

Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development
Faculty of Forest and Environment
STUDY and EXAMINATION REGULATIONS
for the International Master Study Programme
***Forestry System Transformation* (“Master of Science”)**

*dated 08.11.2017 in the version of the **third amendment statute dated 10.02.2021**
valid from winter semester 2021/2022*

Only the original German version of these regulations is legally valid.

The Faculty Board of the Faculty of Forest and Environment of Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development issued the following third amendment statute to the Study and Examination Regulations on 10.02.2021:

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§1 Scope

These regulations shall determine the objective, contents, structure and sequence of the degree programme and the examination modalities for the *Master of Science* in the 4-semester *Forestry System Transformation degree programme* based on the Framework University and Examination Regulations of the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (HNEE) dated 23 March 2016. The regulations shall be supplemented by the curriculum and the module descriptions.

§ 2 Subject and objectives of the study programme

Students on this interdisciplinary and application-based degree programme shall earn the academic degree of Master of Science via the acquisition of theoretical and practical analytical knowledge and skills in the fields of forest resource management, ecological economics and environmental governance. The degree programme aims to produce interdisciplinary experts who are capable of understanding and assessing the abundance of forest ecosystems, forest functions and forest goods and services at the conceptual and methodological level and can develop stratagems for their sustainable provision based on innovative and sustainable management concepts, financial incentive systems and cooperative governance strategies. Graduates will acquire competence in the multi-criterial/holistic assessment of the opportunities and risks associated with available management strategies, including their social-ecological impact. In this context, multifunctional forest resource management concepts will be combined with concepts, methods and practical examples of ecologically- and socially-minded forest resource economics. This perspective is supplemented with the principles of environmental governance, transformation and innovation research, system modelling and a participative and adaptive institutional design. To this end, the students will acquire the natural, social, human and economic science expertise required to apply their knowledge in practice. Upon completion of the study programme, graduates will be capable of implementing the analytic, planning and design processes associated with future-oriented, integrated and sustainable forest resource management on an independent basis and with specific consideration of the subjects of institutional design and innovation potential. The aim of the Forestry System Transformation degree programme is to enhance the students' knowledge and practical methodological skills in the field of forest ecosystem management and the sustainable use / preservation of forest resources and to relate such knowledge to different action levels in the management of complex socioecological systems, from the local level (identification of cultivation alternatives) to the global level (international environment and forestry policy). The students will develop an understanding of the various effects of changing conditions and changing use of forest resources on forest ecosystems, the provision of forest ecosystem goods and services and the associated value-added chains. In specific, the degree programme will examine socioecological interdependencies and will approach the recording and evaluation of forest ecosystem services and the coordination of forest resource use from the perspective of central institutional analysis and ecological economics. The course will cover analysis of development dynamics, current status and future development options of forest ecosystems, their services and social requirements in both rural and urban areas. These aspects shall be further examined from a social science perspective and will be discussed with reference to ecosystem processes and ecological limits.

§ 3 Learning and study programme objectives

In terms of demand and practical application at work, the specific course objectives shall prepare graduates for the following application areas:

- Consultation of forestry or forestry-related companies as well as companies working in the bioeconomy focussing on forest ecosystem cultivation and the identification of cultivation alternatives
- Development of strategies promoting innovation- and transformation-based approaches in the field of sustainable natural resource use;
- Political consulting for public administrations on the integration of ecosystem goods and services and utilisation potential in spatial development;
- Further academic education.

The following skills will be taught to achieve these objectives:

- System theoretical, technical and methodical expertise in natural science and social science with a socio-economic focus;
- Competence to make decisions and act in the field of natural resource management with a view to diverse ecosystem goods and services/bundles between the opposing poles of social demands and ecosystem-related limits to the cultivation of forest ecosystems
- Presentation and communication skills
- Ability to work in a team, presentation and conflict-resolution skills
- Soft skills in the field of international and interdisciplinary project and research work.

§ 4 Consecutivity and image

The consecutive Master's study programme follows on from the International Forest Ecosystem Management (B.Sc.) and Forestry (B.Sc.) bachelor programmes and is also suitable for applicants with other bachelor degrees relating to (forest) ecosystems/sustainable natural resource management and socio-ecological system research.

This includes, in particular, degree programmes in the following fields:

- agriculture and forestry, agricultural and forestry sciences;
- nature conservation, environmental sciences (excluding environmental technology);
- environmental and resource economics
- teaching qualifications in the above areas of science, provided both teaching subjects are part of the above areas of science.

§ 5 Admission to the study programme

- (1) The course shall start in the winter semester of each year.
- (2) In the case of restricted admission, German candidates may apply directly to HNEE until 15 July of each year. International applicants (i.e. all applicants whose first degree was not awarded in Germany) may apply until 1 May of each year. International student applications are subject to an external and fee-based preliminary assessment by UNI-ASSIST (service office for international student applications; www.uni-assist.de).
- (3) Admission requirements for the Master's study programme consist of
 - a first vocational university degree (Bachelor, Diplom, Diplom (FH), Magister or Master) with an official study period of at least 6 semesters or with a scope of at least 180 ECTS credits and
 - evidence of English language proficiency pursuant to § 5 (5).
- (4) If applicants do not have any knowledge of forest ecosystems and sustainable management of natural resources at the time of admission, they may be admitted for a limited period of time. At the beginning of the first semester, the course "Forest Ecology and Forest Management" is offered. This course, which is offered to all students, is mandatory for those students who have been granted temporary admission based on their lack of specialized knowledge. Proof of successful completion of "Forest Ecology and Management" must be provided by the time students re-register for the second semester. The head of the study program decides on the recognition of any externally acquired forest-related basic knowledge in consultation with the examination board.
- (5) As a requirement for admission, all candidates must demonstrate a good knowledge of English: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) with at least level B2, or comparable qualifications. A copy of the relevant language certificate must be submitted for the equivalence test. Applicants with English as their official or educational language in their home country are not required to submit an English language certificate. The verification of the official or educational language of a country is carried out by UNI-ASSIST and is based on the respective current country information of the Foreign Office. Grad-

uates of English-language degree programmes, such as the degree programme "International Forest Ecosystem Management" (B.Sc.) at the HNEE, do not have to provide any further language certificates. If applicants do not have suitable proof of English at the time of admission, they can be admitted for a limited period of time. The corresponding proof must then be provided by the time of re-registration for the second semester. Knowledge of the German language is not a requirement for admission.

- (6) In the case of restricted admission, the number of available places shall be published every year in the State of Brandenburg's Admissions Numbers Regulation. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available places, the places shall be allocated in accordance with the University Admission Act of the State of Brandenburg (BbgHZG) and the State of Brandenburg's Regulation Pertaining to the Allocation of Places at Universities and Colleges in Courses with Restricted Numbers (HZV) as well as the statutes of the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development pertaining to the selection of students in degree courses with locally restricted admission as amended.

§ 6 Structure and crediting of the study programme

- (1) The official study period is four semesters. The full-time degree programme is divided into:
- 1st semester: Students will acquire the fundamental skills in the fields of analysis, strategy and instruments that enable them to identify the status quo of forest ecosystems and management, social developments, governance systems and institutional framework conditions.
 - 2nd semester: Focus on sustainability-based transformation strategies in the field of forest ecosystem management, their implementation and evaluation.
 - 3rd semester: Independent research project (and hence thematic deepening) at HNEE or a selected institution in Germany or abroad, accompanied by a research colloquium.
 - 4th semester: Master thesis and its defence; additional participation in the Master thesis colloquium.
- (2) In the context of the independent research project to be completed in the third semester, projects that correspond to 24 ECTS credits (as a rule 12 weeks + 3 weeks for the project report) shall be planned in consultation with the course director. In the context of the research project, students shall carry out independent, in-depth study of contents in the field of Forestry System Transformation. The project shall be implemented at a suitable business enterprise, association, authority, organisation or other institution in Germany or abroad. During the research project, an accompanying research colloquium shall be held.
- (3) The programme is not designed for part-time study.
- (4) From the first semester onwards, students may specialise by choosing elective modules from one of the following two areas of specialisation:
- I. Forest Management Strategies for Ecosystem Service Provision (FMS) or
 - II. Transformation and Innovation (T&I)

The requirements applying to the recognition of the area of specialisation shall be met when students:

1. attend an elective module from the chosen area of specialisation in the first and second semester and has thus acquired a total of 12 ECTS credit points and
2. in the third semester, the student has completed a topic-relevant project work from the selected specialization, which must be confirmed by the head of the study program.

The choice of an area of specialisation is not mandatory.

- (5) The structure and objective of the course and classes is set out in the curriculum. The curriculum is part of these University and Examination Regulations (see Appendix 1).
- (6) The entire degree course is modular and includes mandatory and elective modules. The language of instruction is English.

- (7) On successful completion of the module examinations and assessments, credits shall be awarded in accordance with the European Credit transfer System (ECTS). As a rule, students are required to earn a total of 30 credits per semester in all available modules (mandatory and elective). The workload corresponding to 1 ECTS credit is 30 hours. The minimum number of credits needed for the master's degree is 300 ECTS credits including the preceding bachelor degree. 120 of these credits should be earned in the Forestry System Transformation degree programme, based on a completed degree with a minimum of 180 ECTS credits. 108 ECTS credits shall be awarded in mandatory modules and 12 ECTS credits in elective modules.
- (8) In addition, further modules may be taken as elective modules pursuant to Section 5 para. 3 RSPO. These modules shall not contribute to the credits according to paragraph 5; however, on application, they may be mentioned on the students' certificate.
- (9) The ECTS credits students must earn in the elective modules may be transferred from one semester to another. Provided the respective conditions are met, students may take elective modules from higher semesters or, in exceptional cases, catch up on such modules from earlier semesters. For mandatory modules from higher semesters, students shall submit a respective application to the examination committee.
- (10) A curricular exception exists in the form of 'specialisation modules' (not part of elective modules in the curriculum). These modules serve to elaborate on and explicitly supplement the curriculum courses and shall comply with the objectives of the degree programme as stated in Section 3. Specialisation modules may consist of currently added courses within the chosen degree programme or courses from other master's programmes (e.g. master's programmes offered at HNEE or other universities). As a rule, students may take such modules once during the study period and will earn 6 ECTS credits for this. If the chosen specialisation module provides less than 6 ECTS credits, students shall earn any credits missing from the 120 ECTS credits required for the award of the master's degree by attending further modules. Specialisation modules require an application by the students and the approval of the study programme director. In the case of exceeding the maximum number of ECTS credit points that can be credited, the excess credit points of the respective modules will be cancelled and not be taken into account for the credit points for the calculation of the overall grade of the degree.
- (11) Elective modules may not be chosen more than once. If the number of applicants exceeds the places offered for the respective elective module, applications in the semester in which the elective module is offered according to the curriculum shall take priority. 10% of places may be awarded directly by lecturers. As a rule, registration and selection for the elective and elective modules takes place at the beginning of the examination period of the preceding semester (exception: in the first semester, registration and selection takes place in the first week of the lecture period).

§7 Type, scope and assessment of examinations

- (1) The type and scope of the module examinations are specified in the curriculum and the module descriptions. As a rule, exams shall be held at the end of the respective module (in the case of block modules) or during the examination period of the respective semester.
- (2) The projects planned and carried out in the context of the independent research project in the third semester require the course director's prior approval (see Appendix 1). Projects shall be assessed by project supervisors / examiners who are appointed by the head of the study programme.
- (3) In the case of oral examinations, which take the form of oral reports by groups of students during classes, one examiner is generally sufficient.
- (4) A module examination is passed if the module grade is at least "sufficient" (4,0). If several graded examinations (partial examinations) are to be completed in a module, the overall grade is calculated from the arithmetic mean of the partial grades, taking into account the weighting of the partial examinations defined

in the curriculum. All (partial) examinations in a module must be passed. It is not possible to offset examinations that have already been passed against examinations that have not been passed.

- (5) If a subject cannot be taught due to an insufficient number of participants (<5) students shall be divided among the remaining elective modules.
- (6) On registration for an elective module, the corresponding module shall be treated as a mandatory module with regard to examinations. Hence, the students shall be automatically registered for the associated module examinations.
- (7) The type and scope of the academic performance achieved during the course shall be accredited according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Credits shall be accumulated in order to earn the master's degree. Accordingly, candidates shall pass the master's examination if a) they have passed all module examinations with a grade of "sufficient" or higher; b) they have passed the independent research project with a grade of "sufficient" or higher; c) they have completed the master thesis including its defence with a grade of "sufficient" or higher.
- (8) The overall grade of the master examination is calculated as the average grade composed of the weighted individual module grades. The weighting corresponds to the award of credit points under the ECTS scheme.

§ 8 Examination deadlines and resits

- (1) Students are required to take the module examinations required to pass the semester (as a rule 30 ECTS credits) by the end of each semester. Except in cases of illness, students must deregister from examinations no later than 7 calendar days before the start of the examination using the HNEE Campus Management System. In the case of unexcused non-attendance, students will be deemed to have failed the examination. Where candidates cannot attend an examination due to illness, they are required to submit a doctor's certificate confirming their incapacity to attend within three working days of the examination date. In the case of a negligent delay, students will be deemed to have failed the examination.
- (2) As a rule, resits are offered during the examination period of the subsequent semester.
- (3) Failed exams may be repeated twice, with the exception of the master thesis and its defence.

§ 9 Master thesis and defence

- (1) The study programme includes a scientific master thesis corresponding to 26 ECTS credits and its defence which corresponds to 4 ECTS credits.
- (2) Candidates are responsible for obtaining the subject of their master thesis and finding a supervisor, who will usually act as first assessor, as well as a second assessor. The subject of the master thesis may be issued or confirmed by professors or honorary professors representing the respective specialist area in the Faculty of Forest and Environment.
- (3) In conjunction with the registration, students shall submit a written exposé of the envisaged master thesis to their supervisor. Candidates have a maximum of 4 weeks to complete the master thesis. In justified exceptions an extension of max. 2 months can be granted. The corresponding decision is taken by the examination committee on a case-by-case basis.
- (4) The master thesis shall be registered with the faculty director's offices and put on record.
- (5) The subject of the final thesis shall not be issued before students have successfully achieved a significant majority of the required academic and examination performance, as a rule after the successful achievement of an academic and examination performance of at least 75% (= 67 ECTS credits) of the required

total number of credits less the credits earned by the master thesis and its defence. After the successful achievement of the required academic and examination performance, the subject of the thesis shall be issued no later than four weeks after the registration. If the registration is not effected after the required examination performance has been achieved or if no extension has been applied for or complied with, the master thesis is deemed to be a fail.

- (6) The form of the master thesis shall conform with the scientific reporting standards.
- (7) In consultation with the person in charge of the specialist area, the thesis may be written either in German or in English. All theses which are not written in German shall include a German summary.
- (8) On registering their thesis, candidates shall declare whether they agree to the publication of their master thesis or parts thereof by the university and the granting of the respective use and exploitation rights to the university, as well as to the withdrawal of the exploitation rights during the blocking period if the master thesis is blocked for library use.
- (9) The subject of the thesis may be returned no more than once within four weeks of registration. The reregistration shall be effected within four weeks. The examination committee shall decide on any exceptions on request.
- (10) At least one of the bound copies (for the 1st examiner) of the Master's thesis is to be provided with a digital storage medium (e.g. CD, DVD, USB) on which the copy of the entire thesis as well as all basic data and metadata used for the thesis (in an editable format, e.g. docx, xlsx, etc.) are included. The submission date shall be recorded by the dean's secretariat. As part of the thesis, candidates shall confirm in writing that they have written the master thesis themselves – in case the work was done in a group that they have written their section of the work themselves – and that they have used no sources or aids other than those specified.
- (11) Furthermore, at least one of the 4 hardcover copies (for the 1st assessor) of the master thesis shall be submitted in conjunction with a suitable storage medium containing a copy of the entire work (preferably in MS Word format) as well as all basic and metadata related to the work.
- (12) The master thesis shall be assessed by two assessors. The arithmetic mean of the two grades, which shall be "sufficient" or higher, shall account for 70% of the overall thesis grade. Where the grades of the two assessments deviate by more than 1,0, a third assessment shall be carried out. In this case, the overall grade shall be the arithmetic mean of the three assessment grades, which shall be "sufficient" or higher. The third assessor shall be appointed by the examination committee.
- (13) The thesis and its defence shall be assessed by a minimum of two examiners in the specialist area to which the thesis relates. At least one examiner, usually the first examiner, shall have the qualifications required under the Brandenburg University and College Act and hold an independent, autonomous teaching position in the respective specialist area at the university. This examiner may also be a junior professor in the specialist area.
- (14) The master thesis shall be assessed within a period of six weeks.
- (15) The blocking period or release of the master thesis for library use shall be stated in all deposit copies.
- (16) Masters theses are to be archived.
- (17) Where students fail the master thesis including its defence, this examination may be repeated once provided the maximum study period is not exceeded. In the event of repetition, the final thesis shall be registered no later than 6 months after the announcement of the results of the first examination attempt. The right to repeat the examination shall expire if the deadline is not complied with.

- (18) The thesis may be completed by a group of no more than 3 students if the individual candidate's contribution, which will be assessed as his or her examination performance, can be clearly distinguished and is assessable based on the use of sections, page numbers or other objective criteria.
- (19) The master thesis shall be completed with its defence. The defence grade, which shall be "sufficient" or higher, accounts for 30% of the overall thesis grade. The public examination shall be divided into a 20-minute presentation and a subsequent 30-minute discussion. The defence shall take place soon after the thesis assessments have been submitted. Exceptions shall be decided by the examination committee. The examination committee shall consist of a minimum of two lecturers.

§ 10 Graduation

- (1) Once the master's examination has been passed, a Master of Science degree shall be awarded. The common international abbreviation "M.Sc." shall apply.
- (2) The master degree certificate (transcript of records), the master's degree document and the diploma supplement shall be issued in German and English. The certificate shall contain all module examination grades and the master thesis grade and shall list the overall weighted grade in accordance with the academic credits achieved as well as the area of specialisation if applicable. The final certificate shall bear the date of the last examination required to complete the degree programme.

§ 11 Entry into force and transitional provisions

- (1) These Study and Examination Regulations shall enter into force on the day of their publication on the HNE Eberswalde website.
- (2) The Regulations shall apply to all students who enrol for the Forestry System Transformation master's degree after these University and Examination Regulations have entered into force at HNE Eberswalde.
- (3) The study and examination regulations of the Master's degree programme Forest System Transformation, with validity from the winter semester 2018/2019 (first SPO), with validity from the winter semester 2019/2020 (first amendment regulation) and with validity from the winter semester 2020/2021 (second amendment) shall expire after the expiry of twice the standard period of study after the entry into force of these regulations. Corresponding examination procedures must have been completed by this time. Students who have not completed their studies by the time the study and examination expires, lose their right to take examinations.

Appendix to the Study and Examination Regulations:

- (1) Curriculum and module descriptions
- (2) Diploma supplement