

# **Framework Study and Examination Regulations (FSER) of the IPU Berlin**

(Version dated 13.06.2013)

## **Section 1**

### **Scope**

These articles define overlapping study-course procedural rules and regulations for studies and examinations. The individual details are regulated in the examination and study regulations of the study courses.

## **Section 2**

### **Standard Period of Studies and Study Interruptions**

- (1) The standard period of studies for the Bachelor study courses amounts to three years. 180 ECTS credits have to be achieved and verified for same.
- (2) The standard period of studies for the Master study courses amounts to two years. At least 300 ECTS credits have to be achieved and verified for same together with the inclusion of those from the first academic degree leading to a professional qualification.
- (3) Anyone intending to interrupt their studies from the second semester or who is prevented from having proper and orderly studies is required to take leave of absence. The application to take leave of absence should be submitted at the latest six weeks prior to the beginning of the lecture period and include the reasons for same.

Reasons for a leave of absence include especially:

1. Stay abroad for study purposes,
2. Completion of work placement,
3. Illness,
4. Maternity leave,
5. Care of a dependent requiring nursing,
6. Military or alternative service,
7. Fulltime employment.

Verifications of these reasons can be required. The application to take leave of absence is granted provided no considerable doubt arises with respect to the occurrence of the reasons provided. As a rule, the leave of absence is granted for one semester only in each case. It may be increased to two consecutive semesters only in exceptional cases together with the reasons for same.

- (4) There is no legal right to attend lectures for the period of the leave of absence; the other rights continue to exist and apply. In particular, examinations may be taken at the IPU provided the preconditions and requirements for same have already been fulfilled. A semester on leave of absence does not count as a study semester.
- (5) No study fees are due for the period of the semester on leave of absence. The student remains a member of the IPU during the semester on leave of absence. They also have to pay the semester fees to the extent that no exemption has been granted.

## **Section 3**

### **Study Courses and Options**

- (1) A Bachelor study course leads to a first degree from a university qualifying the graduate for professional work. It consists of three study areas:
  1. Core Subject
  2. Affine Subject

### 3. General Career Preparation (GCP)

- (2) Master study courses can
  - a) Build upon a Bachelor study course as in-depth, broadening or interdisciplinary study courses, or
  - b) Require a prior university degree leading to a professional qualification, while does not however build upon specific Bachelor study courses (consecutive Master study courses), or
  - c) Convey study content which as a rule requires a prior first degree from a university qualifying the graduate for professional work and subsequent qualified professional work experience lasting not less than a year as a rule (Master study courses as advanced studies).

#### **Section 4**

##### **Modularisation and Examinations during Studies**

- (1) Modules are self-contained study units, both thematically and in terms of the study time required, which are provided with ECTS credits.
- (2) Modules are conceived specifically for each Bachelor and Master study course, with corresponding teaching content provided with them. Any modules already completed during a Bachelor study course may not be completed again in a Master study course.
- (3) For each module, a graded examination has to be passed. The details in this regard are regulated in the study and examination regulations.
- (4) Examination papers may be written in German or English, provided the supervising lecturer is in agreement with same.
- (5) Regulations are laid down in the study and examination regulations through which the scheduled completion of the study and exam work intended in the representative study schedule is guaranteed within the standard period of studies.

#### **Section 5**

##### **Study Advice**

In order to support the students in achieving their study aims, the IPU offers study advice of both a general and a specialist nature. The Student Office provides study advice on general questions about the studies and the study courses. For specialist study advice, all of the university lecturing staff, as well as the relevant elected student representative for the respective study year are available. The study course coordinators are available for advice on the progress of the studies.

#### **Section 6**

##### **Examination Committee**

- (1) An Examination Committee is to be appointed for each study course. It is responsible for defining proper and orderly study and examination work achievements, the ECTS crediting of the achievements, the organisation of examinations, the appointing of examiners, the decision on being permitted to take the exams, as well as the definition of the study course degree. The Examination Committee issues work-placement training regulations. The Examination Committee ensures that the provisions in the applicable statutory regulations are complied with and is responsible for the adequacy of the study and examination requirements and the maintenance of scientific standards. An Examination Committee can be in charge of several study courses.
- (2) The Examination Committee is appointed by the Academic Senate. It consists of five members, of whom three are professors, one is a member of the academic staff and one is a student. The term of office for the members of the Examination Committee amounts to two years.

- (3) The Examination Committee appoints from among its members a chairperson who has to belong to the group of professors. The Examination Committee can revocably transfer its authority to take decisions on specific tasks to the chairperson.
- (4) The Examination Committee meetings are not open to the public. The members are subject to the duty to maintain official secrecy. If they are not already subject to a duty to maintain secrecy, they are to be obliged in writing by the chairperson to maintain their confidentiality.

### **Section 7 Assessing Achievements**

The assessments of module achievements are to be fundamentally reasoned in writing. In this regard, the decisive reasons for the assessments are to be provided.

### **Section 8 File Management & Access**

- (1) When requested, an application to inspect files must be granted within one year after the decision on the study or exam work achievements, and that also to a person authorised in writing to do same as the case may be. As a rule, the inspection occurs in the Student Office, with the writing of hand-written notes permitted during same. Any entitlement to make copies occurs only in the context of a formal lawsuit.
- (2) The student files with the documents on the examinations (written exams, reports, term papers, minutes of oral exams, degree theses) are stored for five years in the Student Office at the IPU. Electronic storing on the IPU server is possible. Copies of certificates are stored in the IPU for 50 years.

### **Section 9 Remonstrance Proceedings**

Those parties concerned can submit a remonstrance, i.e. statement of objections, against examination assessments to the Examination Committee within three months. The party concerned is to be granted access to the examination files. The remonstrance is to be forwarded to the respective examiner. Said examiner then examines their assessment and forwards the reasons for any new assessment within one month to the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee informs the party concerned about the examiner's decision.

### **Section 10 Crediting ECTS Credits**

- (1) Study and exam work achievements which have already been gained at a university in Germany or at an equivalent university abroad can be credited by the IPU to a study course, if and to the extent it is determined that the achievements to be recognised are equivalent to the corresponding requirements at the IPU.
- (2) The crediting of a module occurs provided there are no fundamental differences with respect to the competencies being acquired (Lisbon Convention Art. V). The crediting occurs on the basis of a simple method in which the equivalence of the content and the workload of a module to be recognised is assessed with that in the respective study course stipulated at the IPU. When examining the course content, the usability of the module to be credited has to be considered within the intended study course. When examining the workload, the requirements for the awarding of ECTS credits for the prior achievements have to be considered. It is not possible to credit study theses in accordance with this procedure.

- (3) Study applicants can demonstrate in a placement test that they have competencies at their disposal, which permit them to be placed in a higher semester or to skip a module. Courses are offered for individual modules, which are obligatory to attend prior to any placement test.
- (4) When crediting a module, the grade gained in the module to be credited is assumed by the IPU for the ECTS credits in this module. Grades which are assumed following their recalculation from a different grading system are assumed to the first decimal point, with the decimal points after that being ignored. To the extent that a module was reported as passed in the prior study or exam work achievement, it is reported as being passed following the crediting. A module to acquire key qualifications can be credited as completed in a Bachelor study course when completed university studies can already be verified.
- (5) In cases of IPU university partnerships with universities either in Germany or abroad, the agreements concluded between these two universities are applicable.
- (6) When the examination regulations for a study course envisage gaining practical professional work experience, any relevant practical work experience can be credited. The Examination Committee of the study course concerned or a work-placement committee appointed by it takes the decision on the crediting of the ECTS credits.

**Section 11**  
**Disadvantage Compensation with Physical Impairments and Disabilities and Substitute Achievements**

- (1) Should a candidate credibly demonstrate by means of a medical certificate that, due to physical impairments lasting over a longer time period, they are not in a position to complete the study course work or the examinations in the intended form, the chairperson of the Examination Committee grants disadvantage compensation. This allows for the study or exam work achievements to be completed in a different way or by means of a prolonged processing or exam time period. It is not possible to use chronic illnesses as a means to be released from the study and examination achievements.
- (2) In the event that a student cannot complete the intended examination achievements for reasons which arise not through any fault of their own, the examiner can demand substitute achievements in a form that differs from the examination forms permitted in the examination regulations.

**Section 12**  
**Attendance & Participation Duties**

In order to attend the lectures, students must apply to the university in good time and, in cases where attendance at lectures is required as part of their study course achievements, they must attend such lectures regularly. Regular attendance is deemed to be at least 80% attendance at the lecture hours in a given course. In the event that students miss lectures more frequently than this, the responsible lecturer can agree an appropriate substitute lecture or other activity with the student relative to the workload missed.

**Section 13**  
**ECTS Credits**

- (1) To the extent that examination achievements are verified and graded by means of an ECTS credits system, the ECTS credits for a module denote the student's workload required as a rule to fulfil the respective requirements and achieve the learning aims. In addition to attending the lectures which belong to the module, this also includes the complete preparation and follow-up work on the material being taught, the preparation and elaboration of the students' own contributions, as well as the preparation for and participation in the achievement checks.

- (2) One European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credit point corresponds to a student workload of 30 hours. As a rule for a semester in a full-time study course, 30 ECTS credits are envisaged corresponding to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), with 60 ECTS credits intended for a complete year of studies. 15 ECTS credits are intended for a semester of part-time studies, with 30 ECTS credits envisaged for a complete year of part-time studies.
- (3) The ECTS credits are certified by the member of the lecturing staff responsible for the respective lecture or for the module, provided the requirements contained in Section 12 have been fulfilled and a minimally sufficient achievement (4.0) is passed where this is intended, or this is regarded as the rendering of an achievement passed when no grading is envisaged.
- (4) An extract from the study block (transcript), in which the individual completed modules or module parts are listed, is provided to the students in each study semester when required.

#### **Section 14 Registering**

Registering for the module examinations occurs automatically at the intended next examination date as soon as the active and regular attendance at the module lectures has been confirmed by the respective lecturer. In the event that a module examination is not passed, the next examination date available chronologically must be taken.

#### **Section 15 Degree Theses**

- (1) The requirement for being permitted to write the final paper (Bachelor or Master thesis) in the studies is that in each study course at least half of the ECTS credits intended for the complete study course have been gained and the professional work placement has been completed.
- (2) Group work (maximum four authors) is permitted with theses. The individual achievements of the authors should be manifest in the work.
- (3) Fundamentally, any authorised examiner who is familiar with the subject can be appointed as the appraiser for a thesis. They must at least have the qualification as defined by the thesis, or one of equivalent value. When requested, a maximum of one external appraiser can be permitted by the Examination Committee, provided they are an authorised examiner in the subject they represent. The first appraiser is the supervisor responsible for the thesis and they are a member of the IPU Berlin.
- (4) The processing time for the final paper (Bachelor or Master thesis) in the studies begins with the permission to do same, and the length of time available is limited by the respective examination regulations (3, 6 and/or 12 months).
- (5) Any extension of the processing time for theses provided in the respective examination regulations can only be permitted under special conditions and only on submission of an appropriate certificate. Such a certificate has to confirm the reason (e.g. limited ability to work, unforeseen difficulties in surveying or evaluating data) and the length of time required (e.g. two weeks) and has to be issued by the thesis supervisor or a doctor. An official medical certificate from a doctor can also be required.
- (6) Any extension of the processing time for theses by more than one semester is not permitted.
- (7) In the event that the abandonment of a thesis occurs, this can be repeated at the IPU Berlin once with a single new attempt permitted. With such a repeat, a recognisably new subject has to be processed.
- (8) Theses have to be submitted to the Student Office by the due date in an electronic format, as well as in two identical printed copies. The Student Office notes the date of receipt in all of the copies, archives the thesis in the electronic format and forwards the printed copies to the appraisers.
- (9) The appraisers' reports contain a grading corresponding to the IPU grading scale, together with the

grounds for the assessment. The theses are assessed independently from each other by the two appraisers.

- (10) The IPU Berlin fundamentally treats such reports in confidence. However the appraisers are free to decide whether they permit the students to look at their reports.
- (11) In the event that the grades by the appraisers for a thesis deviate from each other, the average grade from them is determined and rounded off to the benefit of the student with any further decimal points after that being ignored in accordance with the IPU grading scale. In the event that the grades by the appraisers deviate by two or more complete grades, the appraisers are requested to re-examine the assessment. Should an alignment of the grades still not occur after this, a third appraiser can be utilised.

### **Section 16 Oral Examinations**

- (1) Oral examinations may only be conducted in the presence of a competent assessor and last from 25 to 35 minutes.
- (2) Minutes of the oral exam have to be recorded, which include the exam date, the name of the candidate, that of the examiner, that of the assessor, the subject of the examination, the questions posed, an evaluation and the signatures of the examiner and the assessor.

### **Section 17 Written Examinations**

Any written examinations which do not have to be taken as exams requiring the presence of the students in the exam room should be submitted in an electronic format.

### **Section 18 Electronic Format Examinations**

When an examination paper has to be submitted in an electronic format, the authenticity of the author and the immutability of the exam paper has to be secured in a suitable and permanent format. The respective Examination Committee decides on the suitability of the electronic storage format.

### **Section 19 Multiple Choice Methods**

In the event that in a written examination, more than 60% of the exam paper to be answered consists of questions from multiple choice methods, a normal prose text answer is also permitted in each case without this being disadvantageous to the student.

### **Section 20 Absence and Cheating**

- (1) An examination is assessed with the grade of "Not Sufficient" or "Failed" when the student does not attend an examination date which is binding for them without providing a valid reason, or when they withdraw from an examination which they must take without providing a valid reason. This is also applicable when written examination work is not rendered within the prescribed processing time.

- (2) Any medical certificate to excuse the student's absence from an examination must be received by the Student Office (incoming post) at the latest on the third working day after the set examination date. The Examination Committee is entitled to demand an official certificate from a doctor to substantiate the candidate's inability to take the examination; the student bears the costs for same.
- (3) When a student does not attend the fourth examination date for a module examination, the examination is then conclusively failed, unless the reason for the inability to attend is not caused by their own fault. In the event that each of the four reasons from the inability to attend consists of a doctor's certificate confirming the inability to take the examination, a further (fifth) examination is only then scheduled by way of exception and the examination is not yet regarded as being conclusively failed when the examination candidate is able to completely dispel any concerns about their inability to attend the exams to date as determined by means of a further official doctor's statement.
- (4) In the event that a student attempts to influence the result of study or examination work through cheating, the use of inadmissible resources or bribery, the work concerned is assessed as "Failed". Anyone who disrupts the examination process can be excluded for the remainder of the exam; in this case the examination work is assessed as "Failed".
- (5) The student can demand that decisions in accordance with Paragraphs 1 and 4 are examined immediately by the Examination Committee. The student concerned is to be informed in writing about any negative decisions together with the reasons for same. In grievous cases where the revocation of the intended university degree would be justified, the Examination Committee can decide that the overall examination has been conclusively failed.
- (6) The decision on the individual study or exam work achievements, or the complete examination or the determination of the degree overall can be subsequently adjusted or revoked by the Examination Committee when it becomes known that they were achieved by means of cheating or the use of inadmissible resources or bribery.
- (7) The student is to be given an opportunity to provide their views prior to the decision in accordance with Paragraphs 5 and 6.

## **Section 21**

### **Repeating Examination Work**

- (1) Any failed examinations may be repeated twice. Failed Bachelor or Master theses may only be repeated once.
- (2) The first repeat examination is to be scheduled in such a way that the intended examination achievements can still be rendered within the standard period of studies.
- (3) In the event that an examination is also failed at the second attempt, the student must take study progress advice in accordance with Section 5 at the latest by the end of the subsequent semester. The study advisor sets a deadline by which an application has to be submitted to the Examination Committee for a second repeat of the exam. In the event that no study advice occurs in the intended time in which the application deadline would be set, or the set deadline is not maintained, a response by the student to the IPU is no longer possible.
- (4) The Examination Committee can approve second repeats of examinations when a substantiated application is submitted. The second repeat has to be assessed by at least two examiners. In the event that the second repeat is also completed without sufficient success, the examination is then conclusively failed. The student is to be informed of same in writing.
- (5) And repeat of an exam in order to improve the grades is not envisaged.

## **Section 22 Grading System**

- (1) In order to assess examination work in modularised study courses which are awarded ECTS credits, the following grading scale is applicable utilising the German grading system (1; 2; 3; 4; 5) and the German denotations:

ECTS Grade	German Grade System	ECTS Definition	German Denotations
A	1.0 – 1.5	Excellent	Hervorragend
B	1.6 – 2.0	Very Good	Sehr gut
C	2.1 – 3.0	Good	Gut
D	3.1 – 3.5	Satisfactory	Befriedigend
E	3.6 – 4.0	Sufficient	Ausreichend
F	4.1 – 5.0	Fail	Nicht bestanden

- (2) In order to have a differentiated assessment basis, a grading scale with the following grades is utilised: 1.0; 1.3; 1.7; 2.0; 2.3; 2.7; 3.0; 3.3; 3.7; 4.0. Examination results below 4.0 are assessed as "Failed". An exception to this are grades determined in accordance with Section 10 (4).
- (3) The overall grade for the respective degree is calculated from all of the graded module examinations. With this calculation, the module grades are weighted with the respective ECTS credits. The average grade is rounded off to the first decimal point, with the points after that being ignored.

## **Section 23 Conclusion of Studies/Graduation**

- (1) The requirements for the conclusion of studies and graduating are that
1. The ECTS credits required in the respective study and examination regulations have been successfully gained and verified, and
  2. The degree thesis has been submitted to the IPU Berlin or to an associate university with a corresponding cooperation agreement, and
- (2) On the basis of the examinations passed, the graduates are awarded a certificate, a degree certificate and a diploma supplement (with the latter in English or also in German on request).

## **Section 24 Applicability**

These regulations replace the prior articles for general examination matters dated 26.09.2009. These regulations were determined and agreed on 13.06.2013 by the Academic Senate of the IPU Berlin and approved on 17.03.2013 by the Berlin Senate Administration. They are applicable and binding as and from the date following their publication on 26.06.2013.