

# **FH JOANNEUM Study and Examination Regulations**

Version 1.4 of 21 September 2020

## FH JOANNEUM Study and Examination Regulations

### Contents

<b>Preamble .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. General Study Regulations .....</b>	<b>4</b>
§ 1. General rules for students and teaching staff .....	4
§ 2. Student representation .....	4
§ 3. Organisational forms of degree programmes, certificate programmes for further education, other courses.....	5
§ 4. Admission requirements and admission regulation.....	5
§ 5. Regular and irregular students .....	6
§ 6. Recognition of proven knowledge.....	6
§ 7. Nostrification .....	6
§ 8. Starting in a higher semester.....	7
§ 9. ECTS and academic crediting.....	7
§ 10. Quality assurance in teaching.....	7
§ 11. Structure of the academic year .....	7
<b>II. General Examination Regulations.....</b>	<b>8</b>
A. Course examinations.....	8
§ 12. General provisions.....	8
§ 13. Examination modalities for different course types .....	8
§ 14. Attendance and excused absence .....	9
§ 15. Dates, deadlines .....	9
§ 16. Implementation and organisation .....	10
§ 17. Assessment of course examinations and internships .....	11
§ 18. Resits of course examinations .....	12
§ 19. Board retake examinations .....	13
§ 20. Suspending studies and repeating an academic year .....	13
§ 21. Archiving examination documents.....	14
B. Bachelor's thesis/theses.....	14
§ 22. Objective.....	14
§ 23. Time frame .....	15
§ 24. Choice of topic.....	15
§ 25. Supervision .....	16
§ 26. Assessment and time period of assessment .....	16
§ 27. Marking and retakes.....	17
§ 28. Submission, publication and restriction of access.....	17
C. Bachelor's examination .....	18
§ 29. Objective.....	18
§ 30. Admission .....	18

§ 31. Dates.....	18
§ 32. Examination organisation.....	18
§ 33. Marking.....	19
§ 34. Retake of Bachelor’s examinations .....	19
D. Master’s or Diploma thesis .....	20
§ 35. Objective.....	20
§ 36. Time frame .....	20
§ 37. Choice of topic.....	20
§ 38. Supervision .....	21
§ 39. Assessment and time period of assessment .....	21
§ 40. Marking and retakes.....	22
§ 41. Submission, publication and restriction of access.....	22
E. Final examinations in Master’s and Diploma degree programmes.....	23
§ 42. Objective.....	23
§ 43. Admission .....	23
§ 44. Dates.....	23
§ 45. Examination organisation.....	23
§ 46. Marking.....	24
§ 47. Retake of final examinations .....	24
F. Concluding Provisions.....	25
§ 48. Average grades and assessments.....	25
§ 49 Withdrawal of the academic degree .....	25
<b>III. Requests to the FH Board, deadlines, remedies .....</b>	<b>26</b>
§ 50 Deadline of request/complaint to FH Board .....	26

## **Preamble**

The present Study and Examination Regulations were adopted by the FH JOANNEUM Board in its meeting on 15 June 2020 and, following agreement with the provider, was put into effect on 21 September 2020 as of the start of the winter semester 2020/2021 (effective from 21/09/2020) according to Sec. 10 para. 3 (10) of the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG). They replace any existing guidelines and examination regulations and shall apply to all degree programmes established at FH JOANNEUM as well as all certificate programmes for further education according to Sec. 9 of the FHStG. Examinations belonging to the summer semester 2020 or any previous semester shall be subject to the previous Examination Regulations. The individual items of the Study and Examination Regulations shall be specified in the relevant programme applications. Applications for the establishment of new degree programmes shall be based on these Study and Examination Regulations. It is furthermore stated that in cases of doubt the German version as amended shall prevail in the event of a discrepancy or difference in interpretation between the German and the translated versions of the Study and Examination Regulations.

The bodies established at FH JOANNEUM pursuant to study law include the FH Board, the Head of the Board and the heads of the individual degree programmes. The procedures applied shall be governed by the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (FHStG) and the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HS-QSG) as amended, as well as the decrees issued by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ Austria).

## **I. General Study Regulations**

### **§ 1. General rules for students and teaching staff**

- (1) The use of electronic devices during classes by students has to be authorised by the head of the course.
- (2) The electronic recording of lectures requires the prior approval of all lecture participants.
- (3) It is advisable to use gender-sensitive language in your written works/documents and in exams.

### **§ 2. Student representation**

The student representation at FH JOANNEUM consists of the bodies mentioned in Sec. 30 (1) of the Student Union Act (HSG) 2014 as amended, which include the university representatives pursuant to Sec. 16 HSG 2014 as amended and the programme representatives pursuant to Sec. 19 HSG 2014 as amended. FH JOANNEUM additionally recommends the election of year representatives for the degree programmes. If such year representatives have been appointed they shall be subject to the attendance regulations specified in § 14.

### **§ 3. Organisational forms of degree programmes, certificate programmes for further education, other courses**

FH JOANNEUM offers the following organisational forms for Bachelor's, Master's and Diploma degree programmes and certificate programmes for further education pursuant to Sec. 9 FHStG:

- 1) Full-time study
- 2) Part-time study

As a special organisational form FH JOANNEUM also offers work-friendly and co-operative course formats.

### **§ 4. Admission requirements and admission regulation**

(1) There is always a limited number of places for the degree programmes at universities of applied sciences; their allocation and admission regulations are defined in the respective accreditation application. The admission regulation defines the admissions process and the performance-based criteria according to which the places are allocated. The admissions process is carried out and documented in an objective, verifiable and transparent manner.

(2) The precondition for being admitted to the admission procedure of the degree programme, in addition to meeting the admission requirements, is the submission of an application together with the necessary documents. International applicants must observe the Legalisation and Translation Guidelines of FH JOANNEUM. In addition, German/English skills level B2 are a prerequisite both for English-language and German-language degree programmes. This is a minimum requirement. Specific degree programmes may have additional requirements.

(3) Once the admission requirements have been verified, all applicants that meet these requirements are invited to attend an admissions procedure. An admissions procedure shall be carried out when the number of applicants exceeds the number of places.

(4) The places of study at FH JOANNEUM will be allocated after the admissions procedure in line with the final ranking. In the event that several admission dates are offered, the allocation of places immediately after the admissions procedure shall be at the discretion of the head of degree programme on the basis of the numbers of applicants for the individual dates from the last few years. The exact procedure and the weighting of the various criteria for the allocation of places is part of the respective application for accreditation. Criteria for the allocation of places may be as follows: school grades, aptitude tests, personal interviews, exams on specific topics, the form of application, professional experience, further training and any work to be submitted as well as vocation-specific tests.

(5) FH JOANNEUM makes every effort to provide students with disabilities with a fair admissions procedure that includes disabled access. It is therefore necessary to discuss special needs and requirements due to the disability with the Equality and Diversity Office in advance.

## **§ 5. Regular and irregular students**

(1) Regular students (degree students) are students admitted to regular degree programmes. These include Bachelor's degree programmes, Master's degree programmes and diploma degree programmes at universities of applied sciences.

(2) Irregular students (non-degree students) are students admitted to irregular studies. These include certificate programmes for further education according to Sec. 9 FHStG and individual courses. Irregular students are members of the Austrian Student Union.

(3) The admission of irregular students to certificate programmes for further education according to Sec. 9 FHStG or individual courses is decided by the head of the programme.

## **§ 6. Recognition of proven knowledge**

(1) The recognition of proven knowledge shall be subject to the statutory provisions of Sec. 12 FHStG and in compliance with the relevant recommendations of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region of 11 April 1997 ("Lisbon Convention"), Federal Law Gazette BGBl. III No. 71/1999.

(2) The process of the recognition of proven knowledge for individual courses is applied for by the student. The application can be submitted until no later than two weeks after the start of the course to the head of the programme, who shall make a decision within two weeks of the submission of all documents. If the application is rejected, the student may appeal against this decision to the FH Board via the Head of the Board within four weeks of rejection.

(3) Copies of the documents for the recognition of proven knowledge shall be enclosed with the recognition form. If necessary, the head of the programme can request the applicant to furnish the original documents. The form and the enclosed recognition documents that provide information about the content and extent of the course (e.g. ECTS) are passed on to the head of the programme, who examines the documents and makes a decision about their recognition in accordance with Sec. 10 para. 5 (2) FHStG. A knowledge test is not permitted.

(4) The recognition of special knowledge or relevant professional experience in accordance with Sec. 12 (2) FHStG requires documentary evidence of the equivalence of the knowledge gained in professional practice to the content and extent of the course in question; having worked in an area that is related to the topic of the course alone is not sufficient.

## **§ 7. Nostrification**

(1) Nostrification refers to the recognition of a foreign degree as equivalent to an Austrian Bachelor's, Master's or Diploma degree by the FH Board. Nostrification thus means the complete equivalence to the Austrian degree, the right to use the relevant Austrian degree and the permission to exercise the profession which in Austria is associated with this degree.

(2) Particular attention must be paid to the FHStG and the provisions of current EU law and the relevant occupational regulations.

(3) The nostrification application together with the necessary documents must be submitted to the FH Board via the responsible department (Continuing Education, Study Administration and Study Law).

(4) The decision regarding nostrification shall be made on the basis of the expert opinion of the relevant head of degree programme and the assessment of the FH Board in accordance with Sec. 10 para. 3 (9) in conjunction with Sec. 6 paras. 6 and 7 FHStG.

(5) The nostrification application will be processed once all necessary documents have been submitted to the relevant department. This is also the start of the decision deadline of six months pursuant to Sec. 73 of the General Administrative Procedure Act 1991 (AVG) as amended.

(6) If the nostrification application is approved subject to conditions, the applicant shall be entitled to complete the courses and examinations stated in the official decision within three years of the date thereof depending on the situation, especially the availability of study, internship and laboratory places.

### **§ 8. Starting in a higher semester**

(1) The head of degree programme decides whether someone may start in a higher semester. An admissions process shall not be necessary as a matter of principle. The head of degree programme may authorise a start from the 2nd semester onwards under the following conditions:

- a place is available
- the applicant meets the entry requirements of the degree programme
- completed courses and examinations of at least 75% of the courses stipulated until this point can be credited in accordance with § 6 of these Study and Examination Regulations

(2) If these requirements are not fully met, the head of degree programme can stipulate conditions. Attending courses at a later date is only possible if permitted by the degree programme.

### **§ 9. ECTS and academic crediting**

One ECTS credit point is equivalent to a workload of 25 hours.

### **§ 10. Quality assurance in teaching**

The courses are regularly assessed by the students with the aim to provide high-quality teaching. This requires continuous reflection on the content as well as the pedagogy and didactics. The current internal regulation documents must be used to evaluate the courses following approval by the FH Board.

### **§ 11. Structure of the academic year**

The FH Board decides on the structure of the academic year, which must be published in good time.

## II. General Examination Regulations

### A. Course examinations

#### § 12. General provisions

(1) All students and teaching staff must be informed of the latest version of the Examination Regulations in an appropriate manner and a copy must be made available upon request.

(2) The individual courses to be taken and their specific type are gathered from the accreditation application for the degree programme in question.<sup>1</sup>

(3) At the beginning of each semester and in any case no later than during the second course unit, the relevant lecturer must provide students with a written overview of the goals, content, methods and examination modalities<sup>2</sup> of their course in the form of a syllabus, and also inform the students about the content, methods, assessment criteria, the form of resit options and the assessment key for their performance.<sup>3</sup> In justified exceptional circumstances, including disasters or epidemics, the lecturer may modify the syllabus during the semester, notifying the students as soon as possible.

(4) The examinations shall be scheduled shortly after the courses in which the contents relevant to the examinations were taught. Examination dates should generally be scheduled at the end of the semester and at the beginning of the following semester. Resits and board examinations shall take place no later than before the beginning of the second semester following the course. In cases of hardship, students may submit a written request to the head of the degree programme asking for this date to be postponed.<sup>4</sup> If the request is rejected, students have the option of filing a complaint to the FH Board via the Head of the Board within four weeks of rejection.

#### § 13. Examination modalities for different course types

(1) Lectures:

The object of lectures is to impart to the students scientific and practical knowledge of the topic of the lecture. The aim is that students, once they have attended the course of lectures, will have gained both an overview and detailed knowledge and are able to apply various scientific approaches to solving problems and perceiving relationships. The aim is not least for students to be able to find their own arguments to questions and problems based on their understanding and factual knowledge. The assessment of a lecture course can be either in the form of an individual oral or a written examination. Several part examinations may also be carried out. An “individual examination” is considered to be an overall examination covering the entire subject matter of the course.

(2) Practicals, seminars or projects:

The object of practicals, seminars and projects is to impart to the students career related skills. The aim is to teach students how to solve problems through actions and reflection. The assessment of

---

<sup>1</sup> The heads of the individual degree programmes have the accreditation applications ready for inspection.

<sup>2</sup> § 13 Study and Examination Regulations

<sup>3</sup> E.g. individual examination, term papers, participation.

<sup>4</sup> This provides students with the opportunity, in exceptional circumstances, to sit their examinations after the beginning of the second semester following the course.



student performance in practicals, seminars and projects is carried out in the form of continued assessment by the head of the course. This means that marks for these courses are not just based on one single performance assessment, but rather on at least two.

(3) Lectures with integrated exercises:

The object of lectures with integrated exercises is to teach students how to link the knowledge gained in the lectures with skills learned in the practicals. The aim is that students will be able to pass through the theory-practice cycles independently and comprehensibly. The assessment of lectures with integrated exercises is analogous to the above regulations for lectures and practicals.

(4) In addition to the examination modalities specified herein, papers, projects, presentations and assignments may also serve as a basis for assessment. Student participation during the course is to be appropriately assessed.

(5) Students must be informed about the applicable examination modalities in the syllabus.

#### **§ 14. Attendance and excused absence**

(1) In principle, students have to attend all courses. Exceptions to the attendance requirements must be specified in the relevant accreditation application. The attendance requirements for lecture courses does not apply to student representatives, but the head of degree programme may specify mandatory attendance for specific courses. This must be substantiated in writing at the start of the semester.<sup>5</sup>

(2) At the beginning of each lecture course, the relevant lecturer must provide students with a copy of the relevant attendance regulations.

(3) Non-compliance with the attendance regulations of a lecture course without proper justification results in a negative assessment of the course.<sup>6</sup>

#### **§ 15. Dates, deadlines**

(1) Examination and retake dates must be provided in such a way that the course can be continued without missing a semester.<sup>7</sup> Examination dates must be scheduled both at the end of the semester and at the beginning of the following semester.<sup>8</sup>

(2) Each student has a total of three examination attempts (initial examination with two dates, resit, board examination). Two dates are to be provided for the initial examination, one of which must be chosen by the student.<sup>9</sup>

(3) The examination dates for initial examinations and resits as well as any submission deadlines shall be scheduled by the head of the programme in consultation with the relevant lecturers and students or the relevant student representative at year level.

---

<sup>5</sup> Substantiation may include, e.g., relevant provisions of the Federal Act Regulating High Level Allied Health Professions (MTD-Gesetz), the Midwifery Act (HebG) and the corresponding decrees.

<sup>6</sup> See § 18 (2) Study and Examination Regulations.

<sup>7</sup> See § 12 (4) Study and Examination Regulations.

<sup>8</sup> See Sec. 13 FHStG as amended

<sup>9</sup> See § 18 (2) Study and Examination Regulations.

(4) There must be at least four calendar days between two board examinations unless the student expressly agrees to a shorter period.

(5) Students must register for individual examinations no later than three calendar days prior to the examination, and deregister no later than one calendar day prior to the examination, not counting the date of the examination.

(6) Performance assessments<sup>10</sup> must be published within four weeks at the latest. This period may be extended by two weeks in properly justified cases. These delays must be notified to the students and the head of degree programme immediately after the occurrence of the reason for the delay.

(7) A resit can be taken no earlier than fourteen calendar days after publication of the grade. The examination date shall generally be announced together with the grade.

## **§ 16. Implementation and organisation**

(1) Examinations may be written or oral and taken with the help of appropriate permitted technical aids.<sup>11</sup> In all cases supervision must be provided by a competent person familiar with the organisational procedure of the examination. Records shall be kept of oral examinations according to Sec. 15 (2) of the FHStG.

(2) As a rule, examinations of courses held in a foreign language will be taken in that foreign language. Exceptions may be granted by the head of the degree programme in question upon reasoned application by the relevant lecturer.

(3) Students have the right to a different examination method if they can provide evidence of a disability that makes it impossible to take the examination using the specified method, and if the content and the examination requirements are not affected by the different method. Once the disability has been notified and the student has been heard, the head of the programme shall decide on the type of examination method and, if necessary, how long the regulation will remain in effect. The student shall be entitled to file a complaint against this decision to the FH Board via the Head of the Board within four weeks of the decision.

(4) Students must be granted access to their own examination documents or examination records under supervision within the statutory period specified in Secs. 13 (6) and 16 (4) of the FHStG (within six months of notification of the assessment results). Students shall be entitled to make copies of their examination documents (these shall include but not be limited to exam questions and the student's own answers) under supervision. The student may request the presence of student representatives when accessing the documents or records.

(5) Oral examinations are accessible to the public. Access may be restricted or refused (depending on available space) for presentations of embargoed Bachelor's, Master's or Diploma theses and to protect the privacy of patients in exams relating to medical issues.

(6) Records shall be kept of oral examinations. Students must be informed of the results of the oral examination immediately after the examination. In the case of failed exams, reasons shall be given to

---

<sup>10</sup> E.g. individual examinations, term paper, participation.

<sup>11</sup> Technical aids must be checked for technical and legal compliance prior to the examination.

the student and entered in the examination record. The examination records must be retained for three years after completion of study or withdrawal from the degree programme or postgraduate course.<sup>12</sup>

(7) Examinations may take place by module (module examinations) if they concern courses held within one semester. If the accreditation application has provisions for module examinations, students must be notified of this at the beginning of the semester. Module examinations cover all lecture courses included in the module. The aim of module examinations is to assess whether the learning objectives (competencies) of a specific module have been achieved. Module examinations may only provide an overall grade of all courses covered. The head of degree programme shall decide whether a module examination is carried out or whether lecture courses are examined individually.

(8) The posting of examination results by name shall be prohibited for data protection reasons.

(9) Students may be excluded from an examination if the examination supervisor determines that an attempt was made to obtain examination results fraudulently.

This in particular includes the following actions:

- use of unauthorised aids,
- repeatedly obtaining and/or offering support from colleagues verbally or in writing during the examination.

The examination supervisor must inform the head of degree programme if an examination has been aborted in this way.

## **§ 17. Assessment of course examinations and internships**

(1) Examinations shall be marked according to the Austrian marking system *“sehr gut”* (excellent) to *“nicht genügend”* (fail) (1 to 5). If such assessment is not possible or inexpedient, a pass shall be marked as *“mit Erfolg teilgenommen”* (successfully completed). In the event of a fail, the regulations for retakes of courses with continuous assessment shall apply. Recognised courses (acc. to recognition of documented knowledge) shall be marked as *“anerkannt”* (recognised).<sup>13</sup>

(2) The grades must in any case be weighted according to ECTS credit points.

(3) In the case of courses taught by more than one person, the relevant lecturer shall be responsible for marking.

(4) Non-attendance of an examination without giving sufficient reason will be assessed as *“nicht genügend”* (fail). Sufficient reasons for non-attendance include circumstances such as illness, accident, death in the family, or caring for a sick or terminally ill family member. Evidence of such circumstances must be provided as soon as possible, but at the latest eight calendar days from the date on which these reasons cease to apply.

---

<sup>12</sup> See § 21 Study and Examination Regulations

<sup>13</sup> see § 18 (2) Study and Examination Regulations

(5) An examination is considered as not having been attended if the student has to abort an examination for a good reason. The head of degree programme shall decide whether there was a good reason for aborting the examination.

(6) The assessment and repeat of internships shall conform with the accreditation application of the relevant degree programme.

(7) The assessment of an examination cannot be appealed against. If the examination procedure is flawed, a complaint can be made within two weeks of notification of the assessment to the head of the degree programme and subsequently within four weeks to the FH Board via the Head of the Board. The head of the degree programme and/or the FH Board have the authority to void the examination. If the irregularity affects all examination candidates, then all examination results will be annulled, except for those examination candidates who oppose it. The time periods for dealing with complaints must be such that students can continue their studies without missing a semester.

(8) The assessment of an examination or a pre-academic or academic student thesis will be declared invalid if the examination results have been obtained fraudulently. The annulled examination shall count towards the total number of examination attempts.

The consequences of fraudulent acts such as plagiarism or ghostwriting shall be subject to Sec. 20 of the FHStG. In addition, the documents "Plagiarism check of pre-academic and academic student theses" and "Guideline for Good Scientific Practice and Prevention of Research Misconduct" as amended and approved by the FH Board shall apply.

## **§ 18. Resits of course examinations**

(1) A failed individual exam of a course can be retaken twice, with the second resit having to be carried out as a board examination, which may be an oral and/or a written examination.

(2) Students who fail the overall performance assessment of courses with continuous assessment or fail to comply with the attendance regulations for the course will be granted an appropriate extension during which they can provide the necessary evidence of achievement (1st retake). The student may be required to provide another adequate evidence of achievement in individual cases.<sup>14</sup> Another fail will automatically require a board examination (2nd retake).

(3) If the examination is retaken, only the assessment of the resit will count.

(4) Passed examinations may be retaken once.<sup>15</sup> This resit will count towards the total number of examination attempts. Again, only the assessment of the resit will count.

(5) Students cannot register for a resit examination until they have received the result of the original one.

---

<sup>14</sup> The extent and content of such adequate evidence of achievement should preferably be defined in the syllabus.

<sup>15</sup> See Sec. 77 ( 1) UG 2002

## § 19. Board retake examinations

(1) Students must be verifiably invited to attend a board retake examination. The invitation must be sent out two weeks prior to the date of the board examination both by registered letter and by e-mail (FH account).

(2) In the case of board retake examinations, the examination senate shall consist of three persons. All members of the examination senate have to be present throughout oral board examinations; if necessary, this obligation can be met through tele-conferencing. The student may appoint a person of trust to be present at the examination.

(3) The student must be informed about the examination modalities prior to the examination. The invitation letter must include the following information in particular:

- in-person exam / online exam
- exam questions provided in writing  
     yes    no
- preparation time  
     yes    no  
    if yes, how long?
- use of aids  
     yes    no  
    if yes, which ones?
- language of examination
- members of the examination senate.

## § 20. Suspending studies and repeating an academic year

(1) Students are entitled to repeat an academic year in a degree programme once<sup>16</sup> as a result of a failed board examination by sending a written request to the head of degree programme within two weeks of the board examination<sup>17</sup>. The student may commence the repeat year in the winter or in the summer semester. The head of degree programme shall decide which passed examinations and courses of the year to be repeated must be retaken in consideration of the purpose of the studies (learning objectives). Examinations assessed as "*Sehr Gut*" (excellent) and "*Gut*" (good) need not be retaken unless a retake is absolutely necessary in order to fulfil the purpose of the course. In any case, failed examinations as well as the relevant courses must be retaken during the repeat year.

(2) Students may suspend their studies for good reasons. An application for suspension of studies for a maximum of three years shall be submitted to the head of degree programme. The reasons for the suspension and the intention to continue need to be convincingly explained in writing. The head of degree programme will take personal, health or professional reasons into account when deciding about the application. Military service, alternative civilian service, pregnancy and childcare are considered good reasons in any case. All other circumstances or events that are equal to the above reasons with regard to their subjective significance are also considered sufficient reasons for a suspension of studies.<sup>18</sup> Once the reasons for the suspension of studies no longer apply the student

---

<sup>16</sup> This means that a student may repeat a year only once in any given degree programme. It is thus not possible to repeat the same academic year twice or to repeat two or more different academic years.

<sup>17</sup> See Sec. 18 (4) FHStG

<sup>18</sup> E.g. longer-term illness, family reasons.

may continue their studies at the beginning of the semester in which they suspended their studies. In justified cases the suspension may be extended or another suspension requested in compliance with the applicable curriculum.

(3) The head of degree programme shall decide on applications for repeating an academic year or suspending studies within one month in writing stating the reasons. If permission is granted to repeat a year the head of degree programme shall also decide on the recognition of successfully completed examinations.

(4) The student shall not be allowed to take examinations from the time of the negative board examination or from the time of approval of the suspension of studies until the resumption of studies at the agreed start of the semester.<sup>19</sup>

(5) Rejected applications for repeats and suspensions of an academic year as well as decisions on the recognition of successfully completed examinations may be appealed against to the FH Board via the Head of the Board within four weeks.

(6) The application for retake or suspension includes a statement that the student accepts any changes in the curriculum or withdrawal of the degree programme and that he/she has no legal right to continue his/her education in the originally agreed form.

(7) If there have been changes in the curriculum that affect the repeat year or the suspension of studies the head of degree programme must provide a substantiated decision about courses to be taken in accordance with the new curriculum. The recognition of courses must be discussed between the student and the head of degree programme and decided by the head of degree programme upon the student's return at the latest.

## **§ 21. Archiving examination documents**

(1) Course examination and internship documents shall be retained in a secure and structured manner by the office of the relevant degree programme.

(2) If an appeal is pending, the course examination and internship documents of the entire class must be retained until the appeal procedure is completed.

(3) In addition, the relevant operating procedure for the archiving of student data shall apply.

## **B. Bachelor's thesis/theses**

### **§ 22. Objective**

Students must write a Bachelor's thesis or several Bachelor's theses in connection with courses as part of the degree programme (Sec. 3 (2) (6) FHStG). In their Bachelor's thesis/theses students must demonstrate that they are able to solve a problem in their subject area within a specific period of time

---

<sup>19</sup> See Sec. 14 FHStG.

under the guidance of a supervisor, and that they are able to present the results appropriately. The size and difficulty of the piece of work must be in appropriate relation to the available time frame.<sup>20</sup>

### **§ 23. Time frame**

(1) It must be ensured that the time necessary to complete a Bachelor's thesis does not exceed the specified workload limits.<sup>21</sup>

(2) Organisationally, this means:

- Sufficient time is available in the relevant semester to write the Bachelor's thesis.
- Topics and supervisors are approved in good time by the head of degree programme.
- The deadline for submission<sup>22</sup> of the final version of the Bachelor's thesis to the relevant supervisor is announced upon assignment of the topic.
- The supervisor must assess the Bachelor's thesis as soon as possible and in any case within four weeks of submission, to ensure that the student can continue his/her studies without interruption.
- A written confirmation of the supervisor's positive assessment of the final version of the Bachelor's thesis must be submitted upon registration for the examination at the latest.
- Registration for the Bachelor's board examination shall be made no later than two weeks prior to the examination date.

Any exceptions are decided on by the head of degree programme.

(3) Once the Bachelor's thesis/theses has/have been positively assessed, the digital final version must be uploaded to the specified system in accordance with the applicable procedure on the date of the Bachelor's examination at the latest. This shall not apply to embargoed theses (§ 28 (3)), which must be handed in to the degree programme as a bound copy on the date of the Bachelor's examination at the latest. Successful examination results can only be confirmed in writing once the thesis has been uploaded or the bound version of the embargoed thesis has been handed in. Bachelor's theses shall be published at least at campus level, with the exception of embargoed Bachelor's theses (see § 28 (3)).

The abstracts of Bachelor's theses must be uploaded separately within the specified period and will be published worldwide. In the event of embargoed theses, students shall be entitled to an anonymised version of the abstract.

The head of the degree programme shall decide based on curricular provisions, whether theses which have been uploaded in digital form must also be handed in to the degree programme as a bound copy.

### **§ 24. Choice of topic**

Students are given the opportunity to make suggestions regarding the topic in the courses specified in the accreditation application. If the relevant lecturers provide several topic options, students may

---

<sup>20</sup> The specific objectives of Bachelor's thesis/theses in the individual degree programmes as well as the relevant courses can be gathered from the accreditation application of the respective degree programme.

<sup>21</sup> specified by ECTS credits. See § 9 Study and Examination Regulations.

<sup>22</sup> The submission deadline is different from the upload date, since a Bachelor's thesis may only be uploaded once it has been positively assessed.

choose one of these topics within an appropriate time period. In any case, the thesis topic must be authorised in writing by the head of degree programme.

## **§ 25. Supervision**

(1) Supervisors shall be lecturers on the degree programme, external lecturers or, in exceptional cases, other experts. Only persons who have knowledge and experience in scientific work and publication and/or who can demonstrate a relevant track record may act as supervisors.

(2) Supervisors shall be selected by the head of degree programme on the basis of objective criteria.

(3) The thesis may be written in English. Upon agreement with the head of degree programme, it may also be written in another foreign language if at least the supervisor speaks that language.

(4) The same resources that are available during regular studies are also available while working on the Bachelor's thesis<sup>23</sup>. Students shall not be entitled to request special resources.

(5) The progress and structure of the Bachelor's thesis shall be discussed with the supervisor.

(6) Several students may collaborate on a topic if the work of individual students can be assessed separately.

(7) Every Bachelor's thesis must contain an abstract in the language in which the thesis is written. The thesis must in any case contain an English abstract. It must also include a table of contents and a bibliography. The digital final version contains an unsigned declaration that the Bachelor's thesis was written by the student him/herself and has not been submitted to another university<sup>24</sup> for the award of an academic degree. The signed declaration must be attached separately. For data protection reasons, the thesis may not contain any personal data (e.g. matriculation numbers, CVs, addresses, signatures, etc.), with the exception of the names of the student and the supervisor. In addition, the documents "Plagiarism check of pre-academic and academic student theses" and "Guideline for Good Scientific Practice and Prevention of Research Misconduct" as amended and approved by the FH Board shall apply.

## **§ 26. Assessment and time period of assessment**

(1) The Bachelor's thesis is assessed based on a catalogue of criteria, which is made known to students in writing at the beginning of the course.

(2) Catalogues of criteria allow a comprehensible and transparent assessment of the thesis by the student's supervisor.

(3) The time period of assessment shall be set to ensure that

- students have sufficient time to write the Bachelor's thesis or Bachelor's theses,
- assessors have four weeks for assessment and, finally,

---

<sup>23</sup> E.g. library, computers and software, workshops, laboratories.

<sup>24</sup> This shall not apply to joint study programmes acc. to Sec. 3a FHStG and jointly offered study programmes acc. to Sec. 3b FHStG.



- students have sufficient time to prepare for the final examination after submission of the Bachelor's thesis or, in the case of several Bachelor's theses, after submission of the second Bachelor's thesis.

(4) Dates are announced at the beginning of each semester by the head of degree programme.

(5) The supervisors and assessors of embargoed theses shall be notified in writing of the confidentiality requirements for such theses by the head of the degree programme and shall confirm this in writing.

## **§ 27. Marking and retakes**

(1) The Bachelor's thesis or Bachelor's theses are marked by the respective thesis supervisor or supervisors.

(2) Bachelor's theses are marked in accordance with the Austrian marking scheme, i.e. with the marks "*Sehr gut*" (excellent) (1), "*Gut*" (good) (2), "*Befriedigend*" (satisfactory) (3) and "*Genügend*" (pass) (4), failed pieces of work are marked as "*Nicht genügend*" (fail) (5).

(3) With regard to assessment and retake options, the regulations for course examinations shall apply. If a Bachelor's thesis has been assessed as failed, the student shall be granted adequate time to rectify his/her mistakes. A new topic or a new supervisor may be chosen in justified exceptional cases.

## **§ 28. Submission, publication and restriction of access**

(1) Bachelor's theses shall be submitted and uploaded in electronic form and published at least at campus level. This shall not apply to embargoed theses (cf. § 28 (3)). Embargoed theses must be handed in to the degree programme as a bound copy. The head of the degree programme may demand that in addition to digital publication, the thesis must also be submitted as a bound copy on the basis of curricular provisions. Such bound copies must be made available by the student at no charge to the degree programme. The number is limited to three bound copies.

(2) Abstracts of Bachelor's theses shall be uploaded in electronic form and published worldwide. In the event of embargoed theses, students shall be entitled to an anonymised version of the abstract. The signed declaration must be uploaded separately for data protection reasons and may not be published.

(3) Upon submission of his or her Bachelor's thesis, the author has the right to request that the submitted work not be made accessible for up to five years after submission<sup>25</sup>. The head of degree programme shall grant this request if the student is able to demonstrate that important legal or economic interests of the student are at risk.

---

<sup>25</sup> See Sec. 19 (3) FHStG

## **C. Bachelor's examination**

### **§ 29. Objective**

The Bachelor's examination is designed to determine whether students have acquired the basic skills and competences defined in the modules of the accreditation application.

### **§ 30. Admission**

(1) Admission to the Bachelor's examination requires the following:

- all courses have been passed,,
- the internship provided for in the accreditation application has been completed successfully,
- the Bachelor's thesis or Bachelor's theses have been approved.

(2) Students shall be suitably informed about their admission to the Bachelor's examination.

### **§ 31. Dates**

(1) The Bachelor's examination dates are set by the head of degree programme at the beginning of the final semester and students will be informed of the dates in good time via the notice board and electronically.

(2) There will be at least two dates per final year.

(3) Candidates will be notified of the names of the examiners as early as possible, but no later than two calendar weeks prior to the examination date.

### **§ 32. Examination organisation**

(1) The Bachelor's examination consists of a board examination in front of an examination senate whose members work in the field; the examination is in principle open to the public. In the event of embargoed Bachelor's theses, the chair of the examination senate must ensure that the Bachelor's examination is not open to the public in order to protect the student's interests.

(2) The examination senates that carry out the Bachelor's examination are put together by the head of degree programme. Including the chairperson, an examination senate shall consist of at least three persons.<sup>26</sup> If the senate is made up of an even number of members, the chair of the examination senate shall have the casting vote.

(3) The head of degree programme shall appoint one member as chairperson of the examination senate.

(4) One examiner shall be named for each examination subject or sub-area. The chairperson may also act as examiner if the examination topic is within his/her field. General exam questions may be asked by any member of the examination senate.

---

<sup>26</sup> The number of persons in the examination senate is specified in the accreditation application.

(5) The board examination consists of an oral examination about the submitted Bachelor's thesis or Bachelor's theses, which may also include a presentation of the Bachelor's thesis or Bachelor's theses, as well as their links to relevant subjects<sup>27</sup> of the curriculum.

(6) In accordance with the regulations specified in the accreditation application, parts of the examination may be held in a foreign language. In that case, students must be notified in advance.

(7) Students must be informed in writing of the assessment criteria and the examination procedure at the beginning of the last semester of study at the latest.

(8) The examination senate shall be notified in writing of the confidentiality requirements for embargoed theses and confirm this in writing.

### **§ 33. Marking**

(1) Bachelor's examinations are marked in accordance with the following assessment scheme:

- Pass: for a passed examination;
- Pass with credit: for an examination that is clearly above average (mark  $>1.5 - \leq 2.0$ );
- Pass with distinction: for an outstanding examination (mark  $\leq 1.5$ );

(2) The result of the Bachelor's examination shall be announced by the chairperson of the examination senate once all candidates that were examined on that day have completed their examination at the latest. If the examination was not passed, reasons must be given.

(3) The Bachelor's examination shall be marked. The marks for the Bachelor's thesis or Bachelor's theses shall not be taken into account. Details on marking can be found in the relevant examination record.<sup>28</sup>

### **§ 34. Retake of Bachelor's examinations**

(1) A failed Bachelor's examination may be retaken twice. A further retake may be granted by application to the FH Board via the Head of the Board within four weeks of notification that the Bachelor's examination has been failed.

(2) The entire Bachelor's examination must be retaken if just one part of the examination was given the mark "*Nicht genügend*" (fail).

(3) The dates for Bachelor's examination retakes shall be between two weeks and six months after the failed examination. The head of degree programme shall set the dates for the retakes within this time frame.

---

<sup>27</sup> "Subjects" shall be taken to mean courses included in the curriculum.

<sup>28</sup> The mark for the Bachelor's examination shall not be taken into account in the average grade for the degree programme.

## **D. Master's or Diploma thesis**

### **§ 35. Objective**

In their Master's or Diploma thesis, students must demonstrate the success of their training on a scientific or creative basis by independently working on a topic relevant to the degree programme.

### **§ 36. Time frame**

- (1) Students can write their Master's or Diploma thesis in a period corresponding to the workload (ECTS credits) specified in the curriculum.
- (2) Topics and supervisors are approved in good time by the head of degree programme.
- (3) The deadline for submission<sup>29</sup> of the final version of the Master's thesis to the supervisor is announced upon assignment of the topic.
- (4) The supervisor of the Master's or Diploma thesis must assess the piece of work as soon as possible and in any case within four weeks of submission, to ensure that the student can continue his/her studies without interruption.
- (5) A written confirmation of the supervisor's approval (positive assessment) of the final version of the Master's or Diploma thesis must be submitted upon registration for the examination at the latest.
- (6) Registration for the final board examination shall be made no later than 4 weeks prior to the examination date.
- (7) Once the thesis has been approved, the digital final version must be uploaded to the specified system in accordance with the applicable procedure on the date of the examination at the latest. This shall not apply to embargoed theses (§ 41 (3)), which must be handed in to the degree programme as a bound copy on the date of the examination at the latest. Successful examination results can only be confirmed in writing once the thesis has been uploaded or the bound version of the embargoed thesis has been handed in. Master's or Diploma theses shall be published worldwide, with the exception of embargoed theses (§ 41).

The abstracts of Master's and Diploma theses must be uploaded separately within the specified period and will be published worldwide. In the event of embargoed theses, students shall be entitled to an anonymised version of the abstract.

The head of the degree programme shall decide based on curricular provisions, whether theses which have been uploaded in digital form must also be handed in to the degree programme as a bound copy.

### **§ 37. Choice of topic**

Suggestions for a Master's or Diploma thesis topic are made by the student, a lecturer or an interested party from industry or administration. The student must find a lecturer on the degree programme to supervise the thesis and agree on a topic with the supervisor. The topic and the supervisor must be

---

<sup>29</sup> The submission deadline is different from the upload date, since a Master's or Diploma thesis may only be uploaded once it has been positively assessed.

approved in writing by the head of degree programme and documented in the degree programme office.

### **§ 38. Supervision**

(1) Supervisors shall be lecturers on the degree programme, external lecturers or, in exceptional cases, other experts who have knowledge and experience in scientific work and publication and who can demonstrate a relevant track record. Which persons are eligible to act as supervisor will be decided by the head of degree programme on the basis of objective criteria.

(2) A plan of progression and a time schedule shall be worked out between the supervisor and the student, and if necessary with the companies involved. The supervisor must generally make sure that the topic is chosen in such a way that it can be realistically completed within the available time frame and that the topic is suitable for demonstrating the student's qualification.

(3) The supervisor must be regularly informed about the progress of the work by the student. In general, the Master's or Diploma thesis must be written independently by the student. The supervisor must inform the student as soon as he/she realises that the thesis may not be sufficient for a pass. Advice may also be given by other members of the teaching and research staff or by the head of degree programme.

(4) Several students may collaborate on a topic if the work of individual students can be assessed separately. However, it must be clearly indicated which part the student worked on independently.

(5) Every Master's or Diploma thesis must contain an abstract in the language in which the thesis is written. The thesis must in any case contain an English abstract. It must also include a table of contents and a bibliography. The digital final version contains an unsigned declaration that the Master's or Diploma thesis was written by the student him/herself and has not been submitted to another university<sup>30</sup> for the award of an academic degree. The signed declaration must be attached separately. For data protection reasons, the thesis may not contain any personal data (e.g. matriculation numbers, CVs, addresses, signatures, etc.), with the exception of the names of the student and the supervisor. In addition, the documents "Plagiarism check of pre-academic and academic student theses" and "Guideline for Good Scientific Practice and Prevention of Research Misconduct" as amended and approved by the FH Board shall apply.

(6) The thesis may be written in English. Upon agreement with the head of degree programme, the thesis may also be written in another language if at least the supervisor speaks that language.

(7) The same resources that are available during regular studies are also available while working on the Master's or Diploma thesis. Students shall not be entitled to request special resources.

### **§ 39. Assessment and time period of assessment**

(1) The Master's or Diploma thesis is assessed based on a catalogue of criteria, which is made known to students at the beginning of the final semester.

---

<sup>30</sup> This shall not apply to joint study programmes acc. to Sec. 3a FHStG and jointly offered study programmes acc. to Sec. 3b FHStG.

(2) Catalogues of criteria allow a comprehensible and transparent assessment of the thesis by the student's supervisor.

(3) The time period of assessment shall be set to ensure that

- students have sufficient time to write the Master's or Diploma thesis,
- assessors have sufficient time for assessment and, finally,
- after submission of the Master's or Diploma thesis, students have sufficient time to prepare for the final examination.

(4) Dates are announced at the beginning of each semester.

(5) The assessors shall be notified in writing of the confidentiality requirements for embargoed theses and confirm this in writing.

#### **§ 40. Marking and retakes**

(1) Master's or Diploma theses are marked by the respective supervisor.

(2) Master's or Diploma theses are marked in accordance with the Austrian marking scheme, i.e. with the marks "*Sehr gut*" (excellent) (1), "*Gut*" (good) (2), "*Befriedigend*" (satisfactory) (3) and "*Genügend*" (pass) (4), failed pieces of work are marked as "*Nicht genügend*" (fail) (5).

(3) With regard to assessment and retake options, the regulations for course examinations shall apply. If a Master's or Diploma thesis has been assessed as failed, the student shall be granted adequate time to rectify his/her mistakes. A new topic or a new supervisor may be chosen in justified exceptional cases.

#### **§ 41. Submission, publication and restriction of access**

(1) Master's and Diploma theses shall be submitted and uploaded in electronic form and published worldwide. This shall not apply to embargoed theses (cf. § 41 (3)). Embargoed theses must be handed in to the degree programme as a bound copy. The head of the degree programme may demand that in addition to digital publication, the thesis must also be submitted as a bound copy on the basis of curricular provisions. Such bound copies must be made available by the student at no charge to the degree programme. The number is limited to three bound copies.

(2) Abstracts of Master's and Diploma theses shall be uploaded in electronic form and published worldwide. In the event of embargoed theses, students shall be entitled to publication of an anonymised version of the abstract. The signed declaration must be uploaded separately for data protection reasons and may not be published.

(3) Upon submission of an academic paper, the author has the right to request that the submitted work not be made accessible for up to five years after submission. The head of degree programme shall grant this request if the student is able to demonstrate that important legal or economic interests of the student are at risk.

## **E. Final examinations in Master's and Diploma degree programmes**

### **§ 42. Objective**

(1) The final examination is designed to determine whether students have acquired the basic skills and competences defined in the modules of the accreditation applications.

(2) The final examination that concludes a Master's or Diploma degree programme is a general examination consisting of a Master's or Diploma thesis and a board examination.

(3) The board examination is not made up of several partial exams, but rather is one exam consisting of several parts, i.e. the entire board examination must be retaken if just one part has been assessed as failed.

### **§ 43. Admission**

(1) Admission to the final board examination requires the following:

- all courses have been passed;
- the Master's or Diploma thesis has been approved.

(2) Students shall be properly informed about their admission to the final board examination.

### **§ 44. Dates**

(1) The dates for the final examinations are set by the head of degree programme at the beginning of the final semester and students will be informed of the dates in good time via the notice board and electronically.

(2) There will be at least two dates per final year.

(3) Candidates shall be notified of the names of the examiners no later than two weeks prior to the date of the examination.

### **§ 45. Examination organisation**

(1) The final examination consists of a board examination in front of an examination senate whose members work in the field; the examination is in principle open to the public. In the event of embargoed Master's or Diploma theses, the chair of the examination senate must ensure that the Master's or Diploma examination is not open to the public in order to protect the student's interests.

(2) The examination senates that carry out the final examination are put together by the head of degree programme. Including the chairperson, an examination senate shall consist of at least three persons.<sup>31</sup> If the senate is made up of an even number of members, the chair of the examination senate shall have the casting vote.

(3) The head of degree programme shall appoint one member as chairperson of the examination senate.

---

<sup>31</sup> The number of persons in the examination senate is specified in the accreditation application.

(4) One examiner must be named for each examination subject or sub-area. The chairperson may also act as examiner if the examination topic is within his/her field. General exam questions may be asked by any member of the examination senate.

(5) The head of degree programme determines the combination of subjects. Students have the right to submit their own suggestions.

(6) In accordance with the regulations specified in the accreditation application, parts of the examination may be held in a foreign language. In that case, students must be notified in advance.

(7) The board examination includes the following parts:

1. presentation of the Master's or Diploma thesis;
2. an oral examination that connects the topic of the Master's or Diploma thesis with the relevant subjects<sup>32</sup> in the curriculum, as well as
3. an oral examination about other subjects relevant to the curriculum.

(8) Students shall be informed in writing of the assessment criteria and the examination procedure at the beginning of the last semester of study at the latest.

(9) The examination senate shall be notified in writing of the confidentiality requirements for embargoed theses and confirm this in writing.

#### **§ 46. Marking**

(1) Final board examinations are marked in accordance with the following assessment scheme:

- Pass: for a passed final examination;
- Pass with credit: for an examination that is clearly above average (mark >1.5 - ≤2.0);
- Pass with distinction: for an outstanding examination (mark ≤1.5);

(2) The result of the final examination shall be announced once all candidates that were examined on that day have completed their examination at the latest. If the examination was not passed, reasons must be given.

(3) The mark for the Master's or Diploma thesis must be taken into account in the mark for the final examination as the Master's or Diploma thesis is a final degree thesis. An overall grade must be awarded for the Master's or Diploma examination. Details on marking can be found in the relevant examination record.<sup>33</sup>

#### **§ 47. Retake of final examinations**

(1) A failed final board examination may be retaken twice. A further retake may be granted by application to the FH Board via the Head of the Board within four weeks of notification that the final examination has been failed.

---

<sup>32</sup> "Subjects" shall be taken to mean courses included in the curriculum.

<sup>33</sup> The mark for the Master's or Diploma examination shall not be taken into account in the average grade for the degree programme.



(2) The entire final examination must be retaken if just one part of the examination was given the mark “Nicht genügend“ (fail).

(3) The dates for final examination retakes shall be between two weeks and six months after the failed examination. The head of degree programme shall set the dates for the retakes within this time frame.

## F. Concluding Provisions

### § 48. Average grades and assessments

(1) The grade point average  $\bar{x}$  is defined as the average of all course grades (weighted according to ECTS credits) achieved by all graduates who have completed the degree programme in the previous 3 years and is shown in a separate Annex according to the following table:

Grade point average	Number of students*	Percentage distribution
$1.0 \leq \bar{x} \leq 1.5$		
$1.5 < \bar{x} \leq 2.0$		
$2.0 < \bar{x} \leq 2.5$		
$2.5 < \bar{x} \leq 3.0$		
$\bar{x} > 3.0$		

\* The figures in the column “Number of students” refer to all students of the degree programme/postgraduate course who have completed their studies (according to the relevant curriculum) with the corresponding grade point average in the past 3 years (if available).

(2) Assessments of Bachelor’s, Master’s and Diploma examinations are shown in a separate Annex according to the following table:

Assessment of Bachelor’s, Master’s or Diploma examination	Number of students *	Percentage distribution
Pass		
Pass with credit		
Pass with distinction		

\* The figures in the column “Number of students” refer to all students of the degree programme/postgraduate course who have completed their studies (according to the relevant curriculum) with the corresponding assessment in the past 3 years (if available).

Pass: for a passed examination

Pass with credit: for an examination that is clearly above average

Pass with distinction: for an outstanding examination

### § 49 Withdrawal of the academic degree

The FH Board shall repeal and withdraw the notice of award if it subsequently turns out that the academic degree or academic title has been obtained fraudulently, in particular through falsification of certificates or misrepresentation of scientific or artistic achievements.

### **III. Requests to the FH Board, deadlines, remedies**

#### **§ 50 Deadline of request/complaint to FH Board**

(1) Any requests submitted to the FH Board (in particular pursuant to FHStG and/or these Study and Examination Regulations), especially requests based on a preceding decision of a head of degree programme, must be received by the Head of the Board no later than four weeks after the relevant case, unless expressly provided otherwise.

(2) The requests shall be sent to the Head of the FH Board by post or by email to [kollegiumsleitung@fh-joanneum.at](mailto:kollegiumsleitung@fh-joanneum.at).