

# **Admission Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies of the Middle East within the Department of History and Cultural Studies at Freie Universität Berlin**

**Disclaimer: Please note that only the German version of this document is legally binding. This translation is intended for the convenience of the non-German-reading public and is for informational purposes only.**

## **Preamble**

On the basis of Section 14.1.1.2 of the supplemental rules and regulations (*Teilgrundordnung [Erprobungsmodell]*) of Freie Universität Berlin of October 27, 1998 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 24/1998) in conjunction with Section 15 of the Law on Admissions to Higher Education in the Federal State of Berlin for Programs with Admission Requirements (*Berliner Hochschulzulassungsgesetz, BerlHZG*), in the version of the announcement of the amended version of October 9, 2019 (GVBl., p. 695), last amended July 5, 2022 (GVBl., p. 450) in conjunction with Section 10.5.2 of the Berlin Higher Education Act (*Berliner Hochschulgesetz, BerlHG*) in the version of the announcement of the amended version of July 26, 2011 (GVBl., p. 378), most recently amended on July 5, 2022 (GVBl., p. 450), the Department Council (*Fachbereichsrat*) of the Department of History and Cultural Studies at Freie Universität Berlin issued the following regulations on January 25, 2023.\*

## **Section 1 Scope**

These regulations govern admissions to the study program in accordance with Section 10.5.2 BerlHG and the selection procedure for the allocation of places in accordance with Section 15.1.1.1 BerlHZG for the master's degree program M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies of the Middle East within the Department of History and Cultural Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. This is a consecutive master's program as defined under Section 23.3.1.1a BerlHG. It is designed with a focus on research and is offered in English.

## **Section 2 Number of Available Places and the Application Process**

- (1) The number of study placements available for the master's degree program for each given admissions cycle is stipulated in Freie Universität Berlin's General Admission Regulations.
- (2) The application for admission must be submitted electronically to the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin – Admissions Office using the online application system.
- (3) The application deadline is May 31 of each year.
- (4) In accordance with Section 3.1, applications for admission must be accompanied by an official certified copy of the applicant's first university degree (or equivalent professional certification).
- (5) Applicants can still submit their application for the master's degree program even if they do not have the university degree referred to below in Section 3.1 because certain assessment results are not yet available, as long as they otherwise have a good academic record based on previous assessment results, and if the university degree referred to in Section 3.1 will be obtained before the master's degree program begins and as long as the requirements stipulated in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 are also fulfilled in due time. This expectation is fulfilled in particular if at least two-thirds of the total coursework has been evaluated, the application for the final thesis project has been submitted, and the work schedule for the thesis has been set so that it can be completed in due time before the start of the master's degree program. The applicant's grade point average will be considered as part of the application and factors into the selection process. The grade point average is based on the applicant's previous coursework as reflected in their current transcript, which they should submit with the application. In this case, the result of the university degree is irrelevant.
- (6) Freie Universität Berlin has no obligation to investigate the facts of a case on its own initiative (*ex officio*).

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\* These regulations were approved by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin on February 9, 2023 and by the Berlin Senate Administration's department with responsibility for higher education on April 8, 2023.

### **Section 3 Admission Requirements**

(1) The admission requirement for the master's program is a first university degree or an equivalent degree from an institution of higher education within or outside of Germany. The completed degree program should cover the equivalent of 180 credit points, of which at least 60 credit points should include content related to interdisciplinary studies of the Middle East, in fields such as Arab studies, Armenian studies, Iranian studies, Islamic studies, Jewish studies, Ottoman studies, Semitic studies, and/or Turcology.

(2) Applicants who hold a degree that qualifies for entry into a profession from a German university or an equivalent degree from a foreign university comprising of 180 credits, but have earned fewer than 60 credits in courses related to interdisciplinary studies of the Middle East, in fields such as Arab studies, Armenian studies, Iranian studies, Islamic studies, Jewish studies, Ottoman studies, Semitic studies, or Turcology, may, in individual cases, fulfill the admission requirements if they can provide evidence of appropriate qualifications related to the master's degree program. Evidence of qualification for the master's degree program gained outside of a university setting can be documented through diplomas, certificates, or other official documents. Such qualifications include certificates of continuing education programs, degrees from training programs for recognized occupations, diplomas from institutions that are state-approved or recognized by a Chamber of Commerce and Industry, or an equivalent international professional qualification. The qualification must be substantially related to the subject matter of the degree program as specified above in sentence 1 or to the degree pursued in the master's program. Moreover, the qualification must have been awarded by an institution that is recognized by public law and must have been earned in the form of quantifiable and consecutive individual curricular modules. The qualification must be equivalent to at least level 6 of the German Qualifications Framework (*Deutsche Qualifikationsrahmen, DQR*). Relevant professional experience can include, for example, work at a research center, either at a university or elsewhere, that deals with topics on the Near or Middle East, working for international organizations or (non-)governmental organizations, for cultural or educational institutions that support intercultural, international, or interfaith understanding, or working in the field of translation, provided that this professional experience is substantially related to the subject matter of the degree program as specified above in sentence 1 or to the degree pursued in the master's program.

(3) In addition, applicants must demonstrate language skills at the B1 level or higher of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or equivalent in one of the following languages: Arabic, Armenian, Hebrew, Kurdish, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Syrian-Aramaic, or Turkish.

(4) Applicants who did not complete a university degree at an institution where coursework was conducted in English must demonstrate English language skills at a C1 level (CEFR) or equivalent.

(5) Applicants are exempt from the requirement to provide proof of proficiency in German.

(6) The examination board responsible for the master's degree program in the Department of History and Cultural Studies, Freie Universität Berlin, determines the equivalence of any documentation provided. Upon request, the equivalence of the documents can be examined by parties external to the application procedure, who may also provide recommendations concerning inadequate documentation.

### **Section 4 Quotas, Selection Criteria, Organizational Aspects**

(1) 80 percent of the study placements that are still available after the preliminary quotas have been fulfilled will be allocated according to the selection process as outlined in this document (higher education quota). 20 percent of the study placements will be distributed according to Section 15.1.1.2 BerlHZG. 5 percent of the study placements are reserved for the quota stipulated in Section 15.1.3 BerlHZG.

(2) Candidates are selected for the master's program according to the following criteria:

1. The level of qualification as demonstrated by the applicant's academic performance in their degree programs (Section 15.2.1 BerlHZG)

2. Considerations of the applicant's academic background in their choice of degree program and academic interests that provide an indication of their motivation and aptitude for the subject (Section 15.2.4 BerlHZG)
3. Other qualifications acquired outside of a university degree program (Section 15.2.1.5 BerlHZG).

(3) In the selection process, selection points will be awarded under the criteria defined above in Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.3. The maximum number of points that can be awarded is 150. (4) For the selection criteria listed under Section 4.2.1 of these regulations, a maximum of 60 selection points can be awarded in relation to the average grade stated on the degree certificate for the candidate's previous degree program. The points for each average grade are listed in Appendix 1 to these regulations.

(5) Applicants can receive up to 45 points (see Appendix 2) for the selection criterion in Section 4.2.2 based on the credits they have received for the subjects they studied from the alphabetic list below:

1. Arab studies
2. Iranian studies
3. Islamic studies
4. Jewish studies
5. Ottoman studies/Turcology
6. Semitic studies.

(6) Applicants can receive up to 45 points for the selection criterion set out in Section 4.2.3 by providing documentation of qualifications relevant to the proposed area of study from non-university contexts. Points are awarded based on the following:

1. A one-time award of 20 points for practical experience with work related to the Near or Middle East and performed for at least 12 months, for example, at a research institute with a focus on the Near or Middle East, at an international organization or (non-)government organization, at cultural or educational institutions that support understanding and cooperation across disciplines, cultures, religions, and nations, or in the field of translation
2. A one-time award of 15 points for evidence of a qualification obtained through a continuing education provider that required at least 40 hours of study (e.g., through language certificates obtained from non-university educational institutions)
3. A one-time award of 10 points for at least one other documented qualification that speaks to the candidate's aptitude for the master's degree program.

(7) A ranking list calculated on the basis of the sum of these numbers, with the highest number being ranked first, shall be drawn up and used as the basis for candidate selection.

(8) At least two admissions officers will be appointed to supervise the selection process. The dean of the Department of History and Cultural Studies appoints these two people under the authority of Freie Universität Berlin's Executive Board. Both officers must be authorized examiners for the master's degree program and must be university employees with Freie Universität Berlin as their main employer. These positions may not be filled by substitutes or alternates.

## **Section 5 Admission Decision**

(1) The decision on which applicants are to be selected is made by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin – Admissions Office, on the basis of how candidates have been ranked.

(2) The selected candidates receive a formal notification of admission stating the deadlines for their written acceptance and enrollment. Failure to meet these deadlines will result in the place being offered to another candidate.

(3) Candidates selected based on their transcripts are granted tentative admission and can enroll in the first semester of the program, but the duration of their enrollment is limited. Generally, the university degree required for admission as described in Section 3.1 must be submitted by the end of the first semester of study, together with relevant documentation proving that any other requirements associated with the degree have also been met. If the necessary documents are not submitted on time, the student's admission will be retracted.

(4) Applicants who are not admitted will receive a rejection letter that states the reasons for the decision.

(5) The documents submitted for the selection procedure are to be kept until the decision is final; in the case of legal proceedings, they are to be kept until a legally binding decision has been made.

### **Section 6 Entry into Force**

(1) These regulations shall enter into force on the day following their publication in *FU-Mitteilungen* (the official bulletin of Freie Universität Berlin).

(2) The admission regulations for the master's degree program from December 18, 2019 (*FU-Mitteilungen* No. 8/2020, p. 65), therefore lapse when the new regulations come into force.

### **Appendix 1 (to Section 4.4):**

Allocation of selection points based on the grade point average as recorded in the documentation for the first university degree in accordance with Section 4.4:

**Grade point average  
Selection points**

### **Appendix 2 (to Section 4.5):**

Distribution of points based on the credits received for coursework in particularly relevant subjects as referred to in Section 4.5.

**Credits received for particularly relevant subjects  
Selection points**