

## Examination Rules for Distance-Learning Master Degree Courses

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

as of May 25<sup>th</sup> 2021

including the modification articles as of January 19<sup>th</sup> 2022, and December 8<sup>th</sup> 2022.

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**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) und vom 8.12.2022 (ÄO Master Fernstudium 02)”. Should there be any discrepancies between the English translation and the original German version, the original text shall prevail.

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By reason of §2 para 4 and § 64 para 1 of the Law on the Universities of the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia (Hochschulgesetz – HG) in the version of the Hochschulzukunftsgesetz (September 11th 2014) ISM international School of management has issued the following examination rules.

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## Preamble

The distance-learning master degree courses in business sciences at ISM prepare students for professional and management functions in enterprises. The degree courses 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 courses observe gender equality.

## General

### § 1 Scope, Commencement of Studies, Compensation for Disadvantages

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

The degree courses “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 course “Management”.

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

2. The general part of the examination rules regulate the basic structures of the distance-learning master degree courses. The appendices “Course Handbook” and “Study Plan” determine the degree course-specific regulations of the different distance-learning master degree courses. Adjustments and changes to the appendices may be determined by the examination board.
3. The examination rules 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 course 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 courses, 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

## § 2 Preconditions for Study

1. The precondition for taking up studies is a proof of a
  - general qualification for university admission or universities of applied sciences admission or a subject-linked qualification for university entrance or an admission authorization recognized as equivalent by the responsible government agency or an entrance opportunity regulated by statutory ordinance according to §49 para 4 of the Higher Education Act (HG).
  - successfully completed bachelor degree course comprising at least 180 ECTS credits, or an equivalent degree program at a university or university of applied sciences or a foreign university of equal standing for applicants to master degree courses consisting of 120 ECTS units with an intended time-to-degree of four semesters (for full-time students).
  - successfully completed bachelor degree course comprising at least 210 ECTS credits, or an equivalent degree program at a university or university of applied sciences or a foreign university of equal standing for applicants to master degree courses consisting of 90 ECTS units with an intended time-to-degree of three semesters (for full-time students). Applicants whose bachelor degree course only encompasses 180 ECTS credits can also be admitted to these master degree courses if they have gained another 30 ECTS credits in higher education in addition to their bachelor's studies or if they have gained equivalent qualification outside of higher education institutions or through qualified professional experience (the particulars are specified in the Admission Rules for Distance-Learning Master Degree Courses)
2. If the initial degree has not yet been obtained, the applicant can be granted a **provisional admission to the degree course** (conditional admission) as long as the regular study period of their initial degree has been completed by the start of the master degree course, and all other admission requirements are fulfilled. Students provisionally admitted to the degree course have to obtain their initial degree a maximum of six months after the start of their master degree course, and they have to submit the initial degree to ISM at least 10 workdays later. In case of default, students

provisionally admitted to the degree course are exmatriculated. There will be no certification of any examination achievements.

3. In addition, the different degree courses can define additional requirements, such as certain disciplines of the bachelor program, required minimum ECTS credits in certain subject areas, evidence of comprehensive knowledge in certain foreign languages or specialized work experience, or internships (details are regulated in the Admission Rules for Distance-Learning Master Degree Courses).
4. Applicants who have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful completion of a degree course in a way other than by studying are entitled to take up studies in a phase of studies corresponding to the result of the assessment examination according to § 49 para 12 HG as long as regulations regarding the allocation of study places do not oppose this. Further details on the type, form, and scope of the assessment examination are regulated in ISM's Admission Rules for Distance-Learning Master Degree Courses.
5. Admission to studies has to be denied if the applicant does not fulfil the admission requirements according to para 1 to 3, or if the applicant has definitively failed an examination required according to the examination rules in the respective degree course at a university that is considered in scope of the German Basic Law. This also applies to related or comparable degree courses.
6. Further enrolment requirements are regulated by the Admission Rules for Distance-Learning Master Degree Courses.

### **§ 3 Structure and Content of the Degree Courses**

1. For the degree courses "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 course "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 course "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. The workload per year in full-time is 1,800 hours. 60 credit points are to be acquired per year. Thus, a credit point is comprised of 30 hours of work. The part-

time versions of the degree programs have a workload of 1,200 and 900 hours respectively; students are to acquire 40 and 30 credits per year respectively.

3. The degree courses are structured in modules. A module encompasses 5 or 10 ECTS credits, the master thesis encompasses 30 ECTS credits.
4. The contents of the degree courses 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 course handbook (see appendix "Course Handbook").
5. 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 course handbook.
6. 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 course, 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 course.
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 course or university to another, on failing an exam, when the studies are interrupted and before dropping out of a degree course.

## 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 course requires the acquisition of 120 credit points (workload = 3,000 hours) with the exception of the 90 ECTS version of the master degree course 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 courses “Digital Marketing Management” and “Sustainability Management” and the degree “Master of Science”, “M.Sc.” for short, in the degree courses “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 course 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 rules 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 courses 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 rules 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 rules 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 do 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 of the examination board or its chair are to be communicated to the examinee via email. Negative decisions are to be sent to the examinee by registered post without delay; these decisions are to be justified and supplemented with information on legal remedies. The examinee is to be given the opportunity to comment on the facts material to the decision prior to the decision. §2 para 3 No. 3 of the Administrative Procedure Act (VwVfG) of North Rhine-Westphalia remains unaffected, in particular with respect to the exception to the duty to give a hearing and to give reasons in decisions of a scientific or artistic nature.

## **§ 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 course or a congeneric master degree course 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 course 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 course and the purpose of the examinations (see appendix "Course Handbook"). In this respect, there is a significant difference, if the applicant is likely to be hindered in successfully completing the degree course. 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 15<sup>th</sup> March 1991 in the version of 18<sup>th</sup> 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. If no decision can be taken on the basis of the provided documents, the recognition may be carried out through a placement test.
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 rules 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.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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“

6. 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.

## **§ 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 course 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 "Course 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. The specific number, form, extent and requirements of the exams are listed in the course handbook. At the beginning of a semester, the examination board may change the terms of the examinations in consultation with the examiners.
3. The following forms of module examination are provided for:
  - Report or term paper
  - Written exam
  - Partial examinations throughout the semester (E-Portfolio)
4. The extent and duration of module examinations is determined by the credit points assigned to them and defined in the course handbook.
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 course 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 the exam is recorded electronically, e.g. 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 illness 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 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 course handbook. To compensate for disadvantages such as long illnesses, serious technical or family problems, the examination board can grant extensions of deadlines.
5. 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

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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”.
9. 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.

## § 17 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. After registering for the exam, the examinee receives a link that they can use to take the online exam.
3. Online exams can be monitored electronically. To this purpose, students install software on their computer which records the screen as well as the examinee via the examinee’s webcam. Before taking part in the online exam, the examinee identifies themselves with a suitable document (student identification or ID card). If an examinee is suspected of cheating or fraud, the examination board will instruct someone to examine the recording and document breaches of regulations.
4. The electronic monitoring of written exams will be conducted in accordance with the respective data protection regulations and students will be informed in detail about the data that will be recorded before the start of the online exam.
5. 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 monitored 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.
6. The examiner decides on the permissibility of aids. The examinee will be advised of the permitted aids electronically in due time before the examination.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

## **§ 18 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

### § 19 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 course 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 course 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 courses that are taught in German. In the master degree courses 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).
7. 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.

### § 20 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 § 19 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.

## **§ 21 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.

## § 22 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.

## § 23 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

### § 24 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 course, 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 course "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).

## § 25 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 (§ 24, 4) as well as the date of issue. It contains the name of the degree course. 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 course "Management"

## § 26 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 course). 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

- 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.

## § 27 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

### § 28 Inspection to Examination Files

- The examinee can access examination results as well as the assessment of the examiner on the learning platform.
- 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.
- 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

### § 29 Invalidity of Examinations

- If the examinee has cheated in an examination and if this fact becomes known only after issuing the diploma according to § 24 (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.
- 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 § 24 (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 § 24 (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 § 24 (1, 2) or the diploma according to § 11 (5).

## **§ 30 Objection Procedure**

The examination board decides on an objection according to § 68 of the Administrative Court Procedures Code in the case of denunciations against the assessment of a piece of examination work on the basis of a response to be obtained from the persons involved in the assessment.

## **§ 31 Entry into Force**

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

Issued by reason of the senate resolutions of May 25<sup>th</sup> 2021, January 19<sup>th</sup> 2022, and December 8<sup>th</sup> 2022.

Dortmund, December 8<sup>th</sup> 2022

Professor Dr. Ingo Böckenholt

President of ISM International School of Management

## Appendix 1: Specializations of the Master Degree Course "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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; Planung digitalen Marketings</i>	x					
Essentials of Digital Communication <i>Theorien &amp; 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 &amp; in Teams</i>			x			x
Theories & Methods of Systemic Business Coaching <i>Theorien &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; Coaching</i>
Digital Bootcamp <i>Digital Bootcamp</i>	x	x		x		
Instructional Design & Multimedia Learning <i>Instruktionsdesign &amp; 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