

Joint Examination Regulations for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology and the Center for Human and Molecular Biology (ZHMB)

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Note: This translation is provided for information purposes only. In the event of any discrepancy between the translation and the original German version published in the Official Bulletin (*Dienstblatt der Hochschulen des Saarlandes*), the provisions of the latter shall take precedence.

Pursuant to Section 64 of the Saarland Higher Education Institutions Act (SHSG) of 30 November 2016 (Official Gazette of Saarland, p. 1080) as amended by the Act of 16/17 June 2021 (Official Gazette, p. 1762) and pursuant to the Framework Examination Regulations for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes at Saarland University (BMRPO) of 17 June 2015 (Official Bulletin of the Institutions of Higher Education in Saarland, p. 474) and with the consent of the University Senate and the University Board, the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology and the Center for Human and Molecular Biology (ZHMB) hereby issue the following Joint Examination Regulations for Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programmes.

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I General provisions

Section 1 Scope

These regulations apply for the academic assessments and examinations of the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs at Saarland University. The organization of the curriculum, teaching and examinations in this programme is the responsibility of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology (Biosciences, Chemistry, Materials Science and Engineering, Pharmaceutical Science, Physics and Systems Engineering) and/or the Center for Human and Molecular Biology (ZHMB) at Saarland University.

Section 2 General information

(1) The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology (Biosciences, Chemistry, Materials Science and Engineering, Pharmaceutical Science, Physics and Systems Engineering) and/or the Center for Human and Molecular Biology (ZHMB) at Saarland University shall confer a Bachelor of Science degree (B.Sc.) or a Master of Science degree (M.Sc.) on students who successfully complete the study programme in accordance with the assessment and examination procedures set out in these examination regulations.

(2) The goal of the Bachelor's degree programme is to enable students to develop the ability to work on both theory-driven aspects and practical applications of the subject and to acquire an understanding of the fundamental concepts and methodologies used. The Bachelor's degree is the first higher education degree recognized as a professional qualification in Germany. A Bachelor's degree programme concludes with the final assessment phase.

(3) The goal of the Master's degree programme is to impart to students the methods and techniques used in scientific research as well as a deeper understanding of the principles of the subject and a more detailed knowledge of key research results in the chosen subject. Master's degree programmes are more research-oriented unless otherwise stated in the subject-specific regulations. A Master's degree programme concludes with the final assessment phase.

(4) The degree programmes can be studied either full-time or part-time (cf. Section 7). All regulations apply equally to full-time and part-time study.

(5) Students may only participate in examinations and assessments and may only undertake the Bachelor's or Master's thesis project if they are properly enrolled in the programme. In

exceptional cases and where reasonable grounds exist, a student may apply to the Examination Board for exemption from this requirement. The application may be submitted irrespective of the applicant's enrolment status.

(6) For the integrated international programme variants, the special provisions of the respective cooperation agreement between Saarland University and the partner university apply.

Section 3

Standard period of study and student workload

(1) The standard period of full-time study for the Bachelor's degree programme is six semesters, which includes the time taken to complete the final academic assessment phase. In justified exceptional cases, different standard periods of study may also be set for individual study programmes. The single-subject Bachelor's degree programme as a rule comprises 180 credits.

(2) The standard period of full-time study for the Master's degree programme is four semesters, which includes the time taken to complete the final academic assessment phase. The single-subject Master's degree programme comprises 120 credits.

(3) The standard period of part-time study may be no longer than twice the standard period of full-time study. If students complete some of their degree programme in part-time study, this will be taken into account when calculating the standard period of study. The final result will be rounded up to the next whole semester.

(4) Semesters in which a student was granted leave of absence from the programme shall not be added to the standard period of study.

(5) The Examination Board shall, on request, take account of statutory periods of maternal leave, periods of parental leave and family care obligations (particularly caring for one or more children or adolescents or supporting one or more family members with care needs) as well as the special needs of students with disabilities.

(6) The study regulations shall state the semester by which each module or module element should be completed (semester(s) for standard period of study) in order to stay within the standard period of study, as far as this is relevant for the rules regarding failed first attempts (*Freiversuchsregelung*) (cf. Section 15).

(7) The study regulations and the associated study plan shall be structured to ensure that for a full-time student the workload is distributed evenly throughout the degree programme so that students can acquire approximately 60 ECTS credits in each year of the programme.

(8) The type and scope of the proposed student assessments shall be such that students can complete the programme of study within the standard period of study. As a rule, two dates for academic assessment or examination shall be offered for each module or course within the academic year in which the relevant module or course took place, provided that this is compatible with the type of module or course being taken. Furthermore, the degree programmes shall be structured so that they offer periods in which students may study at other universities or acquire relevant external practical work experience without extending the length of time a student spends on the programme.

(9) The programme-specific study regulations may specify compulsory regular attendance at those taught courses in which regular personal participation is necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the module or course (e.g. seminars, practical skills classes).

Section 4

Modularization and ECTS credits

(1) Modularization is understood to mean the pooling of subject matter on a particular topic or area of interest to create an academic unit ('module') that is taught over a specified period of time. Students taking a module are assessed or examined on the content and, on passing, are awarded ECTS credits (often referred to in Germany as 'credit points' or 'CP'). A module typically comprises several courses (module elements) of related content that are taught in a single semester or in two consecutive semesters and that conclude with academic assessments or examinations (usually a single end-of-module examination). The outcome of these assessments or examinations are the basis on which ECTS credits are awarded. The workload associated with a module should correspond to at least five ECTS credits.

(2) The successful completion of a programme module is documented by recording the credits awarded. One ECTS credit corresponds to an average student workload of 30 hours of classroom and self-directed study.

(3) Modules and (associated) module elements are described in the study regulations. Each module (and module element) will be listed together with the corresponding number of credit hours per week and/or the overall time requirements and the student workload expressed in ECTS credits. Information shall also be provided about the type of assessment or examination associated with a specific module and whether in justified exceptional cases the award of ECTS credits for a module depends on the successful completion of assessments or examinations in one or more module elements (assessments or examinations from component module elements as opposed to the usual end-of-module assessment/examination). Details shall also be provided about how often each module element is offered.

(4) A student who completes a module or module element shall be awarded either an ungraded 'pass' or a grade determined in accordance with the grading system set out in Section 14. The programme-specific study regulations shall state whether an assessment or examination is graded.

(5) Credits can only be acquired if the student workload is equivalent to at least one ECTS credit and the module or module element concludes with a graded or ungraded assessment or examination. Modules that comprise several module elements shall be deemed to have been completed only if all of the component module elements have been completed.

(6) Assessments and examinations associated with modules or module elements serve to determine whether students have achieved the learning outcomes of the respective module or module element. The assessments and examinations that students are required to complete shall take place throughout the Bachelor's and Master's degree programme. An assessment or examination may be divided into several parts. More detailed provisions are set out in the subject-specific study regulations.

(7) As each module element is itself part of a module, it is uniquely associated with an end-of-module examination, unless it has its own specific assessment.

(8) The ECTS credits earned will be documented on the course certificate or transcript issued for the relevant modules or module elements. The credits that can be earned for an academic module composed of several module elements are calculated as the sum of the credits from the individual component module elements.

(9) An academic record shall be kept for each student that shall be updated by recording the number of ECTS credits earned by that student each semester through academic assessment and examination. Coursework credits, preliminary assessments and examination credits that were awarded elsewhere and have been deemed transferable (e.g. credits from a distance-

learning or study-abroad programme) will also be included in the academic record. Course credits can also be taken into account even if they are in excess of the minimum total number of credits required for a degree programme.

Section 5 Examination Board and Examination Office

(1) In order to meet its obligations pursuant to Section 28(1) of the Saarland Higher Education Institutions Act (SHSG), the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Saarland University and/or the the Center for Human and Molecular Biology (ZHMB) at Saarland University shall establish examination boards that shall manage the necessary academic assessments and examinations for the degree programmes, whereby one examination board may be responsible for several degree programmes. The examination boards shall receive organizational support from the Examinations Office.

(2) The Examination Board shall comprise:

1. three representatives from the group of professorial staff in the departments participating in the degree programme
2. one representative from the group of mid-level academic staff in the participating departments, and
3. one representative, who shall have limited voting rights, from the group of students in the participating departments.

If questions regarding the grading of the final assessment phase of the Bachelor's or Master's degree arise, the member from the group of students shall only have an advisory vote on the Examination Board unless said member is appropriately qualified.

Each member of the Examination Board shall have a deputy who represents them in their absence. The members of the Examination Board, as defined in items 1 to 3 above, and their deputies shall be elected for a term of two years by the faculty council or the centre council after being nominated by the relevant member group. Members may be re-elected at the end of their term. If a member or deputy member of the Board withdraws before the end of their term, a replacement shall be selected for the remainder of the term. Deputy members and replacement members may be re-elected at the end of their term.

(3) The Examination Board shall appoint a Chair and Deputy Chair from the members of the Board specified in Paragraph (2), sentence 1, item 1 above.

(4) The Examination Board shall be quorate when its members have been duly notified and a majority of voting members is present. Decisions of the Board shall be made by a simple majority of the voting members in attendance. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

(5) The members and deputy members of the Examination Board are obliged to maintain confidentiality in accordance with Section 17(2) of the Fundamental Principles and Rules Governing Saarland University (*Grundordnung der Universität des Saarlandes*).

(6) The Examination Board is responsible for monitoring compliance with the provisions of the programme-specific examination regulations. Specifically, the Examination Board shall:

1. decide on applications to register for student assessments and examinations over the course of the degree programme and on applications to register for the final assessment phase
2. decide on requests for exemption from registration requirements
3. decide on whether to accept requests to undertake coursework assessments, academic assessments/examinations or preliminary assessments required for admission to specific examinations in a form other than that normally prescribed
4. appoint the examiner (thesis examiner) and the second examiner and the supervisor for

- the thesis
5. decide on requests to extend the completion period for the final thesis or to extend the time for completing written academic assessments
 6. decide on requests regarding the language used for student assessments and the final thesis
 7. consult with the relevant members responsible for the subject from the group of professorial staff pursuant to Section 16(1), item 1 Saarland Higher Education Institutions Act (SHSG) with respect to recognizing academic coursework, assessments and examinations, and exam admission prerequisites if applicable
 8. appoint, if necessary, a third thesis examiner for the thesis
 9. determine the grade to be awarded for the thesis
 10. decide on requests for statutory periods of maternity leave, periods of parental leave and family care obligations (particularly caring for one or more children or adolescents or supporting one or more family members with care needs) and on requests relating to the special needs of students with disabilities
 11. decide on applications seeking approval for a third repeat assessment
 12. decide on requests to extend the time frame for a student's progress check
 13. decide on whether exceptional circumstances apply for a student requesting academic assessment when taking leave of absence from his or her studies in accordance with Section 9(6) of the Regulations Governing Student Enrolment at Saarland University (*Immatrikulationsordnung*)
 14. decide on whether to annul the results of academic assessments or examinations and to terminate the assessment or examination procedure; review decisions regarding the grading of academic assessments or examinations if these have been influenced by student deception; and review decisions to exclude a student from an academic assessment or examination
 15. decide on objections raised by a candidate with regard to the grading of academic assessments or examinations after consultation with the relevant examiner
 16. decide on any subsequent correction of academic grades and on whether to invalidate the final assessment phase of the Bachelor's or Master's degree programme
 17. decide on applications for admission to the Master's degree programme
 18. decide on inclusion of additional modules/module elements for a fixed period of time to expand the programmes offered.

(7) The duties set out in Subsection (6), items 1 to 13 and 18 above shall be carried out on behalf of the Examination Board by the Chair of the Board. If a decision previously made by the Chair is contested either by a candidate or by a member of the Examination Board, the decision shall be taken by the Examination Board; in the case of objections regarding the grading of individual assessments or examinations, decisions shall be made on the basis of statements to be obtained from the examiners responsible for proposing the original grade.

(8) In the case of decisions concerning a student in an integrated international programme variant, a professor from the partner university can be invited as an additional advisory member of the Examination Board.

Section 6

Examiners; thesis examiners; supervisors, observers

(1) Thesis examiners and supervisors may be appointed by the Examination Board from the group of professorial staff, the group of professorial staff at other universities, emeritus or retired professors, honorary professors, senior academics qualified to professorial level and professors on special contracts.

(2) After consultation with professors in the relevant subject area, the Examination Board may in special cases also appoint examiners from the group of mid-level research or teaching staff, members of the part-time external teaching staff who teach in the relevant subject area,

qualified staff from external affiliated institutions (as defined in Section 30(5) SHSG), and other qualified and experienced professionals working in the relevant field.

(3) Former faculty members who left the faculty no more than five years ago and who no longer work at Saarland University may, with their consent, be appointed by the Examination Board as examiners. Honorary professors, senior academics qualified to professorial level, professors on special contracts who no longer have teaching duties, heads of independent junior research groups and temporary professors who have taught for more than two semesters, may, with their consent, be appointed by the Examination Board during a period of two years after leaving the faculty.

(4) The examiners who conduct the assessments or examinations associated with specific modules or module elements are the members of academic staff who teach those module elements.

(5) The observer at an oral examination, as specified in Section 11(5) below, shall hold an academic qualification relevant to the subject matter of the examination.

(6) Academic assessments and examinations may only be evaluated by persons with at least the same qualification or an equivalent qualification to that being examined or assessed.

(7) At least one of the thesis examiners shall be drawn from the subject area of the respective degree programme.

Section 7 Studying part-time

(1) Students and prospective students may be enrolled at the university as part-time students if they are only able to study for at least 50% and no more than 60% of their available working hours due to employment obligations, pregnancy, maternity leave, caring for one or more children or adolescents, supporting family members with care needs, or for some other important reason.

(2) If the volume of academic work undertaken by a part-time student in one semester exceeds 60% of the academic credit associated with full-time study (usually 18 ECTS credits), that semester shall be treated as if the student were studying full-time. The volume of academic work shall be calculated on the basis of the assessments completed and examinations taken by the student in that semester, irrespective of whether or not a pass or fail grade was attained. If the volume of work completed by a student only marginally exceeds the limit for part-time study, the student may apply to offset the excess volume against a reduced workload in, for example, the latter part of the same academic year. Any such case will be considered on its individual merits. More detailed provisions are set out in the Regulations Governing Student Enrolment at Saarland University.

(3) Students should normally study full-time in the semester in which the thesis is written. Exceptions may be granted where reasonable grounds exist. If reasonable grounds exist and a request is submitted, the Examination Board may agree to extend the thesis completion period in accordance with the provisions of Section 20. Any extension granted shall not alter the number of credits awarded.

(4) Part-time study does not create any legal entitlement to the provision of special programme content or a modified curriculum.

(5) No liability shall be accepted and no responsibility borne for any effects that part-time study may have on areas for which the faculties are not responsible, or that it may have on courses

offered by external institutions. Students are obliged to contact the appropriate bodies in good time to ensure that they are familiar with information relevant in this regard.

(6) A student that remains as a part-time student shall be required to attend a study counselling interview every two semesters with the counselling or advisory service responsible for the student's programme of study or subject.

Section 8 Progress checks

(1) A student studying full-time for the Bachelor's degree programme with a standard period of study of six semesters shall fulfil the minimum academic progress requirements:

- after 2 semesters, a total of at least 18 ECTS credits
- after 4 semesters, a total of at least 60 ECTS credits
- after 6 semesters, a total of at least 105 ECTS credits
- after 9 semesters, a total of at least 165 ECTS credits.

Additional requirements may be specified in the subject-specific regulations.

(2) A student studying full-time for the Master's degree programme with a standard period of study of four semesters shall fulfil the minimum academic progress requirements:

- after 2 semesters, a total of at least 30 ECTS credits
- after 4 semesters, a total of at least 60 ECTS credits
- after 6 semesters, a total of at least 90 ECTS credits.

Additional requirements may be specified in the subject-specific regulations.

(3) If a student does not achieve the expected minimum academic progress by the end of a semester, they shall be notified in writing that they are at risk of failing to meet the academic requirements for the programme. The student shall be offered a study counselling interview.

(4) If in two consecutive semesters a student fails to achieve the minimum academic progress requirement expected of students at the end of the respective semesters, the student shall lose the right to be examined in the academic programme for which he or she is enrolled. If this situation arises, the Examination Board shall notify the student in writing and shall include information on the candidate's right of appeal. Before any final decision is made by the Examination Board, the student shall be granted the opportunity to make representations about this matter to the Board.

(5) In exceptional cases and where reasonable grounds exist, the Examination Board may agree to a reasonable extension (typically one semester) of the time frames set out in Paragraphs (1) and (2).

Section 9 Core skills

(1) If requested by a student, the relevant examination board may recognize the student's voluntary work and/or civic engagement by awarding the applicant up to 3 ECTS credits, provided that the student can verify that during the programme, they undertook at least two years of continuous unpaid voluntary activity in a recognized not-for-profit organization. The voluntary work and/or civic engagement activities performed by the student shall be confirmed by means of an official certificate from the not-for-profit organization that states the period during which the student was active and the hours worked, and that precisely describes the nature of the activity performed. Furthermore, the student is required to demonstrate convincingly the extent to which core skills have been acquired through the voluntary work performed.

(2) If requested by a student, the relevant Examination Board may recognize official committee work or mentoring or tutoring activities by awarding up to a maximum of 6 ECTS credits per degree programme, based on the assumption that 1.5 credits are earned at the discretion of the Examination Board when the student carries out one hour of such work during each week of a semester. More detailed information is described in the programme-specific study regulations. The student is required to demonstrate convincingly the extent to which core skills have been acquired through the official committee work or mentoring activities performed.

(3) Students who have acquired core skills through other work or activities at Saarland University or at another German or foreign university may apply to have this work recognized. In cases in which the core skills were acquired elsewhere than at Saarland University, Section 17(4) shall apply accordingly.

(4) More detailed provisions are set out in the study regulations or are specified by the Examination Board.

Section 10 **Admission to the Master's programme**

(1) Admission to the Master's programme is granted to particularly suitable applicants. Students seeking admission to a consecutive Master's degree programme shall have a Bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification. The specific admission requirements for the respective Master's degree programme are set out in the subject-specific regulations.

(2) Applicants who do not yet have their Bachelor's degree examination certificate may apply for provisional admission to the Master's programme provided that by the start of the Master's programme they have successfully completed all of the examination and assessment requirements for the Bachelor's programme. In this case, the Bachelor's degree certificate shall be submitted no later than three months after the beginning of the first semester.

(3) If the requirements set out in the subject-specific regulations are not met, the student may be provisionally admitted to the relevant Master's degree programme on the condition that, within a specified period of time, the student acquires the missing curricular content – up to a maximum of 30 ECTS credits – in a supplementary study programme. The procedure to be followed in such cases shall be determined in consultation with a departmental representative who is authorized to conduct examinations; the proposed procedure shall be recorded in writing.

(4) An applicant shall not be admitted to the Master's programme if the formal requirements have not been met.

(5) All admissions to the Master's programme shall be decided by the Examination Board. In case of doubt, the relevant departmental representatives shall be consulted.

(6) The Examination Board shall inform the applicant in writing about whether the application has been accepted or rejected. If relevant, the applicant shall be notified of any conditions pertaining to provisional admission arrangements as defined in Paragraph (3). Other information required for admission which must be communicated in the letter of admission shall be described in the subject-specific regulations.

II Assessment methods

Section 11

Student assessments; academic assessments and examinations

(1) Student assessments are oral and/or written evaluations (including those in electronic form), some of which may be spread across a number of dates. In certain special cases, other forms of student assessment may be specified. Written academic assessments include written examinations, written assignments, seminar papers, project documentation, assessed lab reports, practical reports and implementation assignments. Oral academic assessments include individual or group testing and oral presentations. The type and duration of a student assessment in a specific module or module element shall be announced at the beginning of that module or module element. If a combination of assessments is used, students shall be notified of the weighting of the respective parts.

(2) The purpose of such student assessments is to demonstrate whether students have met the learning objectives for a particular module, whether they have an understanding of the key aspects of the relevant subject matter and methodologies, and whether they are able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired. Student assessments cover academic coursework, exam admission prerequisites, assessments and examinations.

(3) Each module includes an end-of-module assessment or examination that shall be held (for the first time) no later than the beginning of the following semester. Students who successfully complete the academic assessment or examination associated with a module shall be deemed to have met the learning objectives of that module or module element and shall be awarded the corresponding number of ECTS credits. Students shall be notified at least three weeks in advance about the dates of academic assessments or examinations.

(4) Written examinations shall be invigilated by an examiner or by an authorized person for whom the examiner is responsible. As a rule, written examinations shall last at least 60 minutes and not more than 180 minutes. More detailed provisions may be set out in the programme-specific regulations. Written examinations shall be graded within four weeks.

(5) Oral examinations shall be conducted by two examiners or by one examiner and an observer who is familiar with the subject matter of the examination. As a rule, oral examinations shall last at least 15 minutes and not more than 60 minutes per examination candidate. Additional requirements may be specified in the subject-specific regulations. If space allows, students studying in the same subject area or within the same degree programme may be permitted to attend the oral examination provided that the candidate being examined does not object. Permission to attend does not cover the examiners' discussions nor the announcement of the result. The examiner shall consult with the observer before deciding on whether the candidate has passed and what grade is to be awarded. The main topics addressed in an oral exam, the results and the grade(s) awarded shall be recorded in writing and the report shall be signed by the examiner(s) and the observer. The grade(s) attained shall be communicated to the candidate immediately after the examination.

(6) Exam admission prerequisites comprise one or more ungraded knowledge tests that are taken by students during the semester in which the module is taught. Students who successfully complete the exam admission prerequisites have demonstrated that they have achieved the minimum learning outcomes required in preparation for the end-of-module assessment or examination. An exam admission prerequisite may be a written test (e.g. solving exercises or problems or compiling lab reports) or may be conducted orally. Exam admission prerequisites are the responsibility of an examiner but may be administered by a person delegated by the examiner. The results of the exam admission prerequisites shall be documented.

(7) If failing to pass an examination or assessment at the final attempt ('final retake') would lead to the student irrevocably failing the module, as a rule the examination or assessment shall be conducted by two examiners. Further requirements and rules for these academic assessments or examinations may be described in the subject-specific regulations.

(8) Student assessments in seminars and project seminars may be conducted in the form of oral assessments (e.g. student presentations) and/or of written assessments (e.g. written assignments, summary reports). The amount of time that students have to complete a seminar assignment will be announced at the beginning of the seminar. The assessments shall be graded by an examiner, who is usually the seminar instructor. A written assignment/summary report shall be graded as a rule within 6 weeks.

(9) Before students conduct a laboratory experiment, their level of knowledge may first be assessed, e.g. an oral test, summary report, report on practical work. Students shall keep an experimental log that records their experimental results in a clear and understandable manner. The experimental data is subsequently analysed in terms of the theoretical principles underpinning the experiment. The relevant lab demonstrator shall check the written experimental logs and associated analyses and shall discuss the content with the student to assess their understanding of the material. Students who have completed the experiment successfully and are adjudged to have met the learning objectives will be issued with a certificate of satisfactory completion (*Testat*). Further details may be set out in the subject-specific regulations or module catalogues.

(10) If a candidate is prevented from working on a written assessment (with the exception of written examinations) for a period of more than one week because of illness or some other cause beyond the candidate's control, the submission deadline shall be extended accordingly. The candidate shall provide supporting documentation to the Examinations Office without unreasonable delay, e.g. in the event of illness, the candidate shall submit a medical certificate issued by a physician. If a candidate withdraws from or fails to attend an academic assessment or examination because a child cared for by the candidate was ill, the child's illness shall be treated as if the candidate was ill. The candidate shall demonstrate that it was necessary for them to care for the ill child by providing a medical certificate issued by a physician in accordance with Article 45 of Book V of the German Social Welfare Code (SGB V). If the period in which the candidate is prevented from undertaking the assessment exceeds one month, the assessment shall be deemed as 'not attempted'. The candidate shall be allocated a new written assessment once the reasons for the interruption cease to apply.

(11) The Examination Board shall, on request, take account of statutory periods of maternal leave, periods of parental leave and family care obligations (particularly caring for one or more children or adolescents or supporting one or more family members with care needs) as well as the special needs of students with disabilities. If student assessments have to be completed before specific deadlines in accordance with these examination regulations, on request these deadlines will be extended by the statutory period of maternal leave. A further reasonable extension of the completion period stipulated in Section 20 may be granted on request, provided that the candidate can demonstrate physical or mental impairment arising from pregnancy, or from caring for one or more children or adolescents or from supporting one or more family members with care needs. This shall not affect any academic accommodation granted to a student in accordance with Section 13.

(12) As a rule, the language of examination shall be the respective language of instruction. The Examination Board may, in certain individual cases, allow another language to be used if specifically requested by the candidate and agreed with the examiner or thesis examiner. Other language-related rules may also be set out in the subject-specific examination regulations.

Section 12

Participation in student assessments

(1) The application to be admitted for academic examination occurs concurrently with the application to enrol at Saarland University.

(2) As a rule, a student may only take part in an academic assessment or examination if they have formally registered via Saarland University's Campus Management System within the relevant registration period. In some cases, they may need to demonstrate that they have met the registration requirements defined in the subject-specific examination regulations for the relevant modules or module elements. A student may register for or withdraw from an assessment or examination associated with a module or module element up to one week before the assessment/examination. If it is not possible to register for an assessment or examination within the specified time frame due to technical reasons, the candidate must notify the programme coordinator or the Examinations Office before this deadline. The decision to admit a candidate to a particular academic assessment or examination shall be made by the Examination Board.

(3) An application to register for an examination may only be rejected if:

1. the registration requirements set out in Paragraph (2) have not been met or
2. the candidate has lost the right of assessment or examination for the relevant module or for the programme as a whole.

(4) If a candidate who is registered for an academic assessment or examination withdraws from the assessment or examination without reasonable grounds, the student shall be deemed to have failed the assessment or examination.

(5) If a candidate fails to attend an examination on the set date without good cause, the candidate shall be awarded a fail grade. The same applies if a written assessment is not completed within the stipulated period.

(6) If there are credible reasons why a candidate withdrew from or failed to attend an assessment or examination, these reasons shall be submitted in writing and without unreasonable delay to the Examination Board. If the candidate was ill, the candidate is required to present a medical certificate issued by a physician. In certain individual cases, the Chair of the Examination Board may have good reason to demand a comprehensive medical opinion or a medical certificate issued by a public medical officer. This situation may arise if the same candidate has repeatedly presented a medical certificate issued by a physician, if the medical findings are unclear, or in order to counter possible abuses. If a candidate withdraws from or fails to attend an academic assessment or examination because a child cared for by the candidate was ill, the child's illness shall be treated as if the candidate was ill. The candidate shall demonstrate that it was necessary for him or her to care for the ill child by providing a medical certificate issued by a physician in accordance with Article 45 of Book V of the German Social Welfare Code (SGB V). If the reasons given for the withdrawal or non-attendance are accepted, the assessment or examination shall be deemed not to have been attempted, and a new date for assessment or examination may be scheduled if this is compatible with the particular type of assessment or examination proposed.

Section 13

Academic accommodations

(1) If a candidate submits a medical certificate issued by a physician that states that due to a prolonged or chronic health impairment he or she is not in a position to undertake, either in part or in full, coursework assessments, preliminary assessments required for admission to specific examinations or academic assessments/examinations in their prescribed form, the Examination Board may, on request, approve appropriate academic accommodations.

Appropriate academic accommodations include such measures as adapting the conditions under which an assessment or examination is to be conducted (e.g. permitting the use of suitable aids), extending the period in which an assessment or examination is to be completed, or some other modification of the assessment process or its format, i.e. demonstrating the same level of academic knowledge or competence in some other form. Changing the form or format in which an assessment or examination is conducted shall only be considered when an appropriate level of academic accommodation cannot be provided by adapting the assessment or examination conditions or by extending the completion period. In no case shall academic accommodation result in any modification of the content of the assessment or examination. The same shall apply analogously to coursework assessments.

(2) If there is a continuing need to accommodate a student's health impairment, the student shall renew his or her application for academic accommodation as per Paragraph (1) above every two semesters.

(3) The medical certificate issued by a physician, as required in Paragraph (1) above, shall at a minimum contain: information on the physical or mental disability arising from the prolonged or chronic impairment; how, from a medical perspective, this impacts the student's ability to study or undergo academic assessment; the date of the medical examination on the basis of which the certificate was issued; and a medical estimate of the duration of the prolonged impairment or a statement that the impairment is chronic. The Chair of the Examination Board may dispense with the need for a medical certificate if it is readily apparent that the student is suffering from a chronic health condition.

Section 14

Grading of student assessments and grading system

(1) If student work is to be graded, the following grading system shall be used:

- 1 'Very good' – outstanding performance
- 2 'Good' – student performance significantly better than average
- 3 'Satisfactory' – student performance meets average requirements
- 4 'Sufficient' – student performance that despite its shortcomings still meets the minimum requirements
- 5 'Fail' – Failure to meet the minimum requirements due to significant shortcomings in student performance.

(2) To provide a more differentiated scale with which to grade individual assessments or examinations, intermediate grades may be awarded by raising or lowering the grade by 0.3 accordingly; the grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are excluded from the scale.

(3) The grade is supplemented by an ECTS grading that provides a means of assessing a student's achievements in relative terms and that is also included in the diploma supplement and/or transcript of records. The ECTS grading scale uses a statistical scheme to classify the performance of an individual student relative to the performance of other students. Students who have passed the minimum requirements are usually graded as follows:

- A the top 10%
- B the next 25%
- C the next 30%
- D the next 25%
- E the next 10%.

This approach shall be used if the size of the reference cohort is large enough to enable reliable statements to be made about percentage distributions (the reference cohort should not contain fewer than 50 students). Pragmatic solutions will need to be found if the reference cohorts are

too small. Other classification scales that provide a means of assessing how a student performed relative to other students may also be used.

(4) If the overall assessment of a module is based on several separate graded assessments or examinations, the final grade for the module shall be calculated as follows: The grades from each assessment or examination are multiplied with the credits associated with the relevant module element(s) and the results are added together. The value so obtained is then divided by the sum of the credits associated with the component module elements. The result shall be rounded down to one decimal place. (Note: in the German grading system, the lower the numerical value, the better the grade.)

(5) If there is no end-of-module examination/assessment, the following shall apply: If some of the module elements have numerically graded assessments/examinations while others only have a pass/fail option, those pass/fail module elements are not included in the calculation of the final grade awarded for that module.

(6) A student is deemed to have completed an assessment or examination successfully if he or she is awarded a 'pass' or, when numerical grading is applied, achieves at least the grade 'sufficient'.

(7) If the individual examiners have awarded different grades for the thesis or student assessment, the overall grade shall be calculated as the arithmetic mean of the proposed grades. The mean value shall be rounded down to one decimal place.

(8) The final overall grade is calculated by (i) multiplying the grade attained for each end-of-module assessment with the number of credits associated with the respective module and (ii) multiplying the grade attained for the thesis with the number of credits associated with the thesis and then adding the results. The value so obtained is then divided by the sum of the credits associated with the respective modules and the thesis. The result shall be rounded down to one decimal place. Modules that only have a pass/fail option are not included in the calculation of the final overall grade.

(9) At least 50% of the modules (measured in terms of ECTS credits) should be graded.

(10) After completing an assessment or examination, the candidate shall, on request, be granted the opportunity to inspect his or her written work, the examiners' reports and examination records. Inspection applications shall be submitted to the Examination Board no later than one month after the results of the assessment or examination have been announced. The date and time of the inspection appointment shall be determined by the Examination Board.

Section 15

Repeating assessments and examinations and/or the thesis

(1) An assessment or examination that was awarded a fail grade may be repeated twice (cf. the provisions in Paragraph (5) below governing the *Freiversuch* option). By agreement with the examiner or following consent from the Examination Board the second repeat assessment or examination may also be conducted orally, providing the programme-specific study regulations include both types of assessment or examination. If a candidate does not achieve a passing grade in either of the two repeat assessments or examinations, the candidate shall lose the right of examination for that module. If the assessment or examination relates to an elective module or mandatory elective module, it may be substituted by an assessment or examination in another elective or mandatory elective module, provided that this latter module is classified as an alternative in the study regulations and that academic credit has not already been awarded for this content.

(2) On request, in exceptional cases and where reasonable grounds exist, the Examination

Board may consent to a third repeat assessment or examination if requested by the candidate. The third repeat assessment or examination should be held on the next possible examination date after the Examination Board accordingly has issued its consent, while taking due account of the time limits set out in Section 12(2).

(3) If a candidate is awarded a fail grade for the thesis, the candidate may have one further attempt at passing the thesis requirement (cf. the provisions in Paragraph (6) below governing the *Freiversuch* option). If a fail grade is awarded, the candidate shall receive a new thesis topic no later than four weeks after the fail grade was announced. A third attempt at passing the thesis requirement is not permitted; failed attempts at other universities will be taken into account.

(4) The Examination Board may extend the deadline in Paragraph (3) by a reasonable time if so requested by the candidate before the deadline expires, provided that the candidate can demonstrate that the extension is necessary for reasons beyond the candidate's control (e.g. an illness or health issue, as verified by a medical certificate issued by a physician). If a candidate withdraws from or fails to attend an academic assessment or examination because a child cared for by the candidate was ill, the child's illness shall be treated as if the candidate was ill. The candidate shall demonstrate that it was necessary for him or her to care for the ill child by providing a medical certificate issued by a physician in accordance with Article 45 of Book V of the German Social Welfare Code (SGB V). The Examination Board shall, on receipt of an appropriate request, take account of statutory periods of maternal leave, periods of parental leave and family care obligations (particularly caring for one or more children under the age of 18 or supporting one or more family members with care needs), as well as the special needs of students with disabilities. The Examination Board will therefore extend the thesis completion period in Paragraph (3) by the statutory period of maternal leave if so requested by the candidate and a further reasonable extension of the completion period (see Section 20) may be granted on request, provided that the candidate can demonstrate physical or mental impairment arising from pregnancy, or from caring for one or more children or from supporting one or more family members with care needs. This shall not affect any academic accommodation granted to a student in accordance with Section 13.

(5) Subject-specific examination regulations may stipulate that if a student fails an assessment or examination at the first scheduled attempt (i.e. within the period specified in the study regulations), an assessment or examination shall be treated as if it had not been taken (*Freiversuch*).

(6) If a student fails to pass the thesis requirement at the first attempt within the standard period of study specified in the study regulations, the attempt will be treated as if it had not been made (*Freiversuch*).

(7) Successfully completed written assessments in the form of written examinations or successfully completed oral examinations may be retaken once within a period of two semesters or on the next available date. The student will be awarded the higher of the two grades. In all other cases, students are not permitted to repeat an assessment or examination for which they have already achieved at least the minimum passing grade.

Section 16

Nullification of assessments or examinations

(1) If a candidate attempts to gain admission to an assessment or examination by deception, the Examination Board may decide to nullify the results of previous assessments or examinations and stop the examination process.

(2) If a candidate attempts to influence the result of an assessment or examination by deception or by the use of unauthorized aids, the candidate shall receive a fail grade for that

assessment or examination. Examiners shall report cases of plagiarism to the Examination Board. If plagiarism has been established, the relevant module element shall be repeated. The Examination Board shall notify the student in writing of its decision. A fail grade shall also be awarded to any candidate whose behaviour prevents the orderly conduct of an examination and who is excluded from the examination after receiving prior warning from the examiner or from a person authorized by the examiner in accordance with Section 6(5). Within a period of one month, the candidate may ask the Examination Board to reappraise any decision made pursuant to Section 16(2), sentence 1 and 2. If the Examination Board upholds the decision, the candidate shall receive a fail grade for that assessment or examination. If the Examination Board does not uphold the decision with respect to disorderly conduct, the relevant academic assessment or examination shall be deemed not to have occurred.

(3) If a candidate is found to have cheated in an assessment or examination and if this fact only becomes apparent after the examination certificate has been issued, the Examination Board may retroactively amend the grade awarded for the assessment or examination in which the graduate was found to have cheated and may assign a fail grade either for the entire assessment or examination, or for some part thereof.

(4) In recurring cases or very serious cases of deception (particularly when substantial plagiarism is involved), the Examination Board may, after consultation with the student, decide to revoke the student's right of examination.

(5) If the admission requirements for an assessment or examination were not met but there was no intentional misrepresentation on the part of the candidate and if this fact only becomes apparent after the assessment or examination, this defect shall be deemed to have been remedied by the fact that the candidate successfully completed the assessment or examination. In such cases, the candidate is also bound to accept the result of the assessment or examination if the candidate was awarded a fail grade. If a candidate intentionally gained wrongful admission to an assessment or examination, the Examination Board shall decide on any sanctions.

(6) Before any decision by the Examination Board pursuant to Paragraphs (1) to (4), the candidate shall have one month in which to make representations about this matter. The candidate shall be notified in writing about any decisions made pursuant to Paragraphs (1) to (4); the letter of notification shall include the reasons for the decision and information on the candidate's right of appeal. These decisions are subject to a period of limitation of five years from the date on which the examination certificate was signed.

(7) An incorrect certificate of graduation or an incorrect examination certificate issued in relation to the final assessment phase of the Bachelor's or Master's degree programme shall be revoked and, if applicable, amended and reissued.

Section 17

Recognition of previous periods of study and credits from earlier coursework, exam admission prerequisites, assessments and examinations

(1) Previous periods of study and credits earned for earlier coursework, assessments and examinations ('prior learning') in degree programmes at universities in Germany, at recognized foreign universities or at a recognized distance-learning institution will be accepted provided that there are no significant differences in academic content when compared with the modules for which transfer credits are being accepted. The term 'no significant differences' is understood to mean that, when measured in terms of the learning objectives achieved, the previous periods of study and earlier coursework, assessments and examination credits meet the requirements specified for the relevant subject at Saarland University.

(2) When recognizing previous periods of study at foreign universities and the academic credits

earned during those periods, the equivalency agreements approved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*KMK – Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the German Rectors' Conference (*HRK – Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*) shall be taken into account, as shall any agreements existing between Saarland University and its partner universities.

(3) If a student demonstrates proof of having acquired an equivalent level of competency and skill in a non-university environment, they shall earn up to half of the corresponding academic credits allotted for such knowledge and skills in the Master's programme.

(4) The candidate is responsible for providing the documentation required for the recognition process. Students have the right to have prior learning recognized if the requirements set out in Paragraphs (1) to (4) have been met.

(5) If the previous periods of study or earlier coursework, assessments or examinations for which recognition is being sought were not associated with a particular number of ECTS credits, the equivalent number of credits shall be calculated and the academic record for that student updated accordingly. The grades awarded for graded academic assessments or examinations shall be transferred and included in the calculation of the overall grade in accordance with the provisions of the subject-specific study and examination regulations as well as in accordance with the provisions of cooperation agreements with partner universities. If the grading systems are not comparable or if earlier academic assessments or examinations are ungraded, the information in the subject-specific regulations shall apply, whereby Section 14(9) shall apply analogously. The recognition of credits earned from external assessments or examinations shall be indicated in the student's transcript of records.

III Thesis

Section 18 Admission to the thesis phase

(1) Students will be admitted to the thesis phase provided that they have satisfied all of the programme requirements. To demonstrate that these requirements have been met, students shall submit proof that they have:

1. enrolled in the respective degree programme
2. fulfilled the requirements for the thesis phase specified in the subject-specific examination regulations.

(2) Applications for admission to the Master's thesis phase shall be submitted to the Examination Board or Examinations Office. More detailed information is described in the subject-specific examination regulations.

(3) In exceptional cases and where reasonable grounds exist, upon request the Examination Board may admit a candidate to the thesis phase if the requirements set out on request in Paragraph (1) above have not been met.

Section 19 Subject of the thesis

(1) The Bachelor's degree thesis is a piece of supervised project work. It should demonstrate that the candidate is capable of addressing a subject-related problem within a specified time frame using scientific methods and is able to present the results scientifically.

(2) The Master's thesis is a piece of supervised academic work that is carried out

independently. The thesis should demonstrate that the candidate is capable of addressing a subject-related problem by conducting their own research within a specified time frame through application of relevant scientific methods and techniques and is able to present the results scientifically.

(3) The thesis topic may be set by any examiner in accordance with Section 6(1) and (2).

(4) The Examination Board shall appoint a primary thesis examiner, a secondary thesis examiner and the thesis supervisor. If a thesis supervisor is not appointed, the primary thesis examiner shall act as supervisor.

(5) The candidate shall be notified of the topic of the thesis within a period of four weeks after the candidate has been admitted to the thesis phase. The candidate shall have the opportunity to submit proposals regarding the topic of the thesis. However, the candidate is not obliged to do so.

(6) Upon request, the candidate may be allowed to write their thesis in cooperation with external partners (e.g. in business or industry). The prerequisite for this is written proof of a sufficiently scientific focus of the topic from the external partner and, if applicable, further requirements specified in the programme-specific regulations. Paragraph (3) and (4) shall remain unaffected. The approval of the request shall be made by the Examination Board.

(7) The date on which the topic of the thesis was announced (i.e. the start of the thesis completion period) and the thesis topic shall be documented.

(8) Within four weeks of receiving notification of the thesis topic, the candidate may, after consultation and on one occasion only, decline the topic of the thesis. A new topic for the thesis shall be issued within a period of four weeks after the first topic is declined. If a thesis is to be repeated pursuant to Section 15(3), the topic of the thesis may only be declined if this option was not used when the topic of the first thesis was announced.

Section 20

Duration and deadlines

(1) The student workload for the Bachelor's thesis amounts to 12 ECTS credits; this corresponds to a completion period of 11 weeks. The student workload for the Master's thesis amounts to 30 ECTS credits, corresponding to a completion period of 23 weeks. The thesis topic and the problems to be addressed shall be such that the thesis can be completed within the allotted time.

(2) In exceptional cases and where reasonable grounds exist, a candidate may apply to the Examination Board for an extension to the completion period; 2 weeks for a Bachelor's thesis and 6 weeks for a Master's thesis shall be considered reasonable. Any extension granted shall not alter the number of credits awarded.

(3) If a candidate is prevented from working on the thesis for a period of more than one week because of illness or some other cause beyond the candidate's control, the thesis submission deadline shall be extended accordingly. The candidate shall provide supporting documentation to the Examinations Office without unreasonable delay, e.g. in the event of illness, the candidate shall submit a medical certificate issued by a physician. If a candidate is prevented from working on the thesis because a child cared for by the candidate was ill, the child's illness shall be treated as if the candidate was ill. The candidate shall demonstrate that it was necessary for them to care for the ill child by providing a medical certificate issued by a physician in accordance with Article 45 of Book V of the German Social Welfare Code (SGB V). If the period in which the candidate is prevented from undertaking the Bachelor's thesis exceeds three months or in the case of the Master's thesis six months, the thesis shall be

deemed as 'not attempted'. The candidate shall be allocated a new thesis topic once the reasons for the interruption cease to apply.

(4) The Examination Board shall, on request, take into account statutory periods of maternal leave, periods of parental leave and family care obligations (particularly caring for one or more children or adolescents or supporting one or more family members with care needs) as well as the special needs of students with disabilities. In such cases, the completion period for the thesis or written assessment shall be extended by the statutory period of maternal leave and may be extended further pursuant to the provisions of Paragraph (2) above if the candidate demonstrates physical or mental impairment arising from pregnancy, or from caring for one or more children, or from supporting one or more family members with care needs. This shall not affect any academic accommodation granted to a student in accordance with Section 13.

(5) If a student does not meet the thesis completion deadline, a fail grade shall be awarded for the thesis. Repeat attempts shall be subject to the requirements set out in Sections 15(1) and 15(3), which apply analogously.

Section 21

Procedural elements, presentation and layout of the thesis

(1) Candidates shall submit three printed adhesively bound copies and one electronic copy (PDF file) of the thesis to the Examinations Office. The thesis shall be paginated and shall be produced using a common word-processing system or program. The candidate shall ensure that all copies submitted are legible. The candidate shall give written assurance that the electronic version is identical in content to the printed version of the thesis.

(2) A candidate who submits a thesis shall also submit a written declaration of original authorship stating that the thesis is their own original work and that no source materials or aids other than those indicated were used. Any parts of the thesis that draw on the wording or substance of other works shall be clearly marked as borrowings and the sources shall be acknowledged correctly. The candidate shall also state whether drawings, sketches, diagrams and photographic and graphic images are the candidate's own work, or were produced in accordance with the candidate's instructions, or are the work of others.

(3) The date of submission of the printed copies of the thesis shall be documented.

(4) The thesis may conclude with a research colloquium if this has been specified with more detailed information in the subject-specific regulations.

(5) The thesis shall be assessed by the primary thesis examiner who set the thesis topic and by the secondary thesis examiner appointed by the Examination Board. Both examiners shall hand in their written reports no later than four weeks after the Bachelor's thesis was submitted for examination or no later than six weeks after the Master's thesis was submitted for examination; the report shall contain a thesis grade in accordance with the specifications in Sections 14(1) and 14(2). However, if the proposed grades differ by more than 1.0 or if only one of the thesis examiners awards a fail grade, the Examination Board shall appoint a third thesis examiner to assess the thesis. Once the report from the third examiner has been received, the Examination Board shall, contrary to the provisions of Section 14(7), decide on the grade to be awarded for the thesis based on the three reports received.

(6) The candidate shall be notified about the result of the thesis examination including the grade awarded.

IV Degree qualification

Section 22

Successfully completing the Bachelor's or Master's programme and overall grade

(1) A candidate is deemed to have successfully completed the final assessment phase of the Bachelor's or Master's degree programme if the candidate has

1. passed all academic assessments and examinations specified in the programme-specific study regulations
2. if applicable, completed all academic coursework specified in the programme-specific study regulations
3. earned the required number of ECTS credits (excluding those awarded for the thesis) from the required mandatory modules, mandatory elective modules and elective modules as specified in the programme-specific study regulations
4. successfully completed the thesis.

(2) A candidate shall be deemed to have failed to graduate from the Bachelor's or Master's degree programme if they have failed one or more of the required assessments and examinations or all of the assessments and examinations that can be selected within a category/module or have failed the thesis, including all permissible retake attempts ('irrevocable fail'). A candidate who has failed the final assessment phase of the Bachelor's or Master's degree programme will be notified in writing by the Chair of the Examination Board; the letter of notification shall include the reasons for the decision and information on the candidate's right of appeal.

(3) The final overall grade awarded for the Bachelor's or Master's degree qualification is calculated in accordance with the provisions of Sections 14(8) and 14(9).

(4) If a candidate who has completed all the stipulated programme requirements has acquired more than the necessary minimum number of graded credits, they may, in accordance with the respective study regulations, be permitted to select a subset of the assessments or examinations for inclusion in the calculation of the final overall grade.

(5) The final overall grade that appears on the degree certificate and the formal graduation certificate shall be classified as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| up to 1.5: | Very good |
| 1.6 to 2.5: | Good |
| 2.6 to 3.5: | Satisfactory |
| 3.6 to 4.0: | Sufficient |

The subject-specific regulations may include a provision for certain overall grades to be additionally awarded the addendum 'with distinction'.

Section 23

Degree qualification and documentation

(1) Candidates who successfully complete the final assessment phase of the Bachelor's or Master's degree programme shall receive a certificate without delay, as a rule in the form of a transcript of records in German and on request in English. As a minimum, it shall contain the module grades, the overall grade and the name of the study programme as well as the topic and grade of the thesis.

(2) If the certificate is not issued in the form of a transcript of records, the certificate shall be issued in accordance with the subject-specific regulations and additionally with a transcript of records.

(3) The certificate shall be signed by the Chair of the Examination Board or their deputy. The certificate shall also bear the date of the final assessment or examination and the date on which it was signed.

(4) The Bachelor's certificate of graduation confers the degree of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) upon the candidate; the Master's certificate of graduation confers the degree of Master of Science (M.Sc.) upon the candidate.

(5) The conferral of the degree shall be documented in the form of a Bachelor's or Master's certificate of graduation with details of the certificate in accordance with (3) and any further details which may be described in the subject-specific regulations. The subject-specific regulations shall also stipulate in which language the formal graduation certificate may be issued. The formal graduation certificate shall be signed by the Chair of the Examination Board and the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology or the Head of the Center for Human and Molecular Biology (ZHMB) and shall bear the seal of the faculty or the ZHMB.

(6) Graduates will be issued with a diploma supplement when they receive their formal graduation certificate.

V Final provisions

Section 24 Commencement

(1) This regulation shall come into force on the day after it is announced in the Official Bulletin of the Institutions of Higher Education in Saarland (*Dienstblatt der Hochschulen des Saarlandes*).

(2) It shall apply for all degree programmes whose study regulations and subject-specific regulations come into force after 1 October 2021.

Saarbrücken, 11 March 2022

President of Saarland University
(Univ.-Prof. Dr. Manfred Schmitt)