



JACOBS
UNIVERSITY

Policies for Master Studies

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Disclaimer:

These policies are subject to compliance with Bremer Higher Education Act (BremHG). Changes to these policies are possible under the provision of 1.2 “Changing these Policies”.

1. About these Policies

1.1. Scope of these Policies

These policies are valid for all master programs leading to a Master of Science or Master of Arts degree. In addition to these policies, all master programs have program-specific regulations. In cases of conflict, the Policies for Master Studies apply. Exceptions are possible for joint programs offered in cooperation with partner institutions.

1.2. Changing these Policies

Changes of the Policies for Master Studies are decided upon by the Academic Senate.

2. Definitions

2.1. Master Studies

Master studies at Jacobs University comprise master programs that are organized in master modules, master courses and all other components of master programs.

2.2. Master Programs, Degrees and Certificates

Jacobs University offers academic master programs and executive (i.e. professional) master programs. Master programs consist of a predefined set of modules. They include coursework and a master's thesis. Upon successful completion of a master program (i.e. when meeting all necessary graduation requirements), students are awarded a Master of Arts (M.A.) or a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree. A student may complete the requirements for a master program at any time during the academic year. The regular study period for the master's degree is four subject semesters (Fachsemester), unless a different standard study period is defined in the program handbook. The list of master programs offered by Jacobs University and the degrees awarded is published on the university website.

2.3. Master Modules

Master programs are structured in modules. In general, modules consist of at least two courses. Master modules may also include components other than courses. For each course and each other component of a master module, a fixed amount of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credit points is awarded to the student upon successful completion.

2.4. Master Courses/Module Components

Master courses are individual courses offered within a master program. Master courses are assigned to a master module and thus constitute module components. Master courses include lectures, seminars, laboratory courses and other types of instruction. Master courses entail a predefined student workload which is specified in ECTS credit points.

2.5. Student

For the purpose of these policies, a student is someone who is enrolled in a master program at Jacobs University.

2.6. ECTS Credit Points

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

2.7. Program Coordinator

Every master program has a Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator carries the responsibility for the academic coordination of the study program.

2.8. Academic Advisor

Every student is assigned to a specific faculty member for academic advising. Students may change their Academic Advisor.

2.9. Program Handbook

Every master program has a program handbook for each of his cohorts. The program handbooks contain the program-specific graduation requirements including a reference to the Policies for Master Studies.

2.10. Academic Terms

At Jacobs University, the academic year is divided into a Fall semester and a Spring semester. The January Intersession belongs to the Fall semester. Mandatory courses can be scheduled for the Intersession period. Therefore, students are expected to be present during the Intersession, if they have to attend mandatory courses relevant for their studies. Classes and Exams are usually scheduled from Monday to Friday. Students should be prepared to also attend extraordinary Saturday sessions and exams. Specific dates and deadlines are published in the official Academic Calendar.

3. Course Administration

3.1. Registration

Every semester, students must register for the courses relevant for their master program. The deadlines for registration are published each semester by the Student Records Office. The university reserves the right to cancel a course in case fewer than 5 students have registered for it.

If a student is not formally registered for a course, no grade can be awarded for that course, even if the student completes the work for it. If a student is formally registered for a course, the Instructor of Record must provide a result for that student at the end of the semester even if the student has not participated in the course.

Some courses have pre-requisites that must be fulfilled before registration. Additionally, they may have co-requisites which require students to register in parallel to one or more associated course(s).

Students may be exempted from the pre- or co-requisite requirement upon approval by the Instructor of Record and/or the Program Coordinator.

3.2. Grading

Courses at Jacobs University are graded by the Instructor of Records on the basis of a percentage scheme. The percentages can be converted to a numerical grade. Respective grading tables can be found on the university's website.

A course is passed with a grade of 4.33 or better. ECTS credits are awarded as soon as the course is passed.

The Student Records Office calculates the cumulative grade point average (GPA). All courses in which the student received a grade (except for courses in the Further Courses Area) are included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA weighted by credits.

The deadline for submitting final grades for the Fall semester is the subsequent end of January, for the Spring semester the subsequent end of June, or a workday close to these dates as specified in the Academic Calendar.

3.3. Further Courses Area

In addition to courses that are required for graduation students may register for further courses. Credits obtained in these courses do not count towards the credits needed for graduation and are not included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA, but appear on the transcript. In case that students complete more courses within a module or more modules than the number of courses/modules which is required for graduation, the additional courses/modules may be moved to the Further Courses Area.

3.4. Drop/Add

During a period of two weeks after the beginning of classes, students have the opportunity to change their study plan by dropping and/or adding courses. The drop/add deadline is published each semester in the Academic Calendar.

Under special circumstances, courses can be dropped or added after the official drop/add deadline. A course can only be late dropped or added before the end of classes. The Student Records Office is responsible for the final decision on late drops and adds after consulting with the Instructor of Record for the course and the student's Academic Advisor.

3.5. Pass Option

Students may request, upon consultation with the Academic Advisor, for the grade of one passed course to be excluded from the calculation of the GPA and to be replaced by a 'P' (for pass) on the transcript under the following conditions and limitations:

- No more than one Pass Option may be applied during the entire graduate degree program.
- The Pass Option may not be applied on a failed course or on the Master's thesis.
- The Pass Option can be applied at any point before graduation, but for all internal grade-based evaluations the actual grade in the course will be considered.
- Once applied, the Pass Option cannot be reverted into a grade or reassigned to a different course.
- If a student retakes a course formerly designated as pass in a subsequent semester, the title of the course and the grade of the retake appear on the transcript. The grade is counted towards the GPA. It is not possible to use the pass option of this course for any other course.

3.6. Failed Courses and Reassessment Option

If a student has failed a course, he/she may opt to have the course reassessed. In addition, students may choose to have one passed course reassessed in order to improve the grade.

The following conditions apply:

- It is at the discretion of the Instructor of Records to specify whether the student may take a make-up exam in order to have the final exam reassessed or whether the student must retake the entire course.
- In case that the student may take a make-up exam, the student must inform the Student Records Office that he/she opts to have the result of the final examination reassessed no later than 10 working days after the publication of the final course grade. The request is binding and cannot be revoked.
- The Instructor of Records decides on the appropriate format and length of the reassessment of the final exam and schedules it. Students must inform themselves about all reassessment formalities.
- If a student is required to retake the entire course, he/she must inform the Student Records Office no later than by the end of the drop/add period of the semester in which he/she intends to retake the course. The Student Records Office will register the student for the course and the student must attend all classes and participate in all exams.
- Only one reassessment option for a course which has been passed is available during the entire graduate degree program.
- The reassessment option may not be applied to the Master's thesis.
- The grade of the reassessment will appear on the transcript.
- Courses are definitively failed after three unsuccessful attempts at passing them (one initial attempt and two reassessments).

3.7. Incomplete Course Work

Students may request in unusual circumstances a temporary incomplete grade for any course for which they are currently registered, indicated by an "I" on the initial grade report. An "I" will be assigned only in cases where a student receives permission from the Instructor of Record to turn in coursework after the end of the semester. The Instructor of Record must communicate a grade penalty for late submission if applicable.

The student must fulfill the missing requirements within the Deadline for Submitting Incomplete Coursework published in the Academic Calendar, whereupon the Instructor of Record will convert the "I" to a grade.

If the missing requirement is not fulfilled by the deadline, the Instructor will assign the lowest possible grade for this grading component and issue the grade for the course accordingly. An incomplete “I” will also be assigned if a student is officially excused for a grading component. In this case no grade penalty will be imposed. The modalities for completion of the course in these cases is regulated in 3.12 “Excuse from Academic Obligations”.

3.8. Audit

Students may register for courses as auditors. It is at the discretion of the Instructor of Record to allow auditing of the course and specify the requirements for successfully auditing. Audited courses will not be graded, will not receive credits, and will not count toward the degree requirements. These courses will appear on the transcript with the indication that the course was audited.

3.9. Course Syllabi

Each Course is based on a generic syllabus. This syllabus must be published before the beginning of teaching in any given semester. It contains the topic of the course sessions and specifies, if pertinent, the basic literature to be consulted for these sessions.

The syllabus should also contain specifications of the requirements, the grading details, and the learning outcomes. It is at the discretion of the Instructor of Record to distribute a more detailed syllabus in class.

3.10. Examinations

All grading components contribute according to the predefined scheme to the final grade of the course. Grading components may include: midterm examination, final examination, quizzes, homeworks, written assignments, essay papers, practical skills, project reports, presentations, discussions, oral contributions, active participation and the Master’s thesis.

Team projects may be used for all types of examinations. In such cases, the Instructor of Record must clearly indicate the method of determining credit for the participants in the team. Such a method may provide that the contributions of the individual team members be clearly identifiable and therefore gradable.

In general, Instructors of Record proctor examinations in their own courses. In exceptional cases the Student Records Office may organize additional proctors centrally (e.g., for final exams with high numbers of participants). In those cases where the midterm or the final examination is in an oral format minutes of the examination must be taken by a competent person other than the examiner.

Examination results are published in the integrated campus management system (CampusNet). Students have the right to have access to their examination files upon request.

Midterm examinations are regulated as follows:

- If a student has two exams in one day, he/she may request to re-schedule one exam;
- If a student has four exams in one week, he/she may request to re-schedule one exam;
- The student has to send a request to the respective Instructor of Record regarding re-scheduling at least one week in advance.

The student is obliged to provide the respective Instructor of Record with convincing evidence for required re-scheduling.

Final Examinations

Finals will be preceded by a period free of class meetings (Reading Days). The scheduling of final examinations is organized centrally by the Student Records Office.

The final exams schedule is published by the Student Records Office. It is designed such that no student is required to take more than two final examinations on any given day. Make-up sessions are scheduled at a mutually agreeable time for student and Instructor of Record – either before or after the regularly scheduled examination time – in order to accommodate students who would otherwise have to take more than two examinations in one day. The student has to make a request to the respective Instructor of Record regarding re-scheduling no later than one week after the schedule is published.

3.11. Excuse from Academic Obligations

Students may be excused officially by the Student Records Office from taking examinations or from attending mandatory class/lab sessions for the following reasons only:

Illness or personal emergency: Illness must be documented with a sick certificate issued by a qualified physician. This certificate needs to verify the date and time of the in-person visit occasioned the confirmation that the student is unable to fulfill his/her academic obligation (either attend class/lab or take the examination). The university reserves the right to request a second medical opinion. Other emergencies must be appropriately documented in writing. Sick certificates and documentation for personal emergencies must be submitted to the Student Records Office by the third calendar day from the beginning of illness/of the emergency. Please note that these three days include the first day of the illness/of the emergency. If the third calendar day is a Saturday, Sunday or a public holiday, the deadline is extended to the next working day. If students submit a sick certificate after the deadline, an excuse may be issued, when applicable, only for the submission date and the two calendar

days preceding it. Predated or backdated sick certificates – i.e., when the visit to the physician takes place outside of the documented sickness period – will be accepted provided that the visit to the physician precedes or follows the period of illness by no more than one working day.

Excursion in a mandatory module: Excuses due to excursions in mandatory modules will be sent out by the Student Records Office as early as possible after the drop/add period each semester.

Regardless of the reason for their absence, students must inform the Instructor of Record before the beginning of the examination or class/lab session that they will not be able to attend. The day after the excuse ends, students must contact the Instructor of Record. Students have the right to take one make-up exam within the deadline for students to submit materials for incompletes as published in the Academic Calendar. Failure to do so will lead to a continued incomplete of the module until the missing requirements are fulfilled or definitively failed.

Students who go on an optional excursion or participate in events of importance to the university may ask the Student Records Office to issue a recommendation for an excuse. Requests for recommendations must be made via email well in advance of the event or the class trip. The decision whether to excuse the student rests with the Instructor of Record.

3.12. Advanced Placement, Transfer Credits, and Non-Academic Achievements

Jacobs University awards ECTS credits for Advanced Placement (AP), Course/Module Transfer and Non-Academic Achievements.

Advanced Placement Credits

Advanced Placement (AP) credits may be awarded for academic skills acquired outside of formal university-level coursework. Advanced Placement credit is conditional on a demonstrated level of competence equivalent to a university-level course regularly offered at Jacobs University. Not all Jacobs University courses are eligible for Advanced Placement. Language courses are generally excluded from Advanced Placement.

For more details, students should contact the relevant Instructor of Record and their Program Coordinator. All Advanced Placement applications must be submitted during the student's first semester at Jacobs University. Courses taken once at Jacobs University may not be replaced by Advanced Placement credits. Faculty may request students applying for Advanced Placement to pass a formal written examination, which should be offered during the first two weeks of classes.

AP credits thus recognized by Jacobs University will be designated on the transcript as being Advanced Placement courses (AP). No grade will be assigned.

Transfer Credits

Transfer credits may be awarded for academic module work completed at another university or institution of higher education (e.g., for transfer students or for study abroad). To apply for the recognition of transfer credits, students must submit the Transfer Credit Form, the module syllabi, and an official transcript indicating the modules taken to the Student Records Office. Upon recommendation of the Faculty from the respective field of study, the Student Records Office rules on the acceptance of transfer credits.

Module work completed at other institutions is eligible for transfer credits at Jacobs University if the qualification to be recognized does not differ significantly in content, intended learning outcomes, scope, academic level or quality from the modules offered at Jacobs University. A refusal to transfer credits must be reasoned by Jacobs University. Language modules in the languages taught at Jacobs University are accepted if taken at other universities or at our partner institutes. Credits acquired for languages other than those offered at Jacobs University are transferred if issued by a partner university of Jacobs University

For module work completed prior to enrollment at Jacobs University, students must apply for recognition of transfer credit points during their first semester at Jacobs University. Students who transfer a significant number of credits may be treated as “Transfer students” and be placed into a higher semester of their study program.

For module work completed elsewhere while being enrolled at Jacobs University (i.e., during the semester breaks or study abroad), students must apply for recognition of transfer credit within one semester after the achievement.

Non-Academic Achievements

Knowledge and skills acquired outside of the higher education system shall be accounted for up to half of the credits provided for the courses/modules offered, provided that the acquired knowledge and skills are equivalent in content and level to the courses/modules they are intended to replace. Equivalence is given if the content, scope and requirements essentially correspond to those of the intended study program at Jacobs University, to which the credits are to be applied. Students must apply for the recognition of Non-Academic Achievements during their first year of study.

3.13. Language Courses

Students can register for language courses. Program-specific regulations are defined in the respective program handbook. Participants must take a placement test before registering for

the appropriate language level. Students can, at their own risk, take language courses half a level higher than the one in which they have been placed according to the placement test.

4. Graduation Requirements

4.1. Credit Points

Graduation in a two years academic master program requires at least 120 ECTS credit points. Programs with a shorter standard study period may define differing ECTS credits point requirements in the respective program handbook.

4.2. Course Work

In order to graduate, students have to successfully complete all modules, courses and other components as specified in the respective program handbook.

4.3. Master's Thesis

In order to graduate, students have to submit a master's thesis of 20-30 ECTS credit points. The thesis is written under the guidance of a faculty member (thesis supervisor).

The cover page of the master's thesis needs to show the title, the university's name, the month and year of submission, the name of the student and the names of the reviewers. Furthermore, the thesis needs to contain a declaration signed by the student that the thesis is independent work that has not been submitted elsewhere. The thesis is submitted to the Students Records Office and is checked for plagiarism.

The master's thesis is graded by the thesis supervisor and a second reviewer. As a rule, the second reviewer must be a Jacobs University faculty member or an external expert holding a PhD degree.

The master's thesis is graded according to the Jacobs University grading scheme (see section 4.9). Each reviewer must submit the completed "Master's Thesis Evaluation" form to the Student Records Office within four weeks after receiving the thesis. The grades of all reviewers are averaged. If the average grade is not a Jacobs University grade, the reviewers must agree upon a grade that is a Jacobs University grade.

If the thesis is not passed, the reviewers decide whether the student is granted the right to resubmit within 3 months.

Students must submit the Master's thesis until their last day of enrollment. If they cannot complete their thesis within the last semester of enrollment, they must apply for an extension of studies (see Admission and Enrollment Policy Paragraph 4) in order to stay enrolled for another semester.

4.4. Final Documents

Upon graduation and after completing the formal checkout, every student will receive the following final documents:

- **Diploma:** The diploma states the name and birth date of the degree holder, the degree and program, and the date of the conferral of the degree. The diploma carries the seal of Jacobs University and is signed by the President of the university and the Dean responsible for graduate studies.
- **Diploma supplement:** The diploma supplement conforms to the guidelines of the Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) and provides more detailed information about the university and the specific program of study. It also includes the final GPA, the date of the conferral of the degree and, if applicable, further special achievements.
- **Final transcript:** The final transcript lists all modules a student has taken at Jacobs University, including the grades of the individual courses. It also lists the semester GPA for each semester of study, the cumulative GPA for the entire study, the Master's thesis title, the date of the conferral of the degree and, if applicable, further special achievements. The transcript is signed by a staff member of the Student Records Office and carries the seal of the University.

5. Administrative Details

5.1. Committee on Examinations and Standing

The Committee on Examinations and Standing is an academic body that decides on official appeals by students in matters such as academic examinations, extension of studies, reenrollment (see Admission and Enrollment Policy Paragraph 3), as well as other complaints regarding examinations or academic standing that could not be solved otherwise. The committee is an independent appeals board which acts according to the policies of the university. It is a non-public body. Its decisions are binding. The committee consists of the following members with voting rights (which may be replaced by substitutes):

- one Dean for undergraduate education
- one Dean for graduate education
- one faculty member from the focus area Health
- one faculty member from the focus area Mobility
- one faculty member from the focus area Diversity
- one research associate
- one undergraduate student
- one graduate student

5.2. Graduation Ceremony

A student who wants to receive his/her diploma during graduation ceremony must submit his/her master's thesis at least two weeks before the ceremony. The reviewers must provide the master's thesis evaluation form at least 24 hours before the beginning of the graduation ceremony to the Student Records Office.

Students who want to participate in the graduation ceremony before having completed all graduation requirements do a so-called “walkthrough”. In order to be eligible for a walkthrough, students must provide written confirmations of their thesis supervisor and/or the respective Instructor(s) of Record that they are expected to finish all graduation requirements by no later than August 31 of that academic year. As a rule, the confirmations must be submitted to the Student Records Office at least two weeks before the graduation ceremony.

5.3. Students with Special Needs

The rules and provisions of the “General Act on Equal Treatment” (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz - AGG) apply. Students with special needs should be able to complete their studies and examinations under conditions equivalent to those of any other student. To this end, as far as possible all study- and examination-related offers are designed to be barrier-free. Students with special needs are entitled to special arrangements during their studies, during study organization and design as well as during examinations. In particular, consideration must be given to study- and examination-related effects, e.g., the need for special aid or assistance, and the provision of study and examination conditions in a form other than the intended organization. The academic requirements for study- and examinations achievements will not be affected. Students with special needs may apply for individual arrangements prior to any examination at the Student Records Office using the corresponding form. If candidates can document, that they are not able to take an examination wholly or partially in the offered form because of continued or permanent illness or disability, special arrangements are provided for. These may include a prolongation of the

examination duration, the assignment of an individual room or a different design of the examination.

The individual requirements must be registered with the Student Records Office in advance.

The submission of a medical certificate and/or disabled person card may be required.

5.4. Maternity- and Parental Leave

It is possible to make use of the protection periods according to the Maternity Protection Act (MutterSchutzGesetz - MuSchG), as amended, and in accordance with time limits for the parental allowance and parental leave (Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz - BEEG), as amended. When granting a leave of absence as well as calculating leave periods the provisions of § 40 Bremisches Hochschulgesetz concerning the period of maternity - or parental leave apply. Taking examinations during maternity- or the parental leave is possible, despite leave of absence. However, make-ups of examinations are not mandatory during the leave period.