

Programme Regulations 2017
of the Master's degree programme
History and Philosophy of Knowledge
Department of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences

of 5 September 2017¹

*This English translation is for information purposes only.
The original German version is the legally binding version.*

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Version: **05.08.2024 – 1**

¹ With changes pursuant to the D-GESS department conference resolution of 05.08.2024 (regarding Art. 14 Language of instruction). This version (05.08.2024 - 1) replaces the previous edition (05.09.2017 - 0).

Programme Regulations 2017 of the Master's degree programme in History and Philosophy of Knowledge

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(Version on 5 August 2024)

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The ETH Zurich Executive Board,

pursuant to Art. 4, Para. 1, Lit. a of the ETH Zurich Organisation Ordinance
(*Organisationsverordnung ETH Zürich*) of 16 December 2003²,

decrees:

Chapter 1: General regulations

Section 1: General

Art. 1 Subject and scope, appendix

¹ These programme regulations set out the requirements according to which the Master's degree in History and Philosophy of Knowledge may be acquired at the Department of Humanities, Social and Political Sciences (D-GESS).

² The appendix is part of these programme regulations. The Rector decides on changes to the appendix upon request or after a hearing of D-GESS.

Art. 2 Academic title

¹ Graduates of the ETH Zurich Master's degree programme in Science, Technology and Policy (subsequently 'degree programme') are awarded the academic title

Master of Arts ETH in History and Philosophy of Knowledge
(abbreviation: MA ETH HPK).

² This title may also be used in the abbreviated form «MA ETH».

² RSETHZ 201.021

Art. 3 Legal basis

These programme regulations are based upon the stipulations set out in the following legal documents:

- a. Ordinance on Course Units and Performance Assessments at ETH Zurich of 22 May 2012³ (ETH Zurich Ordinance on Performance Assessments);
- b. Ordinance on Admission to Studying at ETH Zurich of 30 November 2010⁴ (ETH Zurich Admissions Ordinance).

Section 2: Credit system

Art. 4 Policy

¹ The study programme follows a credit system which is aligned with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

² ETH Zurich deploys the ECTS in accordance with the Rector's Credit System Guidelines (*Richtlinien zum Kreditsystem*)⁵.

Art. 5 Credits, basis for calculation

¹ Credits describe the average time expenditure required for a student to earn a study achievement.

² One credit corresponds to a workload of 30 hours. This workload comprises all of the study-related activities required to obtain said credit.

³ The curriculum is designed in such a way that full-time students can acquire an average of 30 credits per semester.

Art. 6 Allocation of credits

¹ D- GESS allocates a certain number of credits to each of the course units it offers.

² If an ETH Zurich course unit is found on the curriculum of more than one ETH Zurich degree programme, the department offering the course unit allocates the credits after consultation with the recipients. The Rector of ETH Zurich settles any disagreements.

³ SR 414.135.1, RSETHZ 322.021

⁴ SR 414.131.52, RSETHZ 310.5

⁵ See www.weisungen.ethz.ch (in German only)

³ If a course unit is offered by another university that university is responsible for allocating credits to it.

Art. 7 Issuing of credits

¹ Credits are issued for satisfactory performance. Performance is considered satisfactory if it has been awarded a grade of at least a 4, or a 'pass'.

² No credits are issued for unsatisfactory performance.

³ Credits are always granted in full, partial granting is not permitted.

⁴ The number of credits issued is based on the Course Catalogue valid at the time the respective performance assessment was undertaken.

Art. 8 Recording, checking, administration

D-GESS records, checks and administers the credits acquired.

Chapter 2: Content, scope and structure of the degree programme

Section 1: Programme content, structure and scope

Art. 9 Programme content, programme goal

¹ Important scientific findings are collective achievements, they are not just the result of the brilliant ideas of individuals. They take place in a historical situation that is characterized by certain values of knowledge such as objectivity and accuracy. Such historical situations presuppose institutions such as universities, research institutes and libraries and are determined by specific symbol systems such as mathematical calculations, technical languages or imaging techniques. The conditions of knowledge development are researched by general history, the history of science- and technology, theoretical and practical philosophy and literary studies. Accordingly, it is an interdisciplinary degree programme that provides knowledge in the aforementioned fields of knowledge and thus the background and analytical tools that enable students to deal creatively and independently with contemporary forms of knowledge from a historical and systematic perspective. In the two-year Master's degree studies, students learn to scientifically examine the normative, symbolic, social, institutional, political and economic conditions under which knowledge is created and how its further development affects these conditions. Great importance is attached to an appropriate factual understanding of the sciences and techniques to be studied.

² Graduates of the degree programme earn a double qualification. The programme offers natural- and technical scientists the opportunity to reflect on the knowledge of their first study programme by earning of historical, philosophical and social theory approaches. Humanities- and cultural studies students gain insights into the natural- and technical sciences by specializing in History and Philosophy of Knowledge. Another key educational goal is to develop the ability to think and write clearly and vividly in order to present complex scientific, historical and philosophical issues in a concise and comprehensible manner.

Art. 10 Commencement of studies in Autumn

It is only possible to enter the degree programme at the beginning of the Autumn Semester.

Art. 11 Academic procedure, study guide

¹ The curriculum is as follows:

- a. The first two semesters are characterized by many contact hours and serve to teach basic topics and methods, whereas the second semester is more strongly oriented towards intensive analytical reading of subject-specific theory and source texts under the guidance of the lecturers.
- b. In the third semester, the focus is on writing the reading essays.
- c. The fourth semester is dedicated to the Master's thesis.
- d. A 14-day research colloquium must be attended in each of the four semesters.

² The D-GESS offers a study guide to the degree programme, which contains an overview of the details of the study programme and corresponding recommendations.

³ The departmental exchange coordinator is available to answer questions relating to student mobility. The details are regulated in Art. 16.

Art. 12 Scope, duration, limitation on duration of studies

¹ As stipulated in Art. 31, 120 credits are required to earn the Master's degree.

² The normal duration of studies is two years.

³ The maximum permitted duration of studies is four years. If there are important reasons, the Rector may extend the permitted duration of studies upon timely submission of an application.

Art. 13 Course Catalogue

¹ The D-GESS lists the course units of the degree programme for each semester in the Course Catalogue. The information in the course catalogue is binding.

² Details regarding entries in the Course Catalogue are set out in Art. 4 of the Ordinance on Performance Assessments at ETH Zurich⁶ and in the corresponding implementation stipulations⁷ of the Rector.

Art. 14 Language of instruction

Course units and the corresponding performance assessments are normally conducted in English. The language of instruction is also subject to the pertaining Rector's directives⁸.

Art. 15 Admission to course units

Special admission prerequisites may apply to the attendance of a particular course unit. If these are not specified in these programme regulations, they are specified in the Course Catalogue if they are ETH Zurich course units.

Art. 16 Mobility studies (ETH graduate students)

¹ During the Master's degree studies credits may be earned at universities other than ETH Zurich or UZH (mobility credits). Of these mobility credits a maximum of 30 may be recognised towards the Master's degree. The stipulations of para. 2 - 4 below still apply.

² The Master's thesis is generally excluded from the student mobility; it must be written at ETH Zurich.

³ Students who did not obtain the preceding (Bachelor's) study programme at ETH Zurich:

- a. may not take part in an ETH Zurich exchange programme.
- b. may undertake individual exchange stays, but no mobility credits may be recognized towards the Master's degree.

⁴ If admission to the degree programme is subject to the acquisition of additional credits (admission with additional requirements), an exchange stay is only possible once the requirements have been met in full. Furthermore, mobility credits are not recognised for the fulfilment of additional requirements.

⁶ SR 414.135.1, RSETHZ 322.021

⁷ See www.directives.ethz.ch

⁸ See www.directives.ethz.ch

⁵ If course units from other universities are part of the curriculum of the degree programme, the corresponding credits do not count as student exchange credits.

⁶ For an exchange stay students draw up a written study programme in advance with the help of the mobility advisor of the degree programme. This plan includes the courses to be taken at the host university and the credits to be earned. It must be approved by the Director of Studies.

⁷ The Director of Studies decides whether mobility credits will be recognized. Art. 16 of the ETH Zurich Ordinance on Performance Assessments⁹ and the pertaining implementations stipulations¹⁰ of the Rector set out how proof of performance assessments is handled.

⁸ Further details regarding exchange stays or the recognition of mobility credits are published in a suitable manner, e.g. on the degree programme website.

Section 2: Grouping of the range of courses by category

Art. 17 Grouping by category

¹ To earn a Master's degree, study achievements are required in the following categories. The minimum number of credits required in each category is set out in Art. 31.

- a. Basic subjects;
- b. Specialization subjects;
- c. Research colloquia;
- d. Master's thesis.

² The D- GESS assigns course units to the categories in para. 1 and publishes them in the Course Catalogue.

⁹ SR 414.135.1, RSETHZ 322.021

¹⁰ See www.directives.ethz.ch

Art. 18 Overview of categories

¹ Basic subjects

They characterize the first two semesters and teach theoretical approaches, working methods and sources from the following areas of knowledge:

- History of technology
- History of science
- Philosophy
- Literary and cultural studies
- History of the modern world

Students must successfully complete several courses from the basic subjects for the Master's degree, including at least one historical and one philosophical course. Course units in literature- and cultural studies can be assigned to either the historical or philosophical category. In addition, as part of the basic subjects, a semester report must be successfully completed at the end of the first semester as well as a seminar paper during the second semester. The details regarding performance assessments are regulated in Art. 27.

² Specialization subjects

Students must write three reading essays in the third semester, including one essay on a historical topic and one on a philosophical topic. The essays are based on intensive reading of relevant theoretical and source texts, which begins in the second semester under the guidance of the lecturer. Discussion of the essays in individual lessons also prepares students for the choice of topic for their Master's thesis and trains their writing skills. The details of the performance assessments are regulated in Art. 28.

³ Research colloquia

A 14-day research colloquium is held each semester, in which current research work is presented and new developments in the History and Philosophy of Knowledge are discussed in a larger university context. Students must successfully complete four research colloquia for the Master's degree. The details of the performance assessments are regulated in Art. 29.

⁴ Master's thesis

The Master's thesis is usually written in one of the three specialization subjects and forms the completion of the study programme. With the Master's thesis, students should demonstrate their skills in independently developing topics and questions and presenting complex scientific, historical and philosophical issues in writing in a concise and comprehensible manner. The details are regulated in Art. 30.

Chapter 3: Admission to the Master's degree programme

Art. 19 Prerequisites for admission

¹ Applicants for admission to the degree programme must have an excellent university Bachelor's degree comprising at least 180 credits or an equivalent university completion of studies in natural or technical sciences, humanities or cultural studies.

² Details of the academic, language and performance prerequisites for admission (profile of requirements) are provided in the Appendix.

Art. 20 Registration/application, admission procedure and entry to the Master's degree studies

¹ All candidates apply to the Admissions Office of ETH Zurich for admission to the degree programme.

² The degree programme admissions committee investigates candidates' academic backgrounds and suitability for the Master's degree studies, and submits a recommendation for admission or rejection to the Director of Studies.

³ The Rector decides whether to admit or reject the candidate on the basis of the recommendation of the Director of Studies.

⁴ Details regarding application, the admission procedure and entry to the Master's degree studies are determined by the Rector. They are set out in the Appendix.

Chapter 4: Performance assessments

Section 1: General regulations

Art. 21 Performance evaluation

Performance assessments and the Master's thesis are graded. Performance in other performance assessments is either graded or evaluated on a pass/fail basis.

Art. 22 Admission to performance assessments

Admission to performance assessments may be subject to conditions. If these are not specified in these programme regulations, they are specified by the ETH Zurich department or the university which offers the respective course unit.

Art. 23 Registration for / deregistration from performance assessments

¹ The following provisions apply to registration for / deregistration from performance assessments at ETH Zurich:

- a. If the performance assessments in question are end-of-semester examinations or session examinations, registration and deregistration are governed by the stipulations of the ETH Zurich Ordinance on Performance Assessments¹¹ and the associated implementation stipulations of the Rector¹²;
- b. If the performance assessments fall into another category, registration and deregistration are generally handled by the respective lecturer.

² If the performance assessments concerned are those of another university, registration and deregistration are subject to the rules of that university.

Art. 24 Absence, interruption, breaking off, late submission or non-submission

In connection with performance assessments, the following provisions apply to absences, interruptions, breaking offs, late submission or non-submission:

- a. ETH Zurich performance assessments are governed by the stipulations of the ETH Zurich Ordinance on Performance Assessments¹³ and the associated implementation stipulations of the Rector¹⁴.
- b. Performance assessments of another university are subject to the rules of the respective university.

Art. 25 Issuing of results, disputes

¹ Students may view all their performance results online via the corresponding ETH Zurich application. They are informed periodically by email as to which performance assessment results are now viewable.

² Each notification explains how to proceed in the event of any discrepancies regarding the newly visible performance evaluations.

¹¹ SR 414.135.1, RSETHZ 322.021

¹² See www.directives.ethz.ch

¹³ SR 414.135.1, RSETHZ 322.021

¹⁴ See www.directives.ethz.ch

Art. 26 Dishonest conduct

The sanctions for dishonest conduct in the context of performance assessments is outlined in the ETH Zurich Ordinance on Disciplinary Measures of 10 November 2020¹⁵.

Section 2: Performance assessments of the Master's degree studies

Art. 27 Basic subjects

¹ Every course unit in the category «basic subjects» is subject to a performance assessment.

² The respective mode of each performance assessment is listed in the Course Catalogue if the course unit is offered by ETH Zurich.

³ If a course unit is offered by another university that university determines the performance assessment mode of that course unit.

⁴ A performance assessment is passed if it is awarded a grade of at least a 4 or a «pass».

⁵ In the event of a failed performance assessment, the following applies:

- a. A failed performance assessment in a lecture or seminar can only be repeated once and, as a rule, only after the course unit has been registered for a second time. The modalities for repetition are specified for each course unit in the Course Catalogue.
- b. A failed semester report (cf. para. 6 (b)) can only be repeated once.
- c. A failed seminar paper (cf. para. 6 (b)) can only be repeated once. If it is repeated, a new topic must be worked on.
- d. If the semester report or seminar paper is not repeated, the degree programme is deemed to have been definitively failed (cf. Art. 36).

⁶ The following also applies to the category «basic courses»:

- a. Of the courses available for selection in this category, students must successfully complete several, including at least one historical and one philosophical course (lectures [without/with exercise] and seminars).
- b. A semester report must be written at the end of the first semester and a seminar paper in the course of the second semester.
- c. The D-GESS is responsible for monitoring compliance with the provisions of letters a and b.

¹⁵ SR 414.138.1, RSETHZ 361.1

Art. 28 Specialization subjects (reading essays)

¹ Performance in the category «specialization subjects» is achieved in reading essays.

² The mode of each performance assessment is determined in the Course Catalogue.

³ A reading essay is passed if it is awarded a grade of at least 4.

⁴ A failed reading essay cannot be repeated. For the earning of the required credits, another essay must be written and awarded with a grade of at least 4. The number of attempts is limited (see para. 5).

⁵ The following also applies to the reading essays:

- a. To earn a Master's degree, students must successfully complete at least three reading essays, including one essay on a historical topic and one on a philosophical topic.
- b. Students have a maximum of six attempts to successfully complete three essays.
- c. The D-GESS is responsible for monitoring compliance with the provisions of letters a and b.

Art. 29 Research colloquia

¹ Each research colloquium includes a performance assessment. The mode of each performance assessment is determined in the Course Catalogue.

² The performance in a research colloquium is graded as «passed» or «failed».

³ A failed research colloquium cannot be repeated. A further research colloquium must be completed in order to earn the required credits. The number of attempts is limited (see para. 4).

⁴ The following also applies to the category «Research colloquia»:

- a. At least four research colloquia must be successfully completed for the earning of the Master's degree.
- b. Students have a maximum of eight attempts in total to successfully complete four research colloquia.
- c. The D-GESS is responsible for monitoring compliance with the provisions of letters a and b.

Art. 30 Master's thesis

¹ Admission to the Master's thesis is only granted to those who:

- a. has successfully completed the Bachelor's degree studies
- b. has fully met any additional requirements for admission to the degree programme;
and
- c. has earned at least 6 credits in the category «research colloquia» and all credits required for the Master's degree studies in the categories «basic subjects» and «specialization subjects in the Master's degree studies.

² The Master's thesis is supervised by a teaching faculty member. The list of teaching faculty members authorized to supervise is published on the D-GESS website.¹⁶

³ Master's thesis supervisors have the following tasks:

- a. They determine the topic of the Master's thesis in consultation with the student.
- b. They define the task, set the deadline for submitting the Master's thesis and the assessment criteria in writing and grade the thesis.
- c. They appoint a second assessor in consultation with the student.

⁴ The second assessors attest their agreement or disagreement with the process and result of the grading procedure with their signature.

⁵ The processing time for the Master's thesis is 28 weeks¹⁷ (full-time studies). The Director of Studies may extend the completion period if there are important reasons for doing so in response to an official request.

⁶ The Master's thesis is passed if the grade is at least 4 and is confirmed by the second assessor. In the event that the second assessor does not agree in writing, the proposed grade and the written reasons for not agreeing will be referred to the responsible committee for counselling and decision.

⁷ A failed Master's thesis can only be repeated once. If it is repeated, a new topic must be worked on. The repetition can be carried out with a different supervisor than the first attempt.

⁸ If the repetition of the Master's thesis is not passed, the degree programme is deemed to have been definitively failed (cf. Art. 36).

¹⁶ Edited version of 01.11.2024, in force since Autumn Semester 2024.

¹⁷ The 28 weeks are made up of: 26 weeks of actual processing time and 2 weeks to compensate for public holidays, sick days and other short-term absences.

Chapter 5: Issuing of the Master's degree

Section 1: Credits by category, and degree request

Art. 31 Credits by category

¹ The 120 credits required for the Master's degree must be acquired in the following categories and subcategories in at least the numbers given. Further details are set out in paras. 2 and 3 and in Art. 32.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| a. Basic subjects | 52 credits |
| 1) Introductory courses (44 credits) | |
| - Lectures (without/with exercise) (18 credits) | |
| - Seminars (12 credits) | |
| 2) Semester report (3 credits) | |
| 3) Seminar paper (5 credits) | |
| b. Specialization subjects (reading essays) | 30 credits |
| c. Research colloquia | 8 credits |
| d. Master's thesis | 30 credits |

² The following applies to the 52 credits required in the category «basic subjects» (para. 1 (a)):

- At least 44 credits must stem from introductory courses, of which at least 18 credits must stem from lectures and at least 12 credits from seminars. This must include at least one historical and one philosophical course.
- 3 credits must stem from the semester report and 5 credits from the seminar paper.

³ In the category «Specialization subjects» (para. 1 (b)), at least three reading essays must be successfully completed, including one essay each on a historical and a philosophical topic.

Art. 32 Degree request

¹ When students have fulfilled the requirements set out in Art. 31, they may request the issue of the Master's degree. The degree request must be made within four years of starting the Master's degree studies. The Rector may extend the deadline for degree requests upon timely submission of an official request if there is good cause.

² The request should contain all those study achievements with pass grades in the categories and sub-categories listed in Art. 31 which are to be listed in the final academic record. In each category the sum of the minimum number of credits set out in Art. 31 must be acquired.

³ A maximum of 130 credits are recognised towards the Master's degree in the final academic record. All further study achievements are listed on a separate sheet of the academic record.

⁴ At least 90 of the 120 credits required for the Master's degree must be earned at ETH Zurich or UZH. A maximum of 30 student exchange credits may be recognised in accordance with Art. 16.

⁵ The credits earned by completing a course unit may neither be divided nor recognised more than once.

⁶ The recognition of study credits or credits from a previous study programme is excluded in principle. Exceptions are regulated in para. 7.

⁷ Credits earned at ETH Zurich or UZH before taking up Master's degree studies may be recognised as long as the knowledge and skills acquired thereby are integral to the degree programme and the credits in question have not already been recognised towards a degree. The Director of Studies decides whether credits will be recognised. There is no automatic entitlement to recognition.

Section 2: Academic record, certificate and Diploma Supplement

Art. 33 Documents

Students who complete the degree programme receive three documents: an academic record, a certificate and a Diploma Supplement.

Art. 34 Academic record

¹ The academic record serves as verification of the completed Master's degree.

² The academic record contains:

- a. The study achievements listed in the degree request according to Art. 32 para. 2, including grades and other performance evaluation indicators:
- b. The final grade, calculated as the weighted average of the following two grades:
 - 1) the grade of the Master's thesis Grade weighting 1
 - 2) the weighted average of all Grade weighting 2
other grades listed in the degree request
with the corresponding credits
as weights.

³ A separate sheet of the academic record lists:

- a. possible admission requirements; and
- b. other additional requirements in accordance with the relevant implementation stipulations¹⁸ of the Rector.

⁴ D-GESS records, checks and registers the grades and other performance evaluations and issues the academic record.

Art. 35 Certificate, Diploma Supplement

¹ The details for the certificate are regulated in Art. 28 of the ETH Zurich Ordinance on Performance Assessments¹⁹.

² The Diploma Supplement comprises a standardised explanation of the graduation.

Chapter 6: Final clauses

Art. 36 Definitive failure, exclusion from the degree programme

¹ The degree programme is regarded as definitively failed if:

- a. the conditions for earning the Master's degree (acquisition of the required number of credits for the Master's degree according to the stipulations of Art. 31, or any other conditions) can no longer be met due to failure of performance assessments or failure to respect deadlines to complete studies²⁰; or
- b. in the case of «admission with additional requirements», the requirements are not fully met due to failure to pass performance assessments or failure to meet the deadlines set for them.

² Definitive failure results in exclusion from the degree programme.

Art. 37 Transcript of records after exclusion or abandonment of the study programme

Students who are excluded from the degree programme or withdraw from the study programme before obtaining the Master's degree receive a transcript of records for non-graduating students which lists all the study achievements generated and evaluated before exclusion or withdrawal.

¹⁸ See www.directives.ethz.ch

¹⁹ SR **414.135.1**, RSETHZ **322.021**

²⁰ Programme deadlines are the deadline for undertaking a performance assessment, individual assigned deadlines and the maximum permitted duration of studies.

Art. 38 Special cases

The Director of Studies settles cases which are not or are not sufficiently addressed by these programme regulations, their Appendix, or other relevant ordinances and directives.

Art. 39 Entry into force

¹ These programme regulations enter into effect at the beginning of the Autumn Semester 2017.

² They apply to students who

- a. enter from Autumn Semester 2017 onwards;
- b. re-enter to this degree programme from Autumn Semester 2017;
- c. entered before Autumn Semester 2017: These students may, on request, complete the Master's degree studies according to the stipulations of these programme regulations 2017. The Director of Studies rules on such request in consultation with the ETH Zurich Academic Services. A change of regulations does not entitle the student to an extension of the duration of studies.

On behalf of the Executive Board

The President: Lino Guzzella

The Secretary General: Katharina Poiger Ruloff