

Check your start times carefully

What time should I arrive?

The time shown on exam timetables for each exam is the actual start time, i.e. the time when the Invigilator will let you turn the paper over and start writing. You are required to arrive **at least 15 minutes** beforehand. The exam venue will open 15 minutes before the published start time and it can take several minutes to find your seat and settle down before the exam starts. The Invigilator will also read out important announcements 5 minutes before the start.

There can be large queues outside the exam venues beforehand if you require peace and quiet to gather your thoughts, please still arrive in good time but wait quietly nearby, until you see that the candidates are starting to enter the room. Once seated and announcements are made, all candidates are required to be silent so that you can concentrate on the exam.

- Check where your exam rooms are in advance! Every year students are late for exams because they are looking for the room at the last minute
- University Examination Regulation 6.5 states that if you are more than 55 minutes late after the start of any examination of more than one hour's duration you will **not be allowed in**. You will receive zero for the exam.
- For examinations with a duration of up to one hour candidates will be admitted to the examination room up to 10 minutes after the start of the examination.
- Make sure you have an alarm clock or ask a friend to telephone you. If you are catching the bus, leave plenty of time for traffic delays.
- If you are late you will **not** be given extra time at the end.
- Check the start time carefully – we use 24 hour clock to avoid confusion e.g.: two o'clock in the afternoon is 14:00.

Where do I sit?

You are not seated alphabetically, so don't assume that you will be sitting next to your friends. There may be more than one programme being examined in each room, so you must check your timetable carefully and follow the Invigilators instructions when arriving at the venue.

- Don't follow your classmates or think that you are in the wrong room because there are people that you do not recognise.
- You **must** sit in the row allocated to you. If you sit elsewhere, you risk being marked absent and your script may not be marked.

If you cannot find your seat ask an invigilator for assistance, there will also be module boards at the end of each row to guide you. Do not ask your classmates if you have difficulty finding your seat, ask the Invigilator for assistance, that is their job.

Who are Invigilators?

Invigilators are employed by the College to run examinations and to ensure that they are carried out in accordance with the University's policies, procedures and regulations. Individuals seeking employment as Invigilators must demonstrate relevant experience and are interviewed for the post. They are familiar with academic life and will understand that examinations can be very stressful but they are obliged to ensure that the examination environment is fair for all students.

Each venue has several Invigilators, who are responsible for all activity in that area. They report directly to the Examinations Administrator. Invigilators work under the supervision of the Examinations team and carry out routine tasks during examinations.

The Invigilators must ensure good order in the exam room. This means that they must communicate with each other, with College staff and with candidates, either individually or en masse. It is not possible for every exam room to be completely silent from start to finish. If candidates have questions or problems during the exam, the invigilators must respond, which would necessitate their talking. This can be for **your benefit** – for example to correct an error on the exam paper or to solve a problem with the physical environment of the room. If you need to communicate with an invigilator you must raise your hand and wait for them to come to you.

- Do not hesitate to ask an invigilator if you need assistance.
- You should also draw to their attention to any irregularities that you feel they may be unaware of, such as students talking to each other or a mistake on an exam paper.
- Please co-operate with the staff and they will do their best to ensure your exam is generally as stress-free as possible.

What should I do with my coat, bag and mobile phone?

You must **not** take any of the following items to your exam desk (unless directed in advance). If you do, you are at risk of being reported for cheating if notes or other written materials are found in your belongings:

- Coats, bags and briefcases
- Diaries, folders, revision notes or text books (unless approved)

Leave all of your belongings at the back of the room or in the allocated area

All these items **must be left at the back of the room or in the allocated area**. A member of the Examinations team will remind students of this in the starting announcements. If you have taken anything to your desk by mistake, you must tell an invigilator and remove it before the examination starts. The College does not accept responsibility for your personal belongings so please bring only essential items to the examination venue.

Mobile phones should not be brought into the examination as they provide a means to communicate with other students, either inside or outside of the examination room.

- If you are found with a mobile phone on your person during an examination you will be reported on suspicion of cheating, whether or not you have been seen using it.

What are all the announcements for?

When everyone is seated, the Invigilator will make the starting announcements. During the announcements you will be reminded that you must not talk, and that all personal belongings are to be left at the back of the room or in the allocated area. Please listen very carefully, even if you have taken examinations at the College before. The announcements remind you of the rules and procedures and advise you what to do in case you need assistance during the examination. There may also be important instructions about completing your examination paper and writing your answers in a specific booklet.

SECTION 4 DURING THE EXAM

Starting the Exam

- Check that the question paper in front of you has the correct code and title. If it is wrong, notify an invigilator immediately.
- Do not turn the exam question paper over until you are told to by the invigilator. If you do, you can be reported for cheating.
- **Read the instructions.** This is the instructions for candidates and it tells you how many questions must be answered, whether there is any choice of questions etc. You should read this carefully even if you think you know what is expected.
- Complete the front of your answer book, writing in your student ID number. This can be found on your *student ID card*. This number is used to mark your script anonymously. Please check that you have written the number correctly. Do not write your name on the answer book.

Making use of material from your coursework

Exam papers are carefully constructed in order to eliminate, as far as possible, the opportunities for replicating material from your coursework assignments in examinations. You are reminded that you should not draw heavily on the content of previously submitted coursework in order to answer examination questions as this is likely to affect the marks you can obtain for your examination. It is important to read the questions carefully – although an exam question might refer to the same topic, literary text or case study as something you have covered in a coursework assignment, it is likely that the exam question will be constructed differently and will require original thought to answer it well.

Making rough notes

- Scrap paper will **NOT** be provided during examinations. All rough work must be written in the answer book(s) provided. A line should be drawn through any rough work to indicate to the examiner that it is not part of the work to be marked.
- If you have a learning difficulty and require separate answer books for rough work and final answers (arranged in advance by completing a special examination arrangement form), you will be required to hand them all in at the end.

Ensure that your handwriting is clear

As students make increasing use of technology for everyday learning and study, it can be very difficult to write by hand for an extended period, as you will be required to do in your examinations. It is important that you write legibly. If the marker cannot read any or all of your script, s/he will not be able to allocate you any marks for the illegible work and you risk failing the examination. Practice writing your revision materials by hand if you normally use a computer

Asking for help

If you have any questions at all about the exam, you must ask an invigilator. If you speak to another candidate you will **both** be reported for cheating as it is against the University' of Essex examination regulations to communicate with another candidate in an examination (Regulation 6.12)

Please raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to come to your desk. An Invigilator is also more likely to have the correct answer to your query than another candidate. S/he will either help you immediately or will contact a relevant member of academic staff. You must inform an Invigilator if:

- You think another student is cheating
- You don't understand the instructions on the exam paper
- There is some problem or disturbance caused by another candidate or something outside the room.
- You think there is a mistake on the exam paper
- You need extra answer books/sheets
- You need to leave the room

***Always ask the
Invigilator if
you need
anything***

Do not wait until the end of the exam. If you complain after the exam, it is much more difficult to remedy any problems.

Can I eat and drink?

Light refreshments such as bottled water and unwrapped boiled sweets may be consumed quietly but the Invigilators can ask you to stop eating or drinking if you are disturbing other students. Plan ahead – see what time your exams are and eat a good breakfast or lunch beforehand.

May I visit the toilet?

If you need to visit the toilet, you will not be given any additional time. All students using the toilet during exams are escorted by an Invigilator and in the large venues you may have to wait until an invigilator is available. We advise you to visit the toilets before starting the exam. Students are not allowed to leave the exam during the last 30 minutes, in order to preserve a quiet environment. The invigilators may refuse you permission to visit the toilet if they feel that it will cause unnecessary disturbance to other students.

- The toilets are checked carefully before and during exams to make sure that students do not hide notes, to be retrieved during the exam.
- If you are seen or heard looking at any notes about your person during a toilet visit, you will be reported for suspected cheating.
- If you have finished your exam and there are more than 30 minutes remaining, do not visit the toilet just to pass the time or stretch your legs as it disturbs other candidates.

Can I leave early?

University of Essex Examination Regulation 6.5 states that you cannot leave the exam room during the first 55 minutes or during the last 30 minutes of the exam. Students taking exams of 1 or 1.25 hours' duration will be permitted to leave the examination room permanently only with the permission of the invigilator.

- If you have finished and you want to leave you must raise your hand and wait for the invigilator to come to your desk and collect your paper.
- You will not be allowed back to the exam after you have left. We advise students to stay for the whole of the exam so that they can be sure to have demonstrated their potential to the full.

Finishing the examination

At the end of the examination, you **must** stop writing when requested to do so by an Invigilator.

Check that all your work is securely fastened together, particularly extra sheets and that the front(s) of the answer book(s) have been completed. The invigilator will check that you have done this properly when s/he collects your answer book(s).

The invigilators may have as many as 200 answer books to collect, often for more than one exam paper. Please be patient, it may take 10 minutes for all the answer books to be collected and counted. When they are sure that all candidates' work is accounted for, you will be allowed to leave the room.

- If you continue to write after being told to stop, you will be reported for committing an Academic Offence.
- Do not talk to any other candidates whilst the answer books are being collected and counted.
- If there are other exams continuing in the same room or nearby, please collect your belongings and leave **quietly**.

***Don't talk when
papers are
being collected***

SECTION 5 CHEATING (ACADEMIC OFFENCE)

Why does the University take cheating seriously?

The College strives to provide a controlled and fair examination environment for all its students, to enable each student to demonstrate his or her real potential in written examinations. This ensures that the standards of our academic awards are maintained and respected in the UK and internationally. To achieve this, in addition to providing suitable facilities for examinations, the College must prevent, detect and punish students who cheat, so that students who are honest can be confident that examinations are run fairly.

At enrolment/induction you signed a declaration agreeing to abide by the regulations of the College. Copies of College regulations, policies and procedures were available at induction and are also available within the Higher Education student handbook and available on Canvas <http://www.southessex.ac.uk/higher-education/higher-education-policies>

What is cheating, in an examination?

The Invigilators will report every student that they suspect of cheating. The following actions will result in your being reported (this list is not exhaustive):

- Talking in the examination room once the announcements have commenced
- Communicating, or attempting to communicate with another student
- Looking at the exam questions or writing in your answer book before the Invigilator announces that you may start the exam
- Taking a calculator or calculator case that has been written on into an examination
- Inserting notes or used scrap paper into a permitted book or text
- Taking any books, written materials or notes to your desk, no matter how short (unless permitted). Taking an electronic dictionary to your desk
- Taking electronically stored information on a calculator to your desk
- Continuing to write after the Invigilator has instructed you to stop

Every year, students are reported for suspected cheating because they have taken revision notes to the desk. It is quite usual to do last minute revision as you are waiting to go into the exam room. Once you enter the room, you must leave all notes and papers at the back of the room or in the allocated area

***Why take the risk?
Even a post-it note could
contain information that
could assist you to cheat***

What happens to cheats?

All cheating cases are reported immediately to the relevant Head of Faculty, who will consider each case under the Academic Offences Procedures. You will be required to meet the Head of Faculty or attend an Academic Offences Committee before your penalty is decided upon.

The penalties can be very serious. Marks for individual papers or entire modules can be reduced or set to zero, affecting your overall degree result. In very serious cases or repeated offences, the ultimate penalty is that you are required to withdraw from the College.

Where can I find out more?

The University of Essex Examinations Office has prepared a series of web pages which explain the regulations on academic offences in examinations and use examples to help you understand how you are expected to behave in an examination. You are advised to read these pages carefully before taking your first examinations, even if you have studied in a UK school or university before:

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/plagiarism/cheating.html>

SECTION 6 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Disturbance in the exam room

If you feel that your performance in an exam was affected by the physical exam environment, you should tell an invigilator. The Invigilator will submit a report to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, so that they are aware of any disturbance. You do not need to submit an Extenuating Circumstances form for this.

Mistakes on the exam paper

The Invigilator will automatically submit a report to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel if there were any errors on the exam question paper, so that they know of the time taken to correct the error and the impact upon candidates' ability to answer the question. You do not need to submit an Extenuating Circumstances form for this. It is University policy that additional time is **not** awarded in such cases, owing to the difficulty of ascertaining which candidates had and which had not attempted the erroneous question.

What if my performance was affected by illness or other personal problems?

You may want to draw the Extenuating Circumstances Panel's attention to difficulties of a medical or personal kind which you believe have **significantly** affected your examination performance and/or your performance during the academic year. We use the term "Extenuating Circumstances" to describe such difficulties. The College produces guidelines to describe exactly what you need to do and a form for students to fill in, with details of their circumstances. You should:

- **Read the guidelines** carefully before completing the form, for advice on what supporting evidence is required and important information about how extenuating circumstances are dealt with. **For missed examinations a medical certificate from your GP is essential.**

Extenuating Circumstance forms must be submitted by the deadline – these are given on the Assessment Year Planner

Complete an Extenuating Circumstances form B using the links on Canvas and ensure you read the guidelines and policy carefully and complete thorough information following the prompts within the claim form.

- **Attach** evidence of your illness or other difficulty.
- **Submit your form** and any supporting documentation to Colette Coleman, Head of Higher Education and Access (Quality), by the deadline stated on the Assessment Year Planner and you will be provided with a receipt for your form. Please note that we will not accept forms after the deadline date.

The deadline for submitting Extenuating Circumstances forms is very important both for missing coursework during the year and at examination periods because the Extenuating Circumstances Panel operate to a tight schedule, meeting soon after the end of exams. Forms submitted late will not be accepted and cannot therefore be considered by the panel. Please note you must submit medical evidence for missed examinations.

Even if you have discussed your case with a member of staff, **you** are responsible for submitting a form. You will not be able to appeal against your results on grounds of extenuating circumstances if you could reasonably have reported them by the published deadlines.

SECTION 7. AFTER THE EXAMINATIONS

How will I get my results?

All marks are provisional until the Board of Examiners meet soon after the end of term (dates available on Assessment Year Planner). After the Examination Boards have met confirmed results are published on the College website. At this point you will be notified if you have been asked to undertake resits in either coursework or examinations or whether you can progress to the following year or have obtained an award.

What happens if I have to do a resit examination?

If you are granted a resit examination by the Examination Boards these will take place from 12-16 August 2019 inclusive. A more detailed letter giving the actual date, time and location of your examination will be sent out by the Examinations team nearer the time. The resit examination timetable is normally produced by the end of July.

Students must make themselves available for any resit examinations that may be necessary

**Resit examinations will
be held Monday
10th August – Friday
14th August 2020**

The procedure for resit exams is:

- Your online assessment results published after the Examination Boards will state whether you have been offered a resit exam in any of your failed modules.
- The exam timetable will be published by the end of July on Canvas and the College results website, giving dates, times and venue for your resit exams
- If you had individual arrangements for the main exam period, these will automatically be applied to your resit exam(s).

All resit exams must be taken at the College.

The dates of the resit exam period are published at the start of the year on the Assessment Year Planner which is available on Canvas and in the Student Handbook. If you choose to buy a flight home before receiving your examination results, you must pay for a new ticket. This is insufficient reason to be absent from a resit examination. Similarly if you had booked a holiday during the resit period, this would not be sufficient reason to be absent.

This handbook is available in alternative formats on request Contact: 01702 220500