

Joint Master of Science: Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the **requirements** for this Master?

Applicants must possess a first, higher education qualification (Bachelor's Degree) in Geography or a related / comparable professionally certified study programme. Out of all higher education qualifications earned (Bachelor's, Master's, additional academic coursework, etc.) applicants must have accumulated at least 100 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) within courses related to the 3 following areas:

1. Human Geography and Social Sciences with a focus on spatial patterns, society, development;
2. Science methodology and empirical research methods;
3. Physical Geography, Geosciences and Environmental Sciences with a focus on Earth System Science.

A strong motivation to contribute to the area of Human Security and management of risks related to Environmental Change is a pre-requisite to study in this Master's Programme. Applicants should be highly motivated to learn in a multicultural and interdisciplinary environment.

A minimum of 2 years of related professional experience is required for candidates from developing countries who additionally wish to apply for a scholarship under the Development-Related Postgraduate programmes (Epos) of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Non-native English speaking applicants must prove sufficient proficiency in the English language.

What are **career opportunities** with this Master?

The Master offers good visibility and exposure to international organizations, federal agencies, academic and non-academic research organizations, as well as corporations involved with disaster risk reduction and preparedness, humanitarian aid, international relations, research on climate change, food security, spatial planning, and policy. Opportunities might arise in all of these areas based upon a specific individual's situation and career goals.

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Further considerations to make before applying:

- As a **non-EU citizen**, how can I check if my Bachelor studies meet the requirements for this Master?

Please request the registrar or examination office of your University to provide you with a European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) overview / transcript of your courses. If your registrar is unable to provide you with an ECTS overview, you should provide any document that explains the grading system of your University.

- Which **level of English** will be required?

A minimum of a B2 of the CEFR levels is required, C1 level is recommendable. Please note, we require a score from one of the below tests from any candidate that does not speak English as a mother tongue or that is not from a country with English as an official language. Candidates from a multilingual country that can prove that the majority of their prior education was conducted in English as well as German candidates that acquired English language skills on the level "Leistungskurs Abitur" (5 SWS) are exempted from the rule.

| Name of Exam (Abbreviation) | Desired Score |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| TOEFL Paper | 550 |
| TOEFL IBT | 79 |
| TOEFL CBT | 213 |
| IELTS | 6.5 |
| Cambridge Exam | CAE (at least level B2); CPE |
| telc | B2 – C1 |

- a) What happens if I cannot take the language test before the application deadline?

Please check when the next opportunity for any of the approved language test is available and state in your application when you will take the test. A proof of registration for the test needs to be added to the application and results need to be shared as soon as they are available.

- How are the **candidates shortlisted/selected**?

There is a local Numerus Clausus (NC) ruling the programme. The number of students is restricted to about 24 per intake. The academic results of the candidate determine his/her position in the shortlist of candidates and influence the decision

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on a candidate for 51%. The NC varies with the pool of candidates. Other programme specific criteria (i.e. the candidate's ability to express thoughts on a scientific level, the candidate's motivation, career aspirations and personal fit) will be examined based on the application file and might in addition be assessed in a telephone interview. They count for 49% in the decision process.

- **How many students are admitted to the programme each year?**

About 24 new Master students per cohort join each year.

- **Do I have to do an internship during the Master?**

An internship for at least 8 weeks is a compulsory part of the programme. The official internship period starts in the 3rd semester. There are also course breaks of up to 2 months that could be used as well to contribute to research projects or to gain work experience, in parallel to working on the past semester's course papers. Many organizations do not offer internships for fewer than 3 months.

- **Can I apply for the summer semester?**

No. There is just one programme intake per year for this Joint Master Programme starting with the Winter Semester, usually in early October.

- **How much are the tuition fees?**

There is no tuition fees for the Master course.

- **Are there any other fees raised by the Universities?**

Both institutions claim a contribution to cover the cost for example for transport, excursions and events.

Contribution Bonn University per semester = about 280 Euros (including public transport)

Contribution UNU EHS per semester (for semester 1-3) = 100 Euros (No semester contribution is required for the fourth semester)

- **How much are the costs of living in Germany?**

http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en/prepare_your_studies/financing/costs_of_living/

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Applying for Scholarships

The Joint Master Programme is part of a selected group of international postgraduate programmes that benefit from funding through the Development-Related Postgraduate Courses of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) called [Epos](#). Candidates should apply for funding via master-georisk@ehs.unu.edu when submitting the full application package for the Master's application. They should add the [DAAD application form](#) and a motivation letter with reference to the current occupation for the Epos programme participation. Eligible candidates should fill the following requirements in addition to the Master's programme requirements:

- Being a candidate from a Developing Country;
- Having at least 2 years of practical work experience (i.e. with an NGO, GO, or the private sector);
- Having graduated from their Bachelor not more than 5 years ago;
- Having completed no other Master in a similar field of studies;
- Wishing to apply the post-Master knowledge in career as practitioner, further contributing to development;
- Being ready to fully commit to start with the Joint Master Programme once accepted by Joint Master's selection committee and for funding through Epos.

The selection process for the Epos funding among shortlisted candidates will happen between February and April each year.

Candidates that do not fulfill the Epos requirements but wish to benefit from financial support during their studies are invited to apply individually and early to other available funding programmes in Germany. A list of available programmes can be found via the following link: <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/stipendium/en/>

How to apply

A completed application packet consists of the following documents:

1. Completed and signed **application form** (REQUIRED)
2. A signed **Résumé/CV** (REQUIRED)
 - A current résumé including a chronological listing of employment and other significant activities must be submitted with any application.

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3. **Official transcripts (REQUIRED)**
 - Applicants must submit an official transcript from each college or university in which they were enrolled for any period of time, showing all courses, grades and degrees received.
 - Only transcripts that have been certified by the university where the degree was awarded will be accepted.
 - In cases where the transcript is written in any other language than English, a certified translation of the transcript into English or German is also required. Translated versions can be certified either by the originating university or an official national or international institution;
4. **Letter of motivation (REQUIRED)**
 - A written statement, one to two pages in length, describing their motivation, area of proposed research, background, past work in the intended field of study, plans for further postgraduate study and any other information they feel is relevant. Applicants who are currently registered in a postgraduate programme at another university should explain why they wish to change programmes.
5. For non-native English speakers or applicants where English is not the official language, an **English language proficiency certificate**. (REQUIRED).
6. **Copy of an academic essay** written as part of the fulfillment of the first degree **or extract of the Bachelor Thesis** (preferably in English). (REQUIRED).
7. If the candidate wishes to apply to the **Epos funding by the DAAD** the candidate should organize this application in a separate file, adding the [DAAD application form](#), a motivation letter with reference to the current occupation, professional letters of recommendation from your employer (with recent date, stamped and signed), academic letters of recommendation from your university (with recent dates, stamped and signed), as well as **a confirmation of employment from the current employer** in your home country and (if possible), a guarantee of re-employment upon your return home.
8. **Other relevant documents** to support your application (OPTIONAL):
 - **Further certificates** on professional experience and expertise (recommended for Epos applicants)
 - **Additional Certified Transcripts** in cases where additional academic credits were earned outside of Degrees awarded
 - **Letters of recommendation**

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All application documents must be scanned and sent together **as a single PDF file**. Only a sample of academic work is required but in case the piece of academic work is too heavy it could be sent in a separate PDF file. Only Epos applicants should organize their application in an additional PDF file. The file size for each file **should not exceed 8 Megabytes (MB)**. Send completed application packet to:

master-georisk@ehs.unu.edu

Only digital versions sent via email will be accepted. **We do not accept applications sent via post.**

Completed application packets must be received by the **application deadline = January 15th**, at 23:59 CET (Central European Time) for Bonn, Germany. Any applications received with timestamps of 24:00 CET or later on the following day will be automatically excluded.

a) Can I fill out the application form electronically, or should I fill it out by hand?

Both ways are acceptable, but it is imperative that you sign your application form.

b) Can I apply even though I have not received my Bachelor Certificate?

Yes. If you have successfully finished your Bachelor studies, but still waiting for your certificate, you can apply with a confirmation letter from your university stating that you will receive your degree in addition to your final transcripts. If you are accepted into the programme you must present your original certificate on the day of your enrolment.

c) Do I have to provide a motivation letter?

Yes. Please attach a letter of motivation (length: one A4 page) to your application. See further details in the *How to apply* section.

d) Do I have to provide a letter of recommendation?

Although not obligatory (except for Epos funding), it is highly advisable to attach one or several recommendation letters to your application.

e) Do I need to provide originals of my documents?

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Please do not send any originals to us via post! Only send scanned copies of your originals. If you are accepted into the programme, you will be required to present your original certificates on the day of your enrolment.

f) When is the application deadline?

January 15th, for the winter semester start in October of the same year.
Applications usually open in November of year-1.

What happens after my application?

- Each applicant receives an automatic message confirming receipt of the application from the Joint Master email account.
- If the application package is complete and an applicant fulfills the application requirements he/she is shortlisted as a potential candidate for the programme. As the programme is ruled by a local Numerus Clausus the candidate's academic results will determine the position within the shortlist.
- Eligible candidates for the Epos funding programme will be shortlisted and submitted to the German Academic Exchange (DAAD). The DAAD selection committee will be in touch with individual candidates for further assessment and to confirm acceptance into the funding programme (as of April).
- **Skype/Telephone interviews**
Shortlisted candidates might be contacted for an interview in order to understand the student's academic and professional background, motivation, career aspirations and personal fit for the Joint Master. These interviews will happen between February and April each year.
- When will the University inform about **acceptance** and **rejections**?
The expected timing is between mid-April and mid-May for international candidates and mid-July for German nationals.

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What should I do once I'm accepted to the programme?

- Can I defer my admission to next year?

No. If you are accepted, but you are not able to start your studies in the upcoming semester you have to re-apply next year.

- How can I apply for a visa/ residence permit?

Please check on the following website if you need a visa to enter Germany:

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht_node.html

- How can I find accommodation?

You will need to apply for accommodation once you are admitted to the programme. There will be three ways to secure your accommodation:

- Register with our group booking (more info in the admission documents)
 - Register individually at <http://www.studentenwerk-bonn.de/wohnen/online-bewerbung/>
 - Try to find accommodation independently (Please note that Bonn is very popular for students and it remains difficult every year to find a suitable room).
- What other specifics do I have to take into consideration as a non-EU citizen
 - a. Bank: You have to open a German bank account. Many banks offer free student accounts.
 - b. Blocked account: In order to prove your financial security, some German embassies require students to open a blocked bank account with one of the German banks. It is required to have a minimum amount of 12 months' average living expenses (roughly 8000 Euros) in your blocked account and the maximum that you can withdraw is 670 Euro per month.
 - c. Visa: Please check on the following website if you need a visa to enter Germany:
http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht_node.html
 - d. Proof of English proficiency: Each Consular Service might be asking for a different level of English in order to grant your visa application. Please

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check with the representatives of the German embassy in your country and make your arrangements accordingly.

- e. Health insurance: You have to register with a German Health insurance company.
- f. Working regulations: http://www.internationale-studierende.de/en/prepare_your_studies/financing/jobbing/
- **General information for living and studying/working in Germany**

[http://www.auswaertiges-
amt.de/EN/Infoservice/FAQ/ArbeitenLebenDeutschland/Uebersicht.html?nn=480
834](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/FAQ/ArbeitenLebenDeutschland/Uebersicht.html?nn=480834)