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**Master's Examination Regulations for the "Social Protection" degree programme (MSc)  
at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences dated 19 July 2022**

Issued by the  
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# **Master's Examination Regulations**

for the “Social Protection” degree programme (MSc)  
at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg  
University of Applied Sciences

dated 26 March 2015

as amended by the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment Regulation of 7 June 2022

By virtue of Article 2 paragraph 4 and Article 64 paragraph 1 of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG) of 16 September 2014 (GV.NRW, page 547), last amended by Article 1 of the Act on the Further Amendment of the Higher Education Act and the Colleges of Art Act of 25 November 2021 (GV.NRW p. 1210a), the Department of Social Policy and Social Security Studies at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences has issued the following Master's Examination Regulations for the “Social Protection” degree programme:

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# **I. General**

## **Article 1 – Scope of the Examination Regulations**

As set out in Article 64 paragraph 2 HG, these Examination Regulations shall apply to the examinations required to complete the “Social Protection” Master’s degree programme at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

## **Article 2 – Degree programme objectives, purpose of the examination, academic degree**

(1) In accordance with the general study objectives (Article 58 HG), the study programme leading to the Master’s examination is intended to provide students with scientific insights into the application-oriented contents of the programme in particular and enable them to analyse the processes and problems involved in social protection, apply the relevant methods and develop problem-solving strategies, while taking content outside their subject area into account.

(2) The Master’s examination provides students with an additional degree qualifying them for a profession. This degree entitles them to enrol in a PhD programme in accordance with Article 67 paragraph 4 sentence 1 letter c) HG. The Master’s examination is designed to determine whether students have acquired the in-depth expertise needed to work independently in their chosen profession and whether they are able to work and conduct research independently based on academic findings and methods.

(3) Having passed their Master’s examination, students shall be awarded the international academic degree of “Master of Science”, specialising in social protection.

## **Article 3 – Admission requirements**

(1) To be admitted to the Master’s degree programme, students are required to provide evidence of having successfully completed an undergraduate degree. Any additional state regulations concerning admission shall remain unaffected by this regulation. In general, admission shall be granted to students who have completed a Bachelor’s degree in economics, politics, administration, health, education, social science, psychology and international relations or development studies as well as other subjects insofar as the contents relating to the subject area of social protection encompass a minimum of 15 credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The Admissions Committee shall decide on admission. It consists of the heads of the degree programme plus a member of the Examination Board who is appointed by the Examination Board.

(2) A prerequisite to be admitted to the Master’s programme is a Bachelor’s degree worth 180 ECTS credits.

(3) Proof of English language skills at a minimum level of C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is to be provided in the Master’s programme to prove that the student possesses sufficient language ability to study. Applicants who can provide proof of a university entrance qualification that was obtained within the area covered by the CEFR and that demonstrates or includes English language skills at C1 level are exempt from the obligation to provide any separate proof of their English language skills. For applicants holding an English-language school leaving certificate qualifying them for studying at H-BRS, proof of C1-level English language skills is deemed to have been provided with the submission of their English-language school leaving certificate.

(4) Besides completing an undergraduate degree as set out in paragraphs 1 and 3, students who wish to be admitted to the “Social Protection” Master’s degree programme shall provide evidence of having gained at least five months’ professional experience in the field of social protection. The experience acquired should show that the applicant has had to address central issues relating to social protection with regard both to their content and practice. In the event of doubt, the applicant must provide proof of their professional experience in the area of social protection.

(5) A further admission requirement is the passing of a subject-specific written entry examination. Within the framework of this examination, the applicant shall prove that they possess sufficient programme-related aptitude to make it reasonable to expect the course objective to be achieved. The subject-specific examination is conducted online and ends with a signed declaration that the candidate has taken it themselves and without outside help. The subject examination is conducted by an examiner who is

appointed by the Admissions Committee and is the same for all applicants in a given semester. The Admission Committee is responsible for regulating the finer details of the procedure, including how long the examination takes to complete, and announcing them on the website for the degree programme.

(6) If an applicant has definitively failed an examination required by the Examination Regulations in their chosen degree programme at a higher-education institution within the area of application of the German Basic Law, enrolment shall be refused. This shall also apply to degree programmes whose content comes very close to that of their previous degree programme. The Examination Board shall decide on the degree of closeness of content.

## **Article 4 – Standard period of study, language of instruction, scope of studies**

(1) The course of study comprises a standard period of study of four semesters, including the practical semester and the Master's thesis. Studies may be completed early if the necessary work has been completed and corresponding proof provided.

(2) The degree programme is taught in English. Tuition and examinations are conducted in English.

(3) The study programme consists of modules. These are awarded ECTS credits, which measure the students' workload. The workload undertaken in one standard study semester is, as a rule, awarded 30 credits; the degree programme comprises a total of 120 credits. One credit corresponds to an average of 25 hours' work, producing an average total workload of 3,000 hours. The structure of the degree programme (compulsory modules and electives) has been determined in the module catalogue (see the study plan in Appendix 1).

(4) Students who have not submitted a request to be admitted to all examinations for the first study-related semester by the end of the fourth study-related semester (cf. Article 10 paragraph 1) will lose their entitlement to sit them unless they can prove that they are not responsible for this failure to submit a request (Article 18 paragraph 2). The reasons under Article 64 paragraph 3a HG are to be referred to in particular in this regard. A student who de-registers after being admitted (Article 14 paragraph 2) shall be deemed to have not been registered in the first place. Sentences 1 to 3 apply accordingly to the examinations for the second, third and fourth study-related semesters. If students fail one or more of these examinations, they will be required to register for a re-take on the next possible date; sentences 1 to 3 shall apply accordingly.

## **Article 5 – Scope and structure of the Master's examination, examination period**

(1) The Master's examination in the "Social Protection" degree programme consists of examinations that accompany students' studies as well as a Master's thesis.

(2) Students shall be awarded credits for a module if they can prove that they have obtained the related qualifications, i.e. if they have passed the examinations. The examinations accompanying the studies shall take place at the time when the related module or course unit within the study programme is completed in accordance with the study plan. The study plan included in the module catalogue is designed to ensure that students can take all examinations held during a semester by the start of their third study semester.

(3) The descriptions of the modules are summarised in a module catalogue specific to the degree programme.

## **Article 6 – Recognition of study qualifications**

(1) Upon request, examinations passed in degree programmes at other state-run or state-approved universities, at state-run or state-approved universities of cooperative education or in degree programmes at state-run or state-approved universities abroad or in another degree programme at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences shall be officially recognised insofar as the skills acquired do not differ considerably from those tested in the examinations substituted; the two programmes will not be compared to determine equivalence. The same applies to academic degrees obtained after completing degree programmes within the meaning of sentence 1. The aim of recognition under the terms of sentences 1 and 2 is to continue the degree programme, to pass examinations, to enrol in another degree programme or to be admitted to doctoral studies.

(2) The Examination Board is responsible for conducting the recognition procedure. It makes decisions

on recognition, consulting the examiners first in the event of any doubt.

(3) The student who submits a request for recognition of qualifications is responsible for providing the requisite information on the qualification to be recognised. Requests submitted to the Examination Board must be made in writing as a basic principle. Documents from foreign universities where neither German nor English is the official language must be submitted as a certified translation into German or English. The responsibility for proving that a request under the terms of paragraph 1 does not meet the requirements for recognition lies with the Examination Board.

(4) Decisions on requests under the terms of paragraph 1 shall be taken within six weeks of the documents having been submitted in full in accordance with paragraph 3.

(5) In accordance with the official recognition criteria set out in paragraph 1 and at the student's request, the university must enrol the student in a subject-related semester whose number equals the ratio between the number of ECTS credits recognised and the total number of ECTS credits to be gained in the degree programme in question. If the digit after the decimal point is lower than five, the number of semesters shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number; in all other cases, it shall be rounded up.

(6) If a student is denied the recognition requested under the terms of paragraph 1, they may request that the decision be reviewed by the President's Office; the President's Office shall give the Examination Board a recommendation on how to deal with the request.

(7) Upon request, skills and qualifications gained outside a degree programme may be recognised based on the documents submitted if the level and content of the skills and qualifications acquired are equivalent to those tested in the examinations to be substituted. As a basic principle, no more than 50% of the credits envisaged for the degree programme may be awarded for skills and qualifications gained outside the university.

(8) Students have the opportunity where applicable to complete modules or partial modules at a partner university or institution based on partnership agreements between Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences and other higher-education establishments, research institutes, institutes affiliated to the university or other institutes offering seminar content comparable to universities or based on partnerships between departments at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. Students shall submit their requests for admission to the Examination Board no later than six weeks before enrolling in the external study programme that they intend to take. The Examination Board shall authorise and recognise qualifications in accordance with the regulations set out in the partnership agreements. Paragraph 1 shall remain unaffected.

(9) All examination results, including failed attempts, shall remain valid if a student re-enrols on the same degree programme at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. The same applies in the event of a change in examination regulations.

## **Article 7 – Examiners and assessors**

(1) The Examination Board shall appoint the examiners and assessors for the examinations and the Master's thesis. Only lecturers at the university may be appointed as well as persons experienced in professional practice and training insofar as this is necessary or appropriate to achieve the objectives of the examination. To assess an examination, a person must have at least the same qualification or a qualification that is considered equivalent to the one being assessed in the examination.

(2) If several examiners are invited to take part in the examination, at least one examiner must have taught the subject in which the examination is being taken. Assessors must have the same qualification or a qualification that is considered equivalent to the one being assessed in the examination (in German "sachkundige Beisitzerin"/"sachkundiger Beisitzer", or "competent assessor").

(3) When conducting the examination, the examiners are not bound by any instructions.

(4) Students are entitled to propose a supervisor and a second examiner for their Master's thesis. The Examination Board shall ensure that the duties involved in conducting the examination are divided up as equally as possible among the examiners. The students' suggestions shall be taken into account to the extent deemed possible; the students' suggestions shall not give rise to a claim.

## **Article 8 – Examination Board**

(1) The Examination Board of the Department of Social Policy and Social Security Studies shall assume the duties assigned by these Examination Regulations. The Examination Board is an independent examination body of Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

(2) The Examination Board consists of seven people, who are elected by the departmental council:

1. the chair,
2. the deputy chair, and
3. two further members from the ranks of the department's professors,
4. a member from the ranks of the department's research associates with university degrees, and
5. a member from the ranks of the department's students,
6. a member from the ranks of the department's staff members in the area of facilities management and administration.

The Examination Board shall elect, from among its members, a chairperson and a deputy chairperson from the ranks of professors.

With the exception of the chairperson and their deputy, each member of the Examination Board shall be elected along with a deputy. The term of office for professors and the research associate with a university degree is two years, while the student member is in office for one year. Re-election is permissible. Members who resign during their term of office shall be substituted by persons elected by the departmental council from the same group. Insofar as the law permits, the Examination Board may meet by telephone or videoconference and resolutions may be passed by means of electronic communication or by way of circular letter or email, again insofar as the law permits, setting a deadline for voting. Another requirement is that no member of the Examination Board who holds voting rights objects to this course of action. Anyone raising an objection must justify it.

(3) The Examination Board shall ensure that the Examination Regulations are observed and that the examinations are conducted in accordance with the Examination Regulations; it shall also decide on the type and form of the examinations (Article 11 paragraph 4) and the consequences of breaches of the Examination Regulations. In particular, it is responsible for ruling on objections to decisions taken during examination procedures. The Examination Board shall inform the departmental council of how the examinations and study periods are progressing. If the actual average study period differs from the standard period of study, the Examination Board shall propose examination-related measures to reduce the study periods to the departmental council. It shall also make recommendations on reforming the Examination Regulations. The Examination Board may transfer its responsibilities to the chairperson in the following cases:

1. Determining whether a test provided as evidence of the requisite English-language skills at C1 level can be deemed equivalent (Article 3 paragraph 3),
2. Recognition and non-recognition of examinations taken (Article 6),
3. Recognition of study qualifications and examination results, including the recognition of failed attempts (Article 6),
4. Appointing and revoking the appointment of examiners (Article 7 paragraph 1),
5. Admission to examinations in the event of doubt (Article 14 paragraph 3),
6. Admission to the Master's thesis and extending the time allotted to it (Article 20 paragraph 2, Article 21 paragraph 2 and 3),
7. Taking examinations in a form other than that prescribed or extending the time allowed due to a candidate's disability (Article 15),
8. Giving permission to withdraw from examinations, requiring students to submit an independent medical examiner's certificate in the event of withdrawal from examinations, and extending the time allowed (Article 18 paragraphs 1–3),
9. Approving changes to mandatory electives in the event of a re-take (Article 17 paragraph 5),
10. Specifying examination details, in particular the form of the examination and the resources allowed (Article 13 paragraph 4) insofar as the present Examination Regulations do not provide any binding specifications in this regard.

11. Approving different examination arrangements in the event of disability or interests warranting protection (Article 15),
12. Extending the practical semester, splitting up the practical semester retrospectively and changing the training facility retrospectively (Article 11 paragraph 8).

Above and beyond this, the opportunities to delegate responsibilities set out in the Examination Regulations shall expressly apply.

(4) The Examination Board shall be quorate if, apart from its chairperson or deputy chairperson, a further member from the ranks of professors who are entitled to vote and at least one other member who is entitled to vote are present. The Examination Board shall also be quorate if the meeting is being held by telephone or videoconference (Article 8 paragraph 2). It makes decisions by simple majority. In the event that the voting results in a tie, the chairperson (or, if they are absent, the deputy chairperson) shall have the deciding vote. The student member shall not take part in the discussion about or the decision-making on matters relating to the setting of examination tasks or their own examination.

(5) The members of the Examination Board and a representative of the Office of the President are entitled to be present during examinations, with the exception of students who will be taking the same examination during the same examination period.

(6) The members of the Examination Board, the examiners and assessors are officially bound to maintain confidentiality. If they are not civil servants, the chairperson of the Examination Board or their deputy shall oblige them to maintain confidentiality.

(7) The Examination Board's meetings are not public. The Dean of the Department of Social Policy and Social Security Studies shall be invited to take part in the meetings held by the Examination Board. The Dean shall assume an advisory role during the meetings. Upon invitation by the chairperson or their deputy, guests may participate in the meetings of the Examination Board; they shall be equally obliged to maintain confidentiality. Guests have the rights to speak at the meeting but not to submit motions or cast votes.

(8) Decisions taken by the Examination Board or its chairperson that have an adverse effect on any students shall be communicated to them without delay. Prior to this procedure, students have the right to state their case.

(9) In accordance with Article 27 paragraph 1 HG, the responsibility for organising examinations lies with the Dean.

## **Article 9 – Examinations Office**

With regard to the organisation of examinations, the Examinations Office is responsible for the following duties in particular:

1. Maintaining the examination records and, if necessary, allowing them to be inspected in compliance with the instructions given by the chairperson of the Examination Board (Article 26 paragraph 2),
2. Processing requests for registering for and de-registering from examinations,
3. Notifying students about the granting of admission and the drafting of admission lists for examinations, the practical period and the Master's thesis,
4. Notifying students about examination results,
5. Issuing final Grade Reports, Diplomas and Diploma Supplements.

## **II. Regulations governing the course of studies**

### **Article 10 – Schedule of examinations, study plan**

(1) The examinations to be taken on the “Social Protection” degree programme are based on the study plan (Appendix 1). This also shows whether the examinations are graded or ungraded, how much of the final grade each examination grade represents (rounded) and whether partial examinations can be compensated.

(2) At the end of the preceding semester, the departmental council shall determine the range of electives to choose from. If the departmental council decides to remove an elective from its list of courses, examinations in the subject in question shall only be offered for three semesters after the course relating to the examination was last offered. This period includes the semester in which the course was last offered.

### **Article 11 – Practical semester**

(1) Continuous practical activity of at least 12 weeks is integrated into the course of study (the “practical semester”). The practical semester must be completed at a suitable company, administration or other suitable institution (training facility) in Germany or abroad that is recognised by the university. As a basic principle, it is to take place during the third study semester at public institutions or other governing bodies active in the field of social policy, such as political parties, trade unions, associations, foundations, non-governmental organisations, research facilities or other institutions. It must be continuous and involve the usual weekly working hours of a full-time employee of the institution in question. The practical semester can also be conducted part-time, in which case it is completed over a correspondingly longer period than the original 12 weeks. This requires the approval of the teacher at the university who is in charge of the practical semester. In justified individual cases, the university itself may be the training facility. The decision on a corresponding application is made by the Examination Board.

(2) The practical semester is designed to strengthen the link between studies and practical experience. During it, students are expected to familiarise themselves with the realities of professional work and apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies to concrete tasks and describe and evaluate the experience that they have gained from their practical activities. In addition to socio-political questions, the practical semester is intended to provide an insight into professional/work-related requirements.

(3) Admission to the practical semester shall be granted to those who have completed at least two semesters and achieved at least 46 ECTS in examinations assessed in accordance with Article 16 paragraph 4, as stated in the study plan.

(4) The request for admission shall be filed in writing with the Examinations Office, which will forward it to the Examination Board. The information on the internship shall be enclosed with the request.

(5) An internship contract specifying the rights and obligations of the contracting parties shall be concluded between the training facility and the student. The responsibility for the conclusion of an internship contract lies with the student.

(6) During the practical semester, students shall be supervised by a member of the teaching staff at the university who must be entitled to conduct examinations.

(7) Successful participation in the practical semester shall be confirmed by the member of the teaching staff responsible for supervision if:

- a. the training facility certifies that the student has successfully finished their practical semester,
- b. the student has prepared a self-authored internship report of approximately 3,000 words. The report shall describe the work done during the practical semester, document the acquisition of skills intended by the practical semester and be embedded in academic discourse.

(8) If the practical semester is interrupted or curtailed for more than two weeks due to illness or other reasons leading to its purpose not being fulfilled, either in whole or in part, the practical semester shall be extended accordingly. The member of university staff responsible for supervision shall decide on the required length of the extension. The training facility may only be changed retrospectively or the practical semester split up into several parts after it has begun if there is a good reason to do so (e.g. in the event of interests warranting protection determined by legal regulations, such as the care of persons, provisions of the Maternity Protection Act and parental leave). This requires the agreement of the

university teacher supervising the practical semester and of the Examination Board.

(9) If participation in the practical semester is not confirmed by the supervising person, the practical semester may be repeated once.

## **Article 12 – Studium Generale**

Students are able to take additional supplementary subjects besides the modules specified in these Examination Regulations and sit the corresponding examinations, although these will not count towards their overall grade. The relevant department will issue certificates for these examinations at the student's request. Students may request to take their chosen subjects after the end of the standard registration period for them. Decisions on whether to admit them to these subjects are to be made based on available capacity.

# **III. Regulations governing examinations**

## **Article 13 – Purpose, scope and types of examinations**

(1) Examinations are aimed at determining whether a student has gained the expertise necessary to deal with the essential interrelationships between the content and methods of the subjects in which the examinations are taken and whether they are able to independently apply the expertise and skills acquired.

(2) The examination requirements are to be based on the content, skills and learning outcomes pertaining to the module and the courses that it contains as stipulated in the study plan (Appendix 1) and the module descriptions. The level of knowledge examined in earlier study periods may only be assessed insofar as this is necessary to achieve the objectives of the examination in accordance with paragraph 1.

(3) The Examination Board shall decide on the details of the examination, such as the time, place, duration and resources allowed for the examination as well as the end of the registration period (Article 14 paragraph 1) in advance and shall communicate them in writing no less than eight weeks prior to the examination. It is sufficient to inform students by posting a public announcement on the notice-board and/or by publishing the information on the internet.

(4) Attendance may be made compulsory if this is required in order to ensure acquisition of the relevant skills and is justified accordingly in the module catalogue. Students who are absent for less than a third of the total length of the course will not face any negative consequences under any circumstances. Decisions are made by the heads of the degree programme in consultation with the teacher.

(5) The following types of examinations are allowed for modular examinations:

- a. Written examinations take between 60 and 180 minutes. They are invigilated.
- b. Oral examinations may be conducted as individual or group examinations. They take a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 45 minutes for each student. The duration of the examination must be announced before it starts. A record must be made of the main topics and results of the oral examination, in particular the facts relevant to grading. Students shall be informed of the results of their oral examination after it has finished.
- c. Examinations may also be taken in the form of projects, assignments, take-home exams, portfolios, shorter academic papers, policy papers, presentations or case studies insofar as these types of examination test students on the qualifications to be acquired. Examinations may also be set during lecture periods so long as they do not increase the students' workload. Students present their research projects and progress/findings and lead a discussion on them in the compulsory research colloquium, which is usually assessed by the examiners for the Master's thesis. Passing the colloquium is worth two ECTS credits.
- d. Examinations can be taken electronically or using electronic means of communication (online examinations) provided that privacy and data protection regulations are complied with.

(6) Electronic examinations and further specifics

- a. Examinations can be taken in electronic form. Electronic examinations (e-examinations) are examination procedures that are conducted and evaluated using computer-assisted and/or digital media.
- b. The authenticity and integrity of the examination results must be ensured. An automatically created evaluation of an examination performance must be reviewed by an examiner (two examiners in the case of a failed examination) at the request of the student affected.
- c. A general briefing is provided before a student faces their first electronic examination procedure during their studies.
- d. The students must be given the possibility to inspect the computer-based examination as well as the result that they attained.
- e. In all other respects, the corresponding provisions of these Examination Regulations continue to apply.
- f. E-examinations are to be taken in compliance with privacy and data protection regulations in particular.

(7) Examinations can consist wholly or partially of selectable answers (single- or multiple-choice examinations). It must be decided what answers will be accepted as correct when the examination tasks are put together. If an individual examination task prohibits multiple answers, these will not be permitted and will be deemed null and void. Before determining examination results, at least two setters of the examination tasks are required to check them through to make sure that they will enable sound examination results to be obtained. If this check reveals flaws in individual examination tasks, these are to be ignored when determining examination results and assessments are to be based on the reduced number of examination tasks. Any reduction in the number of examination tasks cannot be allowed to put any students at a disadvantage. Negative points may not be awarded beyond the scope of each individual task.

(8) Examinations in accordance with Article 8 sentence 1 shall be deemed to have been passed if (1) the student has, in total, answered at least 50 per cent of the examination questions correctly or obtained at least 50 per cent of the available marks or (2) the student has, in total, answered at least 40 per cent of the examination questions correctly or obtained at least 40 per cent of the available marks and the number of questions answered correctly or marks obtained by the student is not more than 17 per cent less than the average score for all the candidates who were sitting the corresponding examination for the first time.(10) In the case of written examinations that make only partial use of selectable answers, paragraphs 8 and 9 shall only apply to this part.

(9) Assessment shall be governed by Article 16 paragraph 4.

## **Article 14 – Admission to examinations, registration and de-registration**

(1) Students are themselves responsible for registering for the examinations in the relevant semester in accordance with the study plan (Appendix 1). They are to register electronically online by the deadline set by the Examination Board (Article 13 paragraph 4). Registration after the deadline requires a good reason and the agreement of the Examination Board.

(2) Registration for an examination can be cancelled with the Examination Board electronically online up to seven days before the date set for the examination without this affecting the number of permitted examination attempts.

(3) Above and beyond this, students may only take part in examinations of the degree programme if they are enrolled at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences or if they have been admitted as visiting students in accordance with Article 52 paragraph 2 HG.

(4) In the event of doubt, the Examination Board shall decide on admission to examinations. Students are informed about their admission to an examination via the Campus Management System. Students are required to look in the Campus Management System to find out whether they have been admitted and satisfy themselves that their registration or, as the case may be, their de-registration is recorded correctly. Only students who are recorded as having been admitted will be able to sit an examination.

(5) Students must show an identity card and their student ID card at the request of the examiner or the invigilators.

(6) As a rule, an examination is offered at least once per semester towards the end of that semester.

## **Article 15 – Provisions concerning interests warranting protection**

(1) Upon request, the Examination Board may allow students to acquire qualifications in a different form if they cannot participate fully in their studies in accordance with the regulations due to interests warranting protection as set out in legal provisions. In particular, due account shall be taken of the legal provisions concerning the care of persons, the regulations of the Maternity Protection Act and the legal provisions concerning parental leave.

(2) If, by submitting a medical certificate or other means, a student plausibly shows that they are not capable of performing to the full potential of their intellectual abilities in the manner chosen due to a long-term disability or chronic illness and will thus be partially or wholly unable to achieve a study qualification in the intended form or within the intended period of time, then the chairperson of the Examination Board may permit an equivalent study qualification and examination performance to be achieved in a different form and, in particular, may allow the time available for the Master's thesis to be extended beyond the deadline stipulated in Article 21 paragraph 2.

(3) The examination conditions must be arranged in such a way that disadvantages for disabled people are compensated for to the greatest possible extent. In the event of doubt, the chairperson of the Examination Board may demand further evidence.

(4) If students with a disability or chronic illness are unlikely to see a change in their symptoms or disability, the measures taken to compensate for their disadvantage must cover all the examinations to be taken in the course of their studies.

(5) The provisions of paragraph 2 also apply to students who are only able to participate in the standard programme of studies to a limited extent due to other interests warranting protection that are set out in legal regulations. In particular, due account shall be taken of the legal provisions concerning the care of persons, the regulations of the Maternity Protection Act and the legal provisions concerning parental leave.

(6) As a basic principle, requests for compensation for disadvantages are to be made at least six weeks before the start of the examination period for which such compensation is to be granted for the first time. Requests are to be submitted to the Examination Board together with supporting evidence in accordance with paragraph 2. Before submitting a request, students are advised to consult the university's representative for people with disabilities or, in the case of paragraph 5, staff in the university's Equal Opportunity Office.

(7) On request, pregnant or breastfeeding students are allowed to de-register for an examination at any time prior to the examination deadline without facing any consequences. They will not incur any legal obligations as a result of not taking part. Withdrawal from an ongoing relationship under examination law that has been established with legal effect is subject to the general requirements, as is any compensation for disadvantages.

(8) In justified cases (e.g. bringing up children, caring for people in need of care, severe disability, period abroad, involvement in the university's self-administration), the Examination Board may approve a modified schedule of studies.

## **Article 16 – Assessment of examinations**

(1) Examinations shall be assessed in accordance with these regulations. All assessment must be verifiable. In the case of oral examinations, students must be informed of their grade without delay after each examination; in all other cases, as a rule after six weeks at the latest. It is sufficient to inform students by posting a public announcement on the notice-board and/or by publishing the information on the internet. Examiners shall inform the Dean of any extension of this period in writing, stipulating the reasons in each individual case; the extension must be authorised by the Dean for the case in question.

(2) As a rule, the examination is conducted by the tutor of the course in which a student wishes to take the examination. If several examiners conduct the examination, they shall jointly assess the student's performance as a whole.

(3) Re-takes that cannot be sat again if they have been definitively failed shall be assessed by a

minimum of two examiners; in all other cases, it is sufficient for a student's performance to be assessed by one examiner only. The Examination Board may decide to appoint only one examiner to conduct oral examinations. In this case, a competent assessor must be consulted; prior to the final grade being determined, the assessor must be interviewed by the examiner. Master's theses are to be assessed by two examiners.

(4) The following grades shall be used to assess examination performance, except in the cases set out in paragraph 5:

1	Very good (i.e. German "sehr gut")	Outstanding performance
2	Good (i.e. German "gut")	Performance significantly above average
3	Satisfactory (i.e. German "befriedigend")	Average performance
4	Sufficient (i.e. German "ausreichend")	Performance below average but still meeting the requirements
5	Insufficient/Failed (i.e. German "nicht ausreichend")	Performance which does not meet the requirements due to considerable flaws

(5) In order to differentiate assessment in more detail, grades may be lowered or increased by 0.3, although the grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are not permissible.

The following applies to average grades that produce an interim value:

Interim value of up to	1.5	Very good (i.e. German "sehr gut")
Interim value of more than	1.5 and up to 2.5	Good (i.e. German "gut")
Interim value of more than	2.5 and up to 3.5	Satisfactory (i.e. German "befriedigend")
Interim value of more than	3.5 and up to 4.0	Sufficient (i.e. German "ausreichend")
Interim value of more than	4.0	Insufficient/Failed (i.e. German "nicht ausreichend")

Interim values are only taken into account to the first decimal place; all other decimal places are deleted without rounding.

(6) An examination shall be awarded a pass if the performance is assessed as being at least "sufficient". If two examiners who have jointly assessed an examination differ in their assessments and the difference between their two grades is less than 2.0, the final grade shall be determined by the arithmetic mean of the individual grades. In this case, the examination will be awarded a pass if all examiners graded the work as "sufficient" (4.0) or better. If the difference is 2.0 or more, the Examination Board shall appoint a further examiner and the worst grade is then ignored. The final grade is the arithmetic mean of the remaining grades. However, the work can only receive a grade of "sufficient" (4.0) or better if all remaining individual grades are "sufficient" (4.0) or better.

(7) Notwithstanding paragraph 6, examinations may also be assessed as "passed" or "failed". In this case, an examination shall be awarded a pass if the examiner assesses the performance as at least "still meeting the requirements despite some flaws".

(8) Besides the grade based on the German grade scale of 1 to 5, a relative grade is also given in

accordance with the ECTS Users' Guide, as amended from time to time.

## **Article 17 – Re-taking examinations (number of possible re-takes, consultations, mandatory elective course changes)**

(1) An examination that has not been passed may be re-taken twice. Article 22 paragraph 4 shall remain unaffected by this regulation.

(2) If a student has not passed an examination after the second attempt, they may, upon request, arrange a consultation with one of the examiners involved in their second examination attempt. The purpose of this consultation is to find reasons for the shortcomings in the student's performance and identify ways of improving it.

(3) In justified exceptional cases, the Examination Board may decide, at the student's request, to hold their third examination attempt as an oral examination.

(4) An examination that has been awarded a final grade of "sufficient" or "passed" may not be re-taken.

(5) Students who are required to repeat their examination on a mandatory elective course that is not being offered in the following year may change their mandatory elective course by applying to the Examination Board. The assessment given to their first examination attempt will remain unaffected. The application to the Examination Board must be made by the student in writing and be signed; in particular, the student must declare their explicit consent to the grade for their first examination attempt being retained.

## **Article 18 – Non-attendance, withdrawal, cheating, breach of regulations, objecting to shortcomings**

(1) A student's performance in an examination shall be deemed "insufficient" (failed) if they do not attend or begin the examination for which they have registered without good reason, or if they do not deliver the required performance by the end of the examination or the allotted time. Sentence 1 shall apply accordingly if the student does not submit their Master's thesis in due time.

(2) The reasons asserted to justify non-attendance shall be communicated and substantiated in writing to the Examination Board without delay. The Examination Board can request that appropriate documentation be submitted in this regard. If a student is unable to sit an examination due to illness, this is usually demonstrated by a medical certificate in German or English confirming that the student will be unable to sit examinations and how long this is likely to be the case for unless there are sufficient factual indications to suggest that the student is likely to be capable of sitting examinations or that another form of evidence would be appropriate. If there are any indications of this kind, the Examination Board may request a medical certificate from an independent medical examiner at the university, with the costs to be covered by the university. The student will be able to choose from several independent medical examiners. If the Examination Board accepts the reasons presented, the student will be informed that they will be able to apply once again for admission to the corresponding examination (without it counting as a failed attempt).

(3) If an examination takes more than two days to process, an extension may be granted subject to the provisions of paragraph 2 sentences 1 to 5. An application must be submitted before the end of the original processing time. The decision on an application is made by the Examination Board.

(4) If a student tries to influence the result of an examination by cheating or by using unauthorised resources, they will be deemed to have failed the examination. If a student disrupts the smooth running of an examination, the examiner or invigilator may exclude them from any further participation in it. In this event, the entire examination will be deemed to have been failed. A record shall be made of the reasons for barring the candidate from the examination. This shall apply accordingly to decisions taken by examiners or invigilators in accordance with sentence 1. Even if a student is merely in possession of unauthorised resources during or after the distribution of the examination papers, this shall be considered an attempt at cheating. Students who wilfully commit an offence as set out in sentences 1 and 2 breach the regulations. This breach of regulations is liable to prosecution in accordance with Article 63 paragraph 5 HG. In the event of repeated or other serious attempts at cheating, students may also be removed from the students' register.

(5) Students must report any shortcomings in the examination procedure to the relevant examiner and the chairperson or deputy chairperson of the Examination Board without delay. If it is unreasonable in an exceptional individual case to expect such shortcomings to be reported immediately, they must be

communicated in writing as follows, giving reasons in each case:

by 30 April of the year in which the winter semester ends in the case of examinations held during the winter semester,

by 31 October of the same year in the case of examinations held during the summer semester.

Students will no longer be able to raise an objection about any shortcomings once the corresponding deadline has passed.

## IV. Master's thesis

### Article 19 – Purpose of the Master's thesis, topic, examiners

- (1) The Master's thesis is a written assignment on a well-defined topic. It is intended to prove that the student is capable of working independently on a task from the subject area of the degree programme within a given period of time, applying both academic and practical methods and covering both subject-specific details and interdisciplinary interrelationships. The topic and the nature of the assigned task must be such that the Master's thesis can be completed within the specified period.
- (2) The Master's thesis may be set and supervised by any examiner who meets the requirements set out in Article 7 paragraph 1. The Master's thesis may also be written at an establishment outside the university if it can be sufficiently supervised there.
- (3) The Master's thesis shall be written in English. It may also be written in a different language in consultation with the examiners and the Examination Board.
- (4) The student shall work independently on a topic for their Master's thesis as part of a research proposal. This proposal, which forms part of the examination in module 9, must have been passed in order to register for the Master's thesis and is commented on by the examiners in module 9. If necessary, the Examination Board shall ensure upon request that the student is given a topic for their Master's thesis.
- (5) The Master's thesis may also be written in the form of group work if each of the students' individual contributions, which shall be assessed as an examination performance, can be delineated, clearly distinguished and assessed based on sections, page references or other criteria, and if the Master's thesis meets the requirements set out in paragraph 1.

### Article 20 – Admission to the Master's thesis

- (1) Students shall be granted admission to the Master's thesis if they have:
  - a. achieved a minimum of 60 ECTS credits from examinations taken in the first and second semesters,
  - b. passed the research proposal for module 9.1,
  - c. reached the fourth subject-related semester.
- (2) Requests for admission are to be submitted to the chairperson or deputy chairperson of the Examination Board, either electronically online or in writing. The following documents are to be enclosed with a request unless they have already been submitted:
  - a. a declaration stating which examiners are prepared to supervise the Master's thesis,
  - b. details of the topic that the examiner intends to set for the Master's thesis,
  - c. a statement about any previous attempts to write a Master's thesis.
- (3) A request for admission can be withdrawn in writing up until the decision on the request for admission is announced, without the need to give reasons; this will not be counted towards the number of attempts allowed to pass the examination.
- (4) The Examination Board shall decide on a student's admission to the Master's thesis. Admission shall be denied if the requirements specified in paragraph 1 are not met.

- (5) A request for admission can be withdrawn in writing up until the Examination Board announces its decision on the request for admission, without the need to give reasons; this will not be counted towards the number of attempts allowed to pass the examination.
- (6) The Examination Board shall decide on a student's admission to the Master's thesis. Admission shall be denied if:
  - a. the requirements set out in paragraph 1 are not met or if
  - b. the documents are incomplete.

## **Article 21 – Administration and implementation of the Master's thesis, extension of the time allotted to the Master's thesis**

- (1) The Examination Board shall set the topic for the Master's thesis. The date on which the Examination Board notifies the student about the topic of the Master's thesis and about the examiners is defined as the date it is set, which shall be recorded and communicated to the Examinations Office.
- (2) The time allotted to the Master's thesis (i.e. the time period from the date on which the topic is set to the date on which the Master's thesis is submitted) is six months. In the case of a Master's thesis of an empirical nature, the allotted time can be extended by one month upon request if the student is experiencing significant delays outside their control as a result of this empirical nature. The chairperson of the Examination Board shall decide whether or not to accept such a request after consulting the supervisor appointed for the Master's thesis.
- (3) If the student is prevented from submitting their Master's thesis on time for good reason, they are to be granted a deadline extension of up to one month on request. Appropriate supporting documents are to be enclosed with the request, e.g. a medical certificate in the event of illness. Paragraph 18 paragraph 2 shall apply accordingly. If the circumstances preventing the student from submitting persist for longer than two months and the Examination Board accepts this state of affairs and applies Article 18 paragraph 2, the attempt shall be deemed to have not been made. The student shall be assigned a new topic once the circumstances preventing them from submitting no longer apply.
- (4) The standard length of the Master's thesis is 60 A4 pages (according to the German Industrial Standard – DIN) in the form stipulated by the Examination Board.

- (5) Students may reject the topic for their Master's thesis, without having to state their reasons; however, they may only do so once and only within four weeks of starting work on the thesis. If the student is re-taking the examination, this option to reject a topic is only available if they student did not exercise it when completing their first thesis.

## **Article 22 – Submission and assessment of the Master's thesis, submission of a new thesis**

- (1) The Master's thesis must be uploaded electronically to the learning platform for the degree programme in a generally readable file format (e.g. docx or pdf, without access protection in each case). When submitting their thesis, the student must provide a written declaration in lieu of an oath that they have produced the thesis independently, using no sources and resources other than those stated. Furthermore, they shall declare that the thesis does not overlap in terms of its content with a thesis written in an earlier degree programme or another academic Master's thesis. Upon request of the Examination Board, the original of the declaration in lieu of an oath must be signed and submitted along with a printed version of the Master's thesis.
- (2) The Master's thesis shall be assessed by two examiners, one of whom must have supervised the thesis. The second examiner shall be appointed by the Examination Board, although students are entitled to make suggestions. Article 7 paragraph 4 shall remain unaffected by this regulation. One of the examiners shall be an employee of Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, and one of the examiners must hold a doctorate.
- (3) Students are to be notified about the assessment of their Master's thesis within six weeks of the deadline for submitting it. If the examiners disagree in their assessments and the difference between their two grades is less than 2.0, the grade for the Master's thesis shall be determined based on the arithmetic mean of the individual grades. The thesis shall be awarded a pass if it has been given a grade

of 4.0 or better by both examiners. If the difference is 2.0 or more, the Examination Board shall appoint a third examiner. In this case, the arithmetic mean of the two grades that deviate the least from each other shall constitute the final grade; if the differences between the three grades are the same, the overall grade shall be based on the arithmetic mean of the three grades. However, the Master's thesis may only be assessed as "sufficient" (4.0) or better if at least two of the grades are "sufficient" (4.0) or better. All assessments must be justified in writing.

(4) A new Master's thesis may be submitted once, otherwise the Master's thesis shall be deemed to have been definitively failed. If a Master's thesis has been awarded a pass, it is not possible to submit a new thesis. Article 20 paragraph 2 shall apply accordingly to a second attempt. The three-month period starts from when the student is informed that their first attempt has failed.

## **IV. Results of the Master's examination**

### **Article 23 – Results of the Master's examination, ECTS grade**

(1) A student shall be deemed to have passed the Master's examination if all their examinations and their Master's thesis were awarded a grade of at least "satisfactory" (4.0) or "passed".

(2) The final grade for the Master's examination shall be based on the arithmetic mean of the grade for the Master's thesis and the grades for the graded examinations, weighted according to ECTS credits. The following weighting factors shall apply:

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| • Master's thesis grade:   | 32% (28/88) |
| • Non-rounded average of the grades for the graded modular examinations: | 68% (60/88) |

The final grade shall be determined by deleting the second digit after the decimal point.

(3) Besides the grade based on the German grade scale of 1 to 5, a relative grade is also given in accordance with the ECTS Users' Guide, as amended from time to time.

(4) The Master's examination shall be deemed to have been definitively failed if one of the examinations in accordance with Article 5 paragraph 1 has been definitively failed. The Examinations Office shall issue a ruling, including instructions concerning rights of appeal, informing the student that they have definitively failed the examination or lost their entitlement to sit it. Enclosed with this ruling will be a certificate listing the examinations that the student has taken and the grades awarded for them as well as the examination results that they would still need to achieve in order to pass the Master's examination. This certificate must make it clear that the student has definitively failed their master's examination or lost their entitlement to sit it.

### **Article 24 – Grade Report, Diploma and Diploma Supplement**

(1) The Grade Report to be issued for a Master's examination that has been passed contains the grades for the examinations and the Master's thesis, the topic of the Master's thesis and the final grade for the Master's examination. Additional study qualifications may be included in the enclosed transcript of records upon request.

(2) Wherever possible, a Grade Report on a Master's examination that has been passed shall be issued within four weeks of the date on which the last examination was taken.

(3) The Grade Report shall be signed by the chairperson of the Examination Committee. The Grade Report shall bear the date on with the last examination was taken.

(4) Along with their Grade Report, the student shall be issued with a Diploma documenting that an academic degree has been awarded. The Diploma shall be signed by the Dean or the Vice Dean and bear the stamp of Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

(5) Along with their Grade Report, the student shall also be issued with a Diploma Supplement containing information on the degree programme and the examination completed. The Diploma Supplement shall bear the same date as the Grade Report and shall be signed by the Dean and the chairperson of the Examination Board. The form and content of the Diploma Supplement are defined in the Appendix to the module catalogue, which is part of these Examination Regulations. The ECTS classification table (Article 23 paragraph 3) shall be enclosed with the Diploma Supplement.

(6) Students who leave the university without any degree may be provided with a printout of their transcript of records.

## **Article 25 – Invalidity of examinations, revocation of the Master's degree**

(1) If a student has cheated in an examination and this does not become apparent until after the examination, the Examination Board may retrospectively correct the grades for those parts of the examination in which the student cheated. If the deception does not become apparent until after the Grade Report has been issued, the Examination Board may declare that the student's final examination was either completely or partially failed.

(2) Should it become known after the certificate has been issued that the student had not met the requirements for admission to the Master's examination, and should this have happened without any fraudulent intent on the part of the student, this shortcoming shall be remedied by the candidate successfully completing the examination. If the student wilfully gained admission under false pretences, the Examination Board shall decide on the legal consequences in compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz für das Land Nordrhein-Westfalen).

(3) The incorrect Grade Report shall be revoked and, as the case may be, re-issued. Decisions pursuant to paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 sentence 2 may only be taken within five years of the Grade Report being issued.

## **V. Concluding provisions**

### **Article 26 – Transitional provisions, inspection of the examination records**

(1) If these Examination Regulations are amended or substituted by new ones, or if the degree programme is discontinued, examinations will be held up until the third semester after the semester in which the course relating to the examination was last offered.

(2) After the examination procedure of the Master's thesis has been completed, students shall, upon request, be granted an inspection of the written Master's thesis, the related assessments of the examiners and the record of the examination. The request for inspecting these documents shall be submitted to the chairperson of the Examination Board within one month of the students having been issued the Grade Report or having been notified about failing their final examination; the chairperson shall also decide on the time and place of the inspection. Article 32 of the Administrative Procedures Act of the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz des Landes NRW) concerning the reinstatement to the previous condition shall apply accordingly.

(3) Students shall be allowed to inspect the examination records relating to a particular examination immediately after they have been informed of the examination result. Paragraph 2 shall apply accordingly.

(4) After being notified of their respective examination performance, students may submit a request to the examiner, asking to inspect the relevant examination documents. The examiner shall determine where and when this is to take place. While conducting an inspection, students are permitted to make a copy of the examination file or another form of reproduction that is faithful to the original.

### **Article 27 – Entry into force and publication**

These Examination Regulations are valid from the day after their publication and apply to students who enrol on the Social Protection Master's degree programme at the university from the 2022/2023 winter semester onwards. The German version of these Examination Regulations are to be published in the Official Publications – Announcement Sheet (Verkündungsblatt) – of Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

Issued by virtue of the decision taken by the Department of Social Policy and Social Security Studies on 7 June 2022.

Prof. Dr. Susanne Peters-Lange,

Dean of the Department of Social Policy and Social Security  
Studies at Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied  
Sciences



**Note on Official Publication 20/2022**

Sankt Augustin, 20 July 2022

The above regulations are hereby officially published.

It is hereby made clear that, in accordance with Article 12 paragraph 5 of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (HG), any allegations that these university regulations breach procedural or formal provisions of the HG, regulatory law or other autonomous university law cannot be made more than one year after these university regulations were published, unless

1. the regulations were not published properly,
2. the Office of the President has previously objected to the resolution passed by the body or committee approving the regulations,
3. the formal or procedural shortcoming has already been communicated to the university, specifying the legal provision infringed and the fact giving rise to the shortcoming, or
4. no reference to the legal consequences of the restriction on objecting to shortcomings was made when the regulations were officially published.