

Examination regulations for Distance-Learning Master Degree Programmes

Applied Business Data Science
Digital Marketing Management
Health Care Management
Management
Medien- & Kommunikationspsychologie
Sustainability Management

as of May 25th 2021

including the modification articles as of January 19th 2022, December 8th 2022 and February 11th 2026

Please note: This is a translation of the original German “Prüfungsordnung für die Master-Fernstudiengänge Applied Business Data Science, Digital Marketing Management, Health Care Management, Medien- & Kommunikationspsychologie, Sustainability Management vom 25.05.2021 in der Fassung gemäß der Ordnung zur Änderung der Prüfungsordnung für die Master-Fernstudiengänge vom 19.1.2022 (ÄO Master Fernstudium 01) , vom 8.12.2022 (ÄO Master Fernstudium 02) sowie vom 11.02.2026 (ÄO Master Fernstudium 03)”. Should there be any discrepancies between the English translation and the original German version, the original text shall prevail.

Pursuant to § 2 (4) and § 64 (1) of the Higher Education Act of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG), as amended by the Act of 12 July 2019, ISM International School of Management has issued the following examination regulations for the Master examination in the Master distance learning programmes.

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Related documents:
Study plan
Module handbook

Preamble

The distance-learning master degree programmes in business sciences at ISM prepare students for professional and management functions in enterprises. The degree programmes provide students with the necessary subject-specific in-depth knowledge and skills, and enables them to apply sophisticated theories and methods from business sciences autonomously. Students will be qualified to analyze and interpret complex interdisciplinary issues, and to assess, and classify findings critically. In addition to the acquisition of field-specific and methodological skills, the studies will foster the students' personal and social skills. Students acquire vocational competencies and are able to act in a responsible manner. In addition, they know the international framework.

Furthermore, students develop a critical awareness for the use of digital media, so that they are able to take part in well-founded and critical discussions within a knowledge-based society. This includes the self-regulated use of extensive digital information environments to gain new knowledge, the ability to consider and assess different opinions, to challenge one's own perspective, and to give one's own point of view based on facts.

The structure and content of the degree programmes observe gender equality.

Disadvantage compensations for students aimed at providing parity in study and examination conditions with regard to admission to study courses as well as the organization and structuring of studies, workload, and modifications of studies and examinations are taken into account in the corresponding rules and guidelines.

General

§ 1 Scope, Commencement of Studies, Compensation for Disadvantages

1. These distance-learning master examination regulations apply to the completion of studies of all distance-learning master degree programmes at ISM.

The degree programmes “Applied Business Data Science”, “Digital Marketing Management”, “Health Care Management”, “Medien- & Kommunikationspsychologie” and “Sustainability Management” consist of 120 ECTS credits and their intended time-to-degree is four semesters (for full-time students).

There is a 120 ECTS version with an intended time-to-degree of four semesters (for full-time students) and a 90 ECTS version with an intended time-to-degree of three semesters (for full-time students) of the degree programme “Management”.

There are full-time and part-time versions for all degree programmes.

Insofar as hereafter no explicit differentiation is made between the Master distance learning degree programmes, these regulations apply to all Master distance learning degree programmes.

2. In addition to the general section, these examination regulations include the appendixes “Module Handbook” and “Study Plan.” Adjustments and changes to the appendixes may be determined by the examination board.
3. The examination regulations in their valid version are an integral part of the study agreement.
4. Students can be admitted to the first semester of a distance-learning master degree programme any time during a winter or summer semester.
5. To ensure equality of opportunity for students with disabilities (within the meaning of § 2 para 1 of the Social Security Code IX) or for those with chronic illnesses, the compensation of disadvantages with regard to the admission to degree programmes, the academic calendar, study conditions, as well as examination procedures and conditions are accorded to compensate for the disadvantages. Appropriate proof may be requested to substantiate a disability or chronic illness. In cases of dispute, an authorized expert is to be involved in formulating the compensation of disadvantages. Furthermore, the statutory maternity periods, parental leave periods as well as inactive periods due to the care or provision of spouses, registered life partners or a direct relation or first-degree relation by marriage are to be observed if these are in need of care or provision.
6. While observing the requirements of the discipline and depending on the circumstances of the individual case, the following compensations may for example be accorded:
 - Extension of the total period in which certain study and examination work is to be handed in (examination period)

- Changes in duration (including editing time, interruption of time-based study and examination work for individual recuperation periods which may not be counted against the time available to work on a task) and/or circumstance (splitting of examinations into several parts) of individual study and examination work
 - Extension of time periods between study and examination tasks
 - Possibility to co-determine examination dates (e.g., not immediately before or after certain therapeutic measures)
 - Realization of a study or examination work in a form other than scheduled
 - Acceptance of individual instead of group examinations
 - Allowance of necessary aids (e.g., Braille) and assistance services (e.g., sign language interpreter) as well as provision of adapted (examination) documents (e.g., large print)
 - Conducting an examination in a separate room
7. If a student provides credible evidence that, due to a prolonged or permanent physical disability, a chronic illness, or in accordance with the applicable statutory maternity protection provisions, they are unable to complete examination requirements in whole or in part in the prescribed form, the examination board shall permit the student to complete the examination requirements within an extended period of time or to provide equivalent examination performance in an alternative form. Once granted, compensation for disadvantages (reasonable accommodation) due to a chronic illness or disability shall apply to all future examination requirements, provided that no change in the nature of the illness or disability is to be expected.

§ 2 Preconditions for Study

1. The precondition for taking up studies is a proof of a
 - a university of applied science entrance qualification or a general qualification for university entrance or a subject-linked qualification for university entrance or an entrance qualification recognized as equivalent by the competent government agencies or an entrance opportunity regulated by statutory ordinance according to § 49 para 4 of the Higher Education Act (HG).
 - in the case of Master degree programmes comprising 120 ECTS credits, a first professionally qualifying higher education degree comprising 180 ECTS credits.
 - in the case of Master degree programmes comprising 90 ECTS credits, a first professionally qualifying higher education degree comprising 210 ECTS credits. By way of exception, applicants who have obtained fewer than the required 210 ECTS credits with their first professionally qualifying academic degree may be admitted (details are governed by the "Admission Regulations" in the respective version in force).
 - in the case of Master degree programmes comprising 60 ECTS credits, a first professionally qualifying higher education degree comprising 240 ECTS credits. By way of exception, applicants who have obtained fewer than the required 240 ECTS credits with their first

professionally qualifying academic degree may be admitted (details are governed by the “Admission Regulations” in the respective version in force).

2. If the final certificate of the first university degree is not available at the beginning of the programme, provisional admission (conditional admission) may be granted provided that the standard period of study of the first degree programme has been completed by the start of the Master degree programme and all other admission requirements are met. The missing degree certificate must be submitted to ISM no later than six months after the beginning of the first semester and in any case no later than ten working days after issuance of the final certificate. For participation in double degree programmes, the final certificate of the first degree must be submitted no later than three months after the beginning of the semester. If proof is not provided within the specified deadline, ISM is entitled to proceed with exmatriculation. In this case, any examination results already achieved will not be certified.
3. In addition, the different Master degree programmes can define additional requirements, such as certain disciplines of the Bachelor degree programme, required minimum ECTS credits in certain subject areas, evidence of a deep knowledge in foreign languages, specialized work experience or certain internships (details are governed by the “Admission Regulations” in the respective version in force).
4. Admission to the programme must be refused if the applicant does not meet the admission requirements pursuant to paragraphs 1 to 3 or has definitively failed a required examination in the chosen degree programme at a higher education institution within the scope of application of the German Basic Law. This shall apply accordingly to related or comparable degree programmes.
5. Further enrollment requirements are governed by the University in the “Admission Regulations” in the respective version in force.

§ 3 Structure and Content of the Master Degree Programme

1. For the degree programmes “Applied Business Data Science”, “Digital Marketing Management”, “Health Care Management”, “Medien- & Kommunikationspsychologie” and “Sustainability Management”, the intended time-to-degree including all exams depending on the degree structure selected by the student is: 4 semesters (full-time: 30 ECTS credits per semester), 6 semesters (part-time 1: 20 ECTS credits per semester), or 8 semesters (part-time 2: 15 ECTS credits per semester).

For the 120 ECTS version of the degree programme “Management” the intended time-to-degree including all exams depending on the degree structure selected by the student is: 4 semesters (full-time: 30 ECTS credits per semester), 6 semesters (part-time 1: 20 ECTS credits per semester), or 8 semesters (part-time 2: 15 ECTS credits per semester).

For the 90 ECTS version of the degree programme “Management” the intended time-to-degree including all exams depending on the degree structure selected by the student is: 3 semesters (full-time: 30 ECTS credits per semester), or 6 semesters (part-time 2: 15 ECTS credits per semester)

2. The workload is indicated by credit points in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The workload includes attendance at lectures, preparation and follow-up, as well as preparation for and participation in exams. A credit point comprises 30 hours of work. A total of 60 credit points must be acquired per academic year. The workload per year in full-time is 1,800 hours. The part-time versions of the degree programmes have a workload of 1,200 and 900 hours respectively; students are to acquire 40 and 30 credits per year respectively.
3. For the purpose of these examination regulations, a course is any form of instruction delivered in person, online, and/ or in hybrid format that can be quantified in semester contact hours (SWS) or teaching units (UE) and is specified in the module handbook and the study plan.
4. The degree programmes are structured in modules. A module encompasses 5 or 10 ECTS credits, the master thesis encompasses 30 ECTS credits.
5. The contents of the degree programmes are conceived in such a way that the course can be completed in the regular time-to-degree. The contents can be found in the module handbook (see appendix "Module handbook").
6. The compulsory and elective modules are recorded in the study plan. The study plan is also a recommendation to students for an appropriate structure of their studies. The contents of the modules, type of exams, teaching methods, as well as workload in hours are defined by the module descriptions published in the module handbook.
7. Each module concludes with a module examination. Credit points are awarded for examinations that have been passed successfully.

§ 4 Course Guidance

1. General course guidance is provided by ISM staff members. It entails questions of aptitude for studies, the structure of the degree programme, as well as career planning. A confidential person is available for psychological support as is a representative for the concerns of students with a disability or chronic illness.
2. The program director is responsible for subject-specific guidance. Program directors are supported by study coaches as well as tutors. They provide support to students in particular regarding the content, structure, requirements, and techniques of the degree programme.
3. A list of names for the contact persons mentioned above is provided digitally on the e-campus.
4. Making use of course guidance is especially recommended: at the beginning of studies, when transferring from degree programme or university to another, on failing an exam, when the studies are interrupted and before dropping out of a degree programme.

Master Examination

§ 5 General, Master Degree

1. The master examination is based on the knowledge and understanding of a bachelor degree and deepens and broadens it essentially. The master degree focuses on the definition, interpretation and critical discussion of the limits, terminologies and doctrines of the subject area and selected special areas of interest. This leads to the fact that graduates can develop and apply their own ideas and solutions – even in an interdisciplinary context and with incomplete information.
2. The requirements of the master examination are fulfilled by acquiring credit points according to the study plan. Successful conclusion of a distance-learning master degree programme requires the acquisition of 120 credit points (workload = 3,600 hours) with the exception of the 90 ECTS version (workload = 2,700 hours) of the master degree programme in “Management”, which requires the acquisition of 90 credit points.
3. If the master examination has been passed, ISM confers the degree “Master of Arts”, “M.A.” for short, in the degree programmes “Digital Marketing Management” and “Sustainability Management” and the degree “Master of Science”, “M.Sc.” for short, in the degree programmes “Applied Business Data Science”, “Health Care Management”, “Management”, and “Medien- & Kommunikationspsychologie”.
4. The master examination consists of the module examination and a thesis. The module examinations take place during the master degree programme at the times when the respective modules are scheduled according to the study plan (see appendix “Study Plan”).

§ 6 Examination Board

1. The tasks assigned by these examination regulations are the responsibility of the examination board for the faculty of economics, which – unless regulated otherwise – acts as the joint examination board for all degree programmes in the faculty of economics. The examination board is an examining body of ISM International School of Management. The composition of the examination board is regulated in the senate’s rules of procedure.
2. The examination board supervises compliance with the examination regulations and ensures the proper conduct of examinations. The board appoints examiners and observers and decides on the withdrawal of those appointments. It is responsible for decisions on objections to decisions taken in examination procedures. The examination board reports to the faculty regularly, at least once a year, on the development of study periods, the dispersion of grades for the parts of the master examination as well as the overall grades. The examination board makes suggestions on reforming the examination regulations and the study plan. As a rule, the examination board can delegate the execution of all of its regular duties to the chair of the examination board.
3. The examination board is quorate if at least two other professors and at least two other voting members are present aside from the chair, or in their absence the chair’s deputy. The examination

board makes decisions by a simple majority. In the case of a voting tie, the vote of the chair, or in their absence the chair's deputy, has the casting vote. The student members of the examination board to not take part in the consultation and decision-making processes on issues which concern the determination of exam tasks or their own examinations.

4. Meetings can be conducted by video conference or by circulation in writing. In the circulation procedure, decisions are taken by email vote if no more than two members object to this voting procedure.
5. Members of the examination board have the right to be present during exams. Exceptions to this are student members who are to take the same exam in the same examination period.
6. Meetings of the examination board are not public. The members of the examination board and their deputies are subject to confidentiality. They are to be bound to secrecy by the chair of the examination board.
7. Decisions made by the examination board or its chair in relation to a justified request submitted in writing by the examinee must be communicated to the examinee by email, or in the case of negative decisions, immediately in writing, stating the reasons and providing information on legal remedies. The formal and content requirements for reasoned requests, in particular following an examination review, are regulated in the guideline "Prüfungseinsicht und Nachkorrekturanträge" (translated: Examination Inspection and Requests for Re-Assessment). This guideline, in its currently valid version, is an integral part of these examination regulations. § 2 para 3 No. 3 of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG) for the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia, in particular on the exception to the duty to give a hearing and to give reasons in decisions of a scientific or artistic nature, remains unaffected.
8. Reasoned requests to the examination board pursuant to paragraph 7 require that the justification addresses at least one of the following points:
 - a) Certain solution pages were inadvertently not taken into account during the correction of written examination papers,
 - b) There is a demonstrable arithmetic error in the calculation of the total score,
 - c) There is an obvious and objectively verifiable error in the academic assessment based on a misunderstanding or incorrect factual basis.

Questions of interpretation regarding the academic assessment do not constitute grounds for reasoned requests under this provision. Further details, in particular the procedure for the inspection of examination documents and for requests for reassessment, are governed by the guideline "Prüfungseinsicht und Nachkorrekturanträge" (translated: Examination Inspection and Requests for Re-Assessment), in its version valid at the time.

§ 7 Examiners and Observers

1. Examiners and observers are appointed by the examination board. Only those who have passed at least one subject-relevant master examination or a comparable degree, especially a diploma

relevant to the subject, or have acquired a comparable qualification may be appointed as examiners.

2. Unless compelling reasons require differently, the examiners should have taught in the subject that is assessed in the exam. When several examiners are to be appointed, at least one of them should have taught in the respective module.
3. The examiners are independent of instruction in their examination activities.
4. Only those who have passed at least one relevant master examination or a comparable exam, especially a diploma, or have acquired a comparable qualification may be appointed as observers.
5. The examinee is to be informed of the names of their examiners usually at least two weeks prior to the exam digitally on the e-campus.
6. Examiners and observers are bound to secrecy on examination matters.

§ 8 Recognition and Credit Transfer Regarding Study Periods, Study, and Examination Credits

1. Study and examination credits acquired in another ISM degree programme or a congeneric master degree programme at another state or state-recognized university or at another state or state-recognized vocational academy or at a foreign state or state-recognized university can be transferred insofar that there is no significant difference in terms of competences, contents, as well as qualification level and/or profile (e.g. research or application-orientated) from those of the master degree programme the recognition is applied for. At the same time, an overall consideration should be undertaken with regard to the importance of the credits for achieving the objectives of the degree programme and the purpose of the examinations (see appendix "Module handbook"). In this respect, there is a significant difference, if the applicant is likely to be hindered in successfully completing the degree programme. The burden of proof for asserting significant differences lies with the university.
2. The examination board makes decisions on the transfer of credits according to para 1. Responsible faculty representatives are to be consulted to arrive at a decision. The applicant must present the documents required for the transfer of credits. Applications for the transfer of credits must be processed within three months.
3. In the case of a transfer of credits according to para 1, students will receive the number of credit points designated to the relevant module according to the appendix "Study Plan".
4. For the transfer of study and examination credits, the equivalence agreements approved by the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) should be observed. Also to be observed are agreements which are part of university partnerships. In cases of doubt, the German "Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen" is to be consulted.

5. Where there are differences in the grading system a grades conversion is to be undertaken according to the “modified Bavarian formula” of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Agreement on the Determination of Overall Grades for Foreign University Entrance Certificates. Decision of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of 15th March 1991 in the version of 18th November 2004). Where grading systems are not comparable the remark “passed” will be adopted. The transfer of credits will be indicated in the diploma.
6. On request, skills and abilities attained in a manner other than through a higher education course, can be recognized on the basis of submitted documents (such as certificates, subject descriptions, curricula etc.), if the content and level of the study and examination credits that they shall replace are equivalent. The verification of whether the study and examination credits provided by the applicant are equivalent to the study and examination credits that they should replace is made in each individual case on the basis of documents submitted by the applicant. It is the applicant’s responsibility to demonstrate the equivalence.
7. The decision regarding the recognition of knowledge and skills rests with the examination board according to para. 6. Applications for recognition are to be processed within three months. Knowledge and skills achieved outside of higher education institutions may be recognized as study and examination credits to a maximum of 50% of the total ECTS credits of the degree program. Credits acquired through recognition are recorded with the note "passed" in the diploma. They are not considered for the calculation of the overall grade.

§ 9 Examination Dates

1. The exams take place online.
2. Participation in the first attempt at an examination must take place no later than three semesters after the semester in which the student took part in the module. Furthermore, repeat examinations must be passed no later than three semesters after participation in the first attempt. If this is not the case, the student loses the right to take the exam. Loss of the right to take an exam may result in a change to different or new examination regulations or in the exmatriculation of the student.

§ 10 Assessment of Examination Performance

1. The examiners grade the individual exams. If exams are composed of more than one element, the assessment of the examination work consists of the weighted arithmetic mean of the grades of the different elements the exam consists of. At the beginning of the module, the examiner has to determine if failing in one of the elements means that the entire exam has been “failed” (5.0) or if the weighted arithmetic mean of the grades for the different elements defines the overall grade for the module.

2. The following grades are to be used to assess examination performance:

1	sehr gut	very good	an excellent performance
2	gut	good	a performance above average requirements
3	befriedigend	satisfactory	a performance in accordance with average requirements
4	ausreichend	sufficient	a performance that in spite of its faults still meets requirements
5	nicht bestanden	failed	a performance that because of considerable faults does not meet requirements

For further differentiation of an assessment, grade figures decreased or increased by 0.3 may be used; grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are not permissible. Only examination performances with a grade from 1.0 to 4.0 may be credited to the master examination.

- The assessments “passed” and “failed” are also permissible for module examinations. A module examination is regarded as “passed” if it meets the requirements. If a module examination is composed of several examinations, all examinations must be assessed as “passed” for the student to pass the overall module examination.
- If several examiners are involved in an examination, they assess the overall examination performance jointly unless otherwise determined in the following. If their assessments do not agree, the grade will be the result of the arithmetic mean of the individual assessments.
- If the arithmetic mean is used to calculate a grade, two decimal places are taken into account – all others decimal places are deleted. The assessment of grades calculated in this manner is defined in the following way:
 - Up to 1.50 „very good“
 - More than 1.50 to 2.50 „good“
 - More than 2.50 to 3.50 „satisfactory“
 - More than 3.50 to 4.0 „sufficient“
 - More than 4.0 „failed“
- A module examination has been passed if it has been assessed at least as “sufficient” (4.0). If a module examination has been passed, this also means that the credit points assigned to that module in the appendix “Study Plan” have also been gained.
- It is possible to inspect corrected written examinations and to submit a request for reassessment. An evaluation by a second instructor, however, is not provided for and therefore cannot be requested.
- Details regarding the inspection of examinations, the requirements for a request for reassessment, and the submission of reasoned requests to the examination board are governed by the guideline “Prüfungseinsicht und Nachkorrekturanträge” (translated: Examination Inspection and Requests

for Re-Assessment), which, in its version valid at the time, constitutes an integral part of these examination regulations.

§ 11 Repetition of Exams, Failure of the Master Examination

1. If module examinations have been “failed” (5.0) they may be repeated twice. One time only a module examination may also be repeated three times (free trial examination to compensate for hardship cases). The master examination has been “definitively failed” if the free trial examination or a second third attempt has been assessed as “failed” (5.0).
2. The free trial examination has to take the form of an “oral exam”. The free trial examination cannot be granted when an examination has been declared as “failed” (5.0) due to improper conduct, in particular an attempt at cheating. The oral exam takes place in a virtual class room or at one of ISM’s campuses. The exam will be conducted by two of ISM’s examiners or one of ISM’s examiners and an observer.
3. The thesis may be repeated once. The master examination has been “definitively failed” if, when the master thesis is repeated, it is graded as “failed” (5.0).
4. If the examinee can definitively no longer be admitted to an examination or if they have “definitively failed” the master examination, the examinee will receive a notification, together with information on legal remedies, of the associated compulsory exmatriculation. On request, the examination board will issue a certificate for the successfully achieved examination and study credits.

§ 12 Cheating and Breach of Regulations

1. If the examinee attempts to influence the result of their exam by cheating, e.g. through the use of inadmissible aids or plagiarism, the corresponding exam will be graded as “failed” (5.0). The attempt at cheating is to be put on record by the respective examiner or proctor.
2. In the case of a first attempt the head of distance learning will issue a warning; in the case of a repeated or serious attempt at cheating the examinee may also be exmatriculated.
3. An examinee who interferes with the proper course of the examination may be excluded from continuing the examination, usually after a warning. In this case, the corresponding examination will be assessed as “failed” (5.0). The reasons for the exclusion are to be put on record.
4. The examinee may request that decisions according to para 1 and para 3 be reassessed by the examination board within 14 days after the decision. This is done with an informal written request.

Module Examinations

§ 13 Objective, Number, Form, and Extent of Module Examinations

1. The degree programme is divided into modules (compulsory modules and elective), each of which concludes with an exam. The examinations are intended to determine whether the examinee has mastered the contents and methods of the module (see appendix “Module handbook”) in the essential relationships and whether they can apply the acquired skills and abilities on their own. The module exam usually consists of an examination at the end of the semester and/or examination work during the semester.
2. Examinations may be conducted in digital form. Digital examinations are those that are carried out using electronic information and communication technologies and are administered with the examinee and examiner physically separated. They may be conducted synchronously or asynchronously, and under supervision or without supervision, provided that the type, scope, and requirements of the respective examination ensure independent, verifiable, and equivalent performance. The specific format of the examination is determined and communicated by the examination board.
3. The specific number, format, scope or duration, and requirements of the examinations are listed in the module handbook. At the beginning of a semester, the examination board may, in consultation with the examiners, modify the examination modalities and communicate these changes.
4. The following forms of module examination are provided for:
 - Report or term paper
 - Written exam
 - Partial examinations throughout the semester (E-Portfolio)
5. If the module examination is carried out as an examination throughout the semester, all forms of examination are allowed which permit an individually recognizable study performance, in particular partial examinations during the course and term papers.

§ 14 Admission to Module Examinations

1. Only those who are registered (matriculated) in the relevant master degree programme at ISM and not in a break semester may be admitted to module examinations. Students who are in a break semester can however be admitted to module examinations that they have to repeat because of a failed attempt.
2. The examination board may request a registration procedure (application for admission) for admission to individual module examinations.

3. The examination board makes the decision regarding the admission. Generally, the decision regarding the admission will be announced two weeks prior to the examination date. The announcement is made electronically.
4. Admission will be denied if
 - the requirements named in paragraph 1 are not fulfilled or
 - the deadlines have not been complied with or documents (paragraph 2) are incomplete and have not been completed by the deadline set by the examination board.

§ 15 Conduct of Module Examinations

1. Examination dates are set by the examination board. The examinees are informed about the examination dates in due time, usually two weeks prior to the respective exam. The announcement is made electronically.
2. On demand of the examiner or invigilator examinees are to identify themselves with ISM student identification or official photographic identification
3. All examination procedures, such as number of participants, start of written exam, end of written exam, disturbances, early hand-ins (including in the preparation periods) are to be documented with a signed record, unless an electronic documentation is provided (e.g., for online exams).
4. Lateness is the responsibility of the examinee.
5. A module examination is graded as “failed” (5.0) if the examinee does not appear at an examination appointment, withdraws from the examination after it has started, or if examination work is not completed within the prescribed time period. In the case of compelling reasons, such as ill-ness of the examinee, or problems with the technical equipment or internet connection, the determining reasons for the absence are to be credibly reported to the examination board in writing within 5 days. Presentation of proofs, such as a doctor’s certificate, may be requested. If the examination board recognizes the reasons, the examination will be annulled and a record of the annulment will be made on the e-campus.

§ 16 Technical Disruptions in Digital Examinations

1. If, in a digital written examination, the transmission of the examination tasks, the processing of the examination tasks, the submission of the examination performance, or the conduct of video supervision is not possible or not properly possible for technical reasons, the examination shall be terminated at the respective stage. The examination performance shall not be assessed; the examination attempt shall be deemed not to have been undertaken. This shall not apply if the student is responsible for the technical disruption.
2. If, during a digital oral examination, the video or audio transmission is temporarily disrupted, the examination shall be continued after the disruption has been remedied. If the technical disruption

persists and proper continuation of the examination is not possible, the examination shall be repeated at a later date. Paragraph 1 sentences 2 and 3 shall apply accordingly.

3. If, during a digital oral examination, a technical disruption occurs only after a substantial part of the examination performance has been completed, the examination may, in deviation from paragraph 2, be continued and concluded by telephone without the use of a video conferencing system, provided that equal opportunities are ensured.
4. Paragraphs 1 to 3 shall apply accordingly to practical digital examinations.
5. Technical disruptions in digital examinations, in particular disruptions of the internet connection, the hardware or software used, or the examination platform, shall result in the examination not being assessed and the examination attempt being annulled, provided that the student is not responsible for the disruption.
6. The circumstances relevant to the absence from, termination of, or interruption of a digital examination must be substantiated in text form to the examination board without undue delay, but no later than five calendar days after the examination date. The examination board shall decide whether the requirements pursuant to paragraph 5 are met and determine the further procedure. If the requirements pursuant to paragraph 5 are met, the examination shall be deemed annulled and shall not count as a failed attempt. If they are not met, the examination shall be deemed failed.

§ 17 Recordings in Digital Examinations in Connection with Academic Misconduct and Breaches of Regulations

1. In digital examinations, video supervision may be conducted to ensure the proper conduct of the examination. Permanent or indiscriminate recording of image, audio, or screen data shall not take place.
2. If, during or after a digital examination, there is a justified suspicion of academic misconduct within the meaning of § 12 (1) or of a breach of regulations within the meaning of § 12 (3), the image, audio, or screen data lawfully collected in the context of the examination may be reviewed by the respective examiner or by a person appointed by the examination board, insofar as this is necessary to clarify the facts of the case.
3. If the review reveals indications of academic misconduct or a breach of regulations, these shall be documented by the respective examiner or by a person appointed by the examination board and submitted to the examination board for further decision. The provisions of § 12 shall remain unaffected.
4. The evaluation of the data shall be carried out exclusively for the purpose of determining academic misconduct or a breach of regulations. Any further use or evaluation for other purposes shall be prohibited.
5. The students concerned shall be informed, in an appropriate manner and no later than prior to the commencement of the digital examination, about the nature, scope, purpose, and duration of the data processing.

6. The data collected shall be deleted without undue delay as soon as they are no longer required for the decision pursuant to § 12, but no later than upon completion of any review procedure pursuant to § 12 (4).

§ 18 Reports or Term Papers

1. Reports are a written, systematic review (sometimes summary) of an activity applicable to the subject (e.g., field trip, academic presentation) or a project (e.g., practice-oriented project with external partners, development of a concept) including a critical discussion of the contents.
2. Term papers are continuous texts created independently and according to scientific and subject-specific practice-oriented methods in written form on a given topic or a practice-orientated task or problem (case study) that has to be solved within a given time frame and number of pages.
3. Term papers can be produced as individual or group work. In the case of group work, the individual contribution of each student must be recognizable, e.g. identified by an indication of sections, page numbers or other objective criteria.
4. The scope and time to complete the written exams are defined in the module handbook. To compensate for disadvantages such as long illnesses, serious technical or family problems, the examination board can grant extensions of deadlines.
5. More details on the editing of written papers are regulated in supplementary “guidelines on the preparation of written papers”.
6. The examinee must affirm in lieu of oath that they have prepared the work they hand in independently and without using other than the stated aids and that the ideas derived directly or in-directly from outside sources are identified as such and that the present paper has not so far been presented in the same or similar form as for any other examination and has also not been published. The statutory declaration must state the number of words written in the paper
7. Examinees must further declare that they agree to their paper being submitted to a plagiarism test, that the consent of the examiner is to be obtained before any publication of the paper, and that they have been informed that a violation of the statutory declaration (para 6) entails the threat of disallowance of the exam achievement as well as deception or fraud proceedings.
8. In addition, the examinee must attach to the submitted work a declaration regarding the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) (cf. § 2 (5) of the “guidelines on the preparation of written papers”).
9. The examinee is to be notified of the assessment of the report or term paper no later than eight weeks after submission of the term paper. Notification is made electronically on the e-campus.
10. If a report has been assessed as “failed”, it may be reworked and resubmitted for assessment once only within a period stipulated by the examination board. If the report is again assessed as “failed” (5.0) in the second correction cycle, then it has definitively failed. Otherwise the report is to be assessed as 4.0 or “passed”.

11. If a report or a term paper has definitively been graded as “failed” (5.0), the module as well as the examination is to be repeated with a new topic or a new research problem.

§ 19 Written Exams

1. Written exams assess the development of solutions to specific problems as well as the treatment of topics within a limited timeframe and with limited aids with the use of methods that are common to the discipline.
2. Written exams are online exams; they are conducted digitally at a laptop or pc. The examinees are not supposed to be present at one of ISM’s campuses for the exam.
3. After registering for the exam, students will receive the login details required to participate in the online exam. The online examination shall be electronically supervised using electronic communication systems. For this purpose, the examinee shall install a software application on their computer which records the screen and, via a webcam, also records the examinee. Prior to participation in the online examination, the examinee must verify their identity by presenting an appropriate document (student ID card or official identity card). In the course of electronic supervision, the applicable data protection regulations shall be observed, and students shall be informed, prior to the start of the online examination, about the data collected. Before the first registration for an online examination, students shall be informed of the documented procedure for conducting online examinations as approved by the examination board.
4. Alternatively, the online exam can be conducted at one of ISM’s campuses at a date determined by the examination board. These exams will be supervised electronically in the same manner as described above. However, ISM will provide hardware that has been configured accordingly. For this form of examination, examination fees may be collected in accordance with the terms of the study contract.
5. The examiner decides on the permissibility of aids. The examinee will be advised of the permitted aids electronically in due time before the examination.
6. The written exam is based on a catalogue of questions set by the person responsible for the module. The questions are assigned different levels of difficulty. Every examinee receives an individualized exam based on the catalogue of questions. The selection of question is made randomly. Each exam consists of the same number of questions for the different levels of difficulty to ensure the comparability of the exams.
7. In cases of questions that require the application or practice-oriented transfer of module content, or open questions that allow for a multitude of correct answers, individualized exams in accordance with paragraph 7 are not necessary.
8. Multiple choice questions (MC questions) may constitute no more than 50 percent of the total number of points to be attained. MC questions must be posed in such a way that they can be answered unequivocally. Allowable MC questions consist of a question followed by a choice of, usually, four to five answers from which the right answers are to be chosen. MC questions are

assessed by plus points for correct answers and minus points for incorrect answers, although less than 0 points cannot be given in an MC questionnaire. Plus and minus points have the same value.

9. Other types of questions aside from open questions may be used in written exams, e.g., arithmetic problems, where the examinees have to write down results and/or steps within their calculations, tasks, where students have to label illustrations or texts with blanks that have to be filled in by the examinees.
10. The examinee is to be notified of the assessment of a written exam no longer than eight weeks after the exam. They are notified electronically via the e-campus.

§ 20 Partial Examinations Throughout the Semester

1. Partial examinations throughout the semester (e-portfolios) consist of written and/or oral tasks that have to be completed throughout the semesters as part of a module. They ensure a continuous documentation of the learning progress. Examples for partial examinations are: the development and delivery of an oral presentation, short essays or contributions to debates, the development of (partial) drafts or (partial) concepts.
2. The examinees are informed about the topics, number, scope, and dates of the partial examinations at the start of the module. The requirements regarding content and form are also determined at the start of the module.
3. Students receive detailed feedback regarding the partial examinations from other participants of the module (peer feedback) and/or the instructor. The instructor makes sure that the feedback is substantiated and methodically understandable.
4. A module examination in the form of partial examinations throughout the semester is graded as “passed” when at least 80 % of the different partial examinations have been handed in and meet the requirements regarding content and form.

Master Thesis

§ 21 Object

1. The thesis is a written final paper that is intended to show that the examinee is capable of independently dealing with a practically orientated task from the subject area of their degree programme both in its technical details and in interdisciplinary relationships by using scientific and subject specific practice-oriented methods within a set period of time.
2. During the development of the thesis, the students should take part in a live seminar that accompanies the development of the thesis; the seminar provides additional information on scientific writing, support regarding methodological questions, as well as opportunities to discuss, review, and reflect on the master thesis with fellow students. Students have to attend at least two individual appointments with a supervising professor to discuss their topic and methodical approach. See the module handbook for further details.
3. The length of the thesis is between 25,000 and 30,000 words
4. The thesis may be written in German or English in the master degree programmes that are taught in German. In the master degree programmes that are taught in English the thesis has to be written in English.
5. The thesis may in principle be carried out in cooperation with an institution outside of ISM.
6. The thesis is supervised by an examiner (first assessor) appointed according to § 7(1). The examinee may make suggestions regarding the second examiner (second assessor), who will be determined by the examination board. One of the two assessors must have a doctorate degree. In addition, one of the examiners must be an ISM Professor.

§ 22 Admission to Master Thesis and Application

1. Conditions for admission to a Master thesis are:
 - Fulfillment of admission requirements according to § 14,
 - Proof of examination achievement of at least 60 ECTS credits.
2. The application for admission to a thesis is to be directed in writing to the chair of the examination board or their deputy via the e-campus
3. Until notification of the decision on the application, the application may be withdrawn in writing without being added to the number of possible examination attempts.
4. The first assessor is to be named in the application for admission. The prospective first assessor is to be consulted regarding their willingness to assign a topic and supervise the thesis before the application for admission is submitted.

5. Should the student not be able to name a first assessor, the examination board will assign them a topic and first assessor for the thesis
6. If the Master thesis is to be carried out in cooperation with companies or organizations outside of ISM, the application is to be accompanied by a short profile of the company or organization, a declaration of commitment by the contact person at the external institution to ensure sufficient supervisory capacity as well as a declaration of willingness by that contact person and proof of their academic qualification for their appointment as examiner (§ 7 (1)).
7. The examination board makes the decision regarding the admission Admission will be denied if
 - the assigned topic does not fulfill the requirements of § 21 or
 - the requirements named in paragraph 1 are not fulfilled or
 - there are doubts as to the feasibility of the thesis, in particular with regard to paragraph 6, or
 - documents are incomplete and have not been completed by the deadline set by the examination board
 - die Unterlagen unvollständig sind und nicht bis zu dem vom Prüfungsausschuss festgesetzten Termin ergänzt worden sind oder
 - the examiner is a family member of the examinee.
8. Notification of admission is made electronically.

§ 23 Issuing and Editing of a Thesis

1. The first examiner ensures that the topic and scope of the thesis are constituted in such a way that the thesis can be concluded within the prescribed period of time. The topic of the thesis is issued by the chair of the examination board or their deputy.
2. The day on which the examinee is notified of the topic counts as the date of issue. The date of issue is to be put on record.
3. The editing time (period from starting to edit the thesis until its submission) is 22 weeks for full-time students and 33 or 44 weeks respectively for part-time students. The examinee will be notified of their specific editing time in writing when the topic is issued.
4. In cases of incapacity to be examined due to illness the editing time of the thesis will be extended by the days of incapacity verified by a doctor's certificate, but not by more than two months.
5. The topic of the thesis may be returned only once and only within the first two weeks of the editing time without giving reasons. In the case of repetition according to § 11 (4) the return of a topic is only permissible if the examinee has not made use of this option in when writing their first thesis.

§ 24 Submission of a Thesis

1. The thesis is to be delivered within the time stipulated electronically via upload to the e-campus to the examination board or a place named by it for this purpose
2. The time of submission is to be put on record. If the thesis is not delivered on time, it will be graded as “failed” (5.0).
3. The examinee must affirm in lieu of oath that they have prepared their thesis independently and without using other than the stated aids and that the ideas derived directly or indirectly from outside sources are identified as such and that the present thesis has not so far been presented in the same or similar form for an exam and has also not been published. The statutory declaration must state the number of words of the thesis.
4. Examinees must further declare that they agree to their thesis being submitted to a plagiarism test, that the consent of the first assessor is to be obtained before any publication of the thesis, and that they have been informed that a violation of the statutory declaration (para 2) entails the threat of disallowance of the exam achievement as well as deception or fraud proceedings.

§ 25 Assessment of a Thesis

1. The thesis is to be assessed by two examiners (assessors). One of the assessors should be the first assessor and the other the second assessor. If the examiners’ assessments do not agree, the grade of the thesis is composed of the arithmetic mean of the individual assessments. If both assessors grade the thesis as failed “failed” (5.0), the master thesis is considered failed.
2. If the difference between the two grades of the master thesis is 2.0 or more, the examination board appoints a third assessor to grade the thesis. The grade of the thesis is the result of the arithmetic mean of the three individual assessments. The thesis can, however, only be graded as “passed” (4.0) or better if at least two of the grades are “sufficient” (4.0) or better.
3. If only one examiner assesses the master thesis as “failed” (5.0), the examination board appoints a third assessor to grade the thesis. If the third assessor assesses the thesis as “failed” (5.0), the master thesis is considered failed. Otherwise, the grade of the thesis is the result of the arithmetic mean of the three individual assessments.
4. All assessments are to be justified in writing. The examinee will be notified of their grade no later than eight weeks after submission of the thesis. 30 ECTS credits are awarded for the thesis.

Result of the Master Examination

§ 26 Diploma

1. If the examinee has passed the master examination, they will promptly receive their results in the form of a diploma, if possible within four weeks after notification of the exam result.
2. The diploma includes the designation of the degree attained, information on the master degree programme, the titles of the modules, the grades of the module examinations, the topic and grade of the thesis, the credit points gained and the overall grade of the master examination. Examination credits from another university recognized according to § 8 are indicated as such. At the request of the graduate, a specialization in accordance with appendix 1 will be added to the diploma for graduates of the degree programme "Management".
3. The overall grade of the master examination is composed of the arithmetic mean of the grades stated in para 1 according to § 10. Weighting of the module grades is done in proportion to the credit points assigned to each module.
4. The diploma is to be signed by the head of distance-learning and stamped with the seal of the university of applied sciences. It records the date of issue and the date of the day on which the last examination was taken (graduation).

§ 27 Master Certificate

1. The examinee will receive a master certificate by virtue of passing the master examination. It certifies the award of the master degree according to § 5.
2. The master certificate carries the date of graduation (§ 26) as well as the date of issue. It contains the name of the degree programme. The master certificate is signed by the president and by the head of the examination board and it is stamped with the seal of the university of applied sciences.
3. At the request of the graduate, a specialization in accordance with appendix 1 will be added to the certificate for graduates of the degree programme "Management".

§ 28 Diploma Supplement and Transcript of Records

1. After of passing the master examination, an English-language diploma supplement in accordance to the current template will be issued to the examinee.
2. The diploma supplement states the awarding institution of higher education, additional information about the degree, the qualifications attained with the degree, the topic and grade of the thesis, the overall grade of the master examination, and the ECTS grade and is signed by the head of distance learning.

3. The ECTS grade is a relative grade which puts the overall grade of the master examination in relation to a comparison group (ISM students in the same master degree programme). The grades are determined according to the following table:

ECTS-Grade	Percentage of Students Receiving this Grade
A	10
B	25
C	30
D	25
E	10

4. The transcript of records lists all examination credits gained by the student. This includes the names of the modules, the grades and the respective credit points of the module examinations, the topic and grade of the thesis, the overall grade of the Master examination. It is signed by the head of the examination board as facsimile.

§ 29 Additional Modules

The examinee may undergo an examination in modules additional to the compulsory modules (additional modules). The result of these examinations is not considered for the calculation of the overall grade. The additional modules are listed on the diploma supplement unless the student declares to the examination board in writing that they do not wish the additional examination credits to be recorded on their diploma supplement.

Final Provisions

§ 30 Inspection to Examination Files

1. The examinee can access examination results as well as the assessment of the examiner on the learning platform.
2. After conclusion of the master examination, the examinee can inspect their written exam work, the associated assessments of the examiners and the examination records upon request.
3. The request for the inspection is to be made to the chair of the examination board within a month after issuing of the examination diploma or of the notification of the failed master examination. § 32 of the Administrative Procedure Act for the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia regarding the restoration to the former condition apply accordingly. The chair determines the place and time of the inspection as well as the person in whose presence the inspection is carried out

§ 31 Invalidity of Examinations

1. If the examinee has cheated in an examination and if this fact becomes known only after issuing the diploma according to § 26 (1, 2) or § 11 (5), the examination board may retrospectively adjust the grades for the examinations for which the examinee has cheated and declare the master examination failed in whole or in part.
2. If the requirements for admission to an examination were not fulfilled although the examinee did not intend any deception in this, and if this fact becomes known only after issuing the diploma according to § 26 (1, 2) or § 11 (5), this defect is remedied by the passing of the examination. If the examinee effected the admission wrongfully with intent, the examination board will decide on the legal consequences taking into account the Administrative Procedure Act for the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia
3. The incorrect examination diploma according to § 26 (1, 2) or § 11 (5) is to be confiscated and reissued if appropriate. A decision according to paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 sentence 2 is excluded after expiry of a period of five years after issuing of the examination diploma according to § 26 (1, 2) or the diploma according to § 11 (5).

§ 32 Objection Procedure

1. An objection against adverse decisions in the examination procedure, in particular against the assessment of examination performances, may be lodged within one month after notification in accordance with § 68 of the Administrative Court Procedure Act (Verwaltungsgerichtsordnung – VwGO).
2. An objection against the assessment of an examination performance must be preceded by a reasoned application to the examination board following inspection of the examination and completion of the re-assessment procedure. The procedure and formal requirements for such

application are governed by the “Richtlinie Prüfungseinsicht und Nachkorrekturanträge” (translated: “Guideline on Examination Inspection and Requests for Re-Assessment”), which forms part of these examination regulations. The examination board shall decide on the application.

3. The examination board shall decide on the objection pursuant to paragraph 1. In order to ensure transparency, the contact details of the examination board, the responsible contact people, and the detailed procedure for submitting applications shall be published on the university website.

§ 33 Entry into Force

These examination regulations come into force with effect from September 1st 2021. They will first apply to those students who take up their studies for a distance-learning master degree programme at ISM in the summer term 2022.

Issued by reason of the senate resolutions of May 25th 2021, January 19th 2022, December 8th 2022 and February 11th 2026.

Dortmund, February 11th 2026

Prof. Dr. Gerrit Lietz

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Appendix 1: Specializations of the Master Degree Programme "Management"

The following specializations are offered for the M.Sc. Management:

- Digital Marketing (*Digitales Marketing*)
- Sustainability (*Nachhaltigkeit*)
- Human Resources (*Human Resources*)
- Logistics (*Logistik*)
- Digital Education (*Digitale Bildung*)
- Business Mediation & Coaching (*Wirtschaftsmediation & Coaching*)

Conditions for the selection of a specialization are:

- Each student can only select one specialization.
- The master thesis has to be about a subject from the area of specialization.
- Students have to complete (at least) four electives that belong to their selected specialization according to the following table.

	Digital Marketing <i>Digitales Marketing</i>	Sustainability <i>Nachhaltigkeit</i>	Human Resources <i>Human Resources</i>	Logistics <i>Logistik</i>	Digital Education <i>Digitale Bildung</i>	Business Mediation & Coaching <i>Wirtschaftsmediation & Coaching</i>
Applied Media Psychology <i>Angewandte Medienpsychologie</i>	x				x	
Essentials of General Psychology <i>Einführung in die Allgemeine Psychologie</i>			x		x	x
Essentials of Global Sustainable Development <i>Theorien & Methoden einer globalen nachhaltigen Entwicklung</i>		x				

	Digital Marketing <i>Digitales Marketing</i>	Sustainability <i>Nachhaltigkeit</i>	Human Resources <i>Human Resources</i>	Logistics <i>Logistik</i>	Digital Education <i>Digitale Bildung</i>	Business Mediation & Coaching <i>Wirtschaftsmediation & Coaching</i>
Essentials of Leading Sustainable Organizations <i>Einführung in das Management nachhaltiger Organisationen</i>		x				
Essentials of Digital Marketing Strategy & Planning <i>Einführung in die Strategie & Planung digitalen Marketings</i>	x					
Essentials of Digital Communication <i>Theorien & Methoden der digitalen Kommunikation</i>	x	x				
Business & Commercial Mediation <i>Wirtschaftsmediation</i>						x
Conflict Management in Organizations, at the Workplace & in Teams <i>Konfliktmanagement in Organisationen, am Arbeitsplatz & in Teams</i>			x			x
Theories & Methods of Systemic Business Coaching <i>Theorien & Methoden des systemischen Business-Coachings</i>			x			x
Methods of Solution-Focused Communication <i>Methoden der lösungsfokussierten Gesprächsführung</i>			x			x
Digital & Sustainable Supply Chains <i>Nachhaltige & digitale Lieferketten</i>		x		x		
Global Sourcing <i>Globales Beschaffungsmanagement</i>				x		
Quality Management <i>Qualitätsmanagement</i>				x		
E-Commerce <i>E-Commerce</i>	x			x		

	Digital Marketing <i>Digitales Marketing</i>	Sustainability <i>Nachhaltigkeit</i>	Human Resources <i>Human Resources</i>	Logistics <i>Logistik</i>	Digital Education <i>Digitale Bildung</i>	Business Mediation & Coaching <i>Wirtschaftsmediation & Coaching</i>
Digital Bootcamp <i>Digital Bootcamp</i>	x	x		x		
Instructional Design & Multimedia Learning <i>Instruktionsdesign & Lernen mit Multimedia</i>					x	
Trends in Educational Technology <i>Bildungstechnologische Trends</i>			x		x	
Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning <i>Computerunterstütztes kooperatives Lernen</i>					x	
Lean Management <i>Lean Management</i>			x	x		
Value-based Leadership <i>Wertorientierte Führung</i>		x	x			x