Examination bar – a guide to the procedure for BA/BSc/LLB and General Course students

The regulations state that: The School may at its discretion exclude from an examination a candidate who has not satisfactorily attended the course in that year of study or who has not completed the work required in that course. *Regulations for First Degrees [21]*

While General Course students fall under the rubric of these regulations, the serious implications that barring could have on their being able to complete their year of study at LSE and their degree at their home university, means that the imposition of an examination bar should only take place in consultation with the Senior School Advocate for Students, Dr Pete Evanson, p.evanson@lse.ac.uk .

There is no formal barring process for taught graduate students.

Courses in which a student is barred are coloured on LSE For You: orange for a provisional bar and red for an enforced bar. This is to encourage class teachers and Academic Mentors to pay special attention to completing and monitoring these student records.

The benefits of barring

The imposition (or threat) of an examination bar should be seen as a means to strengthen tutorial and pastoral support, rather than as a punitive mechanism. Barring has been shown to be very useful in identifying students who are struggling for academic and/or other reasons – thereby initiating a response within the department and triggering meetings between the student and Academic Mentor (AM) and/or departmental tutor (DT), or directing the student to support services elsewhere within the School. Such action allows AMs/DTs to identify more easily those students whose attendance and/ or course work submission is poor across a number of courses and those who need help dealing with non-academic issues affecting their academic work. It also warns those students in need of a firm reminder to pay more serious attention to their studies. Only a small number of students provisionally barred in the Michaelmas or Lent Terms remain barred in the Summer Term, indicating that, in most cases, barring has a positive effect in getting students to take their class attendance and/or course work submission more seriously.

Importance of early and consistent intervention

By mid/late Michaelmas Term there are typically a number of students will come to the attention of AMs because of low engagement and attendance. For these students, one way to work with them may be to consider a provisional examination bar. Students should be warned early and clearly – with a provisional bar where appropriate – to give them time to improve their engagement, and meet the criteria to get the bar lifted. Please use barring consistently – inconsistency fails to support students with low levels of engagement, creates inequalities and hampers upholding of bars.

Attendance at LSE100 classes is compulsory. Non-attendance will be alerted to AMs/DTs as for other classes and should be followed up with students, but performance on LSE100 does not affect any progression or barring decisions for students’ degrees. As the interim and final marks for LSE100 are both partly based on in-class assessed activities, AMs are asked to respond promptly to any attendance issues that arise.

Procedure for imposing a provisional examination bar in one or more examinations

Those who can impose bars:

• The student’s Academic Mentor (AM) – please seek agreement from DT before taking action;

• The departmental tutor (DT)

* The Senior School Advocate for Students

Although neither course leaders nor class teachers can impose a bar, they may request that a student’s AM imposes a bar.

The DT can lift any bar imposed by DT or AM. The Senior School Advocate for Students can lift any bar.

When a bar should be considered

Using LSE for You, AMs should identify those students whose class registers show one or more of the following:

• regular and/or repeated absences (shown as A on class registers)

• regular and/or repeated absences with reason (shown as R on class registers)

• failure to submit course work

• adverse comments from class teachers.

The DT Forum (Summer Term 2008) agreed that, for any course, missing 50 per cent or more classes or failing to submit 50 per cent or more required course work should act as a trigger for considering a provisional bar. However, AMs are free to impose more stringent criteria if they consider such action appropriate. Equally, a student’s personal circumstances may be such that imposing a provisional examination bar may be deemed unhelpful.

Mechanisms for imposing a provisional examination bar in one or more courses

Summary of the stages of barring In the Michaelmas Term

At the very latest by the end of Week 7 of the Michaelmas Term – any students who are not engaging with their studies (ie, not attending and/or failing to submit course work) should have been warned about their need to improve and guidance given about how this could be achieved.

At this stage an email should be sent by the DT/AM to the student outlining their concerns and the sources of help/advice available to the student.

When initial communications with the student have not resolved the issue, you can impose a provisional exam bar on one or more of the student’s courses.

Stage 1: Imposing a provisional examination bar

• Notify the student that you are imposing a bar, and the conditions/deadlines required to lift the bar, by emailing them and attach the Notice of Provisional Exam Bar form (there is a Send Email button on the form to generate a blank email to the Registry). You will need to retain a copy of each barred student’s form, as it may need to be updated. Please copy the email to ssc.exambarring@ lse.ac.uk, and, in the case of General Course students, additionally to gc.dean@lse.ac.uk.

• On receipt of this form, the Registry team will enter a code on the Student Record System database which will result in provisionally barred courses being highlighted in orange on LSE for You class registers.

 Stage 2: Applying further conditions to a provisional bar

• If the initial conditions have not been met, you may wish to impose further conditions on the student before you will decide to lift or enforce the bar. Please complete the Stage 2 section of the Notice of Provisional Exam Bar form and again notify the student of the conditions required to lift the bar by emailing them and attaching a copy of this form. Please send the email to ssc.exambarring@lse.ac.uk and the Senior School Advocate for students, p.evanson@lse.ac.uk.

Stage 3: Requesting a provisional examination bar be lifted or enforced

• If the conditions have been met, then the DT should notify the student that they have met the conditions and that the provisional bar will be lifted. Please email registry@lse.ac.uk, and the Senior Advocate for Students.

In the case of a provisional bar imposed on multiple courses, please be sure to specify the outcome of each individual course.

• If the conditions have not been met by the deadline, the DT should notify the student of the reasons for the provisional bar being enforced. Please email ssc.exambarring@lse.ac.uk, and the Senior School Advocate for Students , advising that the bar is to be enforced.

The SSC will arrange an appointment for the student to meet the Senior School Advocate for Students who will then make a decision about future action. If you have a student who would benefit from meeting with the Senior School Advocate for Students, please notify the SSC Advice Team (ssc.advice@lse.ac.uk).

Action timeline

In order for the barring procedure to be successful, it is essential that AMs/DTs take an active role in monitoring that the conditions and deadlines set as part of the provisional bar are being met by the student.

Michaelmas Term – by the end of Week 7: As soon as class attendance and/or course work submission is identified as problematic, AMs/DTs should (i) see students to discuss their lack of engagement and identify support mechanisms, (ii) send a letter/email to underperforming students outlining their concerns and the sources of help/advice available.

Michaelmas Term – by the end of Week 10: AMs/DTs should have imposed provisional bar exams, notified students and submitted the appropriate forms to Registry and the Senior School Advocate for Students.

Under certain circumstances, requests for provisional bars may be made in the Lent Term, normally up until the end of Week 3.

Lent Term – by end of week 10: AMs/DTs should monitor condition deadlines and take appropriate action according to stages 2 and 3 above and notify the students, Registry and the Senior School Advocate for Students. In particular, for those students who have failed to comply with conditions it is often useful to set further conditions to be completed by the beginning of the Summer Term.

Summer Term – by the end of Week 1: AMs/DTs should lift or enforce provisional examination bars according to stage 3 above, notifying the students, Registry and the Senior School Advocate for Students.

Summer Term – Weeks 2 and 3: Senior School Advocate for Students sees students for whom a bar has been enforced or not yet lifted.