

Please note that this document is a non-binding convenience translation. Only the German version of the document entitled "Prüfungsordnung der Universität Heidelberg für den Masterstudiengang Geowissenschaften", dated 21 April 2016 [published in the President's bulletin (Mitteilungsblatt des Rektors) of 25 May 2016, p. 551] has legal validity.

## Heidelberg University Examination Rules and Regulations for the Master's Degree Programme in Earth Sciences

dated 21 April 2016

On the basis of § 32 of the State Law of Baden-Württemberg on Higher Education (Landeshochschulgesetz, LHG), last amended by the law on equal opportunities for men and women in public service in Baden-Württemberg and the amendment to the LHG dated 23 February 2016 (GBl. dated 26 February 2016, p. 108), the Senate of Heidelberg University issued the following examination rules and regulations on 19 April 2016.

Approved by the President on 21 April 2016.

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## Section I: General provisions

### § 1 Purpose of the academic programme and examination

- (1) Based on the knowledge acquired in a Bachelor's degree programme in Earth Sciences, students in the consecutive research-oriented Master's degree programme will gain further expertise and methodological knowledge in the field of Earth Sciences. In addition to the compulsory courses and lectures (compulsory modules 30 to 33), students can choose a range of different areas of specialisation (choice of 7 elective modules).
- (2) The purpose of the Master's examinations is to assess whether students have mastered the interrelationships between the individual disciplines of their subject, are able to apply advanced scientific methods and findings, and are able to work independently, employing scientific principles.
- (3) Admission to the academic programme is subject to separate admissions regulations.

### § 2 Master's degree

Upon successful completion of the Master's examination, Heidelberg University, represented by the Faculty of Chemistry and Earth Sciences, will confer the academic degree of "Master of Science" (abbreviated to "M.Sc.").

### § 3 Standard period of study, programme structure and range of courses offered

- (1) The standard period of study for the Master's degree programme is four semesters, including examinations. Lectures and courses in the Master's degree programme run for three semesters. Successful completion of the Master's degree programme requires a total of 120 credits (CP) for both compulsory and elective courses.
- (2) The Master's programme is a modular programme and includes the lectures and courses (85 CP), the Master's thesis (30 CP) and the final oral examination (5 CP). The modules are listed in Appendix 1.
- (3) Generally, the language of instruction and examinations is German. Classes may also be held and examinations taken partially or completely in English. The Master's thesis may be written in English.

- (4) The Master's degree programme concludes with the Master's examination in accordance with § 15 paragraph 1.

#### **§ 4 Modules, credit points and transcript of records**

- (1) A module is a teaching unit, self-contained in terms of both time and content and comprised of various lectures and courses. Modules consist not only of lectures and courses, but also the examination prerequisites necessary for the successful completion of the module.
- (2) The Master's thesis and the final oral examination are considered individual modules.
- (3) A distinction is made between:
- compulsory modules: these must be completed by all students
  - elective modules: students may freely choose these from the modules offered in their subject.
- (4) All components within a module must be graded as either "passed" or as "sufficient" (4.0) or better (sub-module grades) for the complete module to be passed. Module components that do not require an examination will not be considered in the calculation of the module grade.
- (5) Credits are awarded for successfully completed modules, including their individual components. One credit (CP) corresponds to a student workload of 30 hours.
- (6) Participation in a lecture or course may require the previous successful participation in another lecture or course. For details, please consult the module handbook.
- (7) A transcript of records will be issued at the end of each semester, listing all passed (sub-) module examinations, including the corresponding credits and grades, as well as all failed (sub-) modules including the number of unsuccessful attempts.

#### **§ 5 Examinations board**

- (1) The examinations board is responsible for the organisation of examinations and the tasks prescribed in these examination rules and regulations. It is made up of three professors or lecturers, a representative of the research assistants, and a student with advisory authority.
- (2) The faculty council appoints the chairperson, the deputy chairperson, and the other members of the examinations board. The chairperson and the deputy chairperson must be professors. The student member of the examinations board is appointed by the faculty council based on a proposal from the departmental student committee.
- (3) The members are appointed for three years; the student member is

appointed for one year. Each term commences on the day of appointment. Members may be re-elected.

- (4) The examinations board ensures that the examination rules and regulations are upheld.
- (5) The chairperson manages the business of the examinations board, prepares and chairs meetings and, in the event of a tie vote, has the deciding vote. The examinations board may confer further responsibility to its chairperson. Such a decision may be revoked at any time.
- (6) Members of the examinations board have the right to attend examinations.
- (7) Members of the examinations board and their deputies, as well as examiners and observers are obliged to maintain professional confidentiality. Members who are not civil servants are sworn to secrecy by the chairperson.

## **§ 6 Examiners and observers**

- (1) The examinations board appoints the examiners and observers for examinations. It may confer responsibility for appointing examiners and observers to its chairperson.
- (2) In general, examinations which are not completed during the course of study as part of individual lectures or courses may only be conducted by professors, or associate professors. The faculty council may also confer the right to conduct examinations to research associates.
- (3) Examinations held as an integrated part of a course or lecture during the course of study are usually conducted by the teacher of the course in question, provided that the examinations board has not appointed an alternative examiner.
- (4) In general, all individual oral examinations are also attended by an observer, who records the essential points of the oral examination. Examinations in the context of internships/field training or presentations in seminars are not attended by observers.
- (5) Observers must have sat the corresponding Master's examination or equivalent.
- (6) The chairperson of the examinations board ensures that candidates are given sufficient advance notice of examiners' names.
- (7) Authorised examiners may be called to conduct an examination for a period of up to two years after leaving Heidelberg University.

## **§ 7 Recognition of course credits, examination results and academic degrees**

- (1) Course credits and examination results as well as academic degrees that were obtained through a degree programme at another state or state-recognised institution of higher education or university of cooperative education (Berufsakademie) in the Federal Republic of Germany, or through degree programmes at state or state-recognised institutions of higher education abroad, will be recognised as long as the skills acquired do not differ significantly from those required for the courses and examinations or the degrees that are replaced. This recognition is required in order to continue an academic programme, take examinations, enrol in a further academic programme or be admitted to a doctoral programme. § 15, paragraphs 3 and 4, State Public Service Law (Landesbeamtenengesetz, LBG) remain unaffected.
- (2) Preliminary and intermediate examinations taken at other German universities in the same degree programme or in a similar degree programme will be recognised. Courses completed at recognised distance-learning institutions will be considered equivalent to those in a corresponding traditional degree programme with regard to determining the duration of study.
- (3) It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all necessary information for recognition of credits. It is the responsibility of the office which carries out the recognition procedure to prove that an application does not fulfil the requirements.
- (4) If existing agreements between the Federal Republic of Germany and other states concerning the equivalence of university degree programmes (Equivalency Agreements) diverge from paragraph 1 and § 29, paragraph 2, clause 5 of the State Law of Baden-Württemberg on Higher Education (Landeshochschulgesetz, LHG), and thereby favour students from other states, the rules and regulations in the Equivalency Agreement shall take precedence.
- (5) Examination components are to be graded on the basis of a credit system that allows for recognition of credits from equivalent or similar degree programmes studied at Heidelberg University, or at other universities. This also applies to credits gained at universities of cooperative education, provided that equivalence is established.
- (6) Knowledge and skills acquired outside of the higher education system are to be recognised for a degree programme at a higher education institution if:
  1. the requirements for university admission are fulfilled at the time of recognition,
  2. the knowledge and skills to be recognised for the university degree programme are equivalent in both content and level to the course credits and examinations which they are to replace, and
  3. the criteria for recognition have been verified in an accreditation procedure.

Knowledge gained outside of the higher education system may not replace more than 50% of the degree programme. A Master's thesis will not be

recognised. If required documentation of individual examinations, which serves as proof of specific knowledge and skills, is not provided, the examinations board may request that a placement test be completed.

- (7) Credits may be awarded for study and examination components completed in the context of refresher courses (Kontaktstudien). When recognising credits from refresher courses for a university degree programme, paragraphs 2 and 5, as well as paragraph 6, clause 1, item 1, apply accordingly. When recognising knowledge and skills gained outside of the higher education system for refresher courses, paragraph 6 applies accordingly.

## **§ 8 Unexcused absences, withdrawal, deception and breaches of regulations**

- (1) An examination is graded as "failed" (5.0), if a candidate fails to attend the examination and is unable to provide a valid reason for his or her absence, or if the candidate withdraws after the examination has started. This also applies if a written examination is not completed within the specified time frame, unless the candidate is not responsible for exceeding the time limit.
- (2) Reasons for withdrawal or absence in accordance with paragraph 1 must be plausible and must be immediately submitted to the examinations board in writing. If the candidate, or a child for whom the candidate is generally the sole carer, is ill, a medical certificate must be provided. In cases of doubt, a medical certificate may be requested from a doctor of the University's choice. If the reasons stated are accepted, a new examination date will be scheduled. In this case, examination results that are already available will be taken into account.
- (3) When deciding whether the candidate is at fault for exceeding a deadline for registration or taking an examination, the examinations board must respect the provisions stated in the Maternity Protection Act and the legal regulations concerning parental leave, and allow candidates to make appropriate use of these provisions. The same applies for students with disabilities or chronic illnesses, or for students with dependent relatives, in accordance with § 7 paragraph 3 of the Home Care Leave Act (Pflegezeitgesetz).
- (4) If the candidate tries to influence the examination results through deception or by using unauthorised aids, the examination will be graded as "failed" (5.0). If a candidate disrupts the proper course of the examination, they may be excluded from continuing the examination by the examiner or examination supervisor, in which case the examination will be graded as "failed" (5.0). In extreme cases, the examinations board may exclude the candidate from all further examinations.
- (5) Within a period of 14 days, the candidate may request that the examinations board validate the decisions in accordance with paragraph 4 clauses 1 and 2. The candidate must be informed of negative decisions immediately and in writing; the reasons for the decision must be stipulated and information on the procedure for appeal must be provided.

## § 9 Types of examination components

- (1) The examination components are:
  1. oral examination components completed during the course of study
  2. written examination components completed during the course of study (electronically where applicable)
  3. the Master's thesis
  4. the final oral examination
- (2) If candidates provide a medical certificate that plausibly proves that they are not able to take examinations in the form prescribed, whether completely or partially, due to permanent or chronic health problems, the examinations board may allow them to take an equivalent examination. The same applies to other course requirements.

## § 10 Oral examinations completed during the course of study

- (1) In oral examination components, candidates are required to show that they are able to identify interconnections within the examined subject matter, and that they are able to relate specific problems to these interconnections.
- (2) An oral examination lasts between 15 and 60 minutes.

## § 11 Written examinations completed during the course of study

- (1) In written examination components, candidates should demonstrate that they are able to recognise problems relating to their subject and find solutions for them using subject-specific methods within a limited period of time and using limited resources.
- (2) A written examination lasts between 45 and 150 minutes.
- (3) If a written examination component is set as a term paper, it must also be written under examination conditions. Furthermore, candidates must assure that they are the author of their work and have used no sources or aids other than those indicated.
- (4) The evaluation period for written examinations should not exceed four weeks.

## § 12 Assessment of examination components

- (1) Grades for the individual examination components are determined by the respective examiners. The following grades must be used for the assessment of examinations:
 

|               |   |  |
|---------------|---|--|
| 1 = very good | = | an outstanding performance;  |
| 2 = good      | = | a performance which lies substantially above average requirements; |

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 3 = satisfactory              | =                        | a performance which fulfils average requirements;                                      |
| 4 = sufficient                | =                        | a performance which, despite deficiencies, still meets the requirements;               |
| 5 = failed                    | =                        | a performance which, due to considerable deficiencies, does not meet the requirements. |

For a more detailed assessment of examination performance, grades may be further differentiated by increasing or decreasing the individual grades by 0.3; however, the grade 0.7 and incremental grades above 4.0 may not be used.

- (2) In general, the evaluation period for examination components should not exceed four weeks following completion of the module.
- (3) Students receive a passing grade in an examination component if it has been graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or higher.
- (4) When calculating final module grades and the overall examination grade (§19, paragraph 3), only the first decimal after the point is taken into account. The other decimals are dropped without rounding.
- (5) If grades are awarded in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System ECTS, the international assessment standard specified in Appendix 2 is applied.

## Section II: Master's examination

### § 13 Master's examination admission requirements

- (1) Admission to the individual examination components for the Master's examination is only authorised for those who:
  1. are enrolled in the Master's degree programme in Earth Sciences at Heidelberg University;
  2. have not lost their entitlement to take the examination.
- (2) For admission to the final oral Master's examination, students must also submit certificates confirming the successful completion of the courses listed in Appendix 1 (excluding module 90 "final oral examination" and module 91 "Master's thesis").
- (3) For admission to the Master's thesis, students must also submit certificates confirming the successful completion of the courses listed in Appendix 1 (excluding module 91 "Master's thesis").
- (4) In exceptional cases, the examinations board may admit students to the final oral Master's examination and the Master's thesis if max. two sub-module examinations have not yet been successfully completed.



## § 14 Master's examination admission procedure

- (1) The application for admission to the examination must be made in writing, and addressed to the chairperson of the examinations board prior to the first examination component. The following must be included in the application:
  1. the certificates indicating that the student fulfils the admission requirements set forth in § 13 items 1 and 2,
  2. a declaration from the candidate stating whether he or she has previously failed a Master's examination in a Master's degree programme in Earth Sciences or in another subject area related to Earth Sciences, or whether he or she is currently involved in an examination procedure in such a degree programme.
- (2) If the candidate is unable to provide evidence in the prescribed form, the examinations board may accept alternative documents as proof.
- (3) The examinations board decides whether to admit the candidate on the basis of the application. Rejections must be made in writing, stating the reasons and providing information on the procedure for appeal.
- (4) The application for admission to the examination may only be rejected if:
  1. the conditions stated in paragraph 1 are not fulfilled, or
  2. the documents set forth in paragraph 1 are incomplete, and have not been completed upon request, or
  3. candidates have failed their final attempt at the Master's examination in Earth Sciences or in another subject area related to Earth Sciences, or have lost the entitlement to take the final examinations, or
  4. the candidate is currently involved in an examination procedure in a degree programme according to clause 3.

## § 15 Scope, nature and organisation of the Master's examination

- (1) The Master's examination consists of:
  1. examination components completed during the course of study in the modules, in accordance with Appendix 1,
  2. the final oral examination,
  3. the Master's thesis.
- (2) The examinations referred to in paragraph 1 item 1 are taken as an integrated part of the respective lectures or courses. They may be in written or oral form. The lecturer responsible for a course determines the nature and duration of the examination components and provides this information no later than at the beginning of the course.
- (3) Module examinations may consist of several sub-module examinations.
- (4) In accordance with § 13 paragraph 4, the Master's examination must be completed in the following order: examination components completed during the course of study, final oral examination, Master's thesis.

## § 16 Final oral examination

- (1) The final oral examination is conducted as an individual examination with two examiners. The candidate has the right to suggest an examiner; this does not, however, constitute a legal entitlement. In the oral examination, candidates should be able to prove that they are able to identify interrelationships within the examination subject matter and relate specialist problems to these interrelationships. Additionally, the purpose of the oral examination is to assess whether the candidate has profound basic and specialised knowledge in limited fields of the subjects to be examined.
- (2) The final oral examination lasts for approximately 45 minutes.
- (3) All significant content, and the result of the oral examination, must be recorded in the minutes. Candidates must be notified of examination results immediately following the oral examination.

## § 17 Master's thesis

- (1) The Master's thesis is an examination component that concludes the academic programme. The purpose of the Master's thesis is for candidates to show that they are able to work independently on a problem from the subject field of the degree programme in Earth Sciences within a given period of time and in accordance with the principles of scientific work.
- (2) The Master's thesis may be assigned and supervised by any authorised examiner as defined in § 6 paragraph 2.
- (3) The candidate must begin work on the Master's thesis no later than one week after successful completion of the final oral examination, or, must have by that time submitted an application for assignment of a topic to the chairperson of the examinations board.
- (4) If the deadline (see Section 3) is not met, the final thesis will be graded as "failed" (5.0), unless the candidate is not at fault for exceeding the deadline.
- (5) The topic of the Master's thesis will be determined by the thesis supervisor, in consultation with the candidate. If such an application is made, the chairperson of the examinations board will ensure that the candidate receives a topic for their Master's thesis in due time. The candidate is permitted to propose topics; however, this does not constitute a legal entitlement to a particular topic. The chairperson of the examinations board assigns the thesis topic; the date of assignment must be recorded.
- (7) The deadline for submission of the thesis is six months following assignment of the topic. In exceptional cases, the examinations board, in consultation with the supervisor, may extend this deadline by up to two months. If the deadline is exceeded, the Master's thesis will be graded as "failed" (5.0), unless the candidate is not responsible for exceeding the deadline. The topic

may only be rejected once, and only within the first two months following assignment of the topic.

- (8) The topic, task and scope of the Master's thesis must be limited in such a way that the candidate is able to complete the thesis within the given time frame.
- (9) The Master's thesis may be written in German or English. It must contain German and English summaries.

### **§ 18 Submission and assessment of the Master's thesis**

- (1) Three copies of the Master's thesis must be submitted to the examinations board before the established deadline; the submission date must be recorded.
- (2) When submitting the Master's thesis, the candidate must certify in writing that they are the author of their work and have used no sources or aids other than those indicated.
- (3) The Master's thesis is assessed by two examiners. The first examiner will be the thesis supervisor. The second examiner will be appointed by the examinations board. The candidate is permitted to propose a second examiner. This does not, however, constitute a legal entitlement to examination by a particular examiner. The assessment period should not exceed a period of four weeks.
- (4) The grade is calculated as the average of the two assessments; § 12 shall apply accordingly. If the grades differ by more than one grade point, the examinations board will determine the Master's thesis grade after consulting both examiners. In such cases, a third examiner may be consulted.
- (5) If the Master's thesis is graded as "failed" (5.0), it may be retaken once with a new topic; retaking the thesis with the previous topic is not possible.

### **§ 19 Passing the examination and overall grade**

- (1) The Master's examination is passed when all examination components according to § 15, paragraph 1 have been graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or higher. When calculating the overall grade for the Master's examination, the numerical value of all module grades in accordance with § 12 paragraph 4 shall be taken into account and weighted according to their respective number of credits.

The overall grade is determined as follows:

for an average of up to and including 1.5 very good  
 for an average of between 1.6 and up to/including 2.5 good  
 for an average of between 2.6 and up to/including 3.5 satisfactory  
 for an average of between 3.6 and up to / including 4.0 sufficient

- (2) If both the final oral examination and the Master's thesis are graded with a 1.0, the candidate will receive the commendation "with distinction".

## § 20 Retaking an examination component, deadlines

- (1) If examination components are not passed or are considered not to have been passed, they may be retaken once. This includes examinations failed at other universities. A second retake is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and only for a maximum of two examination components completed during the course of study. A second retake must be approved by the examinations board. A second retake is not permitted for the Master's thesis or for the final oral examination.
- (2) Retaking an examination that has been graded as passed is not permitted.
- (3) If an examination component has been failed, it must be retaken in the following semester, or at the next examination date at the latest. If the candidate fails to meet this deadline, they will lose their entitlement to take the examination, unless they are not responsible for exceeding the deadline.
- (4) If a compulsory module examination is failed on the final attempt, the candidate will be excluded from the academic programme. Failure of elective modules may be offset by the successful completion of a different module.

## § 21 Master's diploma

- (1) Within four weeks of passing the Master's examination, a diploma will be issued. The diploma lists all individual modules with their respective grades, credits, and the overall grade. The diploma bears the date on which the last examination component was completed. It must be signed by the chairperson of the examinations board.
- (2) A Diploma Supplement in German and English is also included, which contains additional information about the course content and period of studies.

## § 22 Master's certificate

- (1) A bilingual Master's certificate in German and English is issued with the diploma, bearing the same date as the diploma. It certifies the conferment of the academic degree "Master of Science". The Master's certificate is signed by the dean and the chairperson of the examinations board. It bears the faculty seal. The certificate is to be issued at the same time as the diploma. If this is not possible, however, it will be issued no later than eight weeks after the diploma.
- (2) If the Master's examination is failed at the final attempt or is considered not to have been passed, the chairperson will issue a written notification, providing information on the procedure for appeal. A certificate will be issued upon request, and upon presentation of documentation of proof, listing passed

examinations and their grades, missing examinations required for obtaining the Master's degree, and including a statement that the Master's examination was not passed on the final attempt.

### **Section III: Final provisions**

#### **§ 23 Invalidity of examinations**

- (1) If a candidate has cheated on an examination and this is not discovered until after the diploma has been issued, the examinations board may correct the examination results for the affected examination components accordingly and may declare the examination to be partially or completely failed.
- (2) If the requirements for admission to the examination were not fulfilled, but without any intent on the candidate's part to deceive and this is not discovered until after the diploma has been issued, the passed examination will be considered a compensation for this shortcoming. If the candidate intentionally gained admission to the examination through deceit, the examinations board will make a decision on the matter.
- (3) The candidate will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation before the decision is made.
- (4) Fraudulent examination diplomas will be confiscated and, if necessary, a new diploma will be issued. If the examination has been graded as "failed" due to cheating or deceit, the Master's certificate will be confiscated along with the fraudulent examination diploma. In accordance with paragraph 1 and paragraph 2, clause 2, a decision may not be made more than five years after the date indicated on the examination diploma.

#### **§ 24 Access to examination documents**

The candidate may submit a written request for access to the examination documents within one year following the completion of the examination procedure. The chairperson of the examinations board will decide when and where such access will be granted.

#### **§ 25 Coming into force**

- (1) These examination rules and regulations become effective on the first day of the month following their publication in the President's bulletin (Mitteilungsblatt des Rektors). At the same time, the examination rules and regulations of 10.02.2009 (President's bulletin of 11 March 2009 p. 317), last modified on 7 February 2013 (President's bulletin of 28 February 2013, p. 74) are suspended.
- (2) Students who were already enrolled in the Master's degree programme in Earth Sciences at Heidelberg University prior to the winter semester 2016/2017 refer to the examination rules and regulations of 10.02.2009 as

amended on 28.02.2013 for a period of 3 semesters. Upon application, students may request to switch to these examination rules and regulations. The informal application must be submitted to the Secretaries' office for examination issues.

Heidelberg, 21 April 2016

Professor Bernhard Eitel  
President

### Appendix 1: Compulsory modules, including certification of successful participation and grading

| Module number | Module name                       | Course  | WCH | Reco mme | CP |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|---------|-----|----------|----|
| 30            | Communication and Didactics       | T, S, C | 5   | 1st -    | 6  |
| 31            | Isotope Geology and Geochronology | L/PC    | 6   | 1st -    | 6  |
| 32            | Earth dynamics                    | L/PC    | 4   | 1st -    | 5  |
| 33            | Field Training                    | FT      | 12  | 1st -    | 12 |
| 90            | Final oral examination            |         | -   | 3        | 5  |
| 91            | Master's thesis                   |         | -   | 4        | 30 |

In addition to the compulsory modules, students must successfully complete 7 elective modules totalling 56 CP. These elective modules are listed in the module handbook.

### Appendix 2: Grading in accordance with ECTS

In addition to the final grade calculated according to the German system, students who have passed the examination components will also be awarded a relative grade according to the following scale:

A for the top 10 %

B for the following 25 %

C for the following 30 %

D for the following 25 %

E for the following 10 %

Depending on the size of the graduating cohort, the grades achieved by at least two previously graduating year groups may also be taken into account when calculating the relative grades for the current graduating year group. For degree grades, the ECTS grade must be included. For individual modules, the ECTS grade may be listed where possible and necessary.

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