

Fachhochschule Vorarlberg GmbH

Statutes FH Vorarlberg

According to § 10 para. 3, sub-para. 10 FHStG



FH Vorarlberg 
University of Applied Sciences

Study and Examination Regulations for the Degree Programmes of FH Vorarlberg Version 2.6

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Study and Examination Regulations for the Degree Programmes of FH Vorarlberg

§ 1 Scope of Application and Definition

(1) These Study and Examination Regulations govern the running of and qualifications awarded by the degree programmes as well as the organization and holding of examinations at FH Vorarlberg pursuant to the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz - FHStG BGBl No. 340/1993 as amended).

(2) Provisions in applications for the accreditation of degree programmes¹ that were approved by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ) or further changes approved by the FH Vorarlberg Board are only effective to that extent that they are not contrary to the Study and Examination Regulations.

The application procedure for the first-time accreditation of degree programmes is defined in the AQ's University of Applied Sciences Accreditation Regulations as amended. The application for the accreditation of a degree programme describes in detail the content and organizational setup of a degree programme, including, amongst other things, entrance requirements, selection process, professions open to graduates, qualification objectives, curriculum as well as module descriptions.

All applications for the accreditation of degree programmes shall adhere to the current internal quality management rules of FH Vorarlberg.

The degree programmes offered by FH Vorarlberg are published on the University's homepage.

(3) Responsibility for Approval of and Changes to Applications for the Accreditation of Degree Programmes

Applications to establish a degree programme as well as changes to content that is subject to accreditation are voted on by the FH Vorarlberg Board in consultation with the Provider.

Revisions and running changes to degree programmes in applications for the accreditation of degree programmes shall also be voted on by the FH Vorarlberg Board in consultation with the Provider.

Changes that are not subject to accreditation, but that are not minimal, are published in the yearly report submitted by FH Vorarlberg to AQ Austria (University of Applied Sciences Yearly Report Regulations as amended).

(4) Deadlines contained in the Examination Regulations are given as workdays. Workdays are Monday to Saturday, except Sundays and legal holidays.

(5) Deadlines for decisions made by the degree programme directors, the FH Vorarlberg Board and the Complaints Commission are suspended in the month of August.

¹ Parts of the application for the accreditation of a degree programme may be viewed in FH Vorarlberg's Library.

§ 2 Recognition of Documented Education and Work Experience Equivalency²

(1) Course recognition may only be awarded on the basis of documented proof of equivalency with course requirements in relation to the scope and content of a course. Following the student's application for exemption from a course, the equivalency of previously acquired knowledge with that taught in the course for which exemption is sought shall be assessed. The decision rests with the programme director. If equivalency is attested, examinations that the student has previously passed shall be recognized. In such cases, the student's knowledge shall not be examined.

(2) Specialist knowledge or work experience shall be taken into consideration for the recognition of courses or work placement; this shall apply, in particular, to part-time degree programmes and parts of degree programmes.

(3) Applications for course recognition are to be submitted to the programme director before the holding of examinations/submission of course work and no later than 14 days after the commencement of the course in question.

(4) The student is responsible for submitting documented proof of educational and work experience equivalency with the course requirements in relation to the scope and content of the relevant course.

(5) In cases in which parts of a course are recognized, grades from other institutions are not admissible as part of the final grade awarded for a course. The final grade will be calculated from the grades awarded for those parts of the coursework completed at FH Vorarlberg.

§ 3 Types of Courses³

(1) The following types of courses are provided for in the Curricula:

- **BA** Bachelor's thesis
- **BP** Work placement
- **CO** Coaching
- **ILV** Integrated course
- **LU** Laboratory
- **MA** Master's thesis
- **PT** Project
- **RP** Revision course
- **SE** Seminar
- **ST** Study trip
- **SV** Supervision
- **TR** Training
- **TUT** Tutorial
- **UE** Exercise
- **VO** Lecture

(2) The type and scope of individual courses and examinations are set out in the respective Study Regulations.

² Cf. § 12 FHStG (Federal Act on University of Applied Sciences Degree Programmes).

³ Cf. § 3 para. 2 sub-para. 5 FHStG.

(3) Students are free to choose electives if:

- They meet the enrolment requirements, and
- The minimum number of students is met / the maximum number of students is not exceeded.

The minimum and maximum number of students in each course is determined by the programme director. Places are allocated in the individual degree programmes in a regulated and transparent manner.

§ 4 General Examination Regulations⁴

(1) Examinations shall be scheduled shortly after the completion of the courses in which the material relevant for the examinations is taught. Repeat examinations are to be scheduled shortly after failed examinations.

(2) A sufficient number of dates for examinations and repeat examinations shall be offered each semester and academic year, so that a student repeating an examination may continue his/her studies without the loss of a semester. The scheduling of repeat examinations shall take into account the scope and level of difficulty of the examination. Examination dates shall be announced at the beginning of the semester or at least 14 days prior to the examination. Dates on which work has to be submitted as well as presentation dates are also subject to this.

(3) At the start of each course, students shall be informed in writing (for example, course notes, emails, in ILIAS and ECTS descriptions etc.) of the examination requirements (content, methods, assessment criteria and standards) and possibilities for repeat examinations. Examinations may also be held for individual modules.

Changes to the type of examination (for example, in the case of repeat examinations) shall be made known by the examiner at the latest upon the publication of the new examination date.

(4) Students shall have the right to take an examination in a different format if they submit proof of a disability rendering it impossible for them to take the examination in the prescribed format and if the different format does not unduly affect the content and requirements of the examination.

(5) If a student is unable to attend an examination, he/she must inform the degree programme office without delay by email of his/her absence. Three workdays after the end of the reason for his/her absence at the latest, the student is required to submit written or electronic proof of the reason for his/her absence.

If a student is unable to attend an examination in one or more subjects due to health reasons, the student shall submit a doctor's note. If over the period of a semester starting with the first scheduled examination date or the first submission deadline for work, the student is not able to sit the examination at another scheduled date or submit work by another scheduled date, the Provider can require that the student sits the examination at the next possible examination date or submits work by the next possible submission date. If he/she is unable to do so due to health reasons, the Provider can request a doctor's note from a doctor of its choosing.

⁴ Cf. § 13 FHStG.

Every student is required to sit examinations and submit work within 2 semesters (1 academic year) at the latest after the first possible examination and submission date. After this deadline, the Provider can unilaterally terminate the Education Contract. It should be noted that students have the option of applying for a leave of absence from their studies due to health reasons.

Failure to provide sufficient reasons, or in a timely manner, for not taking an examination for courses with final examinations shall result in the loss of one possible examination attempt. Course work submissions and presentations are also subject to this.

(6) Students shall be permitted to inspect the assessment documents and the examination records provided that they make such requests within six months after the publication of examination results. Students shall be entitled to make photocopies of these documents. Exceptions are documents covered by rights of use that are outside the jurisdiction of FH Vorarlberg (for example, certificate examinations).

(7) If the assessment documents (in particular, examiners' reports, corrected written examinations and academic work) are not returned to the students, they shall be kept by the instructor for at least twelve months after the announcement of the results. External instructors may store the documents in the degree programme office.

(8) A gender-neutral language is to be used in all written academic work (seminar papers, bachelor's and master's theses etc.), reports (practical training or reflection reports etc.) and presentations as determined in the Language Guidelines for non-discriminatory communication at FH Vorarlberg. The correct use of gender-neutral language is part of the grading criteria and standards.

(9) Concluding course assessment consists of a final written or oral examination at the end of a module or course. Parts of the final examination may be given in the form of partial tests. Positive grades in these tests will be counted towards the grade of the final examination and the repeat sitting of the final examination.⁵

(10) Continuous assessment consists of the evaluation of student performance⁶ on the basis of several types of performance criteria over the period of a course.

§ 5 Student Leave of Absence⁷

An application for leave of absence shall be submitted in due time to the programme director. It must document or state the reasons for the leave of absence and the intended continuation of studies. A decision about the application shall take urgent personal, health or work-related reasons into account. While on leave the student cannot take any examinations. The programme director decides on an individual basis on the modalities by which a student is allowed to continue his/her degree. Leaves of absence are granted for a maximum of one academic year.

FH Vorarlberg cannot guarantee that a student returning from a leave of absence can continue his/her degree according to the same degree curriculum.

⁵ In any case, the examination before a committee shall cover all of the course material.

⁶ Presentations, project reports, projects, work, written/oral examinations, laboratory reports, etc.

⁷ Cf. § 14 FHSStG.

§ 6 Oral Examinations⁸

(1) The following types of oral examinations are provided for by the Federal Act of the University of Applied Sciences Degree Programmes (FHStG):

1. Oral examination for a single course or part of a single course
2. An oral examination before a committee pursuant to § 9 para. 1.
3. An oral examination before a committee concluding a University of Applied Sciences bachelor's and master's degree programme pursuant to § 7.

(2) Oral examinations shall be open to the public; however, admission shall be limited to the number of persons that can be accommodated.

(3) Records have to be kept of all oral examinations by examiners. Records of examinations shall include the subject of the examination, the place and time, the name of the examiner or the names of the members of the examination senate (*Prüfungssenat*), the name of the student, the questions asked, the grade awarded, the reasons for a negative grade as well as any unusual occurrences. Records of examinations shall be kept by the examiner for at least one year from the date of the announcement of the result or, in the case of an examination before a committee, on file in the degree programme office pursuant to sub-para. 2 and 3.

(4) For oral examinations held before an examination senate pursuant to sub-para. 2 and 3, the examination senate shall consist of at least three members. If the number of members of the examination senate is even, the chairperson of the examination senate shall have the deciding vote. All members of the examination senate shall be present for the duration of the entire examination; if necessary, this requirement can be fulfilled through the use of electronic media.

If one examiner, at the most, is not able to be present at the examination (e.g. due to illness), a replacement shall be chosen in so far as this replacement has the necessary professional expertise.

(5) The result of an oral examination pursuant to § 6 para. 1 sub-para. 1 shall be made known to the student immediately after the examination. The result of an oral examination pursuant to § 6 para. 1 sub-para. 2 and sub-para 3 shall be made known after consultation by the examination senate, which shall take place immediately after the examination.

§ 7 Examinations Concluding a University of Applied Sciences Bachelor's and Master's Degree⁹

(1) The examination before a committee concluding a University of Applied Sciences bachelor's degree pursuant to § 3 para. 2 sub-para. 6 FHSTG shall be held before an examination senate with the relevant expertise. This examination before a committee shall consist of an oral examination on:

1. The submitted bachelor's thesis
2. The connections to relevant subjects in the curriculum.

The oral examination may include a presentation or the discussion of a case study, for example.

⁸ Cf. § 15 FHStG.

⁹ Cf. § 3 para. 2 sub-para. 6 FHStG and § 16 FHStG.

(2) The examination before a committee concluding a University of Applied Sciences master's degree is a comprehensive examination held before an examination senate with the relevant expertise. This oral examination before a committee shall consist of the following parts:

1. The presentation of the master's thesis
2. An examination that connects the topic of the master's thesis with the relevant subjects in the curriculum
3. An examination about other subjects relevant to the curriculum.

(3) Students shall be informed at least 14 days prior to the examination via the University's information system of their admission to the examination before a committee.

(4) Students shall be informed about the assessment criteria and the results of the assessment of the examination before a committee.

(5) Examination committee members (including final bachelor's and master's examination committee members) are all the faculty members or external instructors in a degree programme. The chairperson may either be the programme director or someone appointed by the programme director. The deputy chairperson of the committee is appointed by the chairperson of the examination committee.

The examination senate comprises members of the examination committee who conduct the examinations for each candidate. The chairperson of the examination committee can appoint other experts from professional fields relevant to the degree programme as members of examination senates. Examination senates are responsible for final bachelor's and master's examinations before a committee as well as for the second repeat sitting of a single examination. Members of an examination senate are appointed by the chairperson of the examination committee from among its members. The examination senate shall consist of at least three members.

An expert shall be appointed for each examination subject or sub-area. The programme director shall appoint one member of each examination senate as the chairperson.

All members of the examination committee are independent in their duties as examiners.

(6) University of Applied Sciences' bachelor's degree programmes are to be designed so that, as a rule, all students can attend the final examination at the first scheduled date at the end of July (end of February for extended part-time degree programmes).

§ 8 Assessment of Examinations¹⁰

(1) Examinations and independent academic work shall be graded according to the Austrian grading scale of 1 to 5. If this form of assessment is impossible or inexpedient, a pass shall be given as "successfully completed" or "recognized." In the case of a negative assessment, the regulations for repeating coursework for courses with continuous assessment shall apply. The type of grading scale to be used is set forth in the Study Regulation. The programme director may decide which grading scale shall be used in individual cases.

¹⁰ Cf. § 17 FHStG.

(2) Besides the Austrian grading scale of 1 to 5, examination grades on a points scale of 0-100 are also permissible. The table for converting these grades into Austrian grades is given below:

Austrian Grading System	x ... %-age or points
1 - Very good	$100 \geq x \geq 87.5$
2 - Good	$87.5 > x \geq 75$
3 - Satisfactory	$75 > x \geq 62.5$
4 - Sufficient	$62.5 > x \geq 50$
5 - Unsatisfactory	$x < 50$

Consolidated transcripts shall contain only grades and not points.

(3) The assessment of an examination before a committee concluding a University of Applied Sciences bachelor's degree as well as the comprehensive examination before a committee concluding a University of Applied Sciences master's degree shall be determined accordingly:

- "nicht bestanden" / fail
- "bestanden" / pass
- "mit gutem Erfolg bestanden" / pass with merit (considerably above-average performance)
- "mit Auszeichnung" / pass with distinction (outstanding performance)

(4) The results of examinations and assessments of independent academic work shall be announced within 18 working days; of bachelor's and master's theses within a maximum of 24 days.

(5) Examination results for final course examinations and the course grade for courses with continuous assessment shall be published digitally on an information system of FH Vorarlberg. A transcript of records shall be issued free of charge to the student within four weeks after the end of the semester on request or automatically upon completion of the degree.

§ 9 Repeat Examinations¹¹

(1) A student shall be entitled to repeat the failed final examination of a course two times; the second repeat examination shall be an examination before a committee and can be held as an oral examination or as a written examination. The examination senate shall consist of at least three members. If the number of members of the examination senate is even, the chairperson of the examination senate shall have the deciding vote.

The correction and assessment of written examinations before a committee are to be completed within 18 days. A record is to be kept of the joint assessment of the written examination before a committee.

(2) If the sum of individual assessments in courses with continuous assessment results in a negative overall assessment, the student shall be granted a reasonable extension period for the completion of required coursework (first repeat examination). A second negative assessment will result in an examination before a committee (second repeat examination).

¹¹ cf. § 18 FHSStG.

- (3) Students shall be entitled to repeat failed bachelor's examinations held before a committee and failed comprehensive master's examinations held before a committee two times.
- (4) Students may repeat an academic year if they fail an examination held before a committee. An application for the repetition of an academic year has to be submitted to the programme director within three weeks after the failed examination. Failed examinations and the corresponding courses shall be retaken as part of the repetition of the academic year, while passed examinations and corresponding courses shall only be retaken as required.
- (5) The repetition of an academic year commences with the start of the next semester. Until then, the student remains enrolled in the current semester and is allowed to sit examinations.
- (6) Students who have been excluded from a degree programme due to a negative assessment of the last permissible repeat examination shall remain enrolled until the end of the semester and are allowed to complete courses they are attending during this time. They are, however, excluded from being readmitted to the same degree programme.
- (7) Students may submit a petition to the head of the FH Vorarlberg Board to repeat a passed examination if this is possible within the didactic framework of the course. Applications should be submitted within two weeks after the announcement of the grade. If the application is granted, the grade for the passed examination will no longer be valid; however, the repeat examination will count as one of the repeat examinations.

§ 10 Bachelor's and Master's Theses¹²

- (1) The purpose of a bachelor's thesis is to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to identify, formulate and examine relevant professional issues within an academic framework using the academic skills they have acquired during their studies.

The master's thesis must meet general research standards. It demonstrates the ability of students to examine a research question independently and to draw new conclusions within an appropriate content and methodological framework.

Further regulations relating to bachelor's and master's theses can be found in each degree programme's Study Regulations and Guidelines. These Guidelines are binding regarding formal criteria, procedures and examination dates. These formalities are considered to have been communicated to students once these Guidelines have been published on the student information systems.

- (2) Several students may work jointly on a topic provided that the performance of each student can be assessed individually.
- (3) Admission to the examination before a committee is conditional upon the positive assessment of the master's thesis. A master's thesis that has not been positively assessed shall be returned to the student for revisions and resubmission within a maximum of one semester (six months). A master's thesis may be resubmitted twice. A third unsuccessful submission will preclude the awarding of a degree and the end of the student's enrolment.

¹² Cf. § 19 FHStG.

In keeping with § 18 para. 1 and 2 FHStG, one change in topic is permissible as part of the resubmissions, but is not required.

(4) A successful master's thesis shall be published by submitting it to FH Vorarlberg's Library. On submitting a master's thesis to the Library, the author shall be entitled to submit an application to the degree programme director for restriction of access to the copies deposited with the Library for a maximum of five years from the time of submission. Such applications shall be approved if the student establishes that permitting access will materially endanger his/her fundamental legal or business interests.

§ 11 Annulment of Examination Results and Grades for Academic Work¹³

(1) If an attempt is made by a student to influence the results of his/her own examination performance or that of another student through deception, fraudulent means or the carrying or use of unauthorized resources, the results of such examinations shall be annulled. The examination for which the results are annulled shall count as one of the repeat examinations.

The programme director shall decide on the basis of the report submitted by the examiner responsible or the examination supervisor in consultation with the course instructor. The programme director shall take the student's opinion into consideration before reaching a final decision.

(2) If it becomes known after the publication of a grade or the awarding of a certificate that an examination result was obtained by fraudulent means, the degree programme director may retroactively change the grade and annul the examination. Annulled degree certificates will be withdrawn.

(3) If, during the course of a degree, several judgements are made against a student pursuant to § 11 para. 1 or § 11 para. 2 of these Examination Regulations, this may lead to the dissolution of the study contract (Education Contract) with that student.

(4) FH Vorarlberg and its instructors can require students to submit all their written work (including restricted work) to plagiarism detection systems for the purpose of evaluating whether students have plagiarized.¹⁴

Written work may also be directly submitted by the programme director or the instructor to plagiarism detection systems for the purpose of evaluating whether students have plagiarized.

¹³ Cf. § 20 FHStG.

¹⁴ An act of plagiarism is in any case committed, when text, content, or ideas are used and presented as one's own. This encompasses in particular the appropriation and use of text, theories, hypotheses, findings or data by directly quoting, paraphrasing or translating them without appropriate acknowledgement and reference to the source and the original author.

Academic or artistic dishonesty has been unquestionably committed when unauthorised means have been used or unauthorised use has been made of another person in writing a scientific thesis, taking an examination or preparing an artistic submission, or data and results have been fabricated or falsified.

§ 12 Legal Protection¹⁵

Appeals against an examination grade are not permitted. However, if the procedure according to which an examination resulting in a negative assessment was conducted exhibits irregularities, the student has the right to lodge a complaint within two weeks with the programme director, who can then annul the examination within 18 workdays.

If the examination was held by the programme director, the complaint shall be lodged with the FH Vorarlberg Board. The student has the right to continue to take courses until a decision on the complaint has been made. Examinations that are annulled shall not be counted towards the permissible number of repeat examinations.

§ 13 Complaints Commission of the FH Vorarlberg Board

(1) The Complaints Commission of the FH Vorarlberg Board examines:

Complaints submitted by students and applicants against the degree programme directors that relate to decisions made pursuant to the Examination Regulations as well as all other decisions made by programme directors, in particular, pursuant to § 10 para. 5 FHStG.

(2) The Complaints Commission comprises a chair, a faculty member and a student. The members of the Commission and an alternate member are elected from the FH Vorarlberg Board on a proposal by the head of the FH Vorarlberg Board for the duration of the term of the FH Vorarlberg Board. The chairperson shall be a programme director. If the complaint lodged is directed directly or indirectly against members of the Commission, providing grounds for bias or lack of impartiality, impartiality shall be restored through the reconstitution of the Commission.

(3) Complaints must be lodged in writing with the head of the FH Vorarlberg Board within two weeks after the publication of examination results or of the decision of the programme director. Complaints should contain a description of the initial situation, the contested decision and a detailed justification for the complaint.

(4) After submission of the complaint, all communication with the person who has submitted the complaint shall be conducted by the chair of the Complaints Commission.

(5) The Complaints Commission decides in cases referring to irregularities after hearing the student, who shall make use of his/her right to be heard within three workdays of being given notice to do so. The student may request the presence of a student representative at the hearing. Further persons may also be summoned to provide evidence or expert opinion.

(6) In other cases, the Complaints Commission makes its decisions within 24 workdays (except for those instances listed in para. 5) and, if possible, may hear the person submitting the complaint. Deadlines are suspended in the month of August. Further persons may also be summoned to provide evidence or expert opinion.

(7) The consultative and reasoned decision of the Complaints Commission is submitted to the FH Vorarlberg Board. At a minimum, the chair shall document the decision, the basis for the decision and dissenting opinions. This documentation and the results of the vote by the Commission members are submitted as a petition

¹⁵ Cf. § 21 FHStG.

to the FH Vorarlberg Board. The decision of the FH Vorarlberg Board shall be communicated to the person submitting the complaint without delay and in writing.

§ 14 Class Attendance

In principle, class attendance is generally not mandatory for students enrolled in degree programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences. However, if required by the type of course or instruction (e.g. laboratory work, business games etc.), attendance can be made mandatory for that course by the course instructor, who states the mandatory attendance together with the examination modes at the start of the course.

If attendance is mandatory, the following rules apply: in exceptional, attestable cases (for example, specialist doctor's visits, business trips in the case of part-time students, subpoenas, nursing or childcare duties etc.), an individual student is to be excused from attending class. Absences should not amount to more than 20 % of the respective class time.

If absences amount to 20-50 % of class time, students are automatically required to submit written documentation (for example, a doctor's note) to the course instructor and to the degree programme office within three working days after the end of the reason for his/her absence. In such cases, the head of the course shall determine any extra work requirements.

In cases in which absences exceed 50 % of class time, the programme director shall confer with the instructor to determine the type of additional work and the time period in which it is to be completed.

Unexcused absences may lead to a failing grade for a course, particularly, if it is a continuous assessment course.

In cases in which unexcused absences exceed 50 % of class time, a failing grade for a course will be awarded.

In cases in which excused absences exceed 50 % of class time, the programme director shall confer with the instructor to determine the type of additional work and the time period in which it is to be completed, particularly in regard to courses with continuous assessment.

§ 15 Part-Time Studies

If there is an urgent reason for a leave of absence pursuant to § 5 of the Examination Regulations, the student may petition the programme director to continue his/her studies part-time. At a meeting with the programme director, the student shall inform the programme director of his/her reasons, and an individualized study plan, including courses over the agreed period of time, shall be agreed upon in writing. The student's degree can be extended by a maximum of one year. The student is obliged to pay semester tuition fees (study and Austrian National Union of Students membership fees) in full.

§ 16 English Translation

Should difficulties of interpretation arise, the German text of the Study and Examination Regulations shall be binding.