



Hochschule

Bonn-Rhein-Sieg

University of Applied Sciences

Examination Regulations

Master's Examination Regulations (MER)

for the degree programme in

“International Media Studies” (Master of Arts)

at Sankt Augustin Campus of H-BRS

updated on November 28, 2019

as amended by the first Amendment Order on December 5, 2022

Please note that this document is a translation of the German “Master-Prüfungsordnung für den Studiengang ‚International Media Studies‘ (Master of Arts) am Standort Sankt Augustin der Hochschule Bonn- Rhein-Sieg vom 28. November 2019”. Only the German source text is legally binding.

Based on §2 (4) and §64 (1) of the Law on the Universities of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (*Hochschulgesetz – HG NRW*) of 16 September 2014 (*GV. NRW. P. 547*), as last amended by Art. 1 *ÄndG* of 12 July 2019 (*GV.NRW. p. 425, corr. p. 593*), the Department of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Technical Journalism at Sankt Augustin campus of H-BRS has passed the following regulations:

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I General

§ 1 Scope of the Master's Examination Regulations

- (1) On the basis of § 64 para. 2 of the Law Governing the Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia (*HG NRW*), these Master's Examination Regulations (MER) govern the completion of the master's programme in International Media Studies (Master of Arts) at the Department of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Technical Journalism at Sankt Augustin campus of H-BRS.
- (2) These Master's Examination Regulations are based on the Cooperation Agreement of 13 June 2008 between Deutsche Welle, H-BRS and Rheinische Friedrichs-Wilhelm-Universität Bonn, who are jointly responsible for the master's programme in International Media Studies while taking into account the agreements between H-BRS and other partners who cooperate in the degree programme.
- (3) The applied degree programme takes place at several locations: at the studio of Deutsche Welle in Bonn, at the Faculty of Communication at Istanbul University and at other universities that may join the programme under a cooperation agreement.

§ 2 Goal of programme, purpose of examination, academic degree

- (1) Students with a first internationally recognized academic degree and professional experience deepen their comparative knowledge of concepts, methods and techniques in journalism, media and communication studies, the media business and media management with a focus on issues in international media development cooperation. The aim is to give students the practical ability to recognize such methods and to develop and utilize them when analysing and solving practical issues in international media.

As future media decision makers, students will receive particular training on the complex task of informing and educating the public as well as the role and responsibility of the independent media as a cornerstone of a free, democratic and human rights-based system of government.

- (2) The master's degree is the academic gateway to executive roles in journalism, media companies or (media) development cooperation institutions. The master's examination proves that the candidate has achieved the goals of the degree programme.
- (3) Upon successful completion of the examination, H-BRS awards the academic degree "Master of Arts" to the candidate. The participating universities charge tuition fees for the programme.

§ 3 Admission requirements

- (1) Admission to the master's degree programme requires an initial university degree followed by relevant professional experience of at least one year. Applicants must apply to H-BRS online. Required documents must be uploaded to the application portal. If an applicant has failed the last attempt at an examination in the selected degree programme at a university under the jurisdiction of the German Basic Law, and if this examination is required for the completion of the degree programme, § 50 of the Law Governing the Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia (*HG NRW*) excludes the student from being readmitted. This also applies to programmes whose subject matter has significant similarities with the previous programme. The Examination Board decides whether significant similarities exist.
- (2) To prove their linguistic aptitude for the master's programme, applicants must provide proof of at least C1-level English skills according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Applicants with a university entrance qualification completed in the area of the CEFR which lists English language skills at C1 level do not need to provide separate proof.

Applicants who can provide proof of a valid university entrance qualification that was completed in English are considered to have provided proof of C1-level English skills.

Sentences 2 and 3 apply accordingly to university degrees.

(3) In addition to the admission requirements in para. 1 and 2, a written cover letter (statement of purpose) and a CV must be submitted in English.

(4) Beyond the requirements mentioned in para. 1 and 2, an open approach to developments in journalism, media policy and the media business are required in order to complete the International Media Studies master's programme. Therefore, an aptitude review overseen by the members of the Admissions Committee (§7 para. 9) is added to the admission requirements (see Annex 4).

§ 4 Standard period of study, scope, language of instruction, compensation of disadvantages

(1) The degree programme has a standard length of four semesters, master's thesis included. The offered courses are divided into modules. These modules are assigned credit points (CP) indicating the students' workload under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). One semester is worth 30 CP of coursework, one year 60 CP. Each credit point is equivalent to 30 hours of workload. The master's program comprises a total of 120 CP. Students must prove completion of the coursework for each module, i.e., module examinations and other assessments, to earn credit points.

(2) The maximum scope is 72 semester credit hours (full course catalogue).

(3) The language of instruction is English.

(4) If a candidate provides suitable proof to the Examination Board that an illness chronic in nature or lasting longer than one semester leaves them unable to employ their intellectual skills towards academic achievements and therefore complete all or part of the examination in its intended form or duration, the Examination Board may permit the coursework to be completed in another equivalent form. To ensure fair compensation of disadvantages, the examination conditions must – to the extent possible – be designed to compensate for any impairments the candidate may suffer.

(5) If the disability or chronic illness a candidate suffers from is not expected to change, all examinations in the further course of study must compensate for this disadvantage.

(6) Para. 4 also covers students whose legally protectable interests limit their ability to follow the regular course of study. Especially the regulations on care for dependants, the Maternity Protection Act and parental leave must be given due consideration.

(7) Compensation of disadvantages must be requested at least six weeks before the examination period in which the compensation is to begin. The application under para. 4 and supporting documents must be submitted to the Examination Board. Prior to submitting the application, applicants should consult the university's Health and Disability Commissioner or, in case of para. 2, the Equal Opportunity Commissioner.

(8) Pregnant and breastfeeding students are not required to participate in training events and examinations. Their non-participation does not give rise to any claims. Withdrawal from a legally binding and ongoing examination relationship as well as any compensation of disadvantages are subject to the general requirements.

§ 5 Extent and structure of the examination, examination deadlines

(1) The master's examination consists of the module examinations and assessments according to the Study Schedule (see Annex 1), the master's thesis as well as the final colloquium.

- (2) The module examinations and assessments usually take place until the closing date for the module or teaching unit. The Study Schedule (Annex 1) intends to ensure that students complete all module examinations as well as the master's thesis and colloquium by the end of the fourth semester. Students may complete the programme earlier, if they prove completion of all the required assessments.
- (3) The final part of the master's examination consists of a thesis and a colloquium.
- (4) Required module examinations and assessments are listed in the Study Schedule (Annex 1). Examination types are defined in § 9 of the Master's Examination Regulations. Module examinations and assessments are offered once per semester.
- (5) Module examinations are graded, assessments are not. The examination requirements depend on the content, the skills and learning outcomes of each course as defined in the module description.

§ 6 Recognition of coursework and examinations

- (1) Course credit earned in other programmes at other public or officially recognized universities, at public or officially recognized vocational academies or in programmes at public or officially recognized universities in other countries or in another programme at H-BRS can be recognized upon request, if there is no significant difference in the skills taught in the replaced courses. The same applies to degrees awarded upon completion of programmes under para. 1. The master's thesis and colloquium cannot be replaced by transferred course credit.
- (2) If a student re-enrols in the same programme at H-BRS or the examination regulations are superseded, previously earned course credit and study semesters (including failed attempts) are recognized by automatic administrative procedure. No separate request under § 63a of the Law Governing the Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia (*HG NRW*) is required.
- (3) In case a student is simultaneously or consecutively enrolled in two programmes which offer identical modules closing with identical examinations, the examination results including failed attempts are graded in both programmes at once. § 6 para. 1 sentence 2 does not apply; a separate request under § 63a of the Law Governing the Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia (*HG NRW*) is not required.
- (4) The examination procedure begins with a student's first registration for an examination. It ends as soon as the last examination decision has become final. If a student wishes to transfer credit from another university for an examination procedure that has already begun, this external examination attempt must be registered with the Examination Board in the same way as an internal attempt. As for the registration deadlines for external attempts, the student may request the Examination Board to depart from the rules for internal examination attempts. The Examination Board's approval of an external attempt also makes the course recognizable under para. 1.
- (5) Recognition under para. 1 to 3 is intended to help the student complete the programme and/or individual examinations or to start another degree programme. Course credit may not be transferred if students thereby intend to bypass the risk of failing the assessment they seek to replace.
- (6) The Examination Board performs the recognition procedure. In case of doubt, it may consult with examiners.
- (7) The applicant is responsible for providing the required information for the transferred credit. Any such requests to the Examination Board must be made in writing. Documents from foreign universities at which German is not the official language must be submitted as a certified translation in German or English. The Examination Board bears the burden of proof for any request under para. 1 not meeting the recognition requirements.

(8) Decisions about requests in the sense of para. 1 to 3 are made within six weeks after submission of all documents mentioned in para. 7.

(9) Based on the recognition procedure in para. 1 to 3 and upon request of the student, H-BRS must assign the student to a study semester corresponding to the number of recognized ECTS credits as a share of all ECTS credits attainable in the programme. If the first decimal of the result is less than five, the lower semester is assigned. If not, the higher semester is assigned.

(10) If a student is denied recognition of their request under para. 1, the student may request the decision to be reviewed by the Office of the President, which will then give the Examination Board a recommendation on how to proceed with the request.

(11) Upon request, documents proving skills and qualifications according to § 63a para. 7 HG NRW acquired in a way other than through a degree course may be recognized to the extent of up to 50% of the credit points provided for the respective degree program, if the content and standard of these skills and qualifications are equivalent to the courses that they are to replace.

(12) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs 1 to 11, credit points earned at other institutions of higher education within and outside the area of application of the Basic Law in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System shall be recognized upon application on the basis of the underlying course and examination achievements, provided that there is no significant difference between the competencies acquired and the achievements which are to be replaced. The maximum number of points that can be recognized is the number provided for the performance in the relevant degree program.

§ 7 Examination Board, Admissions Committee

(1) The dean is responsible for organizing the examination under § 27 para. 1 of the Law Governing the Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia (*HG NRW*).

(2) The department must form an Examination Board for the other tasks assigned in these Master's Examination Regulations. The Examination Board consists of

1. five staff professors, including one chairperson and one deputy chairperson,
2. one member of the academic staff,
3. one member of the technical and administrative staff,
4. two student members.

(3) The Departmental Council elects the members of the Examination Board from the department. The Departmental Council also elects substitutes for the Examination Board members (except for the chairperson and the deputy). University staff members are elected for two years, student members for one year. The same applies for substitutes. Re-election is permitted.

(4) The Examination Board ensures compliance with the Master's Examination Regulations. Its particular responsibilities include deciding on appeals against examination decisions. The Examination Board provides suggestions for reforming the examination regulations. For decisions on

1. admission to examinations,
2. recognition of medical certificates,
3. significant similarities between programmes / equivalence of completed courses,
4. recognition of coursework and examinations,
5. appointing and removing examiners

6. alternative assessment options or extension of deadlines due to the candidate being physically incapacitated, the Examination Board may delegate its responsibility, in general or on a case-by-case basis, to its chairperson and/or deputy.
- (5) To reach a quorum, the chairperson (or deputy), two professors (or substitutes) and two further voting members (or substitutes) of the Examination Board must be present. The Examination Board decides by simple majority. In case of a tied vote, the chairperson decides. The student members do not take part in discussions and decisions regarding the selection of examination questions or their own examinations.
- (6) Members of the Examination Board have the right to attend examination sessions. This excludes student members who have to take the same examination in the same examination period.
- (7) Members of the Examination Board (including substitutes), examiners as well as observers must maintain official confidentiality. If they are not public servants, the chairperson of the Examination Board must oblige them to maintain confidentiality.
- (8) Students must be informed immediately about any negative decisions by the Examination Board or its chairperson. The student concerned must be granted a fair hearing.
- (9) The dean appoints the Admissions Committee. It may consist of any and all lecturers teaching in the master's programme and the dean. The head of the programme presides over the Admissions Committee and coordinates it.
- (10) The Admissions Committee is responsible for:
 - Drafting and developing assessment criteria
 - Reviewing and evaluating application documents
 - Determining candidates' suitability on the basis of the "Explanations on the selection and admission procedure" (see Annex 4)
 - Suggestions on the admissions procedure

§ 8 Examiners and observers

- (1) The Examination Board appoints examiners and observers. The examiner is usually the lecturer of the module or course. Eligible examiners must have at least the qualification tested in the examination or comparable qualifications and, unless urgent reasons require an exception, have independently taught relevant courses in the section of the programme to be assessed. If several examiners are appointed, at least one examiner must have taught in the examination subject.
- (2) Examiners are not bound by any instructions in their examination duty.
- (3) Eligible observers must have at least the qualification tested in the examination or comparable qualifications (competent observer).
- (4) Written or oral examinations that complete the programme as well as repeat examinations which, if failed finally, cannot be substituted, must be graded by at least two examiners or one examiner in the sense of para. 1. In addition, oral examinations must always be graded by at least two examiners or one examiner in the presence of a competent observer.

II Examinations

§ 9 Examination types

- (1) Modules can finish with module examinations (§10) or assessments (§11). The number and type of examinations is shown in Annex 1 (Study Schedule).
- (2) The following examination types are available:
 1. Written examination [WE] (para. 4)
 2. Oral examination [OE] (para. 5)
 3. Term paper [TP] (para. 6)
 4. Oral presentation [OP] (para. 7)
 5. Group project [GP] (para. 8)
 6. Digital presentation [DP] (para. 9)
 7. Media project [MP] (para. 10)
 8. Portfolio [Pf] (para. 11)

Combinations of up to two examination types are possible, if they do not exceed the total scope.

- (3) Suitable types of examination can be completed as a group project. Each candidate's contribution must meet the examination requirements and be clearly identifiable as an individual contribution based on sections, page numbers or other objective criteria and permit separate grading.
- (4) In a written examination [WE], the candidate must prove the ability to use subject-specific methods to identify a problem and find solutions given limited time and resources and under supervision. Written examination last between 90 and 120 minutes.
- (5) The oral examination [OE] is supervised by two examiners (collegial examination) or one examiner and one competent observer. Candidates may be examined individually or in a group of up to five students. The observer must be heard before final grading. An oral examination for modules with 5 or more credit points takes between 20 and 30 minutes for each candidate. For modules with less than 5 credit points or partial examinations, an oral examination takes between 15 and 20 minutes for each candidate. The main subjects of the examination and the grade must be recorded in a written report, which must be signed by any attending examiners and observers.
- (6) A term paper [TP] is an independently written study of a subject related to the module or a related concrete question that refers to the relevant literature and follows academic principles.
- (7) An oral presentation [OP] comprises:
 1. An independently written paper on a subject-specific or interdisciplinary task based on academic principles
 2. The oral presentation of the paper and communication of results (usually 10 to 20 minutes)
 3. A discussion based on the lecture and paper; the examiner must state the deadline in the assignment
- (8) Group projects [GP] usually test teamwork skills, especially the ability to develop, implement and present concepts. Candidates must demonstrate their ability to define goals and develop interdisciplinary solutions and concepts. Each candidate's individual contribution to a group project must be clearly recognizable and assessable.
- (9) A digital presentation [DP] of theoretical or practical findings in front of an audience usually comprises:
 1. The description and delimitation of the task

2. The development a theory base for academic treatment of the assignment, esp. selection of suitable methods and the consultation and evaluation of relevant literature
3. Formulation and presentation of the result using relevant, subject-specific forms of presentation
4. Documentation of work effort, methods and sources

A digital presentation should take between 20 and 30 minutes. Written handouts may be created to support the presentation, if this does not impair the active nature of the presentation.

(10) A media project [MP] is a comprehensive journalistic product which can be created in practical or project-based modules. Possible forms include reports, documentaries, brochures etc. in printed or electronic format.

(11) A portfolio (Pf) is a collection of tasks whose scope is defined in advance and which are graded collectively. The lecturer must define and communicate the type and scope of the tasks and practical examination procedures at the beginning of the course and include them in the course description. The portfolio grade is the average of the individual task grades.

§ 10 Module examinations

- (1) Module examinations aim to determine whether the student masters the essential content and methods of the taught subjects and is able to independently apply the acquired knowledge and skills.
- (2) Module examinations can consist of separate partial examinations. Candidates must pass all partial examinations to complete the module. Grades for the partial examinations are weighted equally.
- (3) The module "Media, Education and Communication" is weighted 60/40 between the courses "Media Literacy" (60) and "Intercultural Communication and Competence" (40).
- (4) The module examinations are listed in the Study Schedule (Annex 1).
- (6) Module examinations are graded.
- (6) A module examination is offered once per semester. A module examination can be repeated every semester.
- (7) The examination language is English.
- (8) The Examination Board determines the form, language and scope of the module examinations in consultation with the examiners and announces the decision at the beginning of the semester on the notice board and/or on the Internet (§ 13 para. 5).
- (9) Students have to produce different types of media formats for their media projects. The offered formats are audio, video, printed and online. The heads of the degree programme publish the available media projects on the notice board at the beginning of each semester, and students can sign up.
- (10) Unless a candidate objects, students of the master's degree programme may request to watch the oral examinations; audience space may be limited. The examiners' consultation and announcement of results to the candidates is not public, however.

§ 11 Pass/fail assessment

- (1) Modules may also complete with a pass/fail assessment. The required pass/fail assessments are listed in the Study Schedule (Annex 1).

(2) Pass/fail assessments are not graded under § 12 but are either passed or failed. To receive a "pass" assessment, the candidate must at least "meet the requirements despite individual errors". A failed assessment can be repeated indefinitely.

(3) Pass/fail assessments can consist of independent partial assessments. In this case, students must pass all partial assessments to pass the module.

(4) Pass/fail assessments may close with the same examination types as graded modules. The lecturer specifies the examination types in advance and announces it to the students no later than the first two weeks of the course. It is sufficient to post the announcement on the notice board. The time allowed for pass/fail examinations may be less than for graded modules. Unless the course ends with an oral examination (collegial examination, § 9 para. 5), pass/fail assessments and partial assessments can be taken by one single examiner.

(5) If a pass/fail course ends with a written examination, students must register in advance as per § 13 para. 1.

§ 12 Grading of examinations

- (1) Module examinations, the master's thesis and the colloquium must receive differentiated grades. Grading must be transparent. The following grading scheme applies:

Grading scheme (100 points max.)		
Points		Grade
from	to (and including)	
0	49.5	5.0
50	54.5	4.0
55	59.5	3.7
60	64.5	3.3
65	69.5	3.0
70	74.5	2.7
75	79.5	2.3
80	84.5	2.0
85	89.5	1.7
90	94.5	1.3
95	100	1.0

- (2) Multiple examiners must jointly grade the total result. If their grades differ, the final result is the arithmetic mean of their grades.
- (3) Examiners must use the following grades for examinations:

very good	1	Excellent achievement
good	2	Achievement significantly exceeding the average requirements
satisfactory	3	Achievement meeting the average requirements
sufficient	4	Achievement that still meets requirements despite errors
unsatisfactory	5	Achievement with significant errors that fails to meet requirements

Examiners may further differentiate grades in steps of 0.3. However, the grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are excluded.

- (4) Decimal numbers correspond to the following grades:

up to 1.5	very good
above 1.5 to	2.5 good
above 2.5 to 3.5	satisfactory
above 3.5 to 4.0	sufficient
above 4.0	unsatisfactory

Only the first decimal place is considered; all further decimals are dropped without rounding.

- (5) Students must achieve a minimum grade of "sufficient" (4.0) to pass a graded examination.
- (6) Students must be informed of the grades on their written examinations, elaborations and discussions within six weeks. It is sufficient to post the announcement on the notice board. Students must be informed of the grade on their master's thesis within eight weeks. If examiners

exceed these deadlines for announcing the grades, they must inform the dean in writing about the reasons for this delay.

- (7) Students usually receive the results from the colloquium or oral examinations immediately after the examination, in any case before the end of the examination day.

§ 13 Applications, registration and deregistration, module examinations

- (1) Students must register for module examinations independently. Module examinations take place within a period set by the Examination Board, which is announced at the beginning of the semester or at the end of the preceding semester.
- (2) Only students enrolled at H-BRS or cross-registered students may be admitted to module examinations.
- (3) The Examination Board decides about the admission of doubtful cases to examinations.
- (4) In addition, students who have finally lost the right of admission to examinations in the jurisdiction of the German Basic Law or at a partner university in the same or an equivalent degree programme may be denied admission to examinations. Admission is denied if the student has finally failed a corresponding examination or master's examination in the same, a related or a comparable degree programme.
- (5) The chairperson of the Examination Board announces the following information to the students before the examination:
 1. Name of the examination course, examination type, language and duration: at least 2 weeks before the examination
 2. Name of the candidates: at least 2 weeks before the examination
 3. Date and time: at least 2 weeks before the examination
 4. Place: at least 2 weeks before the examination

It is sufficient to post the announcement on the notice board.

- (6) Students must register for module examinations within the registration period announced by the department. They must register online. Paper-based registration is permissible only in exceptional cases. Registration after the registration deadline is not possible.
- (7) Students can withdraw from an examination electronically up to one week before the examination date at the latest. In exceptional cases, students can withdraw from an examination in writing. This does not affect the validity of §15 para. 2.
- (8) Students must present official identification at the request of the examiner or supervisor.
- (9) If the student is unable to complete a part or all of the coursework in the intended form due to permanent physical disability, the Examination Board may allow them to complete equivalent coursework in a different form. The examination conditions must be designed to best compensate for any disadvantages of disabled candidates. Sentences 1 and 2 may also apply exceptionally in case of temporary disability.

§ 14 Repetition of module examinations

- (1) A failed module examination can be repeated twice. A module examination with a grade of "sufficient" (4.0) or higher cannot be repeated.
- (2) A module examination can be repeated every semester.

- (3) If the student has finally failed an examination (third attempt) or if the master's thesis or the colloquium was finally graded lower than sufficient (4.0), the student is exmatriculated.
- (4) Examinations which lead to exmatriculation if failed must be graded by at least two examiners.

§ 15 Absence, withdrawal, cheating, misconduct, appeals

- (1) An examination is graded as "unsatisfactory" if the student fails to appear or withdraws after the beginning of the examination without good reason or does not complete the examination within the specified time. The same applies if the student fails to submit the master's thesis on time.
- (2) The student must report and substantiate their reasons for the withdrawal or absence to the Examination Board immediately in writing. If the student is unable to take the examination due to illness, the proof is usually a medical certificate stating that the student is unable to take the examination. This certificate must also give reasons for any delayed withdrawal from the examination due to illness, especially if the student withdraws after entering the examination room. If the Examination Board accepts the reasons, the student is deemed to not have taken the examination and can register for it again.
- (3) A medical certificate confirming the student's inability to take the examination due to illness is sufficient proof, unless there are sufficient indications that the student is actually able to take the examination, or which make it reasonable to demand an alternative type of proof. If such indications exist, H-BRS may request a medical certificate from a trusted physician at its own expense; the student must be able to choose between several trusted physicians. A regular sick note (*Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung*) is not permitted as proof.
- (4) If a candidate attempts to influence the result of his examination by cheating or using inadmissible aids, the examination is graded as "unsatisfactory" (5.0). Candidates who disturb the examination may, after due warning by the supervisor, be excluded from the examination. In this case, the examination is graded as "unsatisfactory" (5.0). The reasons for the candidate's removal must be recorded. A candidate who is excluded from an examination can appeal to the Examination Board to review this decision. The same applies to decisions under sentence 1.
- (5) Cheating in a written examination in the sense of para. 4 refers in particular to cases where a candidate does not independently create their work or separate contribution to a group project or fails to list all sources and aids (plagiarism). Possession of prohibited aids during the examination is also considered cheating. Prohibited aids may include mobile phones or other mobile devices. Depositing aids in the vicinity of the examination room (toilets, hallways, staircases) is also considered cheating. The *prima facie* principle applies; i.e., apparent attempts will be sanctioned on the first impression unless proven otherwise.
- (6) Students must immediately notify the examiner and the chairperson of the Examination Board of any errors in the examination procedure. If, in individual cases, the candidate cannot be reasonably expected to immediately report the error, they must report errors
 - by March 31 of the year in which the winter semester ends for the first examination date of the winter semester and by May 31 of that year for the second examination date
 - by September 30 of the same year for the first examination date of the summer semester and for the second examination date by November 30 of the same year. The report must be written and state reasons.

After these deadlines, the student can no longer appeal a decision (limitation period).

III Master's thesis and colloquium

§ 16 Purpose of the master's thesis, topic, examiners

- (1) The master's thesis is intended to show that the candidate is able to complete a practical task from their specialization independently within a specified period of time. This includes both subject-specific details and interdisciplinary issues. The student must work independently and follow academic and specialization-specific methods in line with the requirements of the degree programme. The master's thesis must be written in English. It must include an abstract of contents.
- (2) The master's thesis may be theoretical, applied or empirical:
 - Theoretical master's theses mainly focus on academic discussions surrounding a particular topic and treat it based primarily on theoretical/academic criteria
 - Applied master's theses focus on a practical or practice-related problem or an applied issue
 - Empirical master's theses use empirical methods to find a solution to a question
- (3) The master's thesis can be assigned and supervised by any examiner who meets the requirements of § 8 para. 1. The candidate may also request an adjunct professor or a designated lecturer under § 8 para. 1 to be appointed as supervisor, if it is determined that the intended topic of the master's thesis cannot be supervised by a competent professor. With approval by the chairperson of the Examination Board, the master's thesis may be completed at an external institution, if sufficient supervision is provided.
- (4) The candidate may suggest an examiner to supervise the master's thesis. The candidate's suggestion should be taken into consideration.
- (5) The candidate has the right to suggest a topic. Upon request, the chairperson of the examination board ensures that the candidate receives a topic for their master's thesis on time.
- (6) If the candidate suffers from permanent physical impairment, § 4 para. 4 to 7 (compensation of disadvantages) applies accordingly.

§ 17 Admission to the master's thesis

- (1) To be admitted to the master's thesis, students must have completed the courses of the first year as stated in the study plan.
- (2) The application for admission must be submitted electronically or in writing to the chairperson of the relevant examination board. The following documents must be enclosed with the application, unless they have been submitted earlier:
 1. Proof of admission requirements mentioned in para. 1
 2. A declaration designating the examiners willing to supervise the master's thesis
 3. The topic of the master's thesis the examiners intend to assign

Candidates may withdraw their application in writing and without reasons until the announcement of the Examination Board's decision without this having any effect on the number of permitted attempts to pass the examination.

- (4) The Examination Board decides on admissions. Admission must be denied if either:
 1. The requirements in para. 1 are not fulfilled
 2. The documents are incomplete
 3. The candidate has finally failed a module examination under § 14

In case 2, the Examination Board must request the complete documents before reaching a final decision.

§ 18 Assignment and completion of the master's thesis

- (1) The chairperson of the Examination Board assigns the master's thesis topic. The assignment date is the day on which the chairperson of the examination board announces the topic assigned by the supervisor as well as the examiners to the candidate; this date and the topic of the thesis must be recorded.
- (2) The time from assignment to submission of the thesis is four months. The topic and the task assignment must be chosen to permit completion of the master's thesis within this period. In exceptional cases, the chairperson of the Examination Board may extend the period by up to four weeks, if the candidate requests this extension before the submission deadline. The supervisor must be heard on this request.
- (3) The target length of the master's thesis is 80 A4 pages in the format specified by the Examination Board.
- (4) The topic of the master's thesis can only be changed once and only in the first four weeks after the assignment date. If the candidate is repeating the master's thesis, this option is only permissible, if the candidate did not change the topic during the first attempt.
- (5) § 13 para. 9 applies accordingly in case the candidate suffers from permanent physical disability.

§ 19 Submission and grading of the master's thesis, repetition

- (1) Three printed and bound copies of the master's thesis must be submitted to the chairperson of the Examination Board and to the supervising examiner via the Examinations Office (*Prüfungsekretariat*) of Department 03. If the thesis is submitted by post, the date of the incoming mail stamp must be no later than the final submission date. The time of receipt must be recorded and reported to the central Examinations Office (*Prüfungsservice*). Along with the master's thesis, the student must submit the signed declaration in Annex 3 stating that they have independently created their thesis or separate contribution to a group project and cited all sources and aids. The student must also declare that there is no content overlap with a final thesis written for a previous degree programme. A digital version of the thesis must be enclosed with each hard copy.
- (2) The master's thesis must be graded by two examiners in the sense of § 8; one of these must be the supervisor. The second examiner is determined by the Examination Board; in case of § 16 para. 3, this must be a staff professor. If the examiners' grades differ but are less than 2.0 grade points apart, the grade of the master's thesis is the arithmetic mean of both grades. If the difference is 2.0 grade points or more, a third examiner is appointed by the Examination Board. In this case, the grade of the master's thesis is the arithmetic mean of those two grades with the smallest difference; if the difference is the same between all grades, the final grade is the arithmetic mean of the three grades. However, the master's thesis may only be graded as "sufficient" (4.0) or better, if at least two of the grades are "sufficient" (4.0) or better.
- (3) All grades must be substantiated in writing.
- (4) Candidates may repeat a failed master's thesis once. A master's thesis with a passing grade cannot be repeated. If the master's thesis is finally graded lower than "sufficient" (4.0), the student is exmatriolated.

§ 20 Colloquium

- (1) The colloquium adds on to the master's thesis and serves to establish whether the candidate is able to orally present and independently justify the findings and academic foundations, interdisciplinary relationships and wider implications and to assess their practical relevance. The candidate's work on the thesis topic should also be discussed.
- (2) For admission to the colloquium, candidates must
 1. prove the prerequisites for admission to the master's thesis under § 17 and
 2. have passed all module examinations and pass/fail assessments listed in the study schedule, including the master's thesis.
- (3) The request for admission must be sent to the Examination Board. The request must include proof of the admission requirements under para. 2, if not already submitted to the Examination Board; additionally, declarations on previous attempts at master's examinations and on approval or rejection of listeners must be included. The request for admission to the colloquium can also be submitted along with the request for admission to the master's thesis (§ 17). In this case, the Examination Board admits the candidate to the colloquium as soon as it has received all supporting documents. The conditions for denied admission to the master's thesis in § 17 para. 4 apply accordingly to the colloquium.
- (4) The colloquium is an oral exam (§ 9 para. 5) and is usually supervised and assessed jointly by the examiners of the master's thesis. In the case of § 19 para. 2 sentence 4, the colloquium is supervised by the examiners whose individual grades make up the final grade of the master's thesis. The provisions for oral module examinations apply accordingly to the colloquium.
- (5) The colloquium can be repeated once. A colloquium with a passing grade cannot be repeated. If the colloquium is finally graded lower than "sufficient" (4.0), the student is exmatriculated.

IV Result of the master's examination

§ 21 Result of the final examination

- (1) Candidates pass the final examination after earning grades of "sufficient" (4.0) or higher in all module examinations, the master's thesis and the colloquium.
- (2) Candidates fail the final examination, if one of the assessments in para. 1 is finally graded as "unsatisfactory" or is considered to have been graded as such. In case a student fails the final examination or loses of the right to take the examination, the central Examinations Office issues an official notice with a legal notice and a transcript of records. Candidates may request that the chairperson of the Examination Board issue a certificate of their earned course credit and grades and the courses still required to complete the master's examination. The certificate must show that the candidate has finally failed the master's examination or has lost the right to take the examination.

§ 22 Transcript, total grade, certificate, diploma supplement

- (1) The transcript of the successful master's examination includes the grades and credit points of the completed study modules, the master's thesis, the topic of the master's thesis and the total grade of the final examination. Additional coursework will be reflected in the grade transcript.
- (2) The total grade of the master's examination is the non-rounded result of the average module grades weighted by credit points as per Annex 1 (Study Schedule) and the grade for the master's thesis and colloquium. The following weighted percentages apply:

Grade of master's thesis	20%
Grade of colloquium	5%
Grades of module examinations	75%

Only the first decimal place goes into the total grade; all other decimals are dropped without rounding. Along with the transcript of records, the diploma supplement shows the relative grade, which shows the rank of the student's total grade compared to the overall distribution of final grades over the three preceding years. Hence, the relative grade shows the distribution of achieved final grades for the degree programme.

(3) The transcript for the completed final examination must be issued within four weeks after completion of the last examination.

(4) The transcript must be signed by the chairperson of the Examination Board. The transcript shows the date of the day on which the last examination was completed.

(5) The master's certificate is issued with the same date as the transcript and handed over along with it. It is official proof of the academic title "Master of Arts" (M.A.) and completion of the "International Media Studies" master's programme. The certificate is signed by the dean and bears the seal of the Bonn-Rhine-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

(6) Along with the transcript, H-BRS hands over a diploma supplement to the graduate. The diploma supplement is signed by the chairperson of the examination board and bears the same date as the certificate.

(7) The candidate can request a written assessment recognizing their academic and research achievements as well as their personal commitment to the design and implementation of the programme.

V Final provisions

§ 23 Access to examination records

(1) After completion of the examination procedure, the student may contact the Examinations Office to request access to their written examinations, the assessments given by the examiners and the examination reports.

(2) Students must apply to the Examinations Office for access to their records within one month after receiving their master's certificate or notification of their failed final examination. § 32 of the Administrative Procedure Act for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (*VwVfG NRW*) on restitution to the original condition applies accordingly. The Examinations Office determines the time and place at which the student is granted access.

(3) If a student requests access to records for a particular module examination, they must be granted access within one month after the examiner has announced the examination result. Para. 2 applies accordingly for this request.

(4) Students are permitted to make a copy or other faithful reproduction of the examination record.

§ 24 Invalidity of examinations

(1) If the student cheats in an examination, and if this fact becomes known only after they receive their transcript or certificate under § 22 para. 5, 6, the Examination Board can retroactively correct the grades for those examinations in which the student cheated, and the final examination can be declared fully or partially failed.

(2) If a student fails to meet the requirements for admission to an examination but has no intention of concealing this fact, and if this becomes known only after the transcript or certificate under § 22 para. 5, 6 has been awarded, the student's successful completion of the examination remedies this failure. If the student has intentionally obtained wrongful admission, the Examination Board decides on the legal consequences under consideration of the Administrative Procedure Act for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (*VwVfG NRW*).

(3) The incorrect examination transcript or the incorrect certificate under § 22 para. 5, 6 must be revoked and, if necessary, issued again. A decision under para. 1 and para. 2 sentence 2 can only be made within five years after issue of the examination transcript or certificate under § 22 para. 5, 6.

§ 25 Entry into force and publication

These Examination Regulations are officially published by H-BRS in *Amtliche Bekanntmachungen der Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg* and enter into force on the day after their official publication.

These Examination Regulations apply to all students who enrol for the "International Media Studies" master's programme starting from the 2020/21 winter semester.

Issued based on the decision of the Departmental Council of the Department of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Technical Journalism of 5 December 2022.

Sankt Augustin, 5 December 2022

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Johannes Geilen

Dean of the Department of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Technical Journalism at Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences / *Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg* (H-BRS)

Annex 1: Study Schedule

Module	Course	CT	Examination	1st	CP	2nd	CP	3rd	CP	4th	CP	
Media and Development	Comparative Media Systems	L		2								
	Media and Development Cooperation	L	ME	2	6							
	Academic Work	E		1								
Media, Education and Communication	Media Education	S	PME	4	6							
	Intercultural Communication and Competence	E	PME	2								
Media, Politics and Society I	Political Communication	L		2								
	Media Ethics	L	ME	1	6							
	Media Law	L		1								
	Media and Globalization	S		1								
Journalism	Journalism Theory	S		1								
	Forms of Journalistic Writing	S	ME	2	6							
	Research	S		2								
Media Economics	General Media Economics	L	ME	3	6							
	Media Organization	S		1								
Media Practice	Media Project I	P (block)	P/F			3	4					
Media, Politics and Society II	Media Concentration and Media Governance	L	ME			3	6					
	Media in Conflict and Crisis Situations	E				3						
Media and Communication Science	Media and Communication Science	L				2						
	Empirical Methods I	L	ME			2	8					
	Research Seminar Empirical Methods I	S				2						
	New Media and Media Convergence	S				2						
Media Management	Controlling	S				2						
	Human Resource Management	S	ME			2	8					
	Marketing/Public Relations	S				2						
Elective I (1 out of x) e.g.	Media Project II											
	Environmental Communication NGO Management	P (block)	P/F			3	4					
Elective II (1 out of x) e.g.	Media Project III											
	Environmental Communication NGO Management	P (block)	P/F					3	4			
Management Techniques	Editorial Management	S						2				
	Project Management	S	ME					2	8			
	Media Planning	S						2				
Project Work	Project Work	P (block)	ME					2	6			
Empirical Methods II	Advanced Empirical Methods	L						2				
	Research Practice	E	ME					1	6			
	Research Evaluation and Presentation	E						1				
Applied Research Projects	Master's Seminar	S	PP/F					2	6			
	Methodology Workshop	E	PP/F					2				
Master's Thesis + Colloquium	Master's Thesis Colloquium									2	30	
Final Master's Examination												
Updated: April 2015		Total CP: 120			25	30	26	30	19	30	2	30

Annex 2: Curriculum

1st semester	2nd semester	3rd semester	4th semester
<p>Media and Development (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative Media Systems 2 SCH Media and Development Cooperation 2 SCH Academic Work 1 SCH 	<p>Media Practice (4 CP)</p> <p>Media Project I 3 SCH</p>	<p>Elective II (1 out of x) (4 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Project III 3 SCH Environmental Communication 3 SCH NGO Management 3 SCH 	<p>Master's Thesis</p> <p>+</p> <p>Colloquium</p>
<p>Media, Education and Communication (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Education 4 SCH Intercultural Communication and Competence 2 SCH 	<p>Media, Politics and Society II (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Concentration and Media Governance 3 SCH Media in Conflict and Crisis Situations 1 SCH 	<p>Management Techniques (8 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorial Management 2 SCH Project Management 2 SCH Media Planning 2 SCH 	
<p>Media, Politics and Society I (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Communication 2 SCH Media Ethics 1 SCH Media Law 1 SCH Media and Globalization 1 SCH 	<p>Media and Communication Science (8 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media and Communication Science 2 SCH Empirical Methods I 2 SCH Research Seminar Empirical Methods 2 SCH New Media and Media Convergence 2 SCH 	<p>Project Work (6 CP)</p> <p>Project Work 2 SCH</p>	
<p>Journalism (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journalism Theory 1 SCH Forms of Journalistic Writing 2 SCH Research 2 SCH 	<p>Media Management (8 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlling 2 SCH Human Resource Management 2 SCH Marketing / Public Relations 2 SCH 	<p>Empirical Methods II (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Empirical Methods 2 SCH Research Practice 1 SCH Research Evaluation and Presentation 1 SCH 	
<p>Media Economics (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Media Economics 3 SCH Media Organization 1 SCH 	<p>Elective I (1 out of x) (4 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Project II 3 SCH Environmental Communication 3 SCH NGO Management 3 SCH 	<p>Applied Research Projects (6 CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master's Seminar 2 SCH Methodology Workshop 2 SCH 	

Annex 3: Declaration template for master's thesis

Declaration on the Master's Thesis

"I hereby declare that I this thesis is my own work. Any passages taken literally or analogously from other published or unpublished works are indicated as such. Any sources and aids used for this paper have been referenced appropriately. The same content or significant parts of this thesis have not been presented to any other examination authority.

I am aware that the university reserves the right to check my work for plagiarized content and that finding plagiarized content can result in the thesis becoming invalid, the degree being revoked and myself being exmatriculated."

Place and date

Signature

Annex 4: Explanations on the selection and admission procedure

Admission is subject to the formal requirements of § 3 as well as an assessment of the applicant's individual aptitude by an Admissions Committee (§ 3 para. 6, § 7 para. 9, 10). Details on the process and procedure:

1. Admission requirements

(1) The admission requirements are:

- A first university degree
- Relevant professional experience after the first degree amounting to at least one year
- To prove their linguistic aptitude for the master's programme, applicants must provide proof of at least C1-level English skills according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)
- Applicants with a university entrance qualification completed in the area of the CEFR which lists English language skills at C1 level do not need to provide separate proof
- Applicants who can provide a valid university entrance qualification completed in English are considered to have provided proof of C1-level English skills
- Sentences 2 and 3 apply accordingly to university degrees
- A written cover letter (*statement of purpose*) in English
- A CV in English

(2) Applicants must apply and submit their required and supporting documents to H-BRS online. Required and supporting documents must be uploaded on the application portal. Applicants who have failed an examination required by the Examination Regulations in a comparable, related or equivalent degree programme are not admitted.

2. Transparency of the application procedure

(1) The application documents, especially the cover letter and the CV, reflect the applicant's personality. They support the formal application documents and give insight into the applicant's personal and professional development.

(2) If possible, the application documents are supplemented by a personal telephone interview. The formal admission requirements and the individual aptitude review are sufficient preconditions to considering a candidate for admission to the IMS degree programme.

3. Aptitude review

(1) The formal admission requirements are supplemented by an individual aptitude review carried out by an Admissions Committee. This aptitude review covers a) the applicant's ability and motivation, b) media-specific and international experience, c) knowledge of media and development cooperation and d) prior publications or references.

(2) The aptitude review is based on the submitted documents and may be supplemented by a telephone interview with the candidate.

(3) The quality of the candidate's individual suitability criteria is documented in an assessment sheet.

The individual aspects of the aptitude review are:

a) Qualifications and motivation

The written application for the degree programme (statement of purpose) should explain the candidate's qualifications and motivation for the degree programme and present them in a

personal and professionally comprehensible manner. In addition to journalistic and media-related aspects, this also includes the candidate's focus on a career in media and development cooperation.

b) Media-related and international experience

Given the international demands of the study programme, the candidate must have intercultural skills.

Hence, potential students are expected to have an open approach to developments in journalism, media policy and the media business, especially in media and development cooperation. Prior immersion in a particular media field or broad and diverse experiences with various types of media or media-related professions (PR, ministries, NGOs, etc.) can all be beneficial. Applicants' professional experience should amount to at least one calendar year; equivalent freelance or part-time work is also counted. Professional experience preceding the first university degree is not recognized.

c) Knowledge of media and development cooperation

The "International Media Studies" programme is supported by Deutsche Welle and its international media and development cooperation efforts. Applicants with prior experience in this field are welcome, as their expected careers after graduation align with the programme's guiding principle.

d) Publications or references

Publications and special personal and/or professional qualifications (e.g., social, cultural or political activities) are considered in the aptitude review.

4. Phone interview

If possible and necessary, applicants should be contacted for a personal phone interview in which they can personally demonstrate their aptitude for the degree programme.

The impression and results of the phone interview are documented.

5. Transparency of the admission procedure

(1) Formal and individual factors ensure transparency in the admission procedure. The formal requirements consist of the application documents and the formal minimum requirements. The individual requirements consist of the aptitude review described above, which is documented in an assessment sheet.

(2) The final admission decision for the master's programme in International Media Studies is made after all applicants have been reviewed and once the total number of applicants is known. The Admissions Committee completes an assessment sheet for each applicant, which closes with a qualitative assessment and a final statement.

(3) Rejected applicants may be offered the opportunity to discuss their decision outcome and learn about alternative study programmes.