

# Study Regulations Master's Degree Programme in Digital Communication Environments

of 1 September 2022

Based on the regulatory framework regarding the degree programmes at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW) of 2 February 2015 (as of 21 June 2021) and the regulatory framework regarding the limitation of study places in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at the FHNW University of 24 August 2020, along with the Study and Examination Regulations regarding the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at the FHNW Academy of Art and Design of 1 September 2022 (StuER), the director of the FHNW Academy of Art and Design issues at the request of the head of the degree programme the following study regulations for the Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments.

## Part 1: General Remarks

### Section 1

#### Scope

The following Study Regulations, in complement to the Study and Examination Regulations concerning Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at the FHNW Academy of Art and Design of 1 September 2022 (StuER), govern the legal conditions concerning admission, aptitude assessment, enrolment, studies (structure, process, duration, academic performance), performance assessment, and the acquisition of the degree "Master of Arts FHNW in Digital Communication Environments" at the FHNW Academy of Art and Design. The module guide in the appendix is an integral part of these Study Regulations.

## Part 2: Studying

### Sect. 2

#### Admission requirements

#### *Admission requirements*

1 The requirements regarding admission to the Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments are defined in section 3, para. 21 of the Study and Examination Regulations concerning the degree programmes at the FHNW Academy of Art and Design (StuER).

#### *Proof of language competence*

2 Applicants with a foreign language background are required to submit proof of their language proficiency in German or English at level B2 (or equivalent) according to the standard European reference framework at the beginning of their studies. For applicants with a Swiss school leaving certificate, no proof of language competence is required.

#### *Registration*

3 To register for the Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments, candidates are asked to submit documents in accordance with the specifications listed in the registration portal, i.e. in particular:

- CV in tabular format
- Proof of compliance with admission requirements
- Samples of work (portfolio)
- Text sample
- Motivation letter

### Sect. 3

#### Aptitude assessment

#### *Aptitude assessment: prerequisites*

1 In the context of the aptitude assessment, it is ascertained whether a candidate has sufficient potential to qualify for the Master's degree programme.

2 Participation requires the following conditions:

- a. Compliance with the admission requirements pursuant to sect. 2 of these Study Regulations;
- b. Submission of complete registration form pursuant to sect. 2, para. 2 and of all supplementary documents;

- Admission decision* 3 If the admission requirements pursuant to para. 2 are not fulfilled, a negative admission decision according to sect. 12, paras. 1 and 2 of the StuER shall be issued in the form of a ruling, including the appropriate information on legal remedy.
- Admissions commission* 4 With regard to the planning, implementation, and appraisal of the admission and enrolment procedures, the head of the degree programme shall appoint an admissions commission.
- Procedure of aptitude assessment* 5 The aptitude assessment is based on the evaluation of the three following submissions (positions):
- a. Position 1: work samples (portfolio);
  - b. Position 2: text sample;
  - c. Position 3: motivation letter.
- Evaluation criteria* 6 The aptitude assessment is evaluated on the basis of the following criteria on a 2-point scale as either “pass” or “failed”, relying on a point system (ranging from 1 to 10 for each position):

Positions	Criteria
1. Work samples (Portfolio)	- Conceptual competence - Relation between form and content - Innovative content - Presentation
2. Text sample	- Content relevance - Scientific quality - Autonomy of approach - Language quality
3. Motivation letter	- Persuasiveness of content - Language quality of text - Formal treatment and presentation

- To attain a “pass”, a candidate has to attain a sufficient number of points. The three positions are weighted equally in the overall assessment.
- Ruling* 7 Candidates who do not score the necessary number of points and are therefore rated as “failed” shall receive a negative admission decision in the form of a ruling, including the appropriate information on legal remedy.
- Retake of aptitude assessment* 8 The aptitude assessment can be repeated twice.

## Sect. 4

### Enrolment procedure

- Ranked order of admission* 1 In the enrolment procedure, the available study places are assigned to the candidates that fulfil the admission requirements and have passed their aptitude assessment according to a ranking system. Candidates who were not awarded a study place on the basis of their ranking in the assessment, receive a confirmation that they figure on the ranked waiting list. Candidates who definitely cannot be assigned a study place are handed a negative admission decision in the form of a ruling, including the appropriate information on legal remedy, before the start of the semester, at the latest.
- Ranked waiting list* 2 With the start of each new academic year, the current ranked waiting list is cancelled definitely.
- Eligibility of ECTS credits* 3 When a student transfer to the MA programme in Digital Communication Environments from another degree programme at HGK FHNW or from another university, the head of the degree programme reviews the candidate’s suitability and, if applicable, the equivalence of the already completed performances, and decides on how many ECTS credits are to be credited.

## Sect. 5

### Study design

- Structure* 1 The degree programme is modular in structure and involves a total of 120 ECTS credits.

- Modules* 2 A module is a conceptional, time-bounded teaching and learning unit focusing on a thematic or subject-determined topic and defined by specifically outlined competencies as described in the respective module description.
- Module descriptions* 3 Pursuant to sect. 4, para. 6 of the StuER, the module descriptions are published before the start of a new semester in the course prospectus of the FHNW Academy.
- 4 The lecture-free period as defined by the FHNW Academy's academic calendar can, to a limited extent, be used to conduct parts of modules. In particular, this refers to exams, study trips, the realization of implementation projects, catch-up work, work on and submission of project documentations, as well as individual feedbacks.

## **Sect. 6**

### **Course of studies**

- Course of studies* 1 The course of studies including the scheduled time sequence of the modules to be completed, the respective type of modules, the associated module groups as well as the number of required ECTS credits can be drawn from the module guide in appendix A of the study regulations.
- Studying part-time* 2 The degree programme is a full-time study. Studying part-time is only permitted in consultation with and with the approval of the head of the degree programme.
- Types of modules* 3 The Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments recognizes three types of modules:
- a. Compulsory modules, which, as a rule, must be completed in the chronological sequence indicated in the module guide;
  - b. Compulsory modules of choice, to be selected in a certain number from a group of modules;
  - c. Elective modules as listed in the module guide or offered by other HGK FHNW degree programmes or by other universities.
- Specializations* 4 By submitting the topic of their thesis in the 3rd semester, students opt for one of the two possible specializations:
- a. Applied basic research in the field of image, media, concept and design research;
  - b. Reflective design practice in analog and digital visual communication.
- 5 At the beginning of each semester, a Learning Contract is concluded with every student, in which the course of study is specified and the respective specialization is reflected upon.
- Interruption of studies* 6 Pursuant to sect. 6, para. 5 of the StuER, any interruption of studies shall be regulated as follows:
- a. The respective application must be submitted in writing to the head of degree programme for approval at least two months before the start of the semester.
  - b. As a result, the duration of studies is extended by at least one year;
  - c. The interruption may not exceed the duration of 4 semesters. The time out is not factored in when determining the overall duration of studies.
- Intellectual property* 7 Regarding intellectual property rights, the provisions in sect. 7, paras. 21 and 22 of the StuER apply. Any alternative arrangement and supplementary details must be agreed upon in consultation and in writing between the student and the head of the degree programme.
- Equipment* 8 From the start of their studies, students have to be in possession of a computer (laptop) that is capable of processing the programmes commonly used at the HGK FHNW.

## **Sect. 7**

### **Academic performances**

- Performance assessments* 1 Type, form and rating of performance assessments as well as the mode by which modules are assessed are set out in the module guide. The module descriptions therein are listed in the FHNW Academy's course catalogue.
- Attendance and reporting duty* 2 Regarding the duty of attendance and the duty of reporting, the provisions of sect. 10, paras. 2 to 5 of the StuER apply.

*Retake and revision* 3 Failed modules can be repeated in the following year at the earliest. Any revision must be made in accordance with sect. 7, para. 10 of the StuER and in consultation with the lecturers responsible for the module.

**Sect. 8 Graduation**

*Prerequisites* 1 Students are eligible for the Master's thesis if they have successfully completed all the prescribed modules according to the module guide and attained the required number of ECTS credits.

*Master's thesis* 2 Students submit to the head of the degree programme a proposal in which they outline the topic of their Master's thesis, select one of the programme's two specializations in accordance with sect. 6, para. 4, and define the work's key points in terms of content and form.

*Registration for Master's thesis* 3 Registration for the Master's thesis is to be submitted in time with the form and all the required documents to the head of the degree programme.

4 Irrespective of the specialization, the Master's thesis is made up of the three following modules; these are graded on a 6-point scale and weighted equally in the overall evaluation:

1. Practical design work and presentation
2. Process documentation
3. Theoretical part

*Examination panel* 5 The head of the degree programme is responsible for defining the content and correct organizational procedure of the Bachelor's thesis and nominates the internal and external members of the examination panel.

- 6 The examination panel for the Master's thesis is made up of:
- the head of the degree programme (chair)
  - two of the degree programme's lecturers
  - three external experts

*Assessment criteria Master's thesis* 7 The modules of the Master's thesis are graded on the basis of the following criteria on a 6-point scale; they are weighted equally in the overall evaluation:

Position	Assessment criteria
1.1 Practical design work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of content</li> <li>- Conceptual quality</li> <li>- Scope of design research and autonomy of approach</li> <li>- Relation between practical design work and theoretical part</li> <li>- Significance of experiments for question at hand, relevance of work for the practice of visual communication</li> <li>- Complexity of task</li> <li>- Aesthetic quality</li> </ul>
1.2 Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structure</li> <li>- Language competence</li> <li>- Analytical and argumentative skills</li> <li>- Scope of reflection</li> <li>- Ability to answer critical questions</li> </ul>
2. Process documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevance of content</li> <li>- Scientific quality</li> <li>- Autonomy of approach</li> <li>- Language quality</li> </ul>
3. Theoretical part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of content</li> <li>- Structure</li> <li>- Language quality</li> <li>- Scientific quality</li> <li>- Autonomy of approach</li> <li>- Relevance of issue addressed</li> <li>- Relation between practical design work and theoretical part</li> </ul>

<i>Grading conference</i>	8	Pursuant to para. 4, the three modules are assessed by the examination panel in a grading conference. The average from the three module ratings yields the overall grade of the Master's thesis.
<i>Exam documentation</i>	9	The evaluation of the modules that make up the Master's thesis are recorded in assessment sheets, and completed and signed by the internal and external members of the examination panel.
<i>Retake and amendments</i>	10	If a module of the Master's thesis is rated as insufficient, it can be retaken in the following year at the earliest. Amendments are to be made in accordance with sect. 7 para. 10 of the StuER and in consultation with the head of the degree programme, and must be submitted within 6 weeks. The revision of the module has to be done without the support of mentoring, after the examination panel has explained wherein deficiencies lie. In this case, the student is excluded from taking part in the MA thesis exhibition.
<i>Graduation</i>	11	The following conditions apply to a successful completion of the Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Successful completion of all prescribed modules as listed in the module guide;</li> <li>b. Attainment of at least 120 ECTS credits, thereof at least 30 ECTS credits as well as the Master's thesis within the Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments at the HGK FHNW.</li> </ul>

### **Part 3: Final and transitional provisions**

#### **Sect. 9 Entry into Force**

These Study Regulations enter into force as of 19 September 2022. They replace the Study Regulations for the Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments of 1 September 2021.

Basel, 15 September 2022  
Upon request of:

Prof Michael Renner  
Head of Master's degree programme Digital Communication Environments  
Head of Institute Digital Communication Environments (IDCE)

Basel, 16 September 2022  
Issued by:

Prof Dr Claudia Perren  
Director FHNW Academy of Art and Design

#### **Please note:**

The document is the English translation of the original German Study Regulations concerning the the Master's degree programme in Digital Communication Environments at the FHNW Academy of Art and Design. Only the original German version published on the website of the HGK and bearing the signatures of the head of the degree programme and the director of the FHNW Academy of Art and Design is valid in law (in force as of 19 September 2022). According to Section 13 of the HGK Study and Exam Regulations, the common language of the Complaints Commission is German; accordingly, complaints submitted in advance must be written in German; any subsequent hearing before the Commission is also held in German.