

Implementation Guidelines for the German/English-language distance learning programme of the Swiss Distance Learning University of Applied Sciences (Fernfachhochschule Schweiz, FFHS), which supplement the Conditions of Study

1. Scope

- (1) These implementation rules refer to the Master of Science SUPSI in Business Administration (MSc) awarded by the Dipartimento economia aziendale, sanità e sociale (DEASS) of SUPSI and thus supplement the SUPSI Conditions of Study. They contain detailed information about the course of the distance learning programme, which is conducted in German and English. It is organised and implemented by the Department of Business & Technology (Departement Wirtschaft & Technik, DWT) of the Swiss Distance University of Applied Sciences (Fernfachhochschule Schweiz, FFHS).
- (2) The guidelines, instructions and regulations published for the modules, projects and master's thesis shall also apply, as do the FFHS General Terms and Conditions.

2. Admission and recognition of qualifications

- (1) Admission and matriculation to the Master of Science in Business Administration shall be explicitly governed by the relevant admission and matriculation regulations of the degree programme.
- (2) FFHS has adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to promote the transparency of degree programmes and to facilitate student mobility and the recognition of academic achievements. One ECTS credit corresponds to a workload of 25 hours of study (contact hours, independent and online study as well as module examinations).
- (3) The Head of the Programme may recognise qualifications acquired outside the degree programme as part of the master's degree programme and may grant dispensation for the corresponding master's modules. Eligible qualifications shall be those acquired within the framework of a corresponding professional activity after the first degree (diploma/bachelor's degree) and within the framework of further or continuing education programmes at university level (e.g. NDS/MAS/EMBA/MSc). These qualifications must be equivalent to the qualifications acquired in the corresponding master's modules.
- (4) The recognition of qualifications acquired in the context of professional practice shall be based on a thorough evaluation and shall be handled in a very restrictive manner. Consideration will primarily be given to specific high-level professional experience on the basis of which competences have been acquired that are equivalent or at least comparable to the competences to be acquired in one or more modules of the master's degree programme. The Head of the Programme reserves the right to review any such qualifications from professional practice before recognising them. Professional qualifications below master's level shall not be credited.

- (5) To obtain credit for such qualifications, students must apply to the Head of the Programme using the form provided for this purpose (including the relevant attachments). They must provide proof of the equivalence of the qualifications in question.
- (6) For qualifications that are recognised as equivalent, FFHS shall award ECTS credits in accordance with its own system (including the corresponding grades or assessments, if applicable). In total, a maximum of 30 ECTS credits may be awarded, of which a maximum of 15 ECTS credits may come from relevant professional practice.
- (7) Specific agreements with other higher education institutions may replace the procedure for individual recognition.

3. Start of studies, duration of studies, enrolment in modules

- (1) Teaching at FFHS is based on a blended learning approach. The programme consists of 80% independent study and 20% contact hours. Independent study includes activities such as working through the course content, completing tasks/exercises and case studies, writing academic papers and preparing for examinations. It also includes online study on the learning platform. In addition to face-to-face teaching, the contact hours also includes online teaching, block seminars (e.g. workshops) and examinations.
- (2) The programme starts both in the fall and in the spring semester.
- (3) The standard period of study for the master's degree is five semesters (including the master's thesis). The standard period of study does not include any approved semesters of leave.
- (4) The standard period of study may be reduced depending on the number of ECTS credits obtained and recognised prior to enrolment in the master's degree programme.
- (5) The Head of the Programme reserves the right to remove students from the degree programme after two approved semesters of leave should they fail to continue their studies. Subject to the provisions of the Conditions of Study, students may, however, resume their studies at a later date.
- (6) The standard period of study may be extended if students pursue a flexible curriculum (Model F). The costs of the overall degree programme are identical to those outlined in the MSc regulations in the FFHS General Terms and Conditions, subject to compliance with the stated deadlines. The costs are invoiced per semester in accordance with the module taken.
- (7) At the end of each semester and in the absence of a written agreement to the contrary, students will be automatically enrolled in the modules specified in the curriculum for the following semester. Access to a module may be made conditional on the successful completion of other modules. The modules of the core curriculum (semester 1 and 2) should be successfully completed before students may proceed to their major (semester 3 to 5).
- (8) The curriculum provides for at least 90 ECTS credits.
- (9) Students obtain their master's degree after successfully completing the modules prescribed in the curriculum, provided that these correspond to a total of 90 ECTS credits.

- (10) Students may not attend modules in which they are not enrolled.
- (11) If a student withdraws from this degree programme and re-enrols at a later date, the ECTS credits earned and the respective grades shall remain valid, provided that the modules in question are still part of the curriculum. In the case of examinations that have not been passed, the number of attempts shall likewise remain in effect and shall be credited upon resumption of studies, irrespective of any adjustment to the module's examination arrangements.

4. Examination procedures

The provisions of the FFHS Examination Regulations and the following rules shall apply.

4.1 Module examinations / types of assessment

- (1) Assessment may take various forms (e.g. oral examinations, written examinations, presentations, papers, reports, etc.). Detailed and binding information on assessments (type, number, subject, duration, permitted materials and the weighting of partial examinations) is laid down in the respective syllabi and in the online course on the FFHS learning platform. They may differ for students re-sitting an examination or taking an examination during the re-sit period.
- (2) In the case of module examinations, partial examinations and any graded assignments carried out on the learning platform, the introductory and accompanying information shall be binding.
- (3) Module examinations include the syllabus, all teaching modes of the module (see Article 3 (1)) and the respective online course on the learning platform.
- (4) Students may repeat the assessment for a given module no more than once. This must be done in accordance with the conditions set out in the syllabus (curriculum, syllabus and online course on the learning platform) and in the Implementation Rules of these Conditions of Study. Once these options have been exhausted, students will be excluded from the degree programme.
- (5) A module shall be deemed to have been passed if performance is assessed to be "sufficient" or higher. Otherwise, no ECTS credits shall be awarded.
- (6) Passed assessments are marked on a scale of 4 to 6, with tenths of a grade being awarded. The best possible grade is a 6, while a 4 is the minimum or sufficient grade. In exceptional cases, performance may be assessed as "passed".
- (7) Once a module has been passed, it is not possible to re-sit the examination(s) with a view to improving the grade.
- (8) Performance assessed as "insufficient" shall be marked as follows:
 - a) "FX": ECTS credits may be earned through additional work or an additional examination;
 - b) "F": ECTS credits may be earned by repeating the examination or the module;
 - c) In exceptional cases, the grade "insufficient" may be awarded.

4.2 Language of examination

- (1) In German-language modules, all examination questions will be in German. If the relevant teaching materials are in English, English terminology may also be used. Students may sit all examinations either in German or in English.
- (2) In English-language modules, all examination questions will be in English, and students must complete all examinations in English.

4.3 Regular examinations

- (1) If the module as a whole includes only one examination, this will usually take place at the end of the respective semester or at the end of the module. By contrast, partial module examinations may also take place during the semester.
- (2) In the fall and spring semesters, only the regular module examinations (examinations according to the syllabus) will take place. The examination dates can be found in the course timetable or academic calendar.

4.4 Regular re-sits

- (1) After the respective fall and spring semester, students shall have the opportunity to re-sit examinations for the following reasons:
 - For the purpose of sitting an examination for the first time if they were unable to take it on the regular examination date due to an excused absence,
 - For the purpose of retaking a failed module for which they were awarded a grade of F.
- (2) If students have received an overall grade of F for a module, they must repeat the assessment for the failed module as part of the regular re-sit examinations. Alternatively, students may retake the module for a fee and then re-sit the failed examination at the regular examination date. Any partial examinations that have been passed may be credited to the module. Retaking a module may result in an extension of the curriculum.
- (3) Decisions on the examination procedures and the dates of the re-sit examinations shall be communicated to students by the Examination Office of this consecutive master's degree programme.

4.5 Extraordinary re-sits

- (1) If students receive a failing grade of F for a module for which they are taking the examination for the first time during the regular re-sit period, they will then be called up for the next available re-sit date.
- (2) Decisions on any required extraordinary re-sits as well as the examination dates will be communicated to students by the Examination Office of this consecutive master's degree programme.

4.6 Additional examinations in the event of assessment marked “FX”

- (1) If students have been awarded the grade FX, they will not receive any ECTS credits. In order to pass the module retroactively or to receive the corresponding credits, they must hand in an additional work or sit an additional examination.
- (2) Students will be informed of the details (including the date) of this additional examination by the examination office of this consecutive master's degree programme. As a rule, the additional examination has to be taken by the end of the subsequent semester.
- (3) If students successfully complete the additional examination, they will receive a maximum grade of “sufficient” (4.0) for the module in question and will be awarded the corresponding credits.
- (4) If they fail the examination, they will receive a grade of F. In this case, students must re-sit the module examination.
- (5) Within five days of being notified of their grade, students have the right to appeal an initial assessment with the grade FX and to petition the Head of the Programme in writing to have the grade changed to F, so that they may re-sit the failed module examination during the regular re-sit period. Furthermore, Article 4.1 (4) shall also apply.

4.7 Registration for examination

- (1) Students are automatically registered for all examinations (regular examinations during the fall and spring semesters, any required regular re-sits, any required extraordinary re-sits, as well as any required additional examinations in the case of a module for which they received the grade FX).

4.8 Examination requirement

- (1) If students have been awarded a mark of FX for a module, they shall not have the right to postpone any regular examinations (examinations according to the syllabus and timetable), required re-sits, extraordinary re-sits or additional examinations. The specified examination dates shall thus be binding for them. This shall also apply if students are on leave of absence.

4.9 Absence from examinations

- (1) An absence from an examination will be accepted as excused if a justified request is submitted in writing to the Examination Office of the consecutive master's degree programme no later than five days after the date of the examination. This request must be accompanied by a doctor's certificate, a military marching order or an official certificate from the employer. FFHS expressly reserves the right to call in a medical examiner in individual cases. If the absence is accepted, the student will then be informed of the date of the re-sit examination.
- (2) In the event of two consecutive absences accompanied by a medical certificate, the Head of the Programme reserves the right to request a medical examination by a medical examiner appointed by FFHS. The costs shall be borne by the student. Should the student fail to attend this appointment with the medical examiner and fail to appear at the next scheduled examination, the student will receive a grade of F for the assessment in question.

- (3) In the event of an unexcused absence from an examination or a re-sit, as well as in the event of an examination being discontinued or no evidence being provided in accordance with Article 4.9 (1), students will receive a grade of 1.0.

5. Access to assessment records

- (1) Examination candidates shall have the right to access their assessment records. This shall apply to any modules that they have failed during the current examination period.
- (2) Students must request access via the student portal using the relevant online form while observing the deadlines set out in the academic calendar.
- (3) No access will be granted to sample solutions.

6. Appeals to assessment results

- (1) Examination candidates who receive a failing grade shall have the right to submit a written appeal to FFHS via the student portal using the relevant online form within 30 days of accessing their results.
- (2) Any assessment results that are deemed to be passed cannot be appealed.
- (3) The first instance of appeal for disputing the results of assessment results is the Head of the Programme. Prior to disputing the results of any assessment, students are strongly advised to contact the Head of the Programme.
- (4) Appeals against decisions made by the Head of the Programme may be submitted to the FFHS Board of Directors in writing via the student portal using the relevant online form within a period of 30 days from the date of notification of the decision, stating the reasons for the appeal.
- (5) Appeals against decisions of the FFHS Board of Directors may be submitted at last instance to FFHS's external appeals board in writing via the student portal using the relevant online form within a period of 30 days from the date of notification of the final decision. The address of the external appeals board can be obtained from the school administration.
- (6) If the appeal is unsuccessful, students may be liable for the costs of the proceedings.

7. Master's thesis

- (1) Students will only be admitted to the defence of their master's thesis (oral diploma examination) after they have successfully completed all other modules outlined in the curriculum worth a total of 75 ECTS credits.
- (2) The procedures for the master's thesis are laid down in a separate set of guidelines.

8. Disciplinary measures

- (1) Any misconduct or violation of the regulations of the master's degree and the GTC may, depending on the severity of the offence, lead to the subsequent invalidation of passed (partial) module examinations, to exclusion from modules, examinations or the entire degree programme, to students' suspension from the programme, to the withdrawal of ECTS credits, to a reprimand or to exclusion from SUPSI and to withdrawal of the degree. Further details are provided in the Implementation Regulations of the Conditions of Study of the master's degree.

This document is a translation of the approved German version from 17th Dec. 2021 and not legally binding. Only the German version is legally binding.

Approved by SUPSI on 28.03 2022

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