

**Joint Examination Regulations for the  
consecutive Master's Degree Programme "International Food  
Business and Consumer Studies"**

of Kassel University, Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences  
and Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Department of  
Nutritional, Food and Consumer Sciences



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*Approved by the Faculties in October 25th 2023 with changes in July 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025. The translation does not have any legal binding effects, the official version in German is published in "Mitteilungsblatt" of the University of Kassel*

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Study and examination plan

### **§ 1 Scope**

Excluded are the sample module descriptions and the number of ECTS points to be awarded per module. In this respect, the general provisions for examination regulations of the University of Kassel apply to all modules of the degree programme.

### **§ 2 Academic degree**

(1) Based on passing the examination, the academic degree of Master of Science (abbreviated as 'M.Sc.') is awarded by the Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences at the University of Kassel and by the Department of Nutritional, Food and Consumer Sciences at Fulda University of Applied Sciences.

(2) The 'M.Sc.' degree programme International Food Business and Consumer Studies' is designed as an application-oriented course of study. Further details are given in the Diploma Supplement, issued in accordance with the specifications of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES.

### **§ 3 Scope and structure, standard period, start and language of study**

- (1) The master's degree programme comprises 120 ETCS credits. The credits are allocated to each module. The distribution of credits across the module content is shown in § 7 and Appendix.
- (2) The standard period of study is four semesters.
- (3) The master's programme begins in winter semester.
- (4) The studies, including examinations, are conducted in English.

### **§ 4 Examination Board**

- (1) The responsible body for decisions on examination matters is the 'International Food Business and Consumer Studies' Examination Board.
- (2) The Examination Board includes and is entitled to vote
  - three professors teaching in the International Food Business and Consumer Studies degree programme,
  - one member of the academic staff from the International Food Business and Consumer Studies degree programme from the university that only appoints one professorial member on the Examination Board,
  - one student of the master's programme 'International Food Business and Consumer Studies'.

### **§ 5 Study objectives**

- The master's degree intends to enable students to acquire knowledge in the areas of natural, economic and social sciences as well as methodological skills in order to critically classify these in responsible and managerial activities in national and international companies and institutions in the food industry, evaluate and implement, especially at the interfaces of different cultures and in the context of sustainability.
- (2) In order to train students for this professional field, they will be able
    - to critically reflect on the impact of the food business on society and the environment and to shape this in accordance with the principles of ethics and sustainability;
    - to professionally plan, to carry out, to document and to evaluate complex projects in the food business, especially in the areas of
      - product quality, product development, innovation
      - consumer research and marketing, including intercultural aspects
      - management of organizations, processes and data flows in the food value chain
      - product management;

- to think and act inter- and transdisciplinary as well as intercultural;
- to conduct scientific research in food businesses and related areas.

## **§ 6 Admission requirements**

(1) Admission to the Master's degree programme is open to anyone who have

- a first professionally qualifying academic degree from a degree course of at least six semesters under German law in Oecotrophologie, Food or Agricultural Sciences with an average grade point average of 2.4 (on German scale) or better  
or
- a degree with a grade point average of 2.4 or better (on German scale) in a related degree programme, whereby subject and methodological competence in Oecotrophologie, Food or agricultural sciences amounting to 60 credits has been acquired, which is necessary for successful completion of the master's degree programme. The Examination Board decides in individual cases.

(2) If an applicant has a degree with a grade of less than 2.4 (on German scale), or if an applicant is unable to provide sufficient proof in accordance with § 1, a committee appointed by the Examination Board will decide upon application in accordance with §28 (3) of the AB Bachelor/Master whether the applicant has the necessary professional qualifications for admission to the Master's degree programme. The committee consists of two members from each partner university, including at least two professors. Proof can be provided in a selection interview lasting 30 minutes by

- a) relevant professional practice acquired after obtaining the first academic degree that meets the qualification objectives
- b) the motivation to study and
- c) special subject-related knowledge from the Bachelor's degree programme with regard to the competence objectives of the Master's degree programme and the intended career profile.

The selection committee can award up to three points for each of these aspects, so that a total of nine points can be achieved in the selection interview. The points are added up. Admission is granted to those who achieve at least five points in the selection interview. Minutes will be taken of the selection interview.

In addition, a letter of reference and a convincing letter of motivation in English of max. 3.500 characters including spaces must be submitted to prove the applicant's professional aptitude. The letter of motivation needs included the following points:

- a) Motivation to study the Master IFBC programme, including previous subject-related educational and professional qualifications as well as personal experience.
- b) Expectations of the Master's programme in terms of content and teaching and learning formats as well as the possibilities of setting priorities.
- c) Own long-term professional goals and the contribution of the Master's programme to these goals. The selection committee can assign up to three points for each of these aspects, so that a total of nine points can be achieved. The points are added up. For admission, in the letter of motivation at least five points must be achieved.

(4) In addition, proof of knowledge of the English language is required.

(5) The Examination Board may impose preconditions on admission with conditions of up to 30 credits and assign the bridging module.

## **§ 7 Examination parts of the master's examination, formation and weighting of the grades**

(1) The master's programme is structured as follows:

7 compulsory modules	42 credits
1 compulsory module 'Applied research project'	18 credits
1 compulsory elective module ('Bridging module') to compensate for different levels of prior knowledge	6 credits
3 compulsory elective modules ('Business and Food ')	18 credits
1 elective module for profile building	6 credits
1 master's thesis incl. colloquium	30 credits
Total	120 credits

(2) The master's examination consists of

- the course-related module examinations in accordance with § 3
- the master's thesis and the colloquium in accordance with § 8.

(3) As part of the master's programme, module examinations accompanying the course of study must be completed (for module descriptions see Appendix 2 Module Handbook):

- 7 compulsory modules (42 credits in total), 6 of the modules primarily enhance knowledge in the food and nutrition-related scientific disciplines of natural sciences, economics and social sciences and one module to enable students to carry out scientific work.
- International legislation on consumer protection and food
- International organic food markets and marketing
- Food product development
- Research methods. Modules can be: Research methods in social sciences or Research methods and data research in the life sciences.
- Quality management in food business
- Trends in food sciences and sustainable consumption
- Consumer behaviour and consumer science
- 1 compulsory module 'Applied research project' in cooperation with professional practice, 18 credits, trains key qualifications and the ability to intercultural communication and project management.
- 1 compulsory elective module with 6 credits from a catalogue of modules that serves to compensate for the students' different previous backgrounds ('bridging module', compulsory elective area I (WP I), see appendices 1 and 2). The Examination Board may also assign students other modules at Master's level if these modules provide the required qualifications.
- 2 compulsory elective modules with 6 credits each from a catalogue of modules with a focus on 'Business' (compulsory elective area II (WP II), see appendices 1 and 2).

- 1 compulsory elective module with 6 credits from a catalogue of modules with a focus on 'Food' (compulsory elective area III (WP III), see appendix 1 and 2).
- 1 elective module for profile building with 6 credits must be chosen from the module catalogue of the master's degree programmes offered at the University of Kassel, Fulda University or partner universities and should be closely related to the specific qualification profile that the student is aiming for.

(4) The content of the modules, the number of respective ECTS points and the respective examination requirements can be found in the module descriptions (appendix 2). Within subject related modules individual modules listed in appendix 2 can be replaced by other modules that are closely related to the qualification objective of the master's degree programme. The Examination Board decides in consultation with the lecturer responsible for the subject.

(5) Students who have completed the undergraduate course at a German university should acquire at least 12 of the required credits at a foreign partner institution. If there are not enough places available at foreign partner institutions or in special cases, the Examination Board can allow exceptions, given that the qualification goal of the study programme will be achieved.

(6) The overall grade is calculated as the weighted arithmetic mean of all grades according to the credits. The grade for the final examination is weighted three times. If an examination performance is evaluated by several examiners, the grade is calculated proportionately. The following points system is specified:

Points (100 points = 100%) Grade

> 95 to 100 equals 1.0

> 90 to 95 equals 1.3

> 85 to 90 equals 1.7

> 80 to 85 equals 2.0

> 75 to 80 equals 2.3

> 70 to 75 equals 2, 7

> 65 to 70 equals 3.0

> 60 to 65 equals 3.3

> 55 to 60 equals 3.7

> 50 to 55 equals 4.0

under 50 equals 5.0 (failed)

## **§ 8 Master's thesis and colloquium**

(1) The topic of the master's thesis is issued by request of the student via the chair of the Examination Board after admission to the master's examination. The Master's thesis can be submitted in the third semester at the earliest or, in the case of lateral entry, in the second semester of study. The topic of the master's thesis can be issued if no more than 12 credits are missing.

(2) The master's thesis has a time period of 22 weeks and the period begins on the day the topic is announced by the Examination Board. The master's thesis including the colloquium comprises 30 credits. The master's thesis has to be written in English. Upon a justified

request from the examiner and with the consent of the supervisor, the Examination Board may admit another of the official languages of the European Union. In this case, however, the work must contain a detailed summary in English. The thesis must be submitted to the Examination Board on time in three bound hard copies and digitally as a data medium.

(3) The topic of the master's thesis may only be returned once and only within the first six weeks. If the first submission deadline cannot be met for reasons for which the candidate is not responsible, the submission deadline will be extended by the time of the impediment, but no longer than eight weeks.

(4) As part of the master's thesis module, a colloquium will take place with the two examiners of the master's thesis about the master's thesis, no later than six weeks after submission of the master's thesis. The colloquium lasts 60 minutes. Participation in the colloquium requires that at least a grade of 'sufficient' has been achieved in the master's thesis. A colloquium that is not rated at least 'sufficient' can be repeated once. The grade of the final examination (master's thesis including colloquium) is formed by the grade of the master's thesis with a factor of 3 and the grade of the colloquium with a factor of 1.

### **§ 9 Transitional provisions**

(1) These examination regulations apply to all students who start studying in the master's programme in International Food Business and Consumer Studies in the winter semester 2024/25 or later.

(2) Students who began their studies in International Food Business and Consumer Studies before the winter semester 2024/25 can change to the version of these examination regulations by the summer semester 2025 by submitting an application to the Examination Board.

(3) Students who are enrolled in the Master's programme in International Food Business and Consumer Studies at the time these examination regulations come into force can complete their studies in accordance with the previously valid examination regulations, but no later than September 30, 2026.

### **§ 10 Entry into force**

These examination regulations come into force on the day after they are published in the University of Kassel newsletter.

Witzenhausen and Fulda, October 25<sup>th</sup> 2023

The Dean of the Faculty of Organic Agricultural Sciences at the University of Kassel  
Prof. Dr. Maria Finckh

The Dean of the Department of Nutritional, Food and Consumer Sciences at the Fulda  
University of Applied Sciences  
Prof. Dr. Rohtraud Pichner



## Appendix: Study and examination plan Master IFBC

Sem.	Modules				
1 (30 Credits)	Bridging module* (elective) (6 Credits)  WP I	Research methods (6 Credits)	Consumer behaviour and consumer science (6 Credits)	International organic food markets and marketing (6 Credits)	International legislation on consumer protection and food (6 Credits)
2 (30 Credits)	Project work (18 Credits)	Quality management in food business (6 Credits)	Trends in food sciences and sustainable consumption (6 Credits)	Food product development (6 Credits)	Business and Food module** (elective) (6 Credits) WP II + WP III
3 (30 Credits)			Profile module (elective) (6 Credits)	Business and Food module** (elective) (6 Credits) WP II + WP III	Business and Food module** (elective) (6 Credits) WP II + WP III
4 (30 Credits)	Master thesis incl. colloquium (30 Credits)				

### 1 module out of **Research methods**:

- Research methods in social sciences
- Research methods and data research in the life sciences

### \* 1 module out of **Compulsory elective I** (Bridging modules):

- Food processing (6 Credits)
- Management and management accounting (6 Credits)
- Principles of organic farming (6 Credits)

### \*\* 2 modules out of **Compulsory elective II** (Business modules):

- Marketing research (6 Credits)
- Digital transformation in the food sector (6 Credits)
- Innovation management in the food sector (6 Credits)
- Sustainable food systems and management (6 Credits)
- Strategic management (6 Credits)

### \*\* 1 module out of **Compulsory elective III** (Food modules):

- Assessing food quality (6 Credits)
- Innovative product development (6 Credits)
- Quality management and certification of organic products (6 credits)

### 1 **Profile module** (related to the specific qualification)