

# **Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.Sc. Biodiversity, Evolution and Ecology within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy 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 Freie Universität's supplemental rules and regulations (*Teilgrundordnung [Erprobungsmodell]*) from 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 from October 9, 2019 (GVBl., p. 695), last amended on 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 from July 26, 2011 (GVBl. p. 378), last amended on July 5, 2022 (GVBl. p. 450), the Department Council of the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin issued the following regulations on December 14, 2022.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Department Council of the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin issued the following First Ordinance on the Amendment of the Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.Sc. Biodiversity, Evolution and Ecology within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin on December 13, 2023 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 14/2023, p. 335), which has been integrated into this text.<sup>2</sup>

## **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.Sc. Biodiversity, Evolution and Ecology within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin. This is a consecutive master's program as defined under Section 23.3.1.1a BerlHG.

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

- (1) The number of places 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) Applications for admission must be accompanied by an official certified copy of the applicant's first university degree (or equivalent professional certification) referred to below in Section 3.1 in the format specified by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin – Admissions Office.
- (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 Section 3.2 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

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<sup>1</sup> These regulations were approved by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin on January 16, 2023, and by the Berlin Senate Administration's department with responsibility for higher education on April 13, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The First Ordinance on the Amendment of these regulations were approved by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin on January 10, 2024, and by the Berlin Senate Administration's department with responsibility for higher education on March 18, 2024.

been set so that it can be completed in due time during the ongoing semester. 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 considered irrelevant.

(6) Freie Universität Berlin has no obligation to investigate the facts of a case on its own initiative (*ex officio*).

### **Section 3 Admission Requirements**

(1) The admission requirement for the master's degree program is a first university degree or an equivalent degree from an institution of higher education within or outside of Germany. This degree must have been completed in the subject of biology, Earth sciences, horticulture, forestry, agricultural science, bioinformatics, veterinary medicine, or another subject from the natural sciences in which at least 30 credit points were completed in modules related to biodiversity, ecology, and evolution. The applicant must also have obtained at least 10 credit points through practical lab work and/or field work.

(2) Applicants who did not complete a university degree at an institution where coursework was conducted in English must demonstrate English language skills at a level equivalent to B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

(3) Applicants who completed their degree at a university or equivalent institution of higher education outside of Germany or in a program in which German was not the language of instruction must demonstrate German language skills at a level equivalent to A1 of the CEFR.

(4) The examination board for the master's degree in the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin is responsible for determining the equivalence of any documents submitted under Sections 3.1 and 3.2 above. Upon request, the equivalence of the university degree specified in Section 3.1 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 previous degree program (Section 15.2.1.1 BerlHZG).

2. Considerations of the applicant's academic background demonstrated by their choice of previous degree program that provides an indication of their specific motivation and aptitude for the master's degree program (Section 15.2.1.4 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 100.

(4) For the selection criteria listed under Section 4.2.1 of these statutes, 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) A maximum of 20 selection points can be awarded for the selection criterion set out in Section 4.2.2 of these regulations. Points are awarded based on the following: 10 points for evidence of examinations and coursework completed during their previous degree program in the field of biodiversity, evolution, or ecology for a total of at least 40 credit points or 20 points for evidence of examinations and coursework completed during their previous degree program in the field of biodiversity, evolution, or ecology for a total of at least 50 credit points.

(6) A maximum of 20 selection points can be awarded under Section 4.2.3 of these regulations. Qualifications from non-university contexts must be relevant to the proposed area of study and indicate the candidate's suitability for the master's degree. This may include qualifications gained via practical experience in working or interning at an organization focused on environmental protection, an NGO, a research institute focused on environmental protection, or a research museum. These qualifications must have involved at least six months of full-time employment, study, or equivalent. If the applicant can prove their eligibility in this regard, they may be awarded 20 selection points. A maximum of 10 selection points can be awarded if these qualifications were obtained over a shorter period of time; however, the minimum period of time in which these qualifications were obtained must not be less than four months full-time employment, study, or equivalent. If these qualifications were obtained part-time, the minimum durations are doubled respectively. The applicant must clearly demonstrate the relevance of obtaining the qualification(s) for the master's degree program and must also provide relevant documentation for each qualification (e.g., certificates of completion, proof of employment, etc.).

(7) At least two admissions officers will be appointed to supervise the selection process. They are appointed by the dean on behalf of the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin. The appointed admissions 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. The admissions officers hold their positions for one admission cycle.

## **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. If a candidate fails to honor the deadline stipulated by the Admissions Office, their place will be given to someone else.

(3) Candidates selected based on their transcripts are granted tentative admission and can enroll in the first semester of the program on a conditional basis. 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 enter into force on the day following their publication in *FU-Mitteilungen* (the official bulletin of Freie Universität Berlin) and shall apply from the application period for the 2023/2024 winter semester onward.

(2) With their publication, the Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.Sc. Biodiversity, Evolution and Ecology from June 20, 2012 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 61/2012, p. 1032), amended on January 28, 2015 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 7/2015, p. 122), shall lapse.

## Appendix 1

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
1.0	60
1.1	58
1.2	56
1.3	54
1.4	52
1.5	50
1.6	48
1.7	46
1.8	44
1.9	42
2.0	40
2.1	38
2.2	36
2.3	34
2.4	32
2.5	30
2.6	28
2.7	26
2.8	24
2.9	22
3.0	20
3.1	18
3.2	16
3.3	14
3.4	12
3.5	10
3.6	8
3.7	6
3.8	4
3.9	2
4.0	0