

*This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.*

## **BEFRI – Universities of Bern and Fribourg**

### **Regulations for Obtaining a Master of Science in Earth Sciences at the Universities of Bern and Fribourg**

#### **1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

##### **Art. 1 Validity**

These Regulations are valid for all students pursuing a Master's degree in Earth Sciences at one of the two BEFRI Universities (pursuant to the BEFRI Collaboration Agreement in Earth Sciences of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012). The title awarded on completion of the Master's degree program is "Master of Science in Earth Sciences" of the Universities of Bern and Fribourg.

##### **Art. 2 Scope**

These Regulations stipulate the rules and assessment scheme of the Master's degree program in Earth Sciences.

##### **Art. 3 Student's Home University**

<sup>1</sup> The BEFRI University at which the student is enrolled as a regular student is understood to be the student's Home University.

<sup>2</sup> The student must be enrolled at the BEFRI University at which the supervisor of the student's Master thesis is employed.

<sup>3</sup> The student may have only one Home University at any given time. The BEFRI Coordination Committee may consent to a switch to the other BEFRI University upon request by the student.

<sup>4</sup> The Home University has legal competence for:

- admission and
- issuing of the Master's Diploma.

##### **Art. 4 ECTS Credits**

<sup>1</sup> All academic attainments shall be expressed in ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) and must be validated by way of assessment as specified in these Regulations.

<sup>2</sup> One ECTS credit corresponds to an academic workload of between 25 and 30 hours.

##### **Art. 5 Teaching Units**

Teaching units are: lecture courses, exercises, seminars, field trips, internships or other forms of teaching as approved by the Coordination Committee.

##### **Art. 6 Duration of Studies**

<sup>1</sup> The regular duration of studies for the Master's Coordination program in Earth Sciences is four semesters.

<sup>2</sup> The maximum duration of studies shall be eight semesters.

### **Art. 7 Extension of Duration of Studies**

In the event of compelling reasons, namely illness, maternity, gainful employment, military service and civilian service, the responsible body of the Home University may, if proposed by the Coordination Committee, extend the duration pursuant to Article 6 paragraph 2.

### **Art. 8 Languages of Teaching and Assessment**

<sup>1</sup> The teaching language is, in principle, English.

<sup>2</sup> The language of course assessments may be English, French or German, by choice of the candidates.

<sup>3</sup> As a general rule, the Master's thesis shall be written in English, French or German. Other languages may be approved by the Coordination Committee. The same applies to the oral presentation of the Master thesis.

## **2. STRUCTURE OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM**

### **Art. 9 Master's Degree Worth 120 ECTS Credits**

<sup>1</sup> The Master's degree program in Earth Sciences requires completion of 120 ECTS credits.

<sup>2</sup> The 120 ECTS credits are to be acquired as follows:

- a) 60 ECTS credits from teaching units in Earth Sciences;
- b) 60 ECTS credits from the Master thesis.

### **Art. 10 Specialty Tracks**

<sup>1</sup> The Master's degree program offers specialty tracks in which students obtain in-depth knowledge in a subdiscipline of the Earth Sciences. These specialty tracks are defined in the plan of studies.

<sup>2</sup> The specialty track must be chosen in the first semester of the Master's degree program.

## **3. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Art. 11 Admission**

<sup>1</sup> Admission to the Master's degree program in Earth Sciences requires a Bachelor's degree in Earth Sciences from a Swiss university or an equivalent degree. The equivalence of a degree shall be decided by the responsible body of the Home University, upon proposal by the Coordination Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Candidates holding a different university degree, particularly a Bachelor's degree with a minor or additional subject in Earth Sciences worth at least 60 ECTS, may be admitted following approval. The responsible body for admissions at the Home University shall consider in its decision the recommendation of the Coordination Committee. If the candidate's Bachelor degree contains significant gaps in Earth Science training, the

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***

Coordination Committee may recommend, on an individual basis, that the candidate obtains up to 60 ECTS credits from extra coursework at the BeFri Universities, in addition to the 120 ECTS for the Master's degree.

<sup>3</sup> If additional ECTS credits are stipulated, the responsible body of the Home University may, upon proposal by the Coordination Committee, proportionally extend the candidate's duration of studies pursuant to Article 6, paragraph 2.

#### **Art. 12 Start of Studies**

The Master's degree program in Earth Sciences may be started in the fall or the spring semester.

### **4. COURSE OF STUDIES**

#### **Art. 13 Modules**

<sup>1</sup> The Master's degree program in Earth Sciences consists of the following modules:

- module A: consisting of compulsory teaching units;
- module B: consisting of a selection of the teaching units offered in the chosen specialty track;
- module C: consisting of elective teaching units;
- module D: consisting of the Master thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Each module is assigned a number of ECTS credits that must be acquired, and each module must be passed independently of the others to gain the Master's degree.

#### **Art. 14 List of Teaching Units**

<sup>1</sup> The current list of teaching units can be viewed on the BEFRI Earth Sciences website.

<sup>2</sup> Responsibility for regularly updating and publishing the list of teaching units resides with the Coordination Committee.

#### **Art. 15 Master Thesis**

<sup>1</sup> The Master thesis entails carrying out a supervised research project worth 60 ECTS credits.

<sup>2</sup> The Master thesis shall be supervised by persons authorized by the responsible body of the Home University.

<sup>3</sup> The topic of the Master thesis shall lie within the scope of the chosen specialty track and it shall be set in the first semester of the Master's degree program. Upon prior consent by the Master thesis supervisor, the thesis may be partly carried out in collaboration with a private company.

<sup>4</sup> The Master thesis must be submitted by the end of the fourth semester, except for cases given in Article 6, paragraph 2 and Article 7.

<sup>5</sup> The Master thesis may be completed individually or in a group. In the case of a group thesis, the contribution of each candidate must be clearly indicated within the thesis.

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***

### **Art. 16 Content of the Plan of Studies**

The plan of studies contains the list of specialty tracks and the description of the modules with their respective ECTS credits.

### **Art. 17 Enrollment for Courses**

<sup>1</sup> Students must enroll at the start of each semester before the published enrollment deadlines for courses they wish to attend. These deadlines shall be set by the Coordination Committee and published in the appropriate manner.

<sup>2</sup> Students must also enroll for any course assessments they wish to take, in compliance with the relevant deadlines. Students may only enroll for assessments of courses in which they have been enrolled.

### **Art. 18 Credits for External Academic Attainments - Mobility**

<sup>1</sup> Upon proposal by the Coordination Committee, the responsible body of the Home University shall decide whether to count any of the candidate's external academic attainments towards the Master's degree. These include previous attainments and attainments from another Master's degree program outside the BEFRI Master's degree program in Earth Sciences.

<sup>2</sup> A maximum of 30 externally earned ECTS credits may be counted towards the Master's degree program in Earth Sciences.

<sup>3</sup> Counting external academic attainments earned during the Master's degree program in Earth Sciences requires advance approval by the responsible body of the Home University upon proposal by the Coordination Committee.

<sup>4</sup> Upon prior consent by the Coordination Committee and the Master thesis supervisor, parts of the thesis project may be carried out externally. In all cases, the thesis project must be supervised by an authorized person pursuant to Article 15 , paragraph 2.

## **5. COURSE EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS**

### **Art. 19 Grading Scale and Passing of Courses**

<sup>1</sup> Course assessments are graded on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 as the highest grade and 1 as the lowest grade.

<sup>2</sup> Only full grades (1, 2, 3...) or half grades (1.5, 2.5, 3.5...) are permitted.

<sup>3</sup> A course is passed if it has been awarded a grade of at least 4.

<sup>4</sup> Pass grades are: 6 (excellent), 5.5 (very good), 5 (good), 4.5 (satisfactory), 4 (sufficient).

<sup>5</sup> Fail grades are 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3 or 3.5.

<sup>6</sup> The grades are subject to the following rounding rule:

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***

Grade to be rounded in the range of	Rounded grade
5.75 to 6	6
5.25 to <5.75	5.5
4.75 to <5.25	5
4.25 to <4.75	4.5
4 to < 4.25	4
3.25 to <4	3.5
2.75 to <3.25	3
2.25 to <2.75	2.5
1.75 to <2.25	2
1.25 to <1.75	1.5
1 to <1.25	1

<sup>7</sup> Some teaching units may be assessed simply as passed or failed, without a grade between 1 and 6.

#### **Art. 20 Crediting of Modules**

<sup>1</sup> ECTS credits acquired within a given module are credited to the candidate's record only if each of the following conditions is fulfilled:

- a) no grade for individual teaching units is below 3.0;
- b) the unrounded mean of the grades weighted by the ECTS credits is at least 4.0;
- c) all of the teaching units pursuant to Article 19, paragraph 7 have been passed.

<sup>2</sup> Accepted credits are counted towards the relevant module.

<sup>3</sup> Fail grades may be compensated only within the same module; exceptions are given in paragraph 1, point a.

<sup>4</sup> A failed teaching unit in module B may be replaced by another teaching unit in module B from the chosen specialty track. A failed teaching unit in module C may be replaced by another teaching unit in module C.

#### **Art. 21 Modes of Assessment**

Various modes of assessment are employed:

- oral assessments (during the exam periods, at the end of a lecture course or on the date set by the Coordination Committee to repeat the assessment);
- written assessments (during the exam periods, at the end of a lecture course or on the date set by the Coordination Committee to repeat the assessment);
- continuous assessments (e.g., in internships or exercises);
- assessment of the Master thesis;

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***

- other grading methods approved by the Coordination Committee.

### **Art. 22 Announcement of Assessments**

Details of how each teaching unit will be assessed shall be provided at the latest 14 days after the start of classes. In particular, the type and duration of the assessments and, as the case may be, of the specific conditions of participation shall be stated.

### **Art. 23 Assessment Dates and Deadlines**

Assessment dates and enrollment deadlines shall be set by the faculty responsible for carrying out the teaching unit and published in an appropriate manner.

### **Art. 24 Enrolling for Assessments**

Candidates shall enroll for assessments within the deadlines announced by the faculty responsible for the relevant teaching units.

### **Art. 25 Withdrawal**

Withdrawal from an assessment shall occur pursuant to the rules of the faculty responsible for the teaching unit concerned.

### **Art. 26 Assessment of the Master Thesis**

<sup>1</sup> The Master thesis shall be assessed by the supervisor(s) within the deadlines stipulated by the responsible faculty of the Home University. The supervisor(s) of the thesis shall inform the candidate of the grade awarded.

<sup>2</sup> The Master thesis must contain on its last page a dated and signed declaration stating that the rules of scientific integrity have been followed.

<sup>3</sup> Credit for the Master thesis shall be counted towards the Master's degree only if the grade awarded is at least 4.

<sup>4</sup> If the Master thesis is written by a group, then the contribution of each candidate shall be assessed and graded individually.

### **Art. 27 Repetition of assessments**

<sup>1</sup> Candidates who fail an assessment of a teaching unit may repeat the assessment once.

<sup>2</sup> Candidates who fail their Master thesis may choose a new topic.

<sup>3</sup> A passed assessment may not be repeated.

### **Art. 28 Assessment Fees**

Any fees for assessments are in accordance with the regulations applicable at the candidate's Home University.

### **Art. 29 Deception and Plagiarism**

<sup>1</sup> If the result of an assessment is influenced by deception or attempted to be influenced by deception on the part of the

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***

candidate, namely through use of unauthorised auxiliary materials, the assessment shall be awarded the grade 1.

<sup>2</sup> Plagiarism is forbidden at the BEFRI Universities. For each piece of written work, the student shall declare on their honor that they have personally written it. Written work that violates the rules of scientific integrity shall be rejected by the responsible lecturer, and it will be assessed as failed and awarded the grade 1.

<sup>3</sup> Further disciplinary measures may be taken pursuant to the regulations of the Home University.

## **6. AWARDING OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE**

### **Art. 30 Award of the Master's Degree**

The title "Master of Science in Earth Sciences" of the Universities of Bern and Fribourg shall be awarded to the candidate by both universities, provided the candidate has fulfilled the following conditions:

- a) all of the ECTS credits have been earned as stipulated in the plan of studies:
  - 60 ECTS credits through the teaching modules (Art. 13 and Art. 20);
  - 60 ECTS credits through the Master thesis;
- b) the duration of studies has not been exceeded, as set forth in Article 6, Article 7 or Article 11, paragraph 3;
- c) the requirements of each BEFRI University have been fulfilled, especially payment of university fees and of fees for assessments;
- d) any additional academic requirements have been fulfilled.

### **Art. 31 Final Grade**

<sup>1</sup> The final grade of the Master's degree shall be calculated from the arithmetic mean of the grades of all of the teaching units and the Master thesis, each weighted by its ECTS credits, and rounded pursuant to Article 19, paragraph 6.

<sup>2</sup> The transcript of records shall be included in the Diploma Annex (University of Fribourg) or in the Diploma Supplement (University of Bern).

### **Art. 32 Master's Title**

The title awarded shall be "Master of Science in Earth Sciences" of the Universities of Bern and Fribourg. The Diploma shall bear the signatures of the responsible authorities of both BEFRI Universities. A Diploma Supplement shall be enclosed with the certificate.

### **Art. 33 Definitive Exclusion from the Degree Program**

<sup>1</sup> Students shall be definitively excluded from the Master's degree program if they exceed the maximum duration of studies as set forth in Article 6, Article 7 or Article 11, para. 3, if the

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***

Master thesis has been failed twice, or if one of the modules A, B, C has been definitively failed.

<sup>2</sup> The rules concerning deception and plagiarism remain reserved.

## **7. LEGAL RECOURSE**

### **Art. 34 Appeal**

<sup>1</sup> Students may file an appeal against a ruling, especially against a failed assessment. The appeal must be made to the responsible authority of the faculty responsible for the assessment within 30 days of receiving the ruling.

<sup>2</sup> The regulations of the university responsible for the assessment apply to the appeal proceedings.

## **8. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

### **Art. 35 Transitional Provisions**

<sup>1</sup> These Regulations are valid for all students who start the Master's degree program in Earth Sciences as of the 2012 fall semester.

<sup>2</sup> Students who started the Master's degree program in Earth Sciences before the 2012 fall semester may end their studies pursuant to the applicable regulations of their Home University or submit a request to the Coordination Committee to continue their studies pursuant to these Regulations.

### **Art. 36 Entry into Force**

These Regulations enter into force retroactively on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. They have been approved by the competent authorities

- a) of the Canton of Bern and
- b) of the Canton of Fribourg.

On behalf of the Faculty of Science of the University  
of Bern

Bern, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

The Dean:

*Signature*

Prof. Dr. Silvio Decurtins

Approved by the Ministry of Education (Eriedungsdirektion):

Bern, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013

The Minister of Education (Eriedungsdirektor):

*Signature*

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***



Bernhard Pulver

***This document is a translation and is provided for information purposes only. It has no legal force. Accordingly, in the event of any dispute whatsoever about the interpretation of an article, the text of the original German version shall always prevail.***