

Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program North American Studies at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, a Central Institute at Freie Universität Berlin

Disclaimer: Please note that only the German versions of these documents are legally binding. This translation is intended for the convenience of the non-German-reading public and is for information purposes only.

Preamble

On the basis of Section 14.1.2 of Freie Universität Berlin's supplemental rules and regulations (*Teilgrundordnung [Erprobungsmodell]*) from October 27, 1998, published in the Freie Universität Bulletin No. 24/1998 (*FU-Mitteilungen*), and Sections 10.5.2 and 83.1 of the Berlin Higher Education Act (*Berliner Hochschulgesetz, BerlHG*) in its revised form as it was made public on July 26, 2011 (GVBl., p. 378) in conjunction with Section 10.1.1.1 of the Law on Admissions to Higher Education in the Federal State of Berlin for Programs with Admission Requirements (*Berliner Hochschulzulassungsgesetz, BerlHZG*), in its revised form as it was made public on June 18, 2005 (GVBl., p. 393) and in the amended version of May 20, 2011 (GVBl., p. 194), the institute council of the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin issued the following regulations on January 25, 2012*:

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 10.1.1.1 BerlHZG for the consecutive master's degree program North American Studies at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin (master's program). This is a consecutive master's degree program as defined under Section 23.3.1a BerlHG.

Section 2 Number of Available Places and the Application Process

- (1) The number of places available for the master's degree program stipulated in Section 1 is determined for each admissions cycle in accordance with Freie Universität Berlin's admissions regulations.
- (2) The application for admission is to be submitted in writing to the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin – Admissions Office. Electronic submissions (e.g., via fax, email, or other electronic media) are not acceptable unless an application in writing (hard copy) is also submitted.

* These regulations were approved by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin on February 3, 2012 and by the Berlin Senate Administration's department with responsibility for higher education on February 6, 2012.

(3) The application deadline is May 31 each year.

(4) In accordance with Section 3.1, the application for admission must be accompanied by an officially certified copy of the applicant's first university degree (or equivalent professional certification).

(5) Applicants can submit their application to the master's degree program even if they do not have the university degree referred to in Section 3.1 because certain assessment results are not yet available, as long as there is reason to believe, based on the applicant's record and especially their previous performance in examinations, that the university degree referred to in Section 3.1 will be obtained before the master's degree program begins and that the requirements stipulated in Section 3.2 are also fulfilled by the relevant deadline. This expectation is fulfilled in particular if at least two-thirds of the total coursework (of which at least 60 ECTS must have been completed in one of the subjects set out in Section 3.1) 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 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 academic performance in examinations 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*).

Section 3 Admission Requirements

(1) To be admitted to the master's degree program, applicants must hold a first university degree from a German or comparable non-German institution in one of the following subjects:

- a) North American studies
- b) History
- c) Cultural studies
- d) Literary studies
- e) Political science
- f) Sociology
- g) Economics, or

in an interdisciplinary degree in which at least 90 ECTS including the bachelor's thesis were completed in one of the subjects listed in a) to g) above.

(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 at least C1 of

the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Proof can also be provided by taking a test administered by the Language Center of Freie Universität Berlin.

(3) The examinations committee is responsible for determining the equivalence of any documents submitted under Sections 3.1 and 3.2 above. Upon request, documents to be evaluated for equivalence can also be submitted outside of an ongoing application process.

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 allocated under Section 10.1.1.2 BerlHZG. 5 percent of the study placements are reserved for the quota stipulated in Section 10.1.3 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 the final examination of their previous degree program (Section 10.2.1 BerlHZG),
2. A weighting of the subjects studied in the previous degree program that can indicate the candidate's motivation and suitability to study for the degree for which they are applying (Section 10.2.4 BerlHZG).

(3) For the selection of candidates under Section 4.2.1, 85 percent of the study places available under the higher education quota will be allocated based on the grade awarded for the university degree previously obtained as defined under Section 3.1. The criterion for the allocation is based on the grade average stated in the certificate for the previous degree studied.

(4) For the selection of candidates under Section 4.2.2,

a) the remaining 15 percent of places available under the higher education process will be allocated under the criteria set out in Section 4.2.2. Weighting should be based on the number of credit points achieved for each of the following subjects:

1. History
2. Cultural studies
3. Literary studies
4. Political science
5. Sociology
6. Economics.

b) The final grade or grade point average for the degree completed as described in Section 3.1 will be converted to "selection points" using the chart in Appendix 1 and subsequently weighted according to the number of credits completed in the respective disciplines based on the chart in Appendix 2. A ranking list calculated on the basis of the sum of both these numbers, with the highest number being ranked first, shall be drawn up and used as the basis for candidate selection.

(5) At least two admissions officers will be appointed to supervise the selection process. The officers are to be appointed by the chairperson of the institute council of the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin on behalf of the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin. Both officers must be authorized examiners for the master's degree program and must be employees of Freie Universität Berlin as their main employer. The positions may not be filled by substitutes or replacements.

Section 5 Ranking of Candidates

Following completion of the selection process, candidates will be ranked in order of points achieved under the system set out above. If the same position in the ranking list is held by more than one candidate, then those candidates will be selected according to the provisions of Section 8a BerlHZG.

Section 6 Admission Decision

(1) The final admission decision is made by the Executive Board – Admissions Office on the basis of the ranking order.

(2) The selected candidates receive a formal notification of admission stating the deadline for their written acceptance and enrollment. If a candidate fails to honor this deadline, their place will be given to someone else.

(3) Candidates selected on the basis of a transcript receive a conditional admission and can enroll initially for the first semester only. Generally, they may enroll permanently thereafter provided that they submit proof that they have completed their first degree as set out in Section 3.1 by the end of the first semester together with proof of meeting any further requirements in relation to said degree as set out in Section 3.2. If such proofs are not furnished by the stated deadline, their admission to the program will lapse.

(4) Candidates who are not admitted to the program will receive notification that they have not been selected together with the grounds for the decision.

Section 7 Retention of Documents and Right to View Information Held

(1) All documents submitted in relation to the selection process must be retained by the administration of the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin until a binding selection decision has been made or, in the case of any dispute, until a legally binding judgment has been made.

(2) Candidates have the right to view the ranking list, whereby the names of the other candidates must not be disclosed.

Section 8 Entry into Force and Lapse of Previous Regulations

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

(2) With their publication, the Statutes Regulating the Allocation of Places for the Master's Degree Program in North American Studies at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at Freie Universität Berlin of July 9, 2008 (FU-Mitteilungen 42/2008, p. 1114), amended on January 27, 2010 (FU-Mitteilungen 13/2010, p. 226), shall lapse.

Appendix 1:

Allocation of selection points for the average grade as indicated in the certificate of the first university degree in accordance with Section 4.4.b.

Appendix 2:

Allocation of selection points for subjects weighted according to number of credit points in accordance with Section 4.4.b.