

Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.A. Sociology – European Societies within the Department of Political and Social Sciences 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 14.1.1.2 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 11, 2023 (GVBl., p. 260), the Department Council (*Fachbereichsrat*) of the Department of Political and Social Sciences at Freie Universität Berlin issued the following regulations on May 15, 2024¹:

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 BerlHZG for the master's degree program M.A. Sociology – European Societies in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at Freie Universität Berlin. 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 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) 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 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 – of which at least 40 credit points must have been obtained in the field of sociology or in related subjects from within the social sciences – has been evaluated, the application for the final thesis project has been

¹These regulations were approved by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin on July 17, 2024, and by the Berlin Senate Administration's department with responsibility for higher education on July 19, 2024.

submitted, and the work schedule for the thesis has 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 sociology or have contained modules in sociology or related subjects from within the social sciences that were completed for a total of at least 60 credit points. At least 20 of these credit points must have been obtained in social science research methods, of which 10 credit points must have pertained to quantitative methods specifically.

(2) Applicants who did not complete a university degree at an institution where coursework was conducted in English must demonstrate English language skills to the C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or equivalent.

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

(4) The examination board responsible for the master's degree program in the Department of Political and Social Sciences, 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.

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 demonstrated by their choice of previous degree programs reflecting their specific motivation and aptitude for the subject (Section 15.2.1.4 BerlHZG)

(3) In the selection process, selection points will be awarded under the criteria defined above in Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.2. The maximum number of points that can be awarded is 75.

(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) A maximum of 15 selection points can be awarded for the selection criteria under Section 4.2.2 of these regulations in accordance with Appendix 2. Weighting will be carried out in consideration of the applicant's academic background demonstrated by their choice of previous degree programs and requires the applicant to have completed modules in sociology or related social sciences for a minimum of 60 credit points.

(6) At least two admissions officers will be appointed to supervise this part of the selection process. The dean of the Department of Political and Social Sciences appoints these two persons under the authority of Freie Universität Berlin's Executive Board. 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.

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 2025/2026 winter semester onward.

(2) With their publication, the Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.A. Sociology from May 30, 2012 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 56/2012, p. 941), amended on February 13, 2019 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 6/2019, p. 38), shall lapse.

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
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

Appendix 2
(to Section 4.5):

Distribution of points based on the credits received for coursework in sociology or related social sciences as referred to in Section 4.5.

Credits received for coursework in sociology	Selection points
min. 150	15
145–149	14
140–144	13
135–139	12
130–134	11
125–129	10
120–124	9
115–119	8
110–114	7
105–109	6
100–104	5
90–99	4
80–89	3
70–79	2
60–69	1