

**Examination Regulations for the**  
Degree Programme  
**‘Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems (MA)’**  
at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences (H-BRS),  
issued on

**26 March 2015**

**as amended by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Regulation of 22 August 2019**

By virtue of Article 2 paragraph 4 and Article 64 paragraph 2<sup>1</sup> of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG) of 16 September 2014 (GV.NRW, page 547), amended by Article 9 of the Public Services Modernisation Law for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia of 14 June 2016 (GV.NRW, page 310), the Department of Social Policy and Social Security Studies at Campus Hennef of the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences (henceforth referred to as ‘Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University’, ‘H-BRS’) has issued the following Examination Regulations for the programme of study leading to the degree of ‘Master of Arts in Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems’:

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the German § symbol has been rendered as ‘Article’ throughout. What is referred to as ‘Absatz’ in the German ‘Prüfungsordnung’, has been termed ‘paragraph’ in the English translation. (Translator’s comment)

<sup>1</sup> Please note that this document is a translation of the German ‘Masterprüfungsordnung für den Studiengang ‘Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems’ from 12 December 2017’. Only the German source text is legally binding.

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## **I. General provisions**

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

These Examination Regulations shall apply to all examination matters including the final examination for the Master's degree programme '*Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems*' at Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University, as set out in Article 64 paragraph 2 of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (henceforth abbreviated as HG).

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

(1) In accordance with the general study objectives set out in Article 58 HG, the study programme leading to the Master's examination shall 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. Above and beyond this, the Master's degree programme shall provide students with the opportunity to specialise and to gain in-depth scientific insights into social protection.

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

(3) Having passed their Master's examination, students shall be awarded the international academic degree of 'Master of Arts 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 earlier course of study. Additional state regulations concerning admission shall remain unaffected by this regulation. In general, admission shall be granted to students who completed a Bachelor's degree in business administration, economics, politics, law, administration, health, education, social science, psychology, and international relations / 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. The Admissions Committee consists of the heads of the degree programme, the chairperson of the Examination Board and an additional member of the Examination Board from the ranks of professors who is appointed by the Examination Board.

(2) Upon request, degrees acquired in study programmes offered by state-run or state-approved universities abroad shall be officially recognised insofar as the skills acquired within the earlier degree programme do not differ considerably from those tested in the examinations substituted. The applicant is responsible for providing the requisite information on the degree to be recognised. The burden of proof for ensuring that a request under the terms of sentence 1 meets the requirements for admission lies with the Admissions Committee.

When examining whether degrees are eligible for recognition, the Admissions Committee may, in individual cases, deviate from the suggestions made by the Centre for International Education (Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen, ZAB).

(3) A prerequisite to be admitted to the Master's programme is a Bachelor's degree worth 180 credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

(4) 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 as a proof of language-based ability to study. Applicants who can provide proof of a university entrance qualification obtained within the CEFR validity area which shows or includes English language skills at the C1 level are exempt from the obligation to provide a separate proof on English language skills. For applicants holding an English-language school leaving certificate qualifying them for studying at H-BRS, the proof of C1-level English language skills is considered provided with the submission of the English-language school leaving certificate. The accepted tests and the required points are available as a PDF file at the department website: [https://www.h-brs.de/files/english\\_test\\_equivalents\\_fb06.pdf](https://www.h-brs.de/files/english_test_equivalents_fb06.pdf).

(5) Besides submitting a degree certificate as set out in paragraphs 1 and 3, students who wish to be admitted to the Master's programme 'Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems' 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 case of doubts, the applicant must provide proof of his or her professional experience in the area of social protection.

(6) 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 he or she possesses the programme-related aptitude which makes it reasonable to expect that the course objective will be achieved. The subject examination takes 2 hours to complete, is conducted online and ends with a signed declaration that the candidate has taken the subject examination personally and without outside help. The subject examination is conducted by an examiner who is appointed by the admissions committee. The admissions committee shall regulate the details of the procedure.

(7) If an applicant has irrevocably failed an examination required by the examination regulations in the chosen course of study at a higher education institution within the area of application of the Basic Law, enrolment shall be refused. This shall apply also to programmes of study which have a considerable proximity to the previous programme of study in terms of content. The examination board decides on the considerable proximity in 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 4 semesters, including the practical semester and the Master's thesis. An early completion of studies is possible if the required achievements are proven and recognised.

(2) The course of study is an English-language course of study. Tuition and examinations are conducted in English.

(3) The study programme consists of modules. These have been awarded credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), 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. The structure of the study programme (compulsory modules and electives) has been determined in Module Catalogue A (cf. Appendix). Students shall choose their electives at the latest when they re-register for the second semester.

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

(1) The Master's examination in the degree programme 'Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems' consists of examinations that accompany the 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 (cf. Appendix) shall ensure that students can take all examinations that accompany the studies by the end of their second study semester.

## **Article 6 – Recognition of 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 study programmes at state-run or state-approved universities abroad shall be officially recognised insofar as the skills acquired do not differ considerably from those tested in the examinations substituted. Examinations passed in other degree programmes offered by Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University shall be assessed as being equivalent to those taken at other universities. The aim of recognition under the terms of sentences 1 to 2 is to continue the degree programme, to pass examinations or to enrol in another degree programme.

(2) The Examination Board is responsible for conducting the examination procedure. It decides on recognition – in the event of doubt, after having heard the examiners.

(3) The student who submits a request for recognition of qualifications is responsible for providing the requisite information on the exam to be recognised. 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 accordance with paragraph 3.

(5) In accordance with the official recognition criteria set out in paragraph 1 and on the student's request, Bonn-Rhein-Sieg 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 next 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, he or she 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, other skills and qualifications 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.

(8) Students have the opportunity to complete modules or partial modules at a partner university or institution based on partnership agreements between Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University and other higher-education establishments, research institutes, institutes affiliated to the university or other institutes offering seminar contents comparable to universities, or based on partnerships between Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University's departments. Students shall submit their requests for admission to the Examination Board at the latest six weeks prior to enrolling in the external study programme 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.

## **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 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 taken. Assessors must have the same qualification or a qualification that is considered equivalent to the one assessed in the examination (competent assessor, i.e. German 'sachkundiger(r) Beisitzer/-in').

(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 the Master's thesis. The Examination Board shall ensure that the duties involved in conducting the examination are equally divided 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 Social Policy and Social Security Studies shall assume the duties assigned by these Examination Regulations. The Examination Board is an independent examination body of the 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,
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 chair and the deputy chair, 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 people elected by the departmental council from the same group.

(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 in accordance with Article 11 paragraph 4 and the consequences of breaches of the Examination Regulations. It is, in particular, responsible for making final determination on objections to decisions taken during the examination procedures. The Examination Board shall inform the departmental council of the development of the examinations and study periods. 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 the reform of 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 is equivalent to TOEFL (Article 3 paragraph 4),
2. Recognition and non-recognition of examinations taken (Article 6 paragraphs 2, 3 and 8),
3. Appointing and revoking the appointment of examiners (Article 7 paragraph 1),
4. Admission to participation in examinations in the event of doubt (Article 13 paragraph 3),
5. Admission to the Master's thesis (Article 19 paragraph 4),
6. Rendering examination performance in other than the prescribed form or extension of the time allowed due to a student's disability (Article 14 paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, Article 19 paragraph 5, Article 20 paragraph 2),
7. Giving permission to withdraw from examinations and requiring students to submit a public health officer's certificate in the event of withdrawal from examinations (Article 17, paragraph 3),
8. Approving mandatory elective course changes in case of a re-examination (Article 16, paragraph 4),
9. The specification of examination details, in particular of the examination form and allowed resources (Article 11 paragraph 3) insofar as the present Examination Regulations do not provide any binding specifications in this regard.

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

(4) The Examination Board shall have a quorum if, apart from its chairperson or deputy chairperson, a further member from the ranks of professors who are entitled to vote and at least two other members who are entitled to vote are present. It decides by a simple majority. In the event that the voting results in a tie, the chairperson (or, in case of his or her absence, the deputy chairperson) shall have the deciding vote. The student member shall not take part in the discussion about and the decision-making on matters relating to the determination of examination tasks or his or her own examination.

(5) The members of the Examination Board and a representative of the presidium are entitled to be present during examinations, with the exception of students who take 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 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 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 the chairperson's invitation, 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) Incriminating decisions taken by the Examination Board or its chairperson shall be communicated to the students concerned without delay. Prior to this procedure, students have the right to be heard.

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

## **Article 9 - Examinations Office**

(1) Within exam organisation, the Examinations Office is responsible for the following duties in particular:

1. maintaining and, if necessary, granting an inspection of the examination records in compliance with the instructions given by the chairperson of the Examination Board (as set out in Article 24 paragraph 2),
2. processing requests for and withdrawals from examinations,
4. notifying students about the granting of the admission and the drafting of lists for examinations, the practical period and the Master's thesis,
5. notifying students about the examination results,
6. issuing final grade reports, diplomas and diploma supplements.

## **II. Regulations as to the examination procedure**

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

(1) The examinations to be taken in the course of the Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems degree programme arise out of the study plan (Attachment 1). The latter also shows whether the examinations are graded or ungraded, the share of the examination grade in the overall grade (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 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 - 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 interrelations between the content and methods of the subjects in which the examinations are taken and whether he or she is able to independently apply the expertise and skills acquired.

(2) The examination requirements must be related to the content of the courses, as set out for each subject by the study plan included in the Module Catalogue (cf Appendix). 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, with sufficient time in advance and shall communicate them in writing at the latest two 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) The following types of examinations are allowed for modular examinations:

- a) Written tests 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 candidate. The duration of the exam must be announced prior to the examination. Minutes must be kept of the essential topics and results of the oral examination, in particular the facts relevant to grading. Subsequent to the oral examination, students shall be informed of their examination results.
- c) Examinations may also be taken in the form of projects, assignments, take-home exams, portfolios, shorter academic papers, presentations or case studies insofar as these examination types test students on the qualifications to be acquired. Examinations may also accompany lectures so long as they do not increase the students' workload.

(5) Electronic examinations and further specifics

- a) Examinations can be taken in electronic form. Electronic examinations (e-examinations) are examinations procedures the conduct and evaluation of which take place by means of 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 case of a failed examination) upon the affected student's request.
- c) A general instruction is performed before the first conduct of an electronic examination process during a course of study.
- d) The candidates must be given the possibility to inspect the computer-based examination as well as the result they attained.
- e) Otherwise, the corresponding provisions of these examination regulations continue to apply.

## Article 12 – Practical term

(1) A continuous practical activity of at least 12 weeks is integrated into the course of study. The practical term must be carried out at home or abroad in companies, administrations or other institutions (training facilities) that are recognised by the university. Generally, it is conducted during the third semester of study 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. 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 term shall strengthen the link between studies and practical experience. During its course, students should familiarise themselves with the realities of professional work and apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies to concrete tasks, which they must describe and evaluate. In addition to socio-political questions, the practical term shall provide insight to professional/work-related requirements.

(3) Admission to the practical term 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 15 paragraph 4, as stated in the curriculum.

(4) 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.

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

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

- preparatory courses for the internship semester, amounting to 5 ECTS, have been passed,
- the training facility certifies that the student has successfully finished his/her practical term,
- the student has prepared a self-authored internship report of approximately 5,000 words. The report shall describe the work during the internship, document the acquisition of competences and be embedded in academic discourse.

(7) If the practical term is interrupted for more than two weeks due to illness or other reasons, and therefore the purpose of the practical term is not or not completely achieved, the internship semester shall be extended accordingly. The member of the supervising teaching staff decides on the necessary duration of the extension. A retrospective change of the training place or a division of the practical semester into several parts after its commencement is only possible for important reasons (e.g. in the case of legitimate important reasons determined by legal regulations, such as the care of persons, provisions of the Maternity Protection Act as well as parental leave) and requires the agreement of the supervising teaching staff as well as the examination board.

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

### **Article 13 – Registration for and admission to examinations, de-registration**

(1) Students shall be admitted to and signed in to examinations without any special request if

- a) they have been admitted to their studies in accordance with Article 3,
- b) they meet the requirements for participation set out in the modular descriptions,
- c) they have not yet definitively failed a corresponding examination or corresponding preliminary or intermediate examination in the same, a related or comparable degree programme.

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

(3) In the event of doubt, the Examination Board shall decide on admission to examinations.

(4) De-registration from examinations is only possible in exceptional circumstances (cf Article 13). If a student does not take part in an examination for which he/she has registered or to which he/she has been admitted, the examination shall be assessed as failed. Article 16 paragraphs 1 and 2 shall remain unaffected by this regulation.

(5) On the examiner's or invigilators' request, students must submit an identity card and their student ID card.

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

### **Article 14 – Provisions concerning interests warranting protection**

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

(2) If, by submitting a medical certificate or by another means, a student plausibly shows that he or she is not capable of realizing his or her existing intellectual abilities as part of the examination form and thus to fully or partially provide his or her academic performance in the intended form or within the intended term, the chairperson of the Examination Board may allow the student to acquire qualifications in a different form, if it does not differ significantly from the form in which the qualification is usually acquired; also, the time allotted to the Master's thesis in accordance with Article 20 paragraph 2 may be extended.

(3) The examination conditions must be organised 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. In exceptional circumstances, sentences 1 to 2 shall also apply to short-term disability.

(4) In justified cases (e.g. bringing up children, nursing of people in need of care, severe disability, period abroad, involvement in the university's self-administration), the Examination Board may give its consent to modifying the schedule of studies.

## Article 15 – 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 examination results 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) Examinations which are aimed at completing a degree programme as well as re-examinations that cannot be re-taken again if they are definitively failed shall be assessed by a minimum of two examiners; in all other cases, a student's performance may be assessed by one examiner only. To conduct oral examinations, the Examination Board may appoint only one examiner. In this case, a competent assessor must be consulted; prior to the final grade being determined, the assessor must be heard by the examiner.

(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 <i>sehr gut</i> )	Outstanding performance
2	Good (i.e. German <i>gut</i> )	Performance significantly above average
3	Satisfactory (i.e. German <i>befriedigend</i> )	Average performance
4	Sufficient (i.e. German <i>ausreichend</i> )	Performance below average, but still meeting the requirements
5	Insufficient/Failed (i.e. German <i>mangelhaft</i> )	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; the grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are not permissible.

If grades are calculated by adding interim values, the computed values shall account for the following grades:

Interim value of up to 1.5	'very good' (i.e. German <i>sehr gut</i> )
Interim value of more than 1.5 up to 2.5	'good' (i.e. German <i>gut</i> )
Interim value of more than 2.5 up to 3.5	'satisfactory' (i.e. German <i>befriedigend</i> )
Interim value of more than 3.5 up to 4.0	'sufficient' (i.e. German <i>ausreichend</i> )
Interim value of more than 4.0	'insufficient/failed' (i.e. German <i>nicht ausreichend</i> )

Interim values are only taken into account with the first decimal place; all other places after the point 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, the final grade shall be determined by the arithmetic average of the individual grades if the difference between those two grades is less than 2.0. In this case, the examination is 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 appoints a further examiner. Subsequently, the worst grade is ignored. The final grade is the arithmetic average 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, a relative note in accordance with the ECTS Users' Guide, as amended from time to time, is formed.

### **Article 16 – Re-taking examinations (number of possible re-takes, counselling, mandatory elective course changes)**

(1) An examination that has not been passed may be re-taken twice. Article 21 paragraph 4 shall remain unaffected by this regulation.

(2) If a student has not passed an examination after the second attempt, he or she may, upon request, undergo counselling by one of the examiners who have conducted the second examination attempt. The purpose of this counselling is to find reasons for the failure in the student's performance and to identify means for improving the student's performance.

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

(4) Students who must repeat the examination in a mandatory elective course which is not offered in the following year may change their mandatory elective course upon an application to the Examination Board. The assessment of the first examination attempt remains unaffected. The application to the Examination Board is to be made by the student in writing and to be signed; in particular, the student must declare his or her explicit consent to the retention of the first examination attempt.

### **Article 17 – Non-attendance, withdrawal, cheating, breach of regulations, procedural reprimand**

(1) A student's performance in an examination shall be assessed as 'insufficient' (failed) if he or she does not attend the examination without good reason in spite of having registered, or if he or she does not deliver the required performance by the end of the examination. Sentence 1 shall apply accordingly if the student does not submit the Master's thesis in due time.

(2) The reasons brought forward to justify withdrawal or non-attendance shall be communicated and substantiated in writing to the Examination Board without delay. Students who are unable to sit an examination due to illness shall provide evidence of their illness-related inability to take part in the examination by submitting a sick note.

(1) If a student tries to influence the result of an examination by cheating or by using unauthorised resources, he or she will fail the examination. If a student disrupts the smooth running of an examination, the examiner or invigilator may exclude him or her from further participation in the examination; in this event, the entire examination will be considered as 'failed'. The reasons for excluding a student from an examination shall be documented. 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 as 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 grave attempts at cheating, students may also be removed from the students' register.

### **III. Master's thesis**

#### **Article 18 – Purpose of the Master's thesis, topic, examiners**

(1) The Master's thesis is a written assignment on a well-defined topic. It shall 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; using scientific as well as practice-oriented methods, the student shall complete the task with all its specialist details and its interdisciplinary relations. The topic and the task must be such that the Master's thesis can be completed within the period of time stipulated.

(2) The Master's thesis may be issued 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. By consent with the examiners and the Examination Board, it may also be written in any other language.

(4) The student shall independently work on a topic for the Master's thesis as part of a proposal. The proposal is a part of the examination in module 5, must be passed for the registration of the Master's thesis, and is commented upon by the examiners in module 5. If necessary, the Examination Board shall ensure upon request that the student is given a topic for the 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 it meets the requirements set out in paragraph 1.

#### **Article 19 – 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 46 ECTS credits from examinations taken in the first and second semesters
- b) passed module 5

(2) The request for admission shall be filed in writing with the Examinations Office, which will forward it to the Examination Board. The following documents must be attached to the request, insofar as they have not been submitted at an earlier date:

- a) a declaration stating which examiners are prepared to supervise the Master's thesis,
- b) details of the topic that the examiner intends to issue for the Master's thesis,
- c) documents confirming that the student meets the requirements for admission set out in paragraph 1.

(3) Prior to the Examination Board announcing its decision on the request for admission, the request may be withdrawn in writing without any reasons and without this having any effect on 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

- a) the requirements set out in paragraph 1 are not met or if
- b) the documents are incomplete.

(5) According to the study plan, the Master's thesis must be written during the fourth semester. Insofar as the requirements for the admission to the Master's thesis are met and the student has not registered for the Master's thesis on his or her own by the end of the seventh semester, he or she is registered for the Master's thesis for the eighth semester of programme study without any further action on his or her part. In this case, the topic and examiner are determined by the Examination Board unless the student proposes his or her own topic which is then approved by the Examination Board within four weeks of the automatic registration for the Master's thesis. In duly justified exceptional cases, the Examination Board can admit a later registration for the Master's thesis upon the student's justified request.

## **Article 20 – Administration and implementation of the Master's thesis, extension of the time allotted to the Master's thesis**

(1) The Examination Board is responsible for issuing the Master's thesis. The date on which the Examination Board notifies the student about the topic of the Master's thesis and the examiners is defined as the date of issue; the date shall be documented and communicated to the Examinations Office.

(2) The time allotted to the Master's thesis (i.e. the time period from the date of issue to the date on which the Master's thesis is submitted) is six months. In case of a Master's thesis of an empirical character, the allotted time can be extended by one month upon request. The empirical character of the thesis is decided upon by the chairperson of the Examination Board after hearing the supervisor appointed for the thesis. In exceptional circumstances, the Examination Board may extend the time allotted to the thesis by a maximum of four weeks; students must request such an extension prior to the deadline, specifying the reasons. The supervisor's opinion on the request shall be heard. Students who want to have this period extended due to illness must provide evidence of being unable to work on the thesis by attaching a sick note to the request in accordance with Article 17 paragraph 2.

(3) The standard length of the Master's thesis is 80 A4 pages (according to the German Industrial Standard - DIN) in the form stipulated by the Examination Board.

(4) Students may, without stating the reasons, reject the topic of the Master's thesis only once and only within the first four weeks of working on the thesis. In the event of a student re-taking the examination, this procedure shall only allowed if the student has not exercised the option of rejecting the topic when completing the first thesis.

## **Article 21 - Submission and assessment of the Master's thesis, submission of a new thesis**

(1) The Master's thesis shall be uploaded in digital form via the learning platform provided for the study programme. When submitting the thesis, the student must provide a written declaration in lieu of an oath that he or she has produced the thesis independently, using no sources and resources other than those stated. Furthermore, he or she shall declare that the thesis has no topical overlap with a thesis carried out in an earlier degree programme or another academic 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 them must have supervised the thesis. Students have the right to propose the second examiner, who shall be appointed by the Examination Board. Article 7 paragraph 4 shall remain unaffected. If the first examiner is not a (honorary) university professor in the cases set out in Article 18 paragraph 2, the second examiner must be a (honorary) professor. One of the examiners shall be an employee of the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.

(3) Students must be notified about the assessments within 6 weeks of having submitted the Master's thesis. If the examiners disagree in their assessments, the grade for the Master's thesis shall be determined based on the arithmetic average of the individual grades if the difference between the two grades is below 2.0. 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 person. In this case, the arithmetic average of the two grades that deviate the least from each other shall account for the final grade; if the differences between the three grades are the same, the overall grade shall be based on the arithmetic average 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 assessment must be accounted for in written form.

(4) A new Master's thesis may be submitted once, otherwise the Master's thesis shall be definitively failed. If a Master's thesis has been awarded a pass, it is not possible to submit a new thesis.

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

### **Article 22 - Results of the Master's examination; ECTS grade**

(1) The Master's examination shall be awarded a pass if all requisite examinations have been passed.

(2) The final grade for the Master's examination shall be based on the arithmetic average 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:

- Grade for the Master's thesis: 33.3 % (1/3)
- Non-rounded average of the grades for the graded modular examinations: 66.7 % (2/3)



The final grade shall be determined by deleting the second digit after the decimal point. From the third cohort onwards, the study programme 'Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems', an ECTS classification table will be attached in accordance with the European Commission's ECTS Guideline of 2 June 2009; this classification table will include the percentages of all final grades given within the study programme during at least the past two final cohorts.

(3) The Master's examination shall be assessed as definitively failed if one of the examinations in accordance with Article 5 paragraph 1 has been definitively failed. The Examinations Office shall officially notify the student that he or she has failed the examination and forfeited the entitlement to the final examination; along with the notification, he or she shall also receive an official letter with instructions concerning rights of appeal.

### **Article 23 – 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 achievements may be included upon request. The chosen elective must be clearly identifiable as such. Modules that have been successfully completed during the study semester abroad shall be listed along with the name of the university in question.

(2) The report on the passed Master's examination shall be issued, if possible, within four weeks of the date on which the last examination was taken.

(3) The Grade Report shall be signed by the Dean and the chairperson of the Examination Board. The Grade Report shall bear the date on which the last examination was taken.

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

(5) Along with the Grade Report, the student shall be issued a Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement shall contain information on the study 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 can be derived from the Appendix to the Module Catalogue, which is part of these Examination Regulations. The ECTS classification table set out in Article 22 paragraph 2 sentence 3 shall be attached to the Diploma Supplement.

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

### **Article 24 – Invalidity of examinations, revocation of the Master's degree**

(1) If a student has cheated in an examination and this becomes apparent only 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 becomes apparent only after the Grade Report has been issued, the Examination Board may declare the final examination as either completely or partially failed.

(2) If the requirements for admission to an examination were not met without the student's active and wilful deception on this issue, and if this becomes apparent only after the Grade Report has been issued, this deficiency shall be remedied by passing the examination. If the student has 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 redeemed and, as the case may be, re-issued. After expiry of a five-year period from the date on which the Grade Report was issued, a decision as set out in paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 sentence 2 is ruled out.

## **V. Final provisions**

### **Article 25 – Transitional provisions, inspection of the examination records**

(1) If these Examination Regulations are amended or substituted by a new one or if the degree programme is discontinued, examinations will be held 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 minutes of the examination. The request for inspecting these documents shall be filed with the chairperson of the Examination Board within one month of the students having been issued the Grade Report or been notified about failing the 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 granted an inspection of the examination records relating to a particular examination immediately after they have been informed of the examination result. Paragraph 2 shall apply accordingly.

### **Article 26 – Entry into force and publication**

*These examination regulations are valid from the day after their publication for students who enrol in the Analysis and Design of Social Protection Systems Master's course of study at the university from the winter semester 2019/2020 on. The German version of these Examination Regulations shall be published in the Official Publications – Announcement Sheet (Verköndungsblatt) - of the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences.*

Issued by virtue of the decision taken by the Department Social Policy and Social Security on 22 August 2019.

Hennef, 22 August 2019

Prof. Dr. Susanne Peters-Lange,  
Dean of the Department Social Policy and Social Security Studies at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences