

Academic year reform implementation

Frequently asked questions – Information for students

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GENERAL

1. Why has the LSE changed the structure of its academic year?

The School changed the structure of its academic year to improve the student learning experience. Delivering existing volumes of academic course content across longer teaching terms has created the conditions for more effective student learning. The extra term-time week allows departments the space and flexibility to offer innovative forms of teaching and assessment, and to deliver (with School services) additional study skills support. The introduction of Lent Term 'Week 0' exams for [some courses](#) also allows assessment on those courses to take place at a time closer to the corresponding teaching.

2. How is the structure of the 2015-16 academic year (and thereafter) different from earlier sessions?

In 2015-16, the School has moved to a system of two 11-week teaching terms and a 7-week Summer Term. A new exam period will also be held in the week prior to the start of Lent Term for some courses.

DATES

3. What are the term dates for this year?

Michaelmas Term 2015: Thursday 24 September – Friday 11 December

Lent Term Exams 2016: Monday 4 January – Friday 8 January

Lent Term 2016: Monday 11 January – Thursday 24 March

Summer Term 2016: Monday 25 April – Friday 10 June

4. What are the closure dates for this year?

Christmas: Wednesday 23 December 2015 – Friday 1 January 2016

Easter: Friday 25 March – Thursday 31 March 2016

May Bank Holiday: Monday 2 May 2016

Spring Bank Holiday: Monday 30 May 2016

Summer Bank Holiday: Monday 29 August 2016

5. What are the other important dates for this year?

Early degree-specific registration	From 24 August 2015
Pre-sessional registration	From 25 August 2015
Pre-sessional teaching	25 August – 25 September 2015

Main registration period	18-25 September 2015
Welcome Week	21-25 September 2015
First day of MT teaching	28 September 2015
MT WK6	2-6 November 2015
Graduation ceremonies	14-17 December 2015 (i.e. for 12-month MSc students)
LT0 exams	4-8 January 2016
First day of LT teaching	11 January 2016
LT WK6	15-19 February 2016
First day of ST	25 April 2016
Exams	3 May – 10 June 2016
Graduation ceremonies	13-15 July 2016 (i.e. for UG and 9-month MSc students)

READING WEEKS

6. I've heard that LSE has introduced reading weeks in 2015-16. Does this mean I'll get a break from all of my courses in the middle of each term?

Unlikely. Departments will use the extra week in Michaelmas and Lent Terms in different ways – see below. Accordingly, you must be in attendance across both terms, and do not plan internships, work experience or travel for the reading week.

7. How will my department use the extra term-time weeks in Michaelmas and Lent Terms?

At the time of writing, known departmental plans are as follows. If your home department is not listed, please check its website for more information.

<u>Approach</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Departments</u>
Pure reading weeks	Some departments plan to hold department-wide reading weeks, with no scheduled activities. This approach will preserve space in the middle of the term for students to consolidate their learning and to prepare assignments.	Anthropology, Economic History, European Institute, Gender, Methodology, Geography and Environment, Media and Communications,
Mixed reading weeks	Some departments plan to hold department-wide reading weeks, but have permitted programme directors and individual course conveners to determine how best to make use of the time. Some courses (i.e. within the same dept) plan to offer a pure reading week, while others will hold essay-writing and advice sessions; research methods and design workshops; skills development training; film viewings; and applied case studies, to name but some of the additional learning activities that departments have reported.	International History, International Relations, Language Centre, Management, Methodology, Government, Sociology
Formal teaching + mixed reading weeks	Some departments have left both the decision about whether to hold a reading week and what to do during it to individual course conveners. Some courses (i.e. within the same dept) will feature teaching across all 11 weeks (e.g.	Accounting, Law, Statistics, Social Policy

lectures in WK1-10; classes/seminars in WK2-11; or formal teaching in WK1-10 and revision teaching in WK11); while other courses will feature WK6 reading weeks, of which some will host additional learning activities.

Formal teaching	Some departments have confirmed that they will teach across all 11 weeks of term in all courses (e.g. lectures in WK1-10, classes/seminars in WK2-11; or formal teaching in WK1-10 and revision teaching in WK11).	Economics, Finance, Mathematics, Social Psychology
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8. What if during reading week I have formal teaching on one course that clashes with an activity on another course?

In practice, there should be very few clashes of this kind. Courses that run a learning activity in WK6 will do so during the normal lecture or class/seminar slot for the course in question (i.e. where it is a course-specific activity); or during the normal lecture or class/seminar slot for the core course (i.e. where it is a programme-specific activity). Scheduling additional learning activities in this way will mean that they should not clash with formal teaching on other courses.

There are a handful of courses, however, that plan to run additional learning activities that will take longer to deliver than the length of the corresponding lecture or class/seminar slot (e.g. film screenings/discussions). In such cases, the activity will need to be truly 'additional', in the sense that a student will not be disadvantaged in assessment if she/he has to miss it owing to a clash with formal teaching.

EXAMS

9. Which courses will be examined in Lent Term Week 0 2016?

The list of courses that will be examined in LT0 next year can be found [here](#).

A dedicated 'Lent Term Week 0 Examinations' webpage is now available online [here](#). You can find information about:

- Lent Term Week 0 Examination Timetable;
- Re-Entry of Deferred, Discounted or Failed Examinations for Lent Term Week 0;
- Visa Guidance: Non-UK/EEA Students with Lent Term Week 0 Re-sit Assessments;
- Individual Examination Adjustments;
- Applying for IEAs in Lent Term Week 0;
- Illness and Other Exceptional Circumstances;
- Overseas Examination Arrangements.

10. When will the LT0 2016 exam schedule be available?

30 November 2015

11. Can students on 30 week contracts stay in halls of residences during LT0 2016?

LSE student residents in Carr-Saunders, Rosebery and Passfield Halls who are required to attend examinations during the week commencing Monday 4 January 2016 can now make contact with the reception desk in their hall to arrange to extend their stay to arrive back

early after the vacation. Term time rates will apply for each additional night booked from Sunday 3 January onwards.

Students who wish to extend their booking should visit the reception of the hall between Wednesday 7 October and Friday 19 October to reserve their room. Students who wish to book after these dates, will be subject to availability and will pay a student vacation rate. Students who are late arrivals (e.g. students who have not yet arrived to the hall) should contact the hall by 31 October at the very latest to complete their bookings.

12. If you have received Repeat Teaching

If you receive repeat teaching for a course, you are examined on the syllabus for which you last received the teaching. So, if you received teaching in 2015/16, you will be examined on the 2015/16 syllabus. It is not possible for you to be examined on any other syllabus. This means that if the course(s) you are having repeat teaching in is now assessed using a January exam you will need to take that exam in January.

You may only receive repeat teaching for the courses that have been formally agreed by the Repeat Teaching Panel.

13. If I fail/bad fail or defer a LT0 exam, can I re-sit or make the deferred attempt in the Summer Term?

No. The absence of autumn re-sits would make it inequitable for students who fail LT0 exams to re-sit in the Summer Term (i.e. because students who fail in Summer Term have no equally proximate re-sit opportunity). School regulations have been amended to clarify that re-sits or deferred attempts can only be made in the equivalent exam period the following year.

The only exception to this rule will be in the 2015-16 transitional year, e.g. if a student fails, bad fails or defers a ST 2015 exam in one of the courses that from 2015-16 will be examined in LT0.

Resists/Deferrals/Interruptions

Scenario 1 – Your exam is moving in entirety from the Summer Term to LT week 0 and nothing else is changing i.e. all assessment for the course remains the same and the exam is the same format and weight:

You will take the exam in LT0 with all other students. It will not be possible for you to take the exam in the Summer Term. However, if you are unable to travel to London in January, for good reason, you may apply to sit the exams overseas.

e.g. EH401 was formerly assessed 100% by a two-hour exam in ST. It will now be assessed 100% by a two-hour exam in LT0. So as a resit student you will sit your exam in LT week 0 (4-8 January 2016).

Exams that fall into this category in 2015/16 are PH228, PH230, ST226, ST302, ST306, EH401, EH402, EH413, EH414, EH463, EH481, GV441, GV443, GV467, GV4C9, GV4G4, LL4A8, LL4BH, LL4CD, LL4CL, LL4CN, LL4F4, LL4K9, LL4Z6, PH428, ST409, ST422, ST425, ST427, ST435.

Scenario 2 – Your exam is moving from the Summer Term to LT Week 0 and other changes have been made to the course i.e. the exam comprises a larger or smaller proportion of the overall assessment for the course; additional assessment methods are being used or the syllabus has changed:

If the syllabus (teaching material) for the course has changed, your Department will set a paper appropriate to the material you studied and this will carry the weight it did at the time you studied. However, the exam will take place in LT0 with all other students. It will not be possible for you to take the exam in the Summer Term. However, if you are unable to travel to London in January, for good reason, you may apply to sit the exams overseas.

If the syllabus (teaching material) has not changed (i.e. just the assessment methods have changed) your Department will set a paper appropriate to the assessment methods in place when you received the teaching on your course. This may mean that you sit a longer or shorter paper than other students sitting the exam at the same time as you. However, the exam will take place in LT0 with all other students. It will not be possible for you to take the exam in the Summer Term. However, if you are unable to travel to London in January, for good reason, you may apply to sit the exams overseas.

e.g. AC411 was formerly assessed 100% by a 90 minute exam in ST. It will now be assessed 70% by a two-hour exam in LT0, plus an essay (15%) and project (15%). So as a resit student you will sit your exam in LT week 0 (4-8 January 2016).

Exams that fall into this category in 2015/16 are AC411, PH430, PS400, PS404, PS429.

Scenario 3: The exam element of the course has been split between the ST and LT week 0 exam periods.

In these cases your Department will set a paper that matches the previous exam timings. You will sit one exam in Summer Term to reflect the previous timings.

You should note that if an exceptional second deferral is approved, or you need to utilise a third attempt, and will therefore be sitting in 2016/17 these transitional arrangements will NOT be in place and special individual arrangements may have to be made.

e.g. EC102 was formerly assessed 100% by a three-hour exam in ST. It will now be assessed 50% by a two-hour exam in LT0 and 50% by a two-hour exam in ST. So as a resit student you will sit one exam in Summer Term (3 May – 10 June 2016).

Exams that fall into this category in 2015/16 are EC100, EC102, MA100, ST102.

14. If you need to Defer your Week 0 LT Exam

Before the School Closure

If you wish to apply to defer a week 0 LT exam before the School closes on Wednesday 23rd December, please follow the normal process outlined at lse.ac.uk/deferral

During the School Closure

Please complete the deferral form and collate the evidence as soon as possible. After this make contact with the relevant person in your Department to arrange authorisation. You may be required to bring the form into LSE, in person, on 4th January. If you are unsure of who to contact within your Department please contact ssc.advice@lse.ac.uk

After the School Closure i.e. during the LT 0 exam period

Please follow the normal deferral application process.

If you are seeking to defer a week 0 LT exam, please be aware of the following:

- If you are taking an exam for a course which is split over the LT 0 and ST exam periods, you can only apply to defer the LT 0 exam at the time proximate to your LT 0 exam. If you wish to subsequently apply to defer the ST exam, you must do this at a time proximate to the ST exam.

- If you miss a LT 0 exam and have not applied to defer the exam, you will be marked as incomplete for the entire course, which could result in non-progression. All usual criteria for applying for exceptional progression apply and can be found [here](#).
- If you do defer the LT 0 exam for a course and there are other assessment elements you will still need to complete these unless you arrange further deferrals. However when your results are released, it will show that the whole course has been deferred. Any marks you obtain in other assessments will be handled in accordance with your Department's local rules on 'banking' marks.
- If you think you need to defer both the LT 0 and ST exams you may want to instead consider [interruption](#).

15. Visa Enquiries

The LSE International Student Immigration Service (ISIS) has extensive information on its webpages for students re-taking assessments

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/students/ISIS/currentStudents/RetakeExams.aspx>

If you have enquiries regarding the visa implications of re-taking or having deferred assessments, please see the above page.

16. What if I miss a LT0 exam? Will I still be able to progress?

You will receive a '0 Incomplete' or '0 Absent' mark for the course in question, depending on whether the exam is the sole piece of summative assessment for the course. If you are on a degree programme (i.e. not a General Course student), progression will depend on your overall results at the end of the year, to which the normal progression rules will apply, e.g. an undergraduate student may progress to the next year of his/her programme if she/he is carrying no more than 1.0 failed units.

INFORMATION

17. How can I find out more information about how the extra term-time week will be used on the courses I want to take?

Departments have been asked to develop course-level reading week plans. Your department will communicate with you about these plans.

For further information on any of the points above, or for any questions that are not covered, please contact Cheryl Edwardes regarding LT week 0 exams (c.a.edwardes@lse.ac.uk, ext. 7149) or Tom Hewlett (t.w.hewlett@lse.ac.uk, ext. 6387).

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