

General Examination Regulations

for

Master's Degree Programmes

at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences

Dated 14 March 2016

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University of Applied Sciences are legally binding.*

On the basis of Section 2 (4) sentence 1 and Section 64 (1) of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia [*Hochschulgesetz – HG NRW*] in the amended form produced by the University Future Act of 16 September 2014 (Law and Regulations Gazette of NRW – GV.NRW. 2014, p. 547), which entered into force on 1 October 2014, the Senate of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences has enacted the following Examination Regulations:

Contents

Section 1	Applicability
Section 2	Study and examination schedules
Section 3	Aims and objectives; purpose of examination; master's degree
Section 4	General admission requirements
Section 5	Standard period of study; structure of programmes; volume of study
Section 6	Outline of the master's examination; credit points
Section 7	Examination Boards
Section 8	Examiners and observers
Section 9	Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning
Section 10	Placement examination
Section 11	Evaluation of examinations
Section 12	Repeating examinations
Section 13	Withdrawal, examination offences, breach of regulations
Section 14	Purpose, scope and types of examinations
Section 15	Requirements for admission to examinations
Section 16	Conduct of examinations

Section 17	Written examinations
Section 17a	Multiple choice examinations
Section 18	Oral examinations
Section 19	Assignments, term papers, projects
Section 20	Certificates
Section 21	Master's thesis
Section 22	Requirements for admission to the master's thesis
Section 23	Date of assignment and writing the master's thesis
Section 24	Submission and evaluation of the master's thesis
Section 25	Colloquium
Section 26	Final results of the master's examination
Section 27	Final grade certificate, final mark, diploma supplement
Section 28	Master's degree certificate
Section 29	Additional examinations
Section 30	Viewing examination documents
Section 31	Nullification of examinations
Section 32	Entry into force and transitional provisions

Section 1 Applicability

(1) These General Examination Regulations shall apply to master's degree programmes at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. Master's degree programmes can be offered in the form of full-time or part-time study programmes. Further details are provided by the examination regulations of the master's degree programmes [hereinafter "individual examination regulations"].

(2) Each master's degree programme shall have its own examination regulations pursuant to these General Examination Regulations (RPO-M). These programme-specific examination regulations shall contain all provisions required by Section 64 (2) HG NRW.

Section 2 Study and examination schedules

(1) Individual examination regulations shall include an attached study and examination schedule (within the meaning of Section 58 (3) HG NRW), containing the following binding information:

- a. the modules and their specific learning and teaching methods and examinations;
- b. contact hours per week [*Semesterwochenstunden*, or *SWS*];
- c. ECTS credit points (CP);
- d. compulsory course units as well as electives;
- e. examinations.

(2) Study and examination schedules convey the recommended study progression for completing a degree within the standard period of study.

Section 3 Aims and objectives; purpose of examination; master's degree

(1) With due regard to the general study objectives outlined in Section 58 HG NRW, master's degree programmes shall convey, in particular, application-oriented content on the basis of sound scientific knowledge and enable students to apply scientific methods, to develop practical, real-world solutions while thinking beyond the traditional disciplinary boundaries of their field, and to conduct scientific research.

(2) Moreover, master's degree programmes aim to produce graduates who:

- can grasp the many interrelated concepts within their discipline and chosen field of study, and link these concepts to knowledge and competencies from other fields in interdisciplinary fashion;
- can conduct scholarly research and employ scientific methods at a level which would later suffice for a doctoral dissertation;
- are adept at developing evidence-based solutions for real-world scenarios;
- can apply theoretical-analytical skills to a wide range of complex issues;

- possess the technical know-how and key qualifications necessary for a seamless transition to a professional career.

In addition, master's degree programmes shall impart and promote intellectual and social competencies. These include, for example, attributes such as:

- abstract, analytical, logical and networked thinking;
- the ability to quickly familiarise oneself with new fields and challenges;
- self-reliance, creativity, open-mindedness and plurality;
- effective communication skills;
- the ability to give and receive professional criticism;
- a capacity for teamwork.

(3) Master's degree programmes conclude with a master's examination. Its purpose is to assess the overall individual performance of each student in the degree programme and determine whether the aforementioned goals have been achieved.

(4) Successfully passing the master's examination entitles students to the academic degree specified in the examination regulations of their degree programme. Further details are provided by the individual examination regulations.

Section 4

General admission requirements

(1) Admission to a master's degree programme requires proof of a professionally qualifying first degree in a related field and encompassing at least 210 total ECTS credit points (CP) or a standard period of study of no less than seven full-time semesters. The individual examination regulations define "related fields" by discipline and, where appropriate, emphasis area. The individual examination regulations may stipulate additional admission requirements, including proof of a completed practical semester or study abroad semester.

(2) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (1), admission on the basis of a degree as per paragraph (1) sentence 1 may be subject to a minimum overall grade requirement. This overall grade must also be supplemented by an alternate grade based on the ECTS grading scale. Further details are provided by the individual examination regulations. The individual examination regulations may also stipulate specific language proficiency requirements for admission.

(3) In addition to the requirements in paragraphs (1) and (2), the individual examination regulations may require applicants to have earned a minimum number of ECTS points in specific subject areas also defined by the individual examination regulations in order to be eligible for admission to the corresponding master's degree programme.

(4) Deviating from paragraph (1) sentence 1, if an applicant has earned a first degree in a programme encompassing less than 210 ECTS points or less than seven full-time semesters of study – but at least 180 ECTS points or six full-time semesters of study – then said applicant may be admitted to this programme on the condition that he or she completes the

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missing bachelor-level modules while working towards the master's degree. Generally, the Examination Board and the applicant will conclude a formal Learning Agreement defining the scope of the missing ECTS points and the specific modules which must be completed. Admission to the master's thesis is dependent upon the acquisition of a set number of ECTS points (see Section 22 (1) no. 3).

(5) The responsible Examination Board shall decide whether the prerequisites in paragraph (1) have been met based on submitted documents and, if necessary, a face-to-face discussion with the applicant on advanced topics relevant to the field of study. The required subject-relevance of the applicant's previous first degree is considered met if the degree was completed in the same field or in a programme sharing the same specialisation as the master's degree programme in question. In all other cases, applicants must demonstrate a level of expertise comparable in scope and content to an undergraduate degree as defined in sentence 2. Following the outcome of this assessment, the responsible Examination Board will then decide whether to admit the applicant with or without the added condition that the missing academic requirements be completed parallel to the applicant's studies, or to issue a letter of rejection. In the case of conditional admission, the Examination Board and the applicant will generally conclude a formal Learning Agreement defining the specific additional modules which are to be completed. Conditional admission may stipulate up to 30 additional ECTS points, which must be successfully obtained first in order to apply for permission to begin the thesis.

(6) Applicants with academic qualifications not earned in Germany are also eligible for admission to master's degree programmes, provided they possess an academic degree that is demonstrably equivalent to the degree defined in paragraph (1). Rulings on equivalency for academic degrees from universities and institutions outside of Germany shall take into account the equivalency agreements approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs [*Kultusministerkonferenz*] and the University Rectors' Conference [*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*], as well as any applicable legal provisions. In cases of doubt regarding equivalency, the Central Office for Foreign Education [*Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen*] shall also be consulted.

(7) An applicant is ineligible for admission if he or she was previously deregistered (exmatriculated) from the same study programme at a university that is subject to German Basic Law [*Grundgesetz*] for failing the final attempt at passing a compulsory examination as stipulated by that institution's examination regulations. Further, an applicant is ineligible for admission if he or she was previously deregistered from a related or comparable programme of study at a university that is subject to German Basic Law for failing the final attempt at passing a compulsory examination as stipulated by that institution's examination regulations as well as the corresponding individual examination regulations of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. The individual examination regulations define what constitutes a "related or comparable programme of study".

(8) Applicants who have previously studied in a bachelor's or master's degree programme at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences or other higher education institutes in Germany or abroad must submit a request to the responsible Examination Board for the official recognition of all previously passed or failed examinations ("certificate of good standing") in order to successfully enrol at the University or change degree programme. This assessment of previously passed or failed examinations may result in the applicant's

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placement into an advanced semester of study. Certificates of good standing are not required from applicants who are applying to a consecutive master's degree programme directly after successfully completing a bachelor's degree.

Section 5

Standard period of study; structure of programmes; volume of study

- (1) The standard period of study, including all examinations, is three semesters.
- (2) Master's degree programmes are divided into modules. As a rule, a "module" refers to a specific group of thematically related and chronologically coordinated course units that contribute to a uniform education and qualification goal. The master's thesis and the colloquium each constitute individual modules. In accordance with the framework outlined in Section 6 (5), the modules of each master's degree programme comprise a total sum of 90 ECTS points.
- (3) Master's degree programmes can also include emphasis areas. Further details are provided by the individual examination regulations.
- (4) The volume of study is defined in the individual examination regulations.
- (5) Additional information about the progression of master's degree programmes, as well as about the type, form and scope of modules, can be found in the study and examination schedules provided in the annexes of the individual examination regulations. For details about a module's qualification aims, content and most commonly offered modes of examination, please refer to the descriptions in the corresponding module guide, which is available at a suitable location for all students and staff to view.

Section 6

Outline of the master's examination; credit points

- (1) As specified in more detail in the study and examination schedules of the master's degree programmes, the master's examination comprises course-based examinations [*studienbegleitende Prüfungen*; hereafter referred to as "examinations"], certificates [*Testate*] as well as the final examination phase, which consists of the thesis and the colloquium.
- (2) As defined by the relevant study and examination schedule, examinations may cover a module as a whole or individual course units therein and thus conclude either the whole module or only a component thereof in its entirety. Assessment shall take place during the lecture period of the semester in which the corresponding course unit occurs. Additional examination phases may also be scheduled. The responsible Examination Board shall decide whether additional examination phases will be offered and when. Further details are provided by the individual examination regulations.
- (3) The progression of study and the examinations procedure must be planned in such a way that the master's examination can be completed within the standard period of study.

(4) Examination procedures must allow for the rights granted to students under the German Maternity Leave Act [*Mutterschutzgesetz*], the German Child Benefits and Parental Leave Act [*Gesetz zum Elterngeld und zur Elternzeit*], as well as the right to a leave of absence for providing care to persons specified in Section 48 (5) sentence 5 HG NRW. In general, if a student requires a change in the timing of examination processes, he or she must submit a written request to the Examination Board.

(5) The master's examination is based on a credit point system. All modules and course units are assigned a value in credit points (CP) in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The number of credit points awarded for a module is based on the prescribed workload for completing the individual course units and the module as a whole. As per the ECTS standard, one credit point represents a workload for students of approximately 25 to 30 hours. Furthermore, the allocation of credit points is based on the assumption that a student's workload for a full year is equal to 60 CP in total. Credit points are acquired when a student fully completes all mandatory examination requirements for a module. Earned credit points are recorded in the student's credit point account, which is maintained on his or her behalf by the responsible Examination Board.

Section 7

Examination Boards

(1) Examination Boards shall be established in each faculty for the purpose of assuming the duties and obligations allocated by these General Examination Regulations. The individual examination regulations shall define the Examination Board responsible for a particular degree programme. Examination Boards are independent bodies of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, as well as public authorities within the meaning of German administrative procedural law. Each Examination Board shall consist of a Chair, a Deputy Chair, and five additional members. The Chair, the Deputy Chair and two additional members shall be elected by the relevant Faculty Council from among the faculty professors, one member shall be elected from the faculty scientific staff and the remaining two members from the faculty student body. The term in office for full-time employees of the university and their proxies shall be four years; the term in office for student members and their proxies shall be one year. Members may be re-elected.

(2) Each Examination Board is responsible for ensuring compliance with the examination regulations under its jurisdiction. It is also responsible for the organisation and proper conduct of examinations. The duties and responsibilities of the deans as outlined in Section 27 (1) HG NRW shall remain unaffected. Examination Boards are responsible, in particular, for ruling on appeals lodged against decisions made during examination procedures. In addition, Examination Boards are responsible for presenting an annual report to their respective Faculty Councils regarding ongoing trends and developments in examinations and lengths of study. This report shall include corresponding recommendations for reforms or alterations to the examination regulations and curricula. Each Examination Board may delegate its everyday duties and tasks to the corresponding Chair, but not in the case of rulings on appeals lodged by students.

(3) Examination Boards shall have a quorum when the Chair or Deputy Chair, at least one additional professor and at least two additional members with voting power are present.

Furthermore, at least half of the members with voting power in attendance must be professors. Examination Boards shall pass measures by simple majority. In the event of a tie, the deciding vote shall be cast by the Chair. Neither student members of Examination Boards, nor members from the scientific staff shall participate in votes on scientific-pedagogic decisions, in particular decisions concerning the recognition or assessment of examination results or the appointment of examiners and observers. Furthermore, student members shall not participate in decisions or discussions on issues that relate to their own examinations or to examination tasks.

(4) Examination Board members have the right to observe examinations within their faculty. Student members are prohibited from observing an examination if they are required to sit that same examination in the current examination period.

(5) All members of an Examination Board, their proxies, examiners and observers are subject to strict confidentiality requirements. Those members not employed in public service in Germany shall be sworn to secrecy by the Chair of the relevant Examination Board.

(6) Any detrimental decisions made by an Examination Board or its Chair must be communicated to the affected student without delay. Affected students shall be given the opportunity for a fair hearing before a final decision is made.

Section 8

Examiners and observers

(1) All members of the teaching staff at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences are authorised to act as examiners. In exceptional cases, non-members of the teaching staff may be authorised to act as examiners, provided they have the relevant vocational and occupational experience and this decision is deemed necessary and appropriate for accomplishing the purpose of the examination (as second examiner for a thesis, for example). Examiners must possess at least those qualifications being assessed by the respective examination or equivalent qualifications; this also applies to any qualified observers present during oral examinations. Examiners and observers are appointed by the relevant Examination Board. They are not bound by any outside instruction in their duties.

(2) The Examination Board is responsible for ensuring that testing obligations are distributed as evenly as possible among examiners.

(3) The Chair of each Examination Board shall notify students of the names of the examiners in a timely manner. Students shall be notified ideally upon admission to the examination, usually no later than two weeks before the examination date or, in the case of additional examination phases at the start of a semester (Section 6 (2) sentence 3), no later than a week before the start of the additional examination phase or, in the case of the thesis, no later than the date of issue of the thesis topic. Notification by electronic means or public display is sufficient.

Section 9

Credit transfer and recognition of prior learning

(1) Prior periods of study, related passed or failed examinations, or other coursework (learning and assessment achievements) completed in an identical programme of study (full or partial) at a university that is subject to the Basic Law of Germany shall be recognised officially without an equivalence assessment. A “period of study” is defined as any evaluated and documented component of a degree programme at a higher education institution, which, while not equivalent to a full programme of study, nevertheless constitutes a significant acquisition of knowledge or skill. Learning and assessment achievements obtained in other degree programmes at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences shall be recognised officially to the extent that equivalency can be established.

(2) Prior periods of study, related passed or failed examinations, or other coursework not covered under paragraph (1) shall generally be recognised on application, unless otherwise deemed not equivalent. Prior periods of study, related passed or failed examinations, or other coursework are considered equivalent if they share fundamentally similar content, scope and requirements as their counterparts in the respective degree programme at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. Equivalency shall not be determined by a side-by-side schematic comparison, but rather by examining and evaluating the overall competencies acquired in each specific case. The equivalency of prior learning achievements earned at universities and institutions outside of Germany shall be determined on the basis of the equivalency agreements approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs [*Kultusministerkonferenz*] and the University Rectors’ Conference [*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*]. In cases of doubt regarding equivalency, the Central Office for Foreign Education [*Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen*] may also be consulted.

(3) Skills and qualifications acquired in other contexts can also be credited.

(4) Students are required to submit all necessary documentation for the recognition of learning and assessment achievements within the first four weeks following enrolment at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. Documents must clearly state the completed period(s) of study and the related passed or failed examinations or other coursework, as well as the skills and qualifications which are to be credited in each case. As a rule, when requesting credit for prior learning from a university degree programme, students must submit the relevant examination regulations, module descriptions and the individual transcript of records or a comparable document.

(5) If a credit transfer request is approved, the marks for the prior learning achievements – provided a mark was awarded and the grading system is comparable – shall also be transferred and included in any relevant grade calculations. If no mark was awarded or the grading system is not comparable, but it is possible to surmise a mark based on specific evidence or indications, then a mark shall be assigned according to the scale in Section 11 (3) and the credit transfer process shall proceed according to sentence 1. If there is a lack of evidence pointing to a specific mark, then a passed examination shall be credited without a mark and not included in any grade calculations. If a previously failed examination is credited, then it shall be listed once as “not passed”; the re-examination procedure shall

then proceed according to Section 12. Transferred credits shall be documented in the final grade certificate (Section 27 (1)).

(6) The individual examination regulations may set limits on the amount of ECTS points that can be credited for prior learning and assessment achievements in accordance with this Section. Transferring credits for the master's thesis, the colloquium or any project assignments is not permitted.

(7) The Examination Boards are responsible for all decisions relating to credit transfers. Before rulings on equivalency are made, the responsible subject representatives at the University must be consulted.

Section 10 Placement examination

(1) Applicants who have acquired the skills and knowledge needed to succeed at university, but by means other than previous study experience, are eligible to sit a placement examination [*Einstufungsprüfung*] and, depending on the results, begin their studies in an advanced semester, provided this does not clash with any applicable regulations for the allocation of places at German universities.

(2) Depending on the results of the placement examination, the examinee may be partially or fully exempted from certain course units and their respective examination or certificate requirements. The decision resulting from the placement examination shall be confirmed in writing and provided to the examinee.

(3) Details concerning the type, form and scope of placement examinations are specified in the Placement Examination Regulations of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

Section 11 Evaluation of examinations

(1) Examinations are evaluated and differentiated by means of marks. Marks are awarded by the examiner responsible for the examination in question.

(2) If multiple examiners are responsible for a single examination, then they shall jointly evaluate the entire examination unless otherwise specified below. If the individually awarded marks are not identical, the final mark shall be determined by averaging the two scores.

(3) Examinations shall be marked according to the following scale:

1	= Very Good	= Excellent
2	= Good	= Well above average
3	= Satisfactory	= Average
4	= Sufficient	= Meets all requirements despite shortcomings
5	= Failed	= Does not meet requirements due to significant shortcomings

Marks can be raised or lowered by 0.3 points for more precise assessment; the marks 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are not permitted.

(4) For marks that fall between two whole numbers, the following ranges shall apply:

1.0 – 1.5	=	Very Good
1.6 – 2.5	=	Good
2.6 – 3.5	=	Satisfactory
3.6 – 4.0	=	Sufficient
4.1 – 5.0	=	Failed

Only the first decimal place shall be taken into account; all other decimal places are dropped without rounding.

(5) An examination is passed if a mark of “Sufficient” (4.0) or better was awarded.

(6) If a module consists of multiple examinations, then its overall mark shall be calculated by averaging the marks earned for the individual examinations. The marks shall be weighted by their credit point value.

(7) Students shall be informed of the results of written examinations (Section 17) within six weeks after the end of the respective examination phase. Students shall be informed of the results of their take-home assignments, term papers or projects (Section 19) within six weeks after submission. Notification by electronic means or public display is sufficient. Students shall be informed of the results of their thesis within eight weeks from the date of submission. Students are generally informed of the results of oral examinations immediately after their conclusion.

(8) The final cumulative grade for the master’s examination can be supplemented by an ECTS grade upon request, providing a relative assessment of academic performance in addition to an absolute assessment. An ECTS grade reflects a student’s individual performance in relation to the performance of other graduates in the same programme of study. Accordingly, graduates who are among the:

top 10% of their class will receive the grade:	“A”;
the next 25% will receive the grade:	“B”;
the next 30% will receive the grade:	“C”;
the next 25% will receive the grade:	“D”;
and the final 10% will receive the grade:	“E”.

Section 12

Repeating examinations

(1) Failed examinations related to course units or modules can be repeated two additional times. The thesis and the colloquium can be repeated once each. Previous failed attempts at examinations, which were undertaken in a related or comparable degree

programme at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, shall count towards a student's remaining attempts.

(2) Passed examinations cannot be repeated for a better mark.

(3) Students who do not re-sit a failed examination within two semesters shall be automatically registered for a repeat examination on a compulsory basis by the relevant Examination Board according to paragraph (4) below.

(4) If a student has not undertaken a re-examination attempt for a previously failed examination nor submitted an application to do so before the two-semester deadline, then that student shall be registered on a compulsory basis for the last valid examination opportunity before the deadline by the Examination Board. This also applies when no re-examination opportunity was offered for that particular examination before the deadline. If a student registers of his or her own accord for the last valid examination opportunity before the deadline, then he or she is prohibited from withdrawing from the examination within the meaning of Section 15 (6). If the student fails to appear to the examination and cannot provide good reason for his or her absence, then the examination shall be evaluated as "Failed" (5.0). The Examination Board must be notified in writing immediately of any mitigating circumstances for missing an examination, and credible evidence must also be provided. In cases of illness, the Examination Board reserves the right to request a corresponding medical certificate from a doctor of the Board's choosing. If the Examination Board recognises the mitigating circumstances provided, then the deadline shall be extended until the next examination date offered.

(5) Exempted from compulsory registration are students who are on an official leave of absence in accordance with Section 9 of the Enrolment Regulations of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. In exceptional circumstances, students may apply for an exemption from compulsory registration, particularly in the cases of students who:

- a) are actively involved in the care and upbringing of minors within the meaning of Section 25 (5) of the German Federal Education and Training Assistance Act [*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*]; or
- b) participate as elected representatives in executive bodies of the university, the student body or the faculty; or
- c) are currently exercising the office of Equal Opportunities Officer; or
- d) have an impairment or serious illness which prolongs their duration of study.

Exemption requests must be submitted at least four weeks before the start of the examination phase. In the case of a), an exemption should generally not exceed three semesters; in cases b) and c), it should generally not exceed two semesters.

Section 13

Withdrawal, examination offences, breach of regulations

(1) An examination shall be evaluated as "Failed" (5.0) if a student is registered for an examination but fails to appear without good reason, or if a student withdraws from an examination in-progress without good reason, or if a student does not complete the

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requirements of an examination within the stipulated deadline. Sentence 1 shall also apply when a student does not submit the master's thesis or an examination in the form of an assignment, term paper or project before the deadline without good reason.

(2) The relevant Examination Board must be notified immediately and in writing of any mitigating circumstances for missing an examination, withdrawing from an examination or failing to submit an examination before the deadline, and credible evidence must also be provided. In cases of illness, the Examination Board reserves the right to request a medical certificate from a doctor of the Board's choosing. If the Examination Board recognises the mitigating circumstances provided, then the student shall be notified that he or she may request admission to the same examination again without penalty.

(3) If a student attempts to alter the results of an examination through cheating or use of any prohibited materials, then the examination in question shall be evaluated as "Failed" (5.0). A student who disrupts the due and orderly conduct of an examination can be excluded from that examination, usually after first receiving a warning from the examiner or examination supervisor; in this case the excluded student shall receive the mark "Failed" (5.0) for the examination attempt. The reason(s) for exclusion shall be put on official record. If a student is excluded from an examination, he or she may appeal the decision to the Examination Board. This right also applies to exclusions due to cheating or use of prohibited materials.

(4) In the event of repeat or otherwise unusually serious examination offences, the master's examination may be declared definitively and irreversibly failed. The relevant Examination Board shall be responsible for this decision. If a master's examination is declared definitively and irreversibly failed, the affected student shall be automatically deregistered from his or her degree programme.

(5) Any person who intentionally violates any provision in these General Examination Regulations concerning cheating or the manipulation of examination results commits an administrative offence. This offence is punishable by a fine of up to EUR 50,000. The Chancellor of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences is the administrative authority responsible for enforcing this provision and prosecuting administrative offences within the meaning of sentence 1.

Section 14

Purpose, scope and types of examinations

(1) The purpose of course-based examinations is to continually assess over the course of the degree programme whether students have acquired proficiency in the essential aspects of contents and methods in specific subject areas, and can independently and correctly apply their acquired knowledge and skills.

(2) Examination requirements are based on the contents of the related course unit(s).

(3) Examinations are designed around to learning outcomes and usually take the form of written examinations (Section 17), multiple choice examinations (Section 17a), oral examinations (Section 18) or take-home assignments, term papers and projects (Section 19).

A combination of these examination types is also possible with the consent of the Examination Board.

(4) The Examination Board will specify and notify students of the type of examination – as well as the duration in the case of written examinations – generally before the start of the related course unit, in agreement with the examiner(s) and in a uniform and binding manner for all participating students. Notification by electronic means or public display is sufficient.

Section 15

Requirements for admission to examinations

- (1) Students can be admitted to examinations based on course units and modules if they:
1. meet the general prerequisites outlined in Section 4 and any prerequisites defined by the examination regulations of their degree programme; and
 2. are officially enrolled as students or have visiting student status at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences on the date of examination; and
 3. have not already passed the examination in question (see Section 12 (2)).
- (2) In general, an application for admission to an examination must be submitted via the appropriate online platform before the deadline set by the Examination Board, or otherwise in writing to the Chair of the Examination Board.
- (3) The application must include documents proving that the prerequisites in paragraph (1) have been met, provided that these documents were not submitted previously.
- (4) An application for admission to an examination shall be denied if:
- a) the prerequisites in paragraph (1) have not been met; or
 - b) submitted documents were incomplete and missing documents were not submitted before the deadline set by the relevant Examination Board; or
 - c) the student has previously failed the final permissible attempt at passing an examination required by the relevant examination regulations in the same programme of study, or the final permissible attempt at passing an examination corresponding to the one specified in the application while in a related or comparable programme of study at a university that is subject to German Basic Law.
- (5) The Chair of the Examination Board, or the Examination Board itself in cases of doubt, shall be responsible for all decisions regarding entry to an examination. Notification by electronic means or public display is sufficient.
- (6) A student can submit a request to the Chair of the Examination Board to withdraw from an examination – generally via the appropriate online platform, otherwise in writing – by no later than ten days or, in the case of additional examination phases (Section 6 (2) sentence 3), no later than five days before the begin of the examination phase without loss of an examination attempt.

(7) Students must also meet the eligibility requirements in paragraph (1) in order to be eligible for certificates.

Section 16

Conduct of examinations

(1) Dates for examinations shall be set in such a way that they do not require the cancellation of other course units.

(2) Students shall be notified of the date and scope of written examinations (Section 17 RPO-M) in a timely manner, usually at least two weeks before the examination phase. Deviating from sentence 1, in the case of additional examination phases (Section 6 (2) sentence 3) students shall be notified generally at least one week before the examination phase. Notification by electronic means or public display is sufficient. In the case of those examinations defined by Sections 18 and 19 RPO-M and combined examinations defined by Section 14 (3) sentence 2, students shall be notified in a timely manner, generally at least two weeks before the examination in question or before the first examination in the case of combined examinations.

(3) For identification purposes, students must present their student ID card as well as an officially recognised photo ID (e.g. passport) upon request by the examiner or examination supervisor.

(4) If a disabled student within the meaning of Section 3 of the Equal Rights for Disabled Persons Act of Germany [*Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz*] can demonstrate via medical certificate or by other credible means that he or she is not able to sit the examination in its current form, in part or in full, due to his or her impairment, then the Chair of the Examination Board may permit the student to sit an equivalent examination in a specially arranged form. The Chair of the Examination Board is responsible for ensuring, where possible, that the testing conditions do not discriminate against disabled students; in cases of uncertainty, the Chair may request further evidence of impairment from the student in question. Special examination arrangements for disabled students can include in particular:

- extending the duration of examinations / the allotted writing time for the examination;
- intermittent rest breaks during a timed examination;
- splitting examinations into smaller parts;
- alternate forms of testing (oral examinations instead of written examinations, or vice versa);
- permitting and, where applicable, providing additional materials, personal assistance, adapted examination documents or separate testing areas.

Section 17

Written examinations

(1) The purpose of a written examination is to assess whether students can identify problems in a particular subject area and solve them using common methods and techniques from the field given a limited amount of time and with limited use of materials. Written

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examinations may also be conducted on a computer with the approval of the Examination Board, provided that the technical conditions ensure compliance with all statutory data privacy and protection requirements.

(2) The time allotted to students for a written examination is based on the number of ECTS points (CP) for the respective course unit.

(3) Written examinations are completed under supervision. The examiner shall decide which materials, if any, are permitted for use during a written examination.

(4) As a rule, the task for a written examination is set by a single examiner. Where justified by subject matter, particularly when multiple disciplines are covered within a single examination, multiple examiners may also set the task. In this case, examiners shall first jointly define the weighting of the different parts involved in the examination task.

(5) If a student is repeating a previously failed written examination for the final time permitted by German law, then the final attempt shall be evaluated by two examiners. In all other cases, evaluation by a single examiner is sufficient. In those cases described in paragraph (4) sentence 2, each examiner shall evaluate, in general, only their respective part of the examination question; sentence 1 remains unaffected.

Section 17a **Multiple choice examinations**

The individual examination regulations can stipulate multiple choice examinations. Further details on the form and conduct of examinations are provided by the individual examination regulations.

Section 18 **Oral examinations**

(1) Oral examinations shall be conducted by a single examiner in the presence of a qualified observer or by a panel of examiners in the form of group or individual examinations. When an observer is present, he or she has the right to be heard before a mark is determined. In examinations conducted by a panel of examiners, the examiners shall jointly evaluate the examination performance.

(2) The length of oral examinations is set by the individual examination regulations. Oral examinations should require at least 20, but no more than 45 minutes. In the case of group examinations, the length of the examination shall be adjusted accordingly. Further details are provided by the individual examination regulations.

(3) A record shall be kept of the main topics and the results of an oral examination, including, in particular, the essential facts used to determine the mark.

(4) Students intending to sit the same oral examination at a later date are permitted to attend the examination of others, provided that there is sufficient space available and no

objection from the student(s) being tested. Observing students are not permitted to be present during post-examination discussions or when the mark is disclosed.

Section 19

Assignments, term papers, projects

(1) Examinations in the form of take-home assignments, term papers or projects involve clearly defined tasks that are taken directly from the theoretical and practical context of the subject area being tested. These examinations may also be supplemented with a presentation and/or a question-and-answer discussion at an advanced level. The examination can be conducted as a group examination if each student's individual contribution is recognisable and verifiable to a sufficient degree. The topic and task must be set in such a way that it is possible to complete the assignment, term paper or project within the given deadline.

(2) The individual examination regulations define the allotted writing time for assignments, term papers and projects, as well as their required page length.

(3) The Chair of the relevant Examination Board or the assigning examiner shall notify students of the task, deadline, required format and submission method for the assignment, term paper or project in writing, via public display or by electronic means.

(4) Section 17 (5) sentences 1 and 2 shall apply accordingly.

(5) When submitting an assignment, term paper or project, students must also include written and signed confirmation that all work – or in the case of group work, all of the submitting student's respective and appropriately marked individual contribution – was produced independently and made use of no resources or sources other than those which were clearly cited, with quotations duly marked as such.

Section 20

Certificates

(1) The purpose of certificates [*Testate*] is to attest, in particular, the successful completion of exercises, practical courses and seminars. Certificates are awarded when students demonstrate that they are able to apply acquired knowledge and skills and are well-versed in the use of subject-specific methods. Certificates are issued by the instructor responsible for the corresponding course unit.

(2) Certificates are not subject to formalised procedures. Section 15 shall apply analogously to certificates.

(3) Various documents can serve as proof that certificate requirements have been met: records from experiments, written analyses of results, calculations, programming exercises, constructs, technical design concepts and sketches, oral presentations and question-and-answer discussions at an advanced level, for example.

(4) Certificates are awarded on a pass/fail basis and may be repeated an unlimited number of times.

Section 21

Master's thesis

(1) The purpose of the master's thesis is to assess whether students, given a limited period of time, can employ scientific and application-oriented methods in order to independently develop a practice-oriented scholarly work in their field that adequately examines both specialist particulars and the interdisciplinary connections for a given topic. In completing the thesis, students must prove that they have systematically and methodically studied the subject area, that they used abstract and analytical thinking above and beyond the isolated case when developing a solution, and that they duly examined both the technical minutiae and the overarching multidisciplinary correlations of the topic. The thesis is usually an independent scientific enquiry into the assigned topic and includes a comprehensive description and explanation of the generated results.

(2) The thesis topic can be supervised by any professor authorised to act as an examiner as per Section 8 (1). At the request of the student, the Examination Board can also appoint as a supervisor an honorary professor or a lecturer with relevant experience in the corresponding duties and tasks of a thesis supervisor. The thesis can also be completed at a company or institution outside of the university, provided that a sufficient level of supervision can be assured and the Examination Board approves the request. Students shall be given the opportunity to suggest possible topics for their thesis.

(3) The Chairs of the Examination Boards shall ensure that students are assigned a thesis topic in a timely manner after submission of the necessary application documents.

(4) The thesis can also be admitted in the form of group work if each student's individual contribution fulfils the requirements in paragraph (1) and is clearly distinguishable and thus assessable due to clear delimitation by section, page numbers or other criteria which ensure the clear delimitation of individual contributions.

(5) The minimum page length for the text portion of the thesis can be defined in detail by the individual examination regulations.

Section 22

Requirements for admission to the master's thesis

- (1) Students are eligible for admission to the master's thesis if they:
1. meet the general prerequisites for study outlined in Section 4 and any prerequisites defined by the examination regulations of their degree programme; and
 2. are officially enrolled as students or maintain visiting student status according to Section 52 (2) HG NRW at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences for the full duration of the master's thesis; and
 3. have acquired the minimum number of credit points required by the examination regulations of their degree programme.

Non-binding English translation – only the original German texts published in the Official Notices of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences are legally valid.

(2) The Application for Submission of a Master's Thesis must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the relevant Examination Board. Students must also include a declaration of any previous attempts at completing a master's thesis. Furthermore, the application must clearly indicate the name of the examiner who is prepared to set the topic and act as thesis supervisor.

(3) On written request, a student may withdraw his or her application without loss of an examination attempt until an official decision regarding the application has been announced.

(4) The Chair of the relevant Examination Board or, the Examination Board itself in cases of doubt, shall rule on applications for admission to the thesis. Applications for admission shall be denied when:

- a) the prerequisites listed in paragraph (1) have not been met; or
- b) documents are missing or incomplete; or
- c) the student has previously failed the final permissible attempt at passing an examination required by the relevant examination regulations in the same programme of study, or the final permissible attempt at passing a master's thesis in a related or comparable programme of study.

Section 23

Date of assignment and writing the master's thesis

(1) The master's thesis is formally assigned by the Chair of the relevant Examination Board. The date of assignment is defined as the day on which the Chair notifies the student in writing or electronically of the topic set by the thesis supervisor; the date of assignment shall be put on official record.

(2) The individual examination regulations define the length of time that students are given in order to complete the master's thesis (from the date of assignment to the submission deadline). Furthermore, the individual examination regulations can prohibit students from submitting their thesis before a certain amount of time has elapsed. The topic and task of the thesis must be set in such a way that it is feasible to complete the thesis within the time period defined by sentence 1. In exceptional cases, the Chair of the relevant Examination Board can extend the deadline by up to four weeks on the basis of a duly justified request submitted before the original deadline. The thesis supervisor shall be heard in connection with this request.

(3) Students may request a new thesis topic for any reason, but only once and only within the first four weeks after the date of assignment. If a student is attempting to pass the master's thesis for a second time, he or she may only request a new topic if this was not done during the first attempt.

(4) In the case of a thesis candidate with a disability, Section 16 (4) of these regulations shall apply accordingly.

Section 24

Submission and evaluation of the master's thesis

(1) The master's thesis must be submitted on time to the Examination Office in the Student Service Centre as a hard copy in triplicate and additionally as an electronic copy in a format specified by the Chair of the relevant Examination Board. The date of submission shall be put on official record; if a thesis is submitted by post, then the postmarked date shall be recorded as the date of submission. Students must also include written and signed confirmation that all work – or, in the case of group work, all of the submitting student's respective and appropriately marked individual contribution – was produced independently and made use of no resources or sources other than those which were clearly stated, with quotations duly marked as such.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), if it is somehow impractical or impossible to submit three hard copies of the thesis, a more suitable form of documentation for the thesis and/or individual media may be submitted instead with the consent of the Chair of the relevant Examination Board.

(3) The master's thesis shall be evaluated by two examiners. One of the examiners shall be the student's thesis supervisor. If the thesis supervisor is an honorary professor or a lecturer, then the second examiner must be a professor of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences. If the marks awarded by the examiners are not identical, but the difference is less than 2.0 grade points, then the final mark shall be calculated by averaging the two scores. If the difference is greater than or equal to 2.0, then a third examiner shall be appointed by the relevant Examination Board to evaluate the thesis. In this case, the final mark is calculated by averaging the best two of the three marks. A final mark of "Sufficient" (4.0) or better can only be awarded if at least two of the marks are equal to "Sufficient" (4.0) or better. All marks shall be justified in writing.

(4) The amount of ECTS points awarded for passing the master's thesis is defined by the individual examination regulations.

Section 25

Colloquium

(1) The colloquium is an oral defence (viva voce) of the master's thesis and is evaluated separately. The purpose of the colloquium is to assess whether a student is able to orally express the findings of the thesis and their interrelatedness to concepts and ideas both inside and outside of the subject area, to independently justify the findings and to assess their practical significance. The discussion with the candidate will revolve around the treatment of the thesis topic. The colloquium may be conducted in a language other than the degree programme's language of instruction with approval from the relevant Examination Board.

(2) Students are eligible for admission to the colloquium if they:

1. meet the general prerequisites for study outlined in Section 4 and any prerequisites defined by the examination regulations of their degree programme; and

2. are officially enrolled as students or have visiting student status according to Section 52 (2) HG NRW at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences at the time of the colloquium; and
3. have acquired a minimum number of ECTS points as defined by the examination regulations of their degree programme.

(3) The application for admission to the colloquium must be submitted to the Chair of the relevant Examination Board. Students must also include a declaration of all previous attempts at completing a post-thesis colloquium. Students may also submit an application for admission to the colloquium when they apply for admission to the thesis; in this case, the application shall be approved when the prerequisites in paragraph (2) have been met. Section 22 (4) shall also apply with regard to the approval or rejection of an application for admission to the colloquium.

(4) The colloquium is an oral examination jointly conducted and evaluated by the two examiners of the master's thesis. If the situation in Section 24 (3) sentence 5 occurs, then the colloquium shall be jointly conducted and evaluated by the two examiners whose individual marks contributed to the final mark for the thesis. The colloquium usually lasts for approximately 45 minutes. The provisions governing oral examinations (Section 18) shall apply accordingly to all other matters concerning the conduct of the colloquium.

(5) In the case of disabled students within the meaning of Section 3 of the Equal Rights for Disabled Persons Act [*Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz*], Section 16 (4) of these regulations shall apply accordingly.

(6) The amount of ECTS points awarded for passing the colloquium is defined by the individual examination regulations.

Section 26

Final results of the master's examination

(1) The master's examination is deemed passed when a student has successfully earned 90 credit points in his or her degree programme.

(2) The master's examination is deemed failed when a student's final permissible attempt at passing a mandatory examination, the thesis or the colloquium is evaluated as "Failed" (5.0) or otherwise considered to be evaluated as "Failed" (5.0). In this case, the affected student shall receive a written declaration informing him or her of the failed master's examination or the irretrievable loss of the right to sit examinations as per Section 12 (1), as well as providing an explanation of available legal recourse. On written request, the Chair of the Examination Board can issue a certificate listing all successfully completed examinations and their final marks as well as the missing examinations still needed to pass the master's examination. This certificate must clearly show that the student has definitively and irreversibly failed the master's examination or lost his or her right to sit examinations as per Section 12 (1).

Section 27

Final grade certificate, final mark, diploma supplement

(1) Students shall be promptly issued a final grade certificate [*Abschlusszeugnis*] upon passing the master's examination, when possible within four weeks after the colloquium. The final grade certificate shall contain a list of completed modules and the corresponding marks; the topic, mark and names of examiners for the thesis; the mark for the colloquium; and the overall final mark for the master's examination. If credits were transferred from a different higher education institution as per Section 9, then their origin shall also be noted.

(2) The overall final mark for the master's examination is determined on the basis of the individual marks listed in paragraph (1) sentence 2 and in accordance with the grading scale defined in Section 11 (4). The marks are weighted as follows:

- Average of marks earned in modules based on course units, with each mark weighted by the credit point value of its module: = 65%
- Mark for the thesis: = 30%
- Mark for the colloquium: = 5%

(3) The final grade certificate shall be signed by the Chair of the relevant Examination Board and affixed with the official seal of the Examination Board. It shall also indicate the date on which the colloquium took place.

(4) In addition to the final grade certificate, each graduate shall receive a Diploma Supplement and a transcript of records, both issued in English. The Diploma Supplement shall be affixed with the official seal of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

(5) A student who withdraws from the university without having passed the master's examination may apply for a premature leaving certificate [*Abgangszeugnis*] that lists all examinations completed in the degree programme. Paragraph (3) sentence 1 shall apply accordingly.

Section 28

Master's degree certificate

(1) A master's degree certificate shall be issued to students at the same time as the final grade certificate and bearing the same date of issue. The master's degree certificate is an official confirmation that the master's degree specified in Section 3 (4) has been conferred.

(2) The master's degree certificate shall be signed by the Dean and the Chair of the Examination Board of the student's faculty and affixed with the official seal of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.

Section 29

Additional examinations

Students may also sit examinations in modules and course units which are not compulsory for their degree programme. The results of these examinations can be noted on the final

grade certificate or the premature leaving certificate upon request, but will not be taken into account when calculating the final mark.

Section 30

Viewing examination documents

(1) Following the conclusion of the examinations procedure, students may request the opportunity to view their marked examinations, corresponding evaluations of the examiners and examination reports.

(2) Students must submit a request to view examination documents to the Chair of the relevant Examination Board within one month from the date of issue of the final grade certificate, premature leaving certificate or declaration of a failed master's examination. Section 32 of the Administrative Procedure Act of North Rhine-Westphalia [*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz NRW*] shall govern students' right to submit a request after expiry of this deadline. The Chair of the Examination Board shall set the time and place for viewing.

(3) Students may request an opportunity to view the examination documents from a course-based examination once they have completed the examination in question. Requests must be submitted within one month after the announcement of the examination results. Paragraph (2) shall apply accordingly.

Section 31

Nullification of examinations

(1) If a student has cheated on one or more examination and this first comes to light after issuing the final grade certificate, the premature leaving certificate or the certificate defined in Section 26 (2) sentence 3, then the relevant Examination Board reserves the right to retroactively nullify the marks for the affected examinations and to declare the master's examination, in part or in whole, as "Failed".

(2) If the prerequisites for entry to an examination were not met and it can be shown that this was not the result of deliberate deception by the student and this inconsistency first comes to light after issuing the final grade certificate, the premature leaving certificate or the certificate defined in Section 26 (2) sentence 3, then this error shall be remedied by the fact that the examination was successfully passed. If the student used deliberate deception to gain wrongful entry to the examination, then the Examination Board shall decide upon any subsequent legal consequences, taking into account the Administrative Procedure Act of North Rhine-Westphalia [*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz NRW*].

(3) The incorrect final grade certificate, premature leaving certificate, master's degree certificate or certificate as defined in Section 26 (2) sentence 3 shall be revoked and, where appropriate, reissued. The statute of limitations for decisions with regard to paragraph (1) and paragraph (2) sentence 2 is five years after the date of issue for a final grade certificate, premature leaving certificate or certificate defined in Section 26 (2) sentence 3.

Section 32

Entry into force and transitional provisions

These examination regulations shall enter into force on the day after their publication in the Official Notices [*Amtliche Bekanntmachungen*] of Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences.