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HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION AND DEGREE PROGRAMME RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME IN BIOCHEMISTRY

as of 9 February 2015

All titles in this document, be they official, job, status or functions, are used in masculine form, however, they refer to men and women equally and may also be used in the corresponding feminine form.

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I. General provisions

§ 1 Purpose of the academic programme and examination

- (1) The consecutive, research-oriented Master's degree programme in Biochemistry is organised jointly by the Biosciences faculty and the Chemistry and Geosciences faculty. The courses in the programme provide further expertise and methodological knowledge in the inter-disciplinary fields of molecular biosciences and chemistry.
- (2) This degree programme ensures a research-oriented approach, preparing candidates for independent scientific work in a subsequent doctorate programme, as well as providing advanced knowledge for entering scientific occupations in industrial, economical, administrative, teaching and research fields.
- (3) The purpose of the Master's examination 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 have acquired the specialist knowledge required to enter a profession or begin a doctorate programme.
- (4) The requirements for admission to this degree programme are set forth in the Admission Regulations, published separately.

§ 2 Master's degree

After successful completion of the master's examinations, Heidelberg University, represented by the Faculty of Biosciences, will award 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 is four semesters, including the Master's examination.
- (2) Lectures and courses run for three semesters; the Master's thesis is to be completed within the fourth semester. Lectures and courses offered include the modules listed in Appendix 1. Successful completion of the Master's

degree programme requires a total of 120 ECTS-credits (European Credit Transfer System) in all courses required (both all compulsory and 3 elective courses), and the Master's thesis / oral defence module.

- (3) The Master's programme is a modular programme. Examinations are graded with credits (CP) and in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System. One credit point corresponds to a workload of 30 hours. Credits are awarded only for successfully completed modules. All components within a module must be graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or higher for the module to be passed.
- (4) The language of instruction can be English or German. In general, examinations must be taken in the language of instruction.

§ 4 Modules, credits and list of grades

- (1) A module is a teaching unit, self-contained in terms of both time and content and comprised of various lectures and courses. It not only comprises the lectures and courses attended, but also the components necessary for a passing grade in the module.
- (2) Master's thesis and final oral examination are regarded as individual modules.
- (3) A distinction is made between
 - compulsory modules: must be completed by all students
 - compulsory elective modules: students may select these from a limited subject area.
- (4) Research internships 1 and 2 may not be completed within the same work group. Also the internships to be completed in the context of the three compulsory elective modules are to be completed in different work groups.
- (5) All courses and lectures of a module have to be attended for the complete module to be passed. Every module is comprised of one or more courses or lectures, which must be graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or higher (=sub-module grades) for the complete module to be passed.
- (6) A transcript of records will be issued at the end of each semester, listing all module and sub-module examinations students have passed, including the corresponding credits and grades.

§ 5 Examinations board

- (1) An examinations board is responsible for the organisation of examinations and the tasks required by the examination rules and regulations. It will consist of three members of the full-time academic staff, including at least two professors,

from the Biosciences faculty and/or from the Chemistry and Geosciences faculty, as well as two student representatives who will serve in an advisory capacity.

- (2) The faculty councils of both faculties appoint the chairperson, the deputy, and the other members of the examinations board. The chairperson and the deputy must be professors. The student members of the examinations board will be appointed by the faculty councils of both faculties, based on proposals from the student members of each of these departmental faculty councils.
- (3) The members are appointed for three years; the student member is appointed for one year. Members may be re-elected.
- (4) The examinations board ensures that the examination rules and regulations are upheld. On a regular basis, the board reports to the faculties involved regarding periods of study and examinations, and grading as well as the distribution of grades. This report is published in a suitable form.
- (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 on its chairperson. Such a decision may be revoked at any time.
- (6) Examinations board members have the right to attend examinations.
- (7) Members of the examinations board and their deputies are obligated to maintain professional confidentiality. Those who are not civil servants are sworn to secrecy by the chairperson.

§ 6 Examiners and observers

- (1) Examiners will be appointed by the chairperson of the examinations board, in consultation with the examinations board.
- (2) Examinations held during the course of study are usually conducted by the instructor of the course in question.
- (3) Observers must have taken the Master's examination or an equivalent final examination. They are appointed by the examinations board, which may confer these appointments to the respective examiner.
- (4) In general, only professors, lecturers, associate professors, or research associates who have been granted the right to conduct examinations may conduct the defence or furnish an opinion of the Master's thesis. Examiners who are not members of the faculties of Biosciences or Chemistry and Geosciences may be appointed as examiner or evaluator if the first examiner or evaluator is appointed in accordance with sentence 1.

- (5) For examiners and observers, § 5 paragraph 7 (professional confidentiality) shall apply accordingly.

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

- (1) Examination prerequisites and results, as well as academic degrees obtained in degree programmes at German universities or universities of cooperative education (state or state-recognised), or at foreign universities (state or state-recognised), will be recognised as long as there is no significant difference concerning the skills acquired, courses taken and degree obtained in the programme. This recognition is required in order to continue an academic programme, take examinations, start a further academic programme or be admitted to a doctoral programme. The validity of § 15, paragraph 3 and 4 LBG (State Public Service Law) remains unaffected.
- (2) 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 information necessary for achievements to be recognised. 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 agreements exist between the Federal Republic of Germany and other states concerning equivalent university degree programmes (Equivalency Agreements) that favour students from other states by way of derogation from paragraph 1 and § 29, paragraph 2, sentence 5 of the LHG (Act on Higher Education of the Land of Baden-Württemberg), the rules and regulations in the Equivalency Agreement take precedence.
- (5) Examination results are to be graded on the basis of a credit point system that allows for achievements in equivalent or similar degree programmes to be recognised; this also applies to universities of cooperative education, provided that there is equivalence.
- (6) Knowledge and skills gained outside a university degree programme may be recognised for such a programme, as long as
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 should replace, and
 3. the criteria for recognition have been verified in an accreditation.

4. The maximum number of credits that may be recognised for skills and competences acquired outside of the higher education system is 60 credits. A Master's thesis will not be recognised. If documentation of individual examinations that would provide evidence of specific knowledge and skills cannot be provided, the examinations board may request the completion of a placement test.
- (7) In case of refresher courses, credits may be given for courses and examinations. When recognising credits from refresher courses for a university degree programme, paragraphs 2 and 5, as well as paragraph 6, sentence 1, no. 1 apply accordingly. When recognising knowledge and skills gained outside a university degree programme for refresher courses, paragraph 6 applies accordingly.

§ 8 Unexcused absence, withdrawal, deception and breaches of regulations

- (1) An examination is graded as "failed" (5.0), if a candidate fails to appear and is unable to provide a valid reason for his or her absence, or, if the candidate withdraws after the examination has started. The same applies if the candidate fails to provide a written examination by the established deadline, unless the candidate is not at fault for the deadline being exceeded.
- (2) Reasons for withdrawal or absence must be plausible and must immediately be submitted in writing to the examinations board. If the candidate, or a child for whom the candidate is generally the sole caregiver, is ill, a medical certificate must be provided. In the event of doubt, a medical certificate from a designated physician may be required. If the reasons stated are accepted, a new examination appointment will be scheduled. In this circumstance, 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 diseases, or for students with dependent relatives, in accordance with § 7 paragraph 3 of the Pflegezeitgesetz (Home Care Leave Act).
- (4) If the candidate tries to influence the examination results through deception or by using unauthorised aids, the examination results will be graded as "failed" (5.0). If candidates disrupt the proper course of the examination, they may be excluded from taking further part in the examination by the examiner or examination supervisor. In this 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) With regard to paragraph 4, sentences 1 and 2, within a period of 14 days, the candidate may request that the decision be validated by the examinations

board. 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 examinations

- (1) Types of examinations are:
 1. oral examinations
 2. written examinations (electronically where applicable)
 3. Master's thesis and defence.
- (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 for other course requirements.

§ 10 Oral examinations completed during the course of study

- (1) In oral examinations, candidates should be able to prove that they are able to identify interrelationships within the examination subject matter and relate specified problems to these interrelationships.
- (2) Generally, oral examinations will be conducted by an examiner in the presence of a qualified observer.
- (3) An oral examination lasts between 15 and 45 minutes.
- (4) The relevant content and the results of the oral examination must be recorded in a written report. Following the oral examination, candidates must be notified of examination results.
- (5) Students wishing to take a subject examination at a later examination date will be permitted to attend the same examination for another candidate, as long as room is available. However, the visitor may not be present for assessment or announcement of the examination result. Upon request of the candidate, or for other valid reasons, the examination may be closed to visitors.

§ 11 Written examinations completed during the course of study

- (1) In written examinations, candidates should show that they are able to recognise problems relating to their subject and find solutions for them, using subject-specific methods and within limited time and resources. A written examination lasts between 45 and 120 minutes. Multiple choice questions are permitted.

- (2) Multiple choice questions are generally set by the lecturer responsible for a lecture or course, as determined by the examinations board. The examination questions must correspond to the knowledge imparted in the lecture or course, and must provide reliable examination results. Before assessing the examination results, the examiner responsible, as determined in sentence 1, must ensure that the questions for the examination have met the requirements set forth in paragraph 3, sentence 2. If the examiner finds that individual examination questions are incorrect, these questions may not be considered when assessing the examination results. In such a case, the total number of questions will be reduced and the assessment will be based on the reduced number of questions. Reducing the number of examination questions is not permitted to have negative consequences for the candidates.

An examination carried out as a multiple choice examination is considered to be passed, when at least 50 % of the questions were answered correctly, or when the number of the candidate's correctly answered questions is not lower than 22 % of the average examination results of all candidates. (norm-referenced grading). In case of norm-referenced grading, at least 45 % of the questions must be answered correctly.

If a candidate has correctly answered the required number of questions for passing, the multiple choice examination must be assessed as follows. For norm-referenced grading, the scale for assessment is moved linearly by the difference between the absolute and relative threshold for passing.

%	corresponds to	grade
≥ 50 – 55		4.0
> 55 – 60		3.7
> 60 – 65		3.3
> 65 – 70		3.0
> 70 – 75		2.7
> 75 – 80		2.3
> 80 – 85		2.0
> 85 – 90		1.7
> 90 – 95		1.3
> 95 – 100		1.0

- (3) If a written examination is taken as a term paper, it must be taken 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.

§ 12 Assessment of examinations

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

1 = very good	= an outstanding performance;
2 = good	= performance which is substantially above average requirements;
3 = satisfactory	= performance which fulfils average requirements;
4 = sufficient	= a performance which, despite deficiencies, still meets the requirements;
5 = failed	= performance which, due to considerable deficiencies, does not meet the requirements.

For more detailed assessment of examination results, grades may be further differentiated by increasing or decreasing the individual grades by 0.3; however, the grade 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 may not be used.

- (2) In general, the evaluation period for examinations should not exceed two weeks after completion of the module.
- (3) An examination component is passed when it has been graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or higher. A module is passed when all of its individual examination components have been passed.
- (4) The module grade is calculated as the arithmetical mean of the individual grades from all module examinations.
- (5) When calculating final module grades and the overall examination grade (§ 19, paragraph 3), only the first decimal after the point is taken into account, without rounding.
- (6) Additionally, grades are awarded in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (in accordance with Appendix 2).

§ 13 Retaking examinations

- (1) If examinations are not passed, or are not considered to have been passed, they may be retaken once.
- (2) A second re-examination is permitted only upon request to the examinations board.
- (3) Retaking an examination that has been graded as passed is not permitted.
- (4) Failed examinations must be retaken no later than during the following semester. If candidates fail to meet this deadline, they will lose entitlement to take this examination, unless they are not at fault for the deadline being exceeded.

II. Master's examination

§ 14 Scope, nature and organisation of Master's examination

- (1) The Master's examination consists of:
 1. successful completion of the examinations for the modules and courses set forth in § 3 paragraph 2 and Appendix 1,
 2. the Master's thesis module / defence.
- (2) The examinations referred to in paragraph 1, no. 1 are taken as an integrated part of their respective lectures or courses. They may be in written or oral form. The lecturer responsible for a lecture or course determines the nature and duration of the integrated examinations and provides this information no later than the beginning of the lecture or course.
- (3) Module examinations may consist of several sub-module examinations.

§ 15 Master's examination admission requirements and procedure

- (1) Admission to the examinations for the master's examination will only be authorised for students who:
 1. are enrolled in the Master's degree programme in Biochemistry at Heidelberg University;
 2. have not lost their entitlement to take the final examinations in the Master's degree programme in Biochemistry.
- (2) The following certificates must be provided for admission to the Master's thesis: successful completion of modules and courses set forth in § 3 paragraph 2 and Appendix 1.
- (3) The application for admission to the examination must be made in writing, addressed to the chairperson of the examinations board. The application must include the following documents:
 1. evidence of fulfilment of the admission requirements in accordance with paragraph 1, number 1;
 2. declarations from candidates, stating whether they have previously failed a Master's examination in the Biochemistry Master's programme.

- (4) If candidates are unable to provide such evidence in accordance with paragraph 2 number 1, the examinations board may allow other documents of proof to be accepted.
- (5) The decision on admission of the candidate is made by the chairperson of the examinations board.
- (6) The application for admission to the examination may only be denied if:
 1. conditions are not fulfilled in accordance with paragraph 1, or
 2. documents are not complete, or
 3. candidates have lost the entitlement to take the final examinations.
- (7) Such a declaration in accordance with § 3 paragraph 2 no. 2 must be submitted to the examiner for each examination.

§ 16 Master's thesis

- (1) The Master's thesis is the examination component that concludes the academic programme. The purpose of the thesis is for candidates to prove that they are able to work independently, within a given period of time, and using scientific methods, to address a problem from the field of biochemistry, chemistry or molecular biosciences.
- (2) In accordance with § 6 paragraph 4, the Master's thesis may be assigned and supervised by any authorised examiner.
- (3) The candidate must have submitted an application to the chairperson of the examinations board for the assignment of a topic (registration) no later than six weeks after the successful completion of the last examination completed during the course of study. Work on the thesis may only be started after registration. It is possible to begin writing the thesis at a later date only after submission of a substantiated request to the chairperson of the examinations board.
- (4) If the candidate fails to meet this deadline, the thesis is graded as "failed" (5.0), unless the candidate is not at fault for the deadline being exceeded.
- (5) The topic of the Master's thesis will be determined by the thesis supervisor, in consultation with the candidate. If an application for assignment of a topic is submitted, the chairperson of the examinations board will ensure that the candidate receives a topic for his or her Master's thesis in a timely fashion. The candidate is permitted to propose topics. However, this does not constitute entitlement to a certain topic. The thesis topic will be assigned by the chairperson of the examinations board; the date of assignment must be recorded.

- (6) The deadline for submission of the thesis is six months following assignment of the topic. In exceptional cases, the examinations board may extend this deadline by up to one month. If the deadline is not met, the Master's thesis will be graded as "failed" (5.0), unless the candidate is not at fault for the deadline being exceeded.
- (7) The topic, task and scope of the Master's thesis must be limited in such a way that the candidate will be able to complete the thesis within the given time frame.
- (8) The Master's thesis may be written in German or English.
- (9) The thesis must contain an English summary.

§ 17 Submission and assessment of Master's thesis

- (1) Three copies of the Master's thesis must be submitted to the examinations board before the deadline; the submission date must be recorded.
- (2) When submitting a Master's thesis, candidates must certify in writing that they are the authors of their work and have used no sources or aids other than those indicated.
- (3) The Master's thesis will be assessed by two examiners, one of whom must be appointed in accordance with § 6 paragraph 4. The first examiner will be the thesis supervisor. The candidate is permitted to make a proposal; however this does not constitute entitlement to be examined by a particular examiner. The evaluation period may not exceed four weeks.
- (4) The grade is calculated as the mean of both evaluations. If the grades differ by more than one grade level, the examinations board will determine the grade of the Master's thesis 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 on a new topic; retaking the thesis with the previous topic is not possible.
- (6) The Master's thesis may be presented to third parties if the candidate provides written consent.

§ 18 Defence

- (1) Candidates shall present and defend the findings of their Master's thesis in a discussion with the examiner. This oral defence must be taken within four weeks following submission of the Master's thesis.

- (2) The oral defence will be held by two examiners, one of whom must be appointed in accordance with § 6 paragraph 4. One of the examiners must be the thesis supervisor, the second generally is the second examiner of the thesis. The examiners are designated by the examinations board. The candidate is permitted to make a proposal.
- (3) The oral defence lasts approximately 45 minutes. The presentation of the central findings of the Master's thesis may not exceed 20 minutes.
- (4) The grade of the oral defence is calculated as the mean of the individual evaluations.
- (5) If the oral defence is graded as "failed" (5.0), it may be retaken once.

§ 19 Overall grade of the Master's thesis module / defence

The overall grade of the Master's thesis module / defence is calculated using the evaluations of the Master's thesis and the oral defence. The Master's thesis will be weighted with 20 credits and the defence with 10. Both the Master's thesis module and oral defence must be passed, and graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or higher.

§ 20 Passing the examination and overall grade

- (1) The Master's examination is passed when all examination components completed during the course of study, the Master's thesis, and the defence have been graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or higher.
- (2) § 12 applies accordingly for the overall grade.
- (3) When calculating the overall grade for the Master's examination, all module grades, in accordance with § 3 paragraph 2, Annex 1, and the Master's thesis module / defence, in accordance with § 19, are weighted according to their respective credits.

§ 21 Master's diploma

- (1) Once the Master's examination is passed, a diploma will be issued within four weeks. This will list all individual modules with their respective grades and credits, as well as the overall grade of the master's examinations. The diploma will be dated with the date of the last examination. It must be signed by the chairperson of the examinations board.
- (2) A "Diploma Supplement" in German and English will also be provided, containing additional information about the course content and the course of study. This content complies with the "European Diploma Supplement Model".

§ 22 Master's certificate

- (1) A Master's certificate is issued with the diploma, bearing the same date as the diploma. It certifies the conferment of the academic degree.
- (2) The master's certificate is signed by the deans of the Faculty of Biosciences and the Faculty of Chemistry and Geosciences. It bears the seals of both faculties.
- (3) If the master's examination is considered not to have been passed, a certificate signed by the chairperson of the examinations board 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 a statement that the master's examination has not been passed. The same applies for the Master's examination, if it is failed at the final attempt.

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, accordingly, correct the examination results that were affected by the cheating 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 to compensate 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) Before the decision is made, candidates will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation.
- (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 deception, the master's certificate "Master of Arts" will be confiscated along with the fraudulent examination diploma. The statute of limitations for rendering a decision such as described in paragraph 1 and paragraph 2, sentence 2, is five years from the date on the examination diploma.

§ 24 Access to examination documents

Within a year after the examination procedure has been completed, the candidate can request access to written examination documents, examiners reviews and the examination minutes. The chairperson of the examinations board decides when and where such access will be given.

§ 25 Coming into force

These examination rules and regulations come into force on 01 October 2015.

Annex 1: Modules

a) Compulsory modules, incl. certification of successful participation and grades

All compulsory modules must be successfully completed.

Modules	Teaching method	CP
Biochemistry	L, Lab, S	15
Focus Biochemistry	L, ProjectProposal	6
Research Practical I	Lab, S	15
Research Practical II	Lab, S	15
Master's thesis / defence	Master's thesis / defence	30

Compulsory elective modules, incl. certification of successful participation and grades

Three compulsory elective modules (in any combination) from the list of modules offered much be successfully completed.

Modules	Teaching method	CP
Frontiers in Biosciences I	L, Lab, PT, S	13
Frontiers in Biosciences II	L, Lab, PT, S	13
X-Ray Structure and Spectroscopy	S, Lab	13
Bioinorganic Chemistry	L, Lab	13
Biophysical Chemistry	L, Lab	13
Organic Chemistry, Heterocycles	L, Lab, S	13
Organic Chemistry, Stereochemistry	L, Lab	13
Bioinformatics / Molecular Dynamics	L, Lab	13

Annex 2: Grading in accordance with ECTS

In addition to the German-system grades, students who have passed the examinations will also be awarded a relative grade according to the following scale:

A	top 10 %
B	the subsequent 25 %

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C	the subsequent 30 %
D	the subsequent 25 %
E	the subsequent 10 %

The letter grades are calculated based on the examination results of the total graduating class, as well as the graduating classes from two or more previous years, depending on the number of students in the current graduating class. For degree grades, the ECTS grade must be added. For individual modules, the ECTS grade may be listed when possible and necessary.

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