

**Examination Rules for the  
Joint Master of Science  
*Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security*  
of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences  
of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn in cooperation with the  
United Nations University**

**dated 5 August 2013**

Pursuant to §§ 2 Clause 4 and 64 Clause 1 of the Higher Education Act of North-Rhine Westphalia (*Hochschulgesetz – HG*) in the version of the Higher Education Autonomy Act of 31 October 2006 (GV. NRW p. 474), last amended by Article 1 of the Act on the Amendment of the Higher Education Act, Art Colleges Act and Further Directives of 18. December 2012 (GV. NRW S. 672), the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn has enacted the following examination Rules:

Annex 1: module plan

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### **Preliminary remark on terminology:**

All references to persons and employment titles in these Examination Rules equally apply to women and men.

## **§ 1 Objective of the study programme and purpose of the examination**

(1) The Master of Science in the *Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security* is offered by the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn in cooperation with the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) as an international degree programme with a research-oriented profile.

(2) The Master's examination marks the completion of the additional qualifying academic training in the joint study programme *Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security*. The programme is structured with a view to preparing students for professional employment in organisations of international cooperation working in the areas "sustainable development", "environmental risk" and "vulnerability".

(3) The students are to learn to address complex problems and to solve them using scientific methods.

(4) The curriculum of this joint master's programme aims to convey the required specialist knowledge, skills and methods, along with key interdisciplinary knowledge, so as to prepare students for the demands and changes in their professional field. It also cultivates scientific reflection, promotes critical thinking and the appropriate application of scientific knowledge, as well as emphasizing professional responsibility. Among others, the study programme shall emphasise the acquisition of:

- a) specialist knowledge that is oriented toward current research topics and based on advanced scientific knowledge;
- b) methodological and analytical skills that enable independent scientific work with a special focus on research methods and -strategies;
- c) professionally relevant skills.

(5) The language of instruction and of the examinations is English.

## **§ 2 Academic degree**

On passing the Master's examination, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn and the United Nations University shall jointly award the academic degree "Master of Science (M.Sc.)" for the study programme *Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security*.

## **§ 3 Admission requirements**

(1) The joint master's programme *Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security* shall cater to applicants who present the following qualifications:

- a) possess a first, professionally qualifying higher education programme of study in Geography or in a related or comparable study programme, in which they accumulated at least 100 credit points within 3 of the following 4 topics:
  - Physical Geography, Geosciences and Environmental Sciences with a focus on Earth System Science
  - Human Geography and Social Sciences with a focus on space, society and development
  - Science methodology and empirical research methods
  - Spatial planning and policy

Topics in which less than 10 credit points were obtained will not be considered.

b) possess sufficient proficiency in the English language at least at the level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), according to TOEFL 577 or Computer TOEFL 213 (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS 6.5 (International English Language Testing System), or an equivalent certificate.

(2) Capacity-related admission restrictions (numerus clausus) remain unaffected. Admittance to the study programme is only possible following a successful evaluation of the application for acceptance in the joint Master's programme Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security with the cooperating higher education institutions pursuant to the respective selection procedures and Rules of these institutions.

#### **§ 4 Standard period of study, organisation, and scope**

(1) The standard period of study including the Master's thesis is 4 semesters (120 credit points).

(2) The curriculum is selected and limited in such a manner that the Master's examination can be completed within the standard period of study. Instruction takes the form of modules normally comprising interrelated topical, methodological or systematic teaching units in a semester. Modules extending across two sequential semesters are permitted.

(3) Each module is normally completed with a module examination and valued with credit points (CPs) in accordance with ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). An ECTS credit point corresponds to a calculated student workload of 30 hours. A minimum of 120 credit points must be earned.

(4) The study programme comprises modules worth a total of 90 CPs. The Master's thesis shall represent 30 CPs. Details on the modules, their admission requirements and the number of credit points per module are regulated in Annex 1.

(5) The study programme may only be started in the winter semester.

#### **§ 5 Admission to individual study courses**

(1) Should it be necessary to restrict the number of participants in a study course due to the nature or purpose of the course or other research-related or instructional reasons, and if the number of applicants exceeds the admission capacity, the instructor may request that the Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Bonn regulate the participation in accordance with § 59 HG and in agreement with the Director of UNU-EHS.

(2) Study courses with a participant number that can be restricted will be stipulated in the module plan. The number of participants is set at the beginning of each semester by the Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and the Director of UNU-EHS in mutual agreement.

#### **§ 6 Joint Academic Board and Head Office**

(1) A Joint Academic Board (JAB) shall be appointed by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Bonn and the Rector of the United Nations University (UNU) to oversee the organisation of the examinations and performance of the tasks assigned by these Examination Rules. The Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and the Director of the UNU-EHS shall jointly ensure that the JAB properly fulfils and can fulfil its tasks. By agreement, they may issue any instructions necessary toward this end and assure the necessary administrative support.

The JAB is headed by a Chair and a Deputy Chair, whereby the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair are filled by instructors of either the University of Bonn or the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security. The Chair of the JAB shall be rotated between the Parties every

three years. The position of Chair and Deputy Chair shall not be held simultaneously by one Party.

Six further members from the group of university professors supplement the composition of the JAB. The Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences shall select three instructors from the teaching unit Geography. Three instructors shall be selected by the UNU-EHS from among its personnel.

Two further members belong to the group of academic staff, of which one member each is elected by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences from the teaching unit Geography and by UNU-EHS. Two members are elected from the group of students of the Master's study programme "Geography of Environmental Risks" by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and by UNU-EHS.

The JAB members to be elected by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences are elected separately according to groups. University professors who have a fixed teaching workload within the study programme are eligible to be elected for the JAB. From the group of academic staff, those assigned to the study programme are eligible for election. From the group of students, those enrolled in the study programme are eligible for election. Per member, one deputy is elected.

The office term of the members from the group of university professors and the group of academic staff is three years, the office term of the student members shall be one year. Re-election is permissible. The office of the Dean and that of a Vice Dean of the Faculty, as well as that of Director of the UNU-EHS is compatible with the membership in the JAB, along with its Chair and Deputy Chair, provided the respective Rules of the universities permit this.

(3) The JAB shall ensure that the provisions of the joint master's programme rules and regulations are complied with and ensure proper administration of the examinations. In particular, the JAB shall ensure that decisions related to academic appeals are handled in an appropriate manner and that all decisions are communicated to students in a timely fashion. The JAB shall report to the University of Bonn Faculty Council and the Director of the UNU-EHS regularly, and at least once annually, with regard to the development of the joint programme, examination and study times, the administration of Master's theses, and the distribution of final grades. The JAB may also make proposals for amending the rules and regulations of the joint master's programme and the curriculum. By resolution, it may delegate tasks to the Chair. Decisions on appeals and the report to the Faculty Council shall be excluded.

(4) The meetings of the JAB shall not be held in public. The members of the JAB elected by the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and their deputies are sworn to secrecy. All members of the JAB shall act with the highest discretion with regard to information discussed in the meetings of the Board. Summary minutes of the proceedings and resolutions of the JAB will be prepared.

(5) The JAB shall constitute a quorum when, in addition to the Chair or Deputy Chair, at least three further members or their deputies, including at least two university instructors, are present. The student members of the JAB shall be excluded from participation in the assessment and transfer of study credits, study and examination requirements, the setting of examination tasks, and the appointment of examiners and observers. The members of the JAB shall be entitled to attend all examinations.

(6) Any regulation/rules, setting of dates and other notifications of the JAB which are of general effect only, will be announced officially in written or in electronic form in compliance with data protection and with legally binding effect. Additionally, other notifications may be permitted; they shall, however, not be legally binding.

## **§ 7 Examiners and observers**

- (1) The JAB shall appoint the examiners and deputy examiners for each and every examination. Instructors at the University of Bonn and UNU-EHS, and people with practical, professional experience or experience with training are eligible to administer examinations, provided this is required or suitable for the achievement of the examination purpose. Examination performance may only be assessed by persons who, themselves, possess at least the qualification to be determined by the examination or a qualification of equal value. Deputy examiners may be appointed who have at least passed the corresponding Master's examination or an examination of equal value.
- (2) Module examinations shall be administered by the respective instructor who teaches the module. Should an instructor be unable to hold module examinations in the appropriate time, due to illness or other valid reasons, the JAB shall ensure that another examiner is appointed to hold the module examination. This examiner should have previously and independently offered courses for the module in question.
- (3) Examiners and deputy examiners shall be free from scientific interference in undertaking their examination activities.
- (4) The candidate can recommend the examiners for the Master's thesis. The recommendation should be considered when possible; however, it does not constitute a claim.
- (5) The JAB shall ensure that the candidate is appropriately informed of the names of the examiners, at least two weeks before the date of any individual examination.

## **§ 8 Transfer of study and examination credits**

- (1) Credits earned in a study programme at another higher education institution that is the same or very similar, can be transferred to the joint master's study programme per curiam without an equivalence assessment.
- (2) Credits earned in different study programmes or at other higher education institutions, as well as at state- or state-recognised universities of cooperative education, can be transferred in the case of equivalence. Equivalence is to be established when achievements essentially correspond with the demanded achievement with regard to content, scope and the requirements. Not a schematic comparison but an overall view and overall assessment are to be undertaken. For credits obtained in a further-education study programme, the provisions above apply accordingly.
- (3) On application, other knowledge and qualifications may be transferred to this joint master's study programme on the basis of documents presented for this purpose.
- (4) The academic degree "Master of Science" shall only be awarded by the Faculty of the University of Bonn and the United Nations University when 84 CPs (including the master's thesis) have been earned at the University of Bonn or the United Nations University.
- (5) The JAB shall be responsible for transfers pursuant to § 8, clauses 1 to 3. Before decisions on equivalence are made, appropriate representatives with subject area expertise are to be consulted. The decision on the transfer or refusal of transfer shall be shared with the student within a period of 8 weeks, along with an explanation for the decision.
- (6) If credits are transferred, the grades – provided the grade systems are comparable – are to be included and weighted with the corresponding credit points in the calculation of the final grade. If study credits without grades are to be transferred, they are transferred without grades with the designation "passed". In the case of incompatible grading systems, the endorsement "passed" will be recorded. The transfer will be marked in the transcript. Credits earned in study programmes without the credit point system will be calculated into credit points by the JAB, provided the examination in

question corresponds with the modules pursuant to the rules and regulations of the joint master's programme. For this purpose, the standards approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder for comparison with the ECTS are to be used as a reference. Modules are to be recognised when there are no significant differences between the skills gained. If partial examination credits can be recognised, the credit points are awarded on successful completion of the module.

(7) If the requirements of Clause 1 and 2 are satisfied, there is entitlement to credit transfer. The students are to present the documents required for transfer and to provide the corresponding information. The JAB may request a declaration by the student that all previously earned credit points and information relevant to the credit transfer process has been reported. Transfer may be denied for as long as the applicant student does not fulfil his/her duty to cooperate.

### **§ 9 Scope of the Master's examination and examination dates**

- (1) The Master's examination demonstrates that a student has earned an advanced research-oriented academic qualification.
- (2) The Master's examination comprises:
  - the study programme module examinations, which are based on the course content of the modules specified in Annex 1 and
  - the Master's thesis.

All examinations should be completed within the standard period of study as defined in § 4, Clause 1.

(3) The examinations are to be completed over the course of the study programme. Each module, even when it comprises several lectures or classes, is normally assigned one module examination, the result of which is recorded in the transcript. The successful completion of the respective module is the requirement for the awarding of the credit points. A module is considered successfully completed when either the corresponding module examination or all partial examination credits assigned to the module have been graded with at least "sufficient" (D or 4.0).

(4) The examinations are held in English.

### **§ 10 Registration, admission, and deadlines**

- (1) The application for admission to the Master's examination shall be submitted to the JAB in writing together with the registration for the first module examination. The following items shall be enclosed with the application:
  - a) evidence that the general admission requirements specified in § 3 are met;
  - b) evidence of enrolment as a degree student at the University of Bonn and at the United Nations University or the admission as a visiting student pursuant to § 52 HG;
  - c) a declaration as to whether the candidate did not pass an examination or did not pass a final attempt of an examination or the Master's examination in this study programme or in a related or comparable study programme, or whether he/she is simultaneously in the middle of another examination procedure of such a study programme;
  - d) evidence as to whether and, if yes, which module examination or comparable study and credits have been previously earned at a different higher education institution.
- (2) Those students admitted to the module examinations must:
  - a) fulfil and present evidence of fulfilment of the admission requirements pursuant to Clause 1 Letters a) to d),
  - b) fulfil the possibly provided special admission requirements for the module and the module examination, also with regard to number-related restrictions.

(3) For each module examination, a separate registration with the JAB is necessary. The JAB sets deadlines and provides registration forms. Registration can only take place to the extent and for as long as the admission requirements are fulfilled. The examination cut-off dates and registration cut-off dates will be announced via official notices or made known by electronic means. Students may deregister from the respective examination date without stating reasons one week before the examination at the latest in writing or electronically. The date of receipt by the JAB is the decisive date which will be considered. For term papers, withdrawal must take place, at the latest, one week before the subject is made known. In the case of modules with examinations spread out over the semester and which stand in relation to a course, withdrawal is not possible after the subjects or placements have been given.

(4) When registering for the Master's thesis, the candidate shall submit evidence of the successful completion of the required modules (60 credit points) and declare with which faculty member he/she would like to write the thesis.

(5) If the candidate is unable to present a required document pursuant to Clause 1 Sentence 2 then the JAB may allow demonstration of the achievement of the requirements in a different form.

(6) The JAB shall approve student admission to an examination.

(7) Admission to an examination may only be denied when:

- a) the documents pursuant to § 10, Clause 1 are incomplete and/or have not been presented despite a request to do so,
- b) the requirements stated in § 10, Clause 2 are not fulfilled,
- c) the student has not passed a final module examination or the Master's examination in this study programme or within a related or comparable study programme, or
- d) the student is currently in the middle of a different examination procedure in this study programme or a related or comparable study programme.

### **§ 11 Administration of the study programme examinations**

(1) Module examinations refer to examinations in the curriculum as represented by the module plan.

(2) During the module examinations, the students must be enrolled at the University of Bonn and at the United Nations University in this study programme or in a study programme that, pursuant to own examination Rules, imports modules of this study programme, or be permitted as visiting students pursuant to § 52 HG.

(3) In the module examinations, the acquired knowledge in the subject area and the ability to comprehend relationships in a larger context relating to the module are tested. Module examinations can be completed through graded partial module examinations. The module examinations and partial module examinations can take the form of tests, an oral examination, a term paper or project work, or a presentation or report. The respective type of examination and the admission requirements are listed in the module plan. Deviations from what is stipulated in the module plan are possible pursuant to § 14, Clause 5, § 15, Clause 5 and § 16, Clause 3. The concrete type of examination will then be determined in consultation with the examiners and shall be announced by the JAB in a timely manner at the beginning of the semester.

(4) The module plan can determine that prerequisites (study credits) are required for participation in a module examination. If these are not earned then admission to the module examination will be denied. The concrete requirements with regard to prerequisites (study credits) will be announced by the JAB at the request of the instructor at the beginning of the semester pursuant to § 6, Clause 7.



(5) For all module examinations to be completed in the form of written examinations or oral examinations, two examination dates will be set in the semester in which the corresponding courses are completed. Normally, these examination dates are shortly before or after the term ends, or before the new semester begins. The candidate is to be informed of the grading of written examinations within four weeks at the latest; the grading of the Master's thesis is to be shared with the candidate within six weeks at the latest. The dates will be announced by the JAB.

(6) With courses (with the exception of lectures) in which the qualification objective cannot be otherwise achieved, the JAB may, at the instructor's request or the request of the module officer, set regular/active/successful participation as requirement for the participation in the module examination. Here, it must be defined when regular/active/successful participation is given. The decision is to be announced by the JAB pursuant to § 6 Clause 7.

(7) Should the candidate be able to credibly demonstrate to the JAB through suitable evidence that he/she is not able to technically apply his/her given intellectual abilities for the required performance and is therefore unable to complete the examination either wholly or partially due to hindrance that is ongoing or lasting longer than a semester, or due to a chronic illness, then the JAB shall allow the completion of equivalent study or examination requirements in a suitable form as befits the requirement, possibly also within a correspondingly extended time period.

### **§ 12 Repeating examinations**

(1) Each examination that is not passed or is considered not passed may be repeated twice at the most. Unsuccessful attempts at similar courses in related/comparable study programmes at other higher education institutions are counted. The JAB may determine which modules or study programmes are to be considered equal. The repeat exam is to take place at the next set examination date.

(2) If a candidate does not show up despite the obligation to repeat an examination and is not excused the examination will be graded "insufficient (F or 5.0)".

(3) If a module is graded "insufficient" three times, the entitlement to examination is lost and leads to dismissal.

(4) A module examination graded with at least "sufficient" (D or 4.0) may not be repeated.

(5) In the case of modules with examinations spread over the semester and which stand in relation to a course, a repetition of the requirement in the respective semester is not possible. With such modules, the module examination can only be completed by repeating the module. If the module has several partial examinations then only the course or type of course in which the partial examination was not passed or not taken must be repeated.

### **§ 13 Protection Rules, non-attendance, claims, withdrawal, academic dishonesty, infringement of Rules**

(1) An examination will be graded "insufficient" (F or 5.0) when the candidate fails to appear at an examination appointment without valid reasons, withdraws from the examination without valid reasons after the examination has started, or when the Master's thesis is not submitted on time. The same applies when a written examination is not performed within the given completion time. The candidate may deregister from the respective examination appointment for module examinations in writing with the JAB up until a week before the examination at the latest. The date of receipt by the JAB is decisive in such cases.

(2) The reasons asserted for the withdrawal or absence must be sent to the JAB without delay in writing and must be credible. In the case of illness, the JAB may request a physician's note containing the diagnosis required in order to determine inability to participate in the examination. In individual cases, the JAB may demand the presentation of a note from a trusted physician named by the Board or

from a public health officer. If the JAB recognizes the reasons presented by the student, the examination attempt is declared invalid. In the event a student finds faults with an examination, the candidate must immediately present his or her claim to the respective examiner or supervisor. The claim must be documented and sent to the JAB. Sentence 4 applies accordingly.

(3) If an attempt is made to influence the result of the examination by cheating or using aids that are not permitted, the examination in question will be graded “insufficient” (F or 5.0); this shall be determined by the respective examiner or supervisor, who shall fill in the necessary documents and forward these to the JAB. A candidate who disrupts the orderly procedure of the examination can, after a warning, be excluded from continuation of the examination; in this case, the examination in question will be declared as failed and graded with “insufficient” (5.0). The reasons for the exclusion are to be filed in the records.

(4) Within a term of two weeks, candidates may request that decisions be reviewed by the JAB pursuant to Clause 3 Sentences 1 and 2.

(5) On application of the candidate, maternity protection periods as established in the relevant legislation (Maternity Protection Act - MuSchG) are to be taken into consideration. The required documentation must be enclosed with the application. The maternity protection periods suspend every deadline pursuant in these Examination Rules; the duration of the maternity protection period will not count in any of the programme’s deadlines.

(6) Equally, on application, the terms of parental leave are to be considered pursuant to the respectively valid legislation on parental allowance and parental leave. At the latest within four weeks before the desired starting date of parental leave, candidates must inform the JAB in writing of their desired timeframe for the parental leave, enclosing any required documents. The JAB shall assess whether the legal requirements that would result in entitlement to parental leave according to the legislation on parental allowance and parental leave have been met and immediately inform the candidate of the result along with possibly newly determined examination dates. The timeframe for preparing a Master’s thesis cannot be interrupted by parental leave. The topic given counts as not handed out. On expiry of the parental leave, the candidate will receive a new topic.

(7) Lost time due to the care or the maintenance of spouses, civil partnership partners, lineal relatives or first-degree in-laws, shall be considered on application if such individuals are dependent on care. The JAB shall assess whether the requirements of Sentence 1 have been met. The application shall be made immediately upon occurrence of the requirements. Substantiating documents shall be enclosed with the application. The JAB shall immediately advise the candidate of the result and possibly newly set examination dates. The timeframe for preparing a Master’s thesis cannot be extended due to such periods of absence. Any thesis topic given to a candidate who enters maternity leave will be discarded. On expiry of the parental leave, the candidate will receive a new topic.

(8) Matters relating to student misconduct will be addressed in accordance with Article 8 of the Framework Agreement between the United Nations University and the University of Bonn.

(9) Anyone who intentionally violates a rule pertaining to examination credits in these Examination Rules is committing an offence. Matters of student misconduct that are determined to fall within the jurisdiction of the University of Bonn may be penalised with a fine of up to 50,000 euros. The administrative authority responsible for the prosecution and punishment of an offence in such instances is the Head of Administration (Chancellor) of the University of Bonn.

#### **§ 14 Written examinations**

(1) In written examinations, students shall demonstrate that they are able to recognise and solve problems from the module subject area employing the methods commonly used in this subject area in a limited amount of time and using limited aids. The examiners shall announce the allowed aids in a timely manner.

(2) Written examinations may take the form of handwritten exams under supervision or may take a multimedia-supported form. Multimedia-supported exams predominantly comprise free text problems or gap texts.

(3) Each written examination shall have a duration of at least 60 minutes and at the most 180 minutes, and shall be assessed by an appointed examiner. In the case of examinations that mark the completion of a study programme and in the case of repeat examinations for which there is no compensation option in the case of an irrevocable fail, the written examination must be graded by two examiners. The grade of the written examination then results from the arithmetic mean of the individual grades. The concrete date when the grades will be released shall be announced at the beginning of the semester by the JAB.

(4) On application, the candidate shall be given access to his/her graded written examinations; the application must be submitted at the latest within three months after the examination result has been announced. The JAB shall inform the candidate of the time when access to their graded examination is possible. § 29 of the Administrative Procedures Act for the state of North Rhine-Palatinate (VwVfG-NRW) remains unaffected.

(5) In agreement with the examiner, the JAB may replace the planned written examination with an oral examination relating to the subject area of the module. This will be announced in a timely manner at the beginning of the semester pursuant to § 6, Clause 7.

#### **§ 15 Oral examinations**

(1) Through oral examinations, the candidate shall demonstrate that he/she possesses a broad level of knowledge in the examination subject, can recognise its correlations, can categorise special problems in these correlations and show possible solutions.

(2) Oral examinations are taken as individual or group examinations either with several examiners (collaborative examination) or with one examiner in the presence of an observer who is familiar with the subject. A deviation from this is possible when the transparency of the examination is ensured. In the case of examinations that mark the completion of a study programme and in the case of repeat examinations for which there is no compensation option in the case of an irrevocable fail, the written examination must be graded by two examiners. If the examination takes place before several examiners, the candidate will only be examined by one examiner in one examination subject. The grade is then calculated as the arithmetic mean of the individual grades. If the examination takes place before an examiner in the presence of an observer then the examiner is to hear the observer in the absence of the student. The examination time per candidate and module examination is at least 15 and at the most 45 minutes. With group examinations, it is to be ensured that all candidates in a group receive the same examination time.

(3) The main content and the results of the individual exams shall be recorded in the minutes. After the oral examination, the candidate shall be informed of the result.

(4) Students who would like to take the same oral examination at a later point in time may, if space in the room allows, be permitted as listeners, provided no candidate objects to this. The decision shall be made by the examiner; in the case of examinations by a commission, the decision shall be made by its

Chair. This permission does not extend to the consultation between examiners and the announcement of the examination results. Listeners are forbidden to take notes or record during the examination.

(5) In agreement with the examiner, the JAB can replace the planned oral examination with a written examination related to the curriculum of the module. This will be announced in a timely manner at the beginning of the semester pursuant to § 6 Clause 7.

### **§ 16 Term papers and project work, presentations and reports**

(1) In term papers, the candidate shall demonstrate that he/she can independently deal with a limited topic in writing related to the subject area of the module using methods that are standard for the field and in a suitable academic manner. The text part of each term paper comprises at least 5 and at the most 15 DIN A 4-pages and shall be assessed by an examiner appointed pursuant to § 7 Clause 1. The time for completion is at least 2 and at the most 14 weeks. The term paper shall be assessed by an examiner appointed pursuant to § 7 Clause 1. In the case of examinations that mark the completion of a study programme and in the case of repeat examinations for which there is no compensation option in the case of an irrevocable fail, the written examination must be graded by two examiners. The grade of the term paper then results from the arithmetic mean of the individual grades.

(2) In agreement with the examiner, the JAB may set a written examination or oral examination in place of a term paper, with both relating to the subject material of the module. This will be announced in a timely manner at the beginning of the semester.

(3) Project work normally serves to demonstrate the ability to work in a team and, in particular, to develop, implement and present concepts. The candidate should show that he/she can define objectives for a larger task and make use of interdisciplinary approaches to finding solutions. With project work performed as teamwork, the contribution of the individual candidate must be clearly distinguishable and assessable, and fulfil the requirements according to Sentence 1. For the presentation of project work, § 15 Clause 2 Sentences 1 to 5 apply accordingly. The duration of the presentation should be at least 10 minutes and at the most 45 minutes for each candidate. Project work should be completed in the semester in which the corresponding study course takes place or in which the corresponding module is completed.

(4) Presentations are oral presentations with a duration of at least 10 and at the most 45 minutes. They document the ability to comprehensibly present one's own results derived from academic methods and to explain them in the discussion. In other regards, §15 Clause 2 Sentences 1 to 5 accordingly apply. Presentations should be held in the semester in which the corresponding study course takes place or in which the module is completed.

(5) Oral reports are oral presentations with a duration of at least 10 and at the most 45 minutes. They are based on original academic literature and one's own research, and are normally supplemented by a written work with text component comprising 5-15 DIN A 4 pages. Oral reports document the ability to comprehensibly present academic results and to explain them in the discussion. For the written work, § 14 Clause 3 Sentences 2 and 3 apply, for the report § 15 Clause 2 Sentences 1 to 5 apply accordingly.

(6) Reports on excursions and field exercises are considered written works on field events. They are based on notes, original academic literature and/or one's own research. The text part normally comprises 5-15 DIN A4-pages. For the written work, § 14 Clause 3 Sentences 2 to 4 apply, for the presentation § 15 Clause 2 Sentences 1 to 5 apply accordingly. These reports are to be presented in the semester in which the corresponding courses take place or in which the module is completed.

(7) The report on the practical module (internship) is a written report on the completed professional internship. The text part normally comprises 5-15 DIN A4-pages. In deviation from § 19, the report for the practical module is not assessed with an individual grade but is assessed as either passed or not

passed. The report is to be presented in the semester in which the corresponding internship takes place or in which the module is completed. For the written work, § 14 Clause 3 Sentences 2 to 4 apply.

### **§ 17 Master's thesis**

(1) The Master's thesis shall be a written piece of work that shows that the candidate is able to independently treat a problem from the area of geography using scientific methods, and to suitably present these findings. The Master's thesis shall demonstrate the student's ability to work scientifically and independently. With the registration for the Master's thesis, the candidate shall be given the opportunity to make recommendations for the area from which the Master's thesis is selected; the JAB shall, however, not be bound by this.

(2) The topic of the Master's thesis may be set by any examiner appointed pursuant to § 7 Clause 1. Whoever has set the topic normally also supervises the Master's thesis. If the Master's thesis is to be set and supervised by a different university instructor who is active in research and teaching or if it is to be carried out in an institution outside of the university, this shall require the approval of the Chair of the JAB, which may only be granted when suitable supervision through an examiner pursuant to Sentence 1 is guaranteed. The candidate shall be entitled to make a recommendation; however, there will be no claim to assignment to a certain examiner.

(3) On application by the candidate, the JAB shall ensure that the candidate receives the topic for the Master's thesis in a timely manner.

(4) The topic for the Master's thesis may only then be issued when the candidate has earned at least 60 CPs. The issuance of the topic for the Master's thesis takes place via the Chair of the JAB. The topic of the Master's thesis and time of the issuance shall be filed.

(5) The Master's thesis may also take the form of a group thesis when the contribution of the individual candidate to be assessed is clearly differentiable and assessable due to the statement of sections, scope or other objective criteria allowing clear separation, and the requirements pursuant to §17, Clause 1 are fulfilled. The text of the Master's thesis must comprise at least 40 and not more than 80 DIN-A4 pages; in the case of group theses, the share of each candidate shall be 40 to 60 DIN A4-pages.

(6) The Master's thesis comprises a workload of 30 CPs. The timeframe for writing the thesis is a maximum six months. Topic, task and scope of the Master's thesis are to be limited in such a manner that the Master's thesis can be completed within this time period with reasonable demands. Upon receipt of a well substantiated request, the JAB may, in agreement with the supervisor, grant an extension of up to six weeks. The Master's thesis is normally given in the third semester. The topic of the Master's thesis can only be returned by the candidate once and only within the first two months after its issuance. The Master's thesis is considered not handed out if returned. The topic of a second Master's thesis must be distinctly different in content than the topic of the first thesis. The exact title of the Master's thesis can be modified within the first two months, without a change of the topic.

(7) When submitting the Master's thesis, the candidate shall declare in writing that he/she has independently completed the work – with a group thesis, the corresponding section of the work – and that no other sources and aids were used aside from those stated and that quotes have been made clear as such. A Master's thesis has particularly not been independently completed when content or structure and organisation of the treatment of the topic has been given by third parties. The JAB may demand that the candidate make a corresponding declaration under oath and may request a pdf version of the Master's thesis suitable for electronic comparison.

### **§ 18 Acceptance, assessment and repeating the Master’s thesis**

(1) Two copies of the Master’s thesis shall be submitted to the JAB (including an electronic version); the time of submission shall be recorded. The candidate may not withdraw a submitted Master’s thesis. If the Master’s thesis is not submitted on time it will be graded “insufficient” (F or 5.0).

(2) The Master’s thesis shall be assessed and graded by two examiners appointed pursuant to § 7 Clause 1. One examiner is the examiner who set the topic of the Master’s thesis; the second examiner is appointed by the JAB from the circle of examiners appointed pursuant to § 7 Clause 1. The candidate is entitled to make a recommendation; however, there is no claim to a certain examiner.

(3) The individual assessment shall be performed pursuant to § 19 Clause 1 and substantiated in writing. Calculations of grades will be done using the numeric grading system. The grade of the Master’s thesis is composed from the arithmetic mean of the individual grades of each examiner, provided the difference is less than 2.0. If the difference is 2.0 or greater, or in the case that one examiner grades with F (insufficient) and the second examiner with a better grade (D or better), a third examiner will be appointed by the JAB to assess the Master’s thesis. In this case, a grade results from the arithmetic mean of both better individual grades. In obtaining the mean, the procedure will follow § 19 Clause 6. The Master’s thesis can, however, only then be graded as “sufficient” (D or 4.0) or better when at least two grades are “sufficient” (D or 4.0) or better.

(4) If the Master’s thesis has been completed by several students as a group thesis, the independent section of each individual student within the entire work shall be graded.

(5) For a Master’s thesis graded with “sufficient” (D or 4.0) or better, the candidate earns 30 CPs.

(6) If the Master’s thesis is a “fail” or is considered a “fail”, the candidate may repeat it once. Failed attempts in the same subject area taken in similar courses at other higher education institutions will be counted. The topic of the second Master’s thesis may not be selected from the same area as the first Master’s thesis. A return to the topic of the Master’s thesis in the repeat attempt in the form stipulated in § 17 Clause 6 Sentence 6 is only permissible when the student did not exercise this option when preparing the first Master’s thesis. If the second Master’s thesis is also graded “insufficient” then the Master’s examination is considered irrevocably failed and leads to dismissal.

### **§ 19 Assessment of the examination performance, composition of grades and passing of the Master’s examination**

(1) The grades for the individual examinations are set by the respective examiners. If several examiners are involved in an examination, the grade is derived from the arithmetic mean of the individual grades. For the assessment, the following grades are to be used:

Grade Meanings	Truncated Letter Grade Scale	Numerical Scale of Marks	Numeric Grade <i>For reference only</i>	ECTS Scale <i>For reference only</i>
Very good	A	90-100%	1.0	A
	A-	85-89%	1.3	B
	B+	82-84%	1.7	B
Good	B	79-81%	2.0	B
	B-	75-78%	2.3	B

Satisfactory	C+	72-74%	2.7	C
	C	69-71%	3.0	C
	C-	65-68%	3.3	D
Sufficient	D+	60-64%	3.7	E
	D	50-59%	4.0	E
Insufficient	F	0-49%	5.0	FX/F

(2) The examination in a module has been passed when the module grade is at least “sufficient” (D or 4.0). If a module grade is composed of several partial examinations, it is calculated from the weighted arithmetic mean of the grades of the individual examinations. § 9 Clause 3 Sentence 4 remains unaffected.

(3) The candidate shall be notified of the assessment of written examinations within four weeks at the latest and shall be notified of the assessment of the Master’s thesis within six weeks after the submission date at the latest. Announcement by official notice or electronically – in correspondence with the relevant data protection provisions – is sufficient. It should be done before the standard period of study has expired.

(4) The Master’s examination has been passed when all required module examinations pursuant to §4 Clause 4 as well as the Master’s thesis have been passed with at least “sufficient” (D or 4.0) and at least 120 credit points have been earned.

(5) The final grade of the Master’s examination is calculated from the average (arithmetic mean) of the individual module grades weighted with the credit points of the respective module. Clause 2 Sentence 4 applies accordingly. Deviating from this, the final grade is “very good” when the average grade of all module examinations is not below A- (1.3) and the Master’s thesis has been graded with A (1.0). Modules that have been recognised as “passed” due to lacking comparability are not included in the calculation of the final grade.

(6) When composing the module grades and the final grade, only the first digit after the decimal point will be considered; all further digits will be truncated without rounding.

(7) To facilitate international comparability, the corresponding level of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) shall be assigned to the final grade.

(8) The Master’s examination has been irrevocably failed when:

- the candidate has attempted a compulsory module examination three times without success or
- the repeated Master’s thesis has been graded “insufficient” (F or 5.0).

## **§ 20 Transcript**

(1) Directly after all final grades have been given, a temporary transcript will be issued to the candidate. A transcript in the German and the English language will then be immediately issued. The transcript includes:

- all modules for which credit points have been earned,
- the semester in which the credit points were earned,
- the grades achieved for the individual examinations,
- the topic and grade of the Master's thesis,
- the date of the last examination and
- the final grade of the Master's examination and the corresponding ECTS level.

(2) On application by the candidate, the results of the examinations in the supplementary subjects or modules pursuant to § 25 with the corresponding study scope may also be included in the transcript.

(3) The transcript shall bear the date of issue.

(4) If the Master's examination has been irrevocably not passed or if it is considered to be irrevocably not passed, the Examination Office shall issue the candidate a written notification of this with information on the candidate's statutory rights.

(5) If a student leaves the study programme without a degree, he/she may apply for a transcript to be issued listing the achieved study- and examination requirements. This transcript shall be limited to the successfully completed parts of the study programme. In addition, the student may apply for a transcript from which it may be recognised which examinations have not been passed and which are still required for passing the Master's examination.

## **§ 21 Diploma supplement**

The Master's transcript is supplemented by a diploma supplement. The diploma supplement provides additional information on study content, the course of the studies, the academic and professional qualifications acquired with the degree, and the awarding higher education institutions. It shall be provided in English and in standardised form.

## **§ 22 Master's diploma**

Simultaneously with the Master's examination transcript, the candidate will be issued a Master's diploma in the German and English languages bearing the date of the transcript and stating the awarding of the academic degree pursuant to § 2. The diploma will be signed by the Chair of the JAB, as well as by the Dean of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and the Rector of the United Nations University. It will be marked with the seals of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the University of Bonn and the United Nations University.

## **§ 23 Access to examination records**

(1) Within three months of issuance of the transcript, the candidate will be given access, at his/her written request, to his/her examination records by the JAB.

(2) The JAB determines the place and time of access.

## **§ 24 Invalidity of the Master's examination, revocation of the Master's title**

(1) If a candidate has cheated in an examination and this becomes first known after issuance of the transcript, the Examination Office may a posteriori adjust the grades for the examinations in which the candidate has cheated, as well as the final grade, and may declare the examination as either wholly or partially "failed".



(2) If the requirements for admission to an examination were not fulfilled, without the candidate intending to cheat, and if this becomes first known after issuance of the transcript, this shortcoming will be remedied by the passing of the examination. If a candidate has intentionally obtained access to an examination by unjust means then the matter will be resolved in accordance with Article 8 of the Framework Agreement.

(3) Before a decision is taken, the person affected will be given the opportunity to account for his/her actions.

(4) The fraudulent transcript shall be impounded and, if applicable, a new transcript will be issued. If one or several examinations have been declared “failed” due to cheating then the Master’s diploma and all further documents that record the final degree will be impounded together with the fraudulent transcript. After a term of five years after issuance of the transcript, a decision pursuant to Clause 1 and Clause 2 Sentence 2 will no longer be permissible.

(5) If the Master’s examination is assessed in whole as “failed”, the Master’s degree shall be revoked by all higher education institutions or faculties involved; the Master’s transcript, the Master’s diploma, and all other documents that record the final degree shall be impounded.

#### **§ 25 Entry into force and publication**

These Examination Rules shall enter into force on the day after their publication in the Official Notices of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn –Announcement bulletin.

U.-G. Meißner  
The Dean  
of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences  
of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn  
University professor Dr. U. Meißner

Issued on the basis of the resolution of the Faculty Council of 5 June the resolution of the United Nations University of 1 June 2013, and the resolution of the Rectorate of 16 July 2013.

Bonn, 5 August 2013

The Rector  
of the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of Bonn  
University professor Dr. J. Fohrmann