

Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.Sc. Biology 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 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 Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin issued the following regulations on February 22, 2023: ¹

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. Biology within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin on December 13, 2023 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 13/2023, p. 312), which has been integrated into this text.²

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. Biology 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) Under certain circumstances, applicants may be admitted to the master's degree program even if they have not yet obtained the university degree stipulated under Section 3.1. In order to qualify for this exception, the applicant must demonstrate that, based on their academic performance to date (in particular their performance on previous assessments), they will have obtained the above-mentioned university degree prior to commencing the master's degree program. In addition, the applicant must

¹ These regulations were approved by the Executive Board of Freie Universität Berlin on March 3, 2023, and by the Berlin Senate Administration's department with responsibility for higher education on April 4, 2023.

² 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 February 29, 2024.

provide evidence that the other admission requirements listed under Section 3.2 will also be met in due time. This exception will be granted if the applicant has completed at least two-thirds of the total coursework and this coursework has been evaluated. Under this rule, the applicant must also have officially registered to commence work on their final thesis and demonstrate that they will be able to complete this thesis before the start of the master's degree program. In this scenario, the applicant's grade point average will be used in lieu of a final grade during the selection procedure. 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. Under this exception, the result of the university degree is considered irrelevant for the selection procedure (as it has not yet been obtained).

(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 bachelor's degree in biology from the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin or an equivalent degree in biology from an institution of higher education within or outside of Germany. This degree must have included coursework in the fields of zoology, botany, microbiology, genetics, behavioral physiology, and ecology to an extent that is quantitatively and qualitatively comparable to that taught in the bachelor's degree program B.Sc. Biology within the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy at Freie Universität Berlin. This should be documented by evidence demonstrating that at least 30 credits were completed in the area of biology, of which at least 10 credits were obtained in the field of molecular biology and at least 10 credits were obtained in the field of organismic biology.

(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 did not complete a university degree at an institution where coursework was conducted in German must demonstrate German language skills at a level equivalent to A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (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 to 3.3 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 regulations, a maximum of 60 selection points can be awarded in relation to the grade point average stated on the degree certificate for the candidate's previous degree program. The selection points for each grade point average are listed in the appendix to these regulations.

(5) A maximum of 20 selection points can be awarded under 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 molecular and/or organismic biology for a total of at least 40 credits, or 20 points for evidence of examinations and coursework completed during their previous degree program in the field of molecular and/or organismic biology for a total of at least 50 credits.

(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 a clinic, research organization, or research institute or company focused on biology. 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 is 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. The dean of the Department of Biology, Chemistry, Pharmacy appoints these two people 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. 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. 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 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).

(2) The Admissions Regulations for the Master's Degree Program M.Sc. Biology from June 20, 2012 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 61/2012, p. 1028), amended on January 28, 2015 (*FU-Mitteilungen* 7/2015, p. 121), therefore lapse when the new regulations come into force.

Appendix

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