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Examination regulations for the Master's program  
Digital Games at Technische Hochschule Köln –  
University of Applied Sciences

of February 22, 2016

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This is a translation of the original German document. For all legal purposes, only the German version of the examination regulations shall be considered binding.

## **Examination regulations**

**for the program  
Digital Games  
leading to the academic degree  
Master of Arts  
of Cologne Game Lab  
at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences  
of Technische Hochschule Köln**

**of**

**February 22, 2016**  
**as amended on December 14, 2018**

By virtue of §§ 2 (4) and 64 (1) of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act (*Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen - Hochschulgesetz (HG)*) of September 16, 2014 (*Gesetz und Verordnungsblatt NRW* (GV. NRW p. 547), TH Köln - University of Applied Sciences has adopted the following examination regulations by statute:

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## **I. General information**

### **§ 1 Applicability of the examination regulations; module catalog and study plan**

- (1) These examination regulations are to administer full-time studies and examinations of the Master's program "Digital Games" at Technische Hochschule Köln - University of Applied Sciences.
- (2) Based on these examination regulations, Technische Hochschule Köln establishes a study plan (see annex 1) and a module catalog. The module catalog outlines the contents and structure of the program, taking developments in the fields of science and university teaching as well as profession-specific requirements into account. The study plan is to provide students with a recommendation on how to adequately structure their studies.

### **§ 2 Objectives of the program; purpose of the examinations; academic degree**

- (1) Students who pass the Master's examination are awarded a university degree qualifying them to exercise professional work in the field relevant to the program and entitling them to apply for admission to doctoral studies in accordance with § 67 (4) sentence 1, No. 3 of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act (*Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen - Hochschulgesetz (HG)*).
- (2) Taking general study objectives (§ 58 HG) into account, the degree program, which is to prepare students for the Master's examination, is designed to convey application-oriented topics of the discipline on the basis of scientific findings. The aim is both an in-depth specialization in two of the three subject areas "Game Arts", "Game Design" or "Game Programming" as well as the development of artistic-scientific practice and reflection skills. While the degree program responds to the high demand for experts in the games industry with the possibility of specialization, the focus on interdisciplinary artistic-scientific topics aims to build up practical knowledge and transferable skills that help graduates to prove themselves in interdisciplinary, constantly changing work contexts inside and outside the games industry in leading positions or as founders. The program leading to the Master's examination should also give students the opportunity to deepen their academic knowledge and qualify them for employment in the field of education and science as well as for a doctorate in the field of game studies and/or game design.
- (3) The language of instruction and examination is English.
- (4) The Master's program builds on the contents of the Bachelor's program "Digital Games" offered by TH Köln.
- (5) The Master's examination (§ 5) is to determine whether students have acquired further specialized knowledge required to exercise work in their profession independently and whether they are able to work and conduct research independently and on the basis of scientific findings and methods.
- (6) Students who have passed the examinations listed in § 5 have completed an academic degree program, qualifying them to exercise work in the designated profession. Students who have passed said examinations are awarded the academic degree "Master of Arts" in accordance with the regulations stated hereinafter.

### **§ 3 Admission requirements; aptitude test**

- (1) Admission to the Master's program requires the successful completion of a university program in "Digital Games" with at least a Bachelor's degree ("Bachelor of Arts") or the completion of another suitable program worth at least 210 ECTS credits. The examination board decides on the suitability of a program.
- (2) Another requirement is the successful completion of an examination in English to determine the artistic and academic aptitude required for the program. The process evaluates the overall suitability of candidates based on pre-defined assessment criteria (including the required English language skills) and consists of two stages:
  - 1) Submission of documents such as CV, letter of motivation, certificates and relevant work samples as well as written homework which applicants usually need to complete within one month.
  - 2) An oral examination on site or, in the case of a very long journey from abroad or for other justifiable reasons, in the form of a video interview.

All applicants who have registered on the application platform on time, formally correct and are qualified will be assigned a homework for the first stage of the procedure. Only those who have fulfilled the formal and subject-related requirements in the first stage are invited to the oral examination in the second stage.

The selection procedure aims to assess the following aspects:

- 1) Practical media skills, knowledge and experience
  - 2) Individual interests, intrinsic motivation and personal ambition for an in-depth practical and theoretical media examination of nonlinear audiovisuals
  - 3) The practical media skills required to carry out creative project work independently and in a team
  - 4) The ability to participate in academic discourse on media theory
  - 5) Proficiency in written and spoken English
- (3) The examination board appoints one or more juries for the aptitude test from among the examiners, while maintaining the professorial majority. The juries make their decisions on the basis of the eligibility criteria in subsection 2. Based on the recommendations of these juries, the examination board makes the final decision on determining the applicants' aptitude for the program. Admission to the program or to the specialization chosen by the applicants is based on the qualifications determined. Applicants will be informed of the decision no later than the end of the lecture period of the semester preceding the intended start of their studies. Any existing admission restrictions remain unaffected.
  - (4) The result of the aptitude test is valid for the next possible admission date, i.e. usually the following semester.
  - (5) Applicants who possess the qualifications stated in subsections 1, 2 and 3 and have additionally acquired knowledge and skills in ways other than in university studies are to be admitted to a stage of the program that corresponds to the results of the placement test pursuant to § 49 (12) HG, provided that they have passed the aptitude test as defined in subsections 2 and 3, unless regulations on the allocation of study places conflict with this provision. Details are stipulated in TH Köln's regulations on placement tests.

- (6) In exceptional cases, students may enroll in the Master's program prior to having met the admission requirements stated in subsection 1 if they provide proof of meeting the requirements within one semester of enrollment at the latest.
- (7) Admission is to be denied if an applicant has irreversibly failed the Master's, Diplom or other final examination in the program "Digital Games" within the jurisdiction of the German constitution or if they have lost the right to take examinations in this degree program. Admission is also to be denied if the applicant has irreversibly failed (or lost the right to take) a comparable examination of a degree program (within the jurisdiction of the German constitution) whose content has strong similarities to that of the program "Digital Games" and if said failed examination is equivalent to a mandatory examination of this program.
- (8) Graduates of six-semester Bachelor's programs with a study volume of 180 ECTS credits who have been admitted to the three-semester Master's program are required to make up the missing credit points for the seven-semester Bachelor's program during their studies or to compensate for them with work already completed in other practical or academic contexts. Individual agreements on this matter are made with the students at the beginning of their studies. Students may study modules from the Bachelor's program "Digital Games" or have their study and examination achievements from other degree programs as well as internships and professional activities recognized, provided that they are comparable with the "Exchange & Practice" module of the Bachelor's program "Digital Games". The examination board decides on individual agreements and the recognition of previous achievements such as internships or work experience.

#### **§ 4 Standard program duration; scope of the program**

- (1) The standard program duration is three semesters. In compliance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), students are awarded a total of 90 credits (§ 12). The standard program duration includes the examination period.
- (2) The program is divided into individual modules. See § 23 and the study plan (annex) for details on the program structure.
- (3) In compliance with § 59 HG, students have the right to attend courses outside their chosen program.
- (4) Students are enrolled in the program's first semester in the summer semester of each year.

#### **§ 5 Scope and structure of examinations; examination deadlines**

- (1) A student's successful completion of the program is to be determined by the examinations taken throughout the program (module examinations) and a final examination (Master's thesis and presentation/disputation). Group examinations are permissible.
- (2) Module examinations are to be held when the corresponding module has been concluded in accordance with the study plan. The study plan is to ensure that it is possible for the students to have taken all module examinations by the end of the third semester.
- (3) In compliance with § 26, registration for the final part of the Master's examination is to be filed prior to the end of the penultimate semester of the program.

- (4) Examination procedures are to make allowance for the legal provisions for maternity and parental leave periods as well as the leave for the nursing and care of spouses, registered partners, relatives in direct line of descent or brothers and sisters in-law if they are in need of nursing or care.

## **§ 6 Examination board**

- (1) The institute Cologne Game Lab establishes an examination board to be in charge of the organization of examinations and the arrangement of the duties entrusted to it by these examination regulations. The examination board shall be an independent body of the faculty and the institute.
- (2) The examination board is elected by the faculty council and is made up of seven persons:
- a) chairperson and vice chairperson selected from the pool of professors
  - b) two additional members selected from the pool of professors
  - c) one member selected from the pool of research associates or instructors for special tasks
  - d) two members selected from the pool of students
- (3) Deputies are to be elected for all members of the examination board except for the chairperson and the vice-chairperson. The members of the board employed in full-time positions at the university and their deputies have tenure of two years; the student members and their deputies have tenure of one year. Re-election is permissible.

## **§ 7 Rights and duties of the examination board**

- (1) The examination board is responsible for the organization of examinations. It ensures that the examination regulations are complied with and that examinations are conducted properly. In particular, it decides on objections brought forward against decisions that were made in exam-related matters.
- (2) Moreover, the board reports to the faculty council on developments related to examinations and the duration of studies, if so requested. It gives advice on potential reforms of the examination regulations, the module catalog and the study plans. The examination board may transfer its regular duties to the chairperson of the examination board. This does not apply to decisions on objections.
- (3) The members of the examination board and a representative of the Executive Board have the right to be present during examinations. Exempt from this right are student members of the examination board who are to take the examination concerned during the same examination period.
- (4) Sessions of the examination board are not open to the public.

## **§ 8 Decisions by the examination board**

- (1) The examination board has a quorum if, in addition to the chairperson or vice-chairperson, a member from the pool of professors and at least two additional members eligible to vote are present. Decisions require a simple majority. In case of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote. Student members and research assistants do not contribute to decisions on matters related to education and academics, particularly when it comes to the recognition or other evaluation of

examinations and assessments or the appointment of examiners or co-examiners. Moreover, student members of the examination board do not participate in the debate and decision-making on matters related to examination topics or their own examinations.

- (2) All members of the examination board, their deputies, the examiners as well as co-examiners are to be sworn to official secrecy. If they are not employed in the German public service, they are to be sworn to secrecy by the chairperson of the examination board.
- (3) Negative decisions of the examination board or its chairperson are to be reported to the affected student immediately. Prior to any action, the affected student has to be granted the right to be heard.

## **§ 9 Examiners and co-examiners**

- (1) The examination board appoints the examiners and co-examiners. A person may be appointed examiner if they hold at least the qualification that is to be determined by the examination or an equivalent qualification and – provided that no compelling reasons necessitate a divergence – have held an independent teaching position in the subject relevant for the examination. A person may only be appointed co-examiner if they have at least passed the corresponding Master's examination or a comparable examination, or hold a comparable qualification (qualified co-examiner). Examiners are independent for examination purposes.
- (2) Students may also suggest an examiner to be their advisor for their Master's thesis. If possible, a student's suggestion is to be taken into consideration.
- (3) The examination board ensures that examination duties are split as evenly as possible among the examiners. The chairperson of the examination board ensures that the students will be notified of the name of their examiners in advance. This shall happen at the same time as the registration for the examination, i.e. usually at least two weeks before the examination or before the topic of the Master's thesis is assigned. Posting the information on the corresponding bulletin board or on an electronic examination management system is sufficient.

## **§ 10 Recognition of coursework and examinations**

- (1) Coursework and examinations completed within the jurisdiction of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region of April 11, 1997 (BGBl. II 2007, p. 712 - Lisbon Recognition Convention) are to be recognized upon request if it can be proven that they do not considerably differ from the coursework and examinations required. If the recognition of such examinations and coursework is denied, the university is to issue a substantiated notification on this matter. If it has been proposed to reject the recognition request, the Executive Board may be asked to review the decision.
- (2) Examinations and coursework completed in degree programs outside the jurisdiction of the Lisbon Recognition Convention are to be recognized analogous to subsection 1 upon request.
- (3) Achievements that are not part of a degree program may be recognized as examinations or coursework upon request if they are equivalent to the examinations and coursework required. Such

achievements may only account for up to half of the total number of coursework or examinations required for the successful completion of the program.

- (4) For examinations and assessments that have been recognized, students are awarded the number of ECTS credits stated in the study plan (annex 1). Non-graded examinations taken at other universities or in other programs are to be recognized in accordance with subsections 1 and 2. They are to be identified accordingly on the examination certificate and are not accounted for in the calculation of the final grade.
- (5) The examination board is the decision-making body in all cases laid out in subsections 1 to 4. In cases of doubt, it is to consult the examiners responsible for the individual courses.

## **§ 11 Evaluation of examinations**

- (1) Examinations are to be evaluated in a differentiated and comprehensible manner by means of grades. Reasons for the evaluation are to be explained in writing upon request of the examination board. Grades for individual examinations are to be determined by the respective examiner.
- (2) Graded examinations as defined in subsection 1 are all module examinations of the program as well as the Master's thesis and the presentation/disputation, unless otherwise specified in § 25 (1).
- (3) Some modules are not graded and are only evaluated as passed/not passed (see § 25).
- (4) If several examiners participate in an examination, they are to jointly evaluate the examination, provided that no other provisions are made hereinafter. If evaluations differ from one another or in cases where a module examination consists of several components, the grade is the arithmetic average of the individual components pursuant to subsection 5.
- (5) The following grades are to be used for the evaluation of examinations:

|             |                |  |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1.0/1.3     | = excellent    | = an outstanding achievement   |
| 1.7/2.0/2.3 | = good         | = an achievement well above average requirements                                     |
| 2.7/3.0/3.3 | = satisfactory | = an achievement that meets average requirements                                     |
| 3.7/4.0     | = sufficient   | = an achievement that meets the requirements despite its shortcomings                |
| 5           | = insufficient | = an achievement that does not meet the requirements due to substantial shortcomings |

Grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 do not exist.

- (6) Calculated grades that differ from the grades listed above are to be determined as follows.

|                  |                  |                |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| up to 1.5        | equals the grade | "excellent"    |
| above 1.5 to 2.5 | equals the grade | "good"         |
| above 2.5 to 3.5 | equals the grade | "satisfactory" |
| above 3.5 to 4.0 | equals the grade | "sufficient"   |
| above 4.0        | equals the grade | "insufficient" |

For the calculation of grades, only the first decimal is factored in; all other decimals are dropped without rounding.

- (7) An examination is passed if it is graded "sufficient" or better.
- (8) If the module examination is made up of two or more individual examinations, the module is considered to be passed if the weighted average of examination grades equals the grade "sufficient" (4.0).
- (9) Examinations are to be evaluated and students notified of the results within six weeks of the examination. Posting the information on the corresponding bulletin board or on an electronic examination management system is sufficient. Students are to be notified of the results of their Master's thesis within eight weeks.

## **§ 12 Credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)**

- (1) Credits are to be assigned to each component of the Master's program, enabling recognition in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Credits are a quantitative measure of the overall workload that averagely gifted students need to successfully complete a component of the program. This includes courses, preparation and follow-up work for a course, self-study as well as examinations and exam preparation.
- (2) The workload required to successfully complete the degree program as laid down in the curriculum amounts to 60 credits per academic year. One credit corresponds to a workload of 30 hours.
- (3) Students only receive credits if they have successfully completed a module. This means that students are awarded the total number of credits for every graded module examination (as described in § 11 (2) and (6)), that has been passed with a grade of at least "sufficient", irrespective of the grade received for the examination. A total of 90 credits are required to successfully complete the Master's program.
- (4) The credits assigned to the individual modules, the Master's thesis and the presentation/disputation are documented in the study plan (annex 1). Details are provided in the module catalog.
- (5) Complying with § 10, credits obtained in accordance with the ECTS at other institutions of higher education within and outside the jurisdiction of the German constitution are to be recognized with no more than the number of credits assigned in the current program.

## **§ 13 Evaluation of examinations in accordance with the ECTS grading scheme**

The certificate awarded to graduates in accordance with § 31 (1) is to indicate the relative position of the final grade according to the ECTS grading table. The reference group are the students enrolled in the program. All final grades awarded to members of the reference group over a course of at least two years are documented and the grade distribution in terms of percentage is calculated. According to § 32 (7), the grade distribution table is part of the Diploma Supplement.

## **§ 14 Retaking examinations**

- (1) Students may retake module examinations if they do not pass them or if the examinations are considered not passed. Students are required to retake an examination in the examination period that follows the failed attempt. If the examination is not retaken within one year after the failed

attempt, students will lose the right to take this examination attempt. A second retake of the examination is to take place in the examination period that follows the first retake. If the second retake of the examination does not take place within one year after the failed second attempt, students will irreversibly lose the right to take this examination. Sentences 3 and 5 are rendered invalid if students provide evidence that they are not responsible for having missed the stipulated deadline. Times spent on a mandatory or optional semester abroad or internship and leaves of absence are not taken into account for the determination of the deadline for the retake (as per sentences 2 and 4), i.e. the deadline is extended by the amount of time spent on leave or on a semester abroad or internship.

- (2) Students who do not pass the Master's thesis and the project presentation with final oral examination may retake each examination once. Module examinations may be retaken twice.
- (3) Students who did not pass a module examination that is made up of several individual components or a combination of different types of examinations, only need to retake the component that they did not pass.
- (4) For module examinations that consist of several parts, the examination board can determine at the beginning of each semester that individual examinations can be supplemented by an additional oral examination if they are not passed. If a student does not pass the supplementary oral examination, they still have the full number of retake attempts as specified in subsection 2.
- (5) An examination graded at least "sufficient" may not be retaken.

## **§ 15 Absence; withdrawal from examinations; cheating**

- (1) An examination is deemed "insufficient" (5.0) if a student fails to show up for an examination and is not able to present a good reason for their absence. An examination is also deemed "insufficient" if a student withdraws from it without good reason after the examination has begun or if they do not submit the examination within the given time frame. Sentences 1 and 2 also apply if students fail to submit their Master's thesis by the submission deadline.
- (2) Students who miss or withdraw from an examination must immediately report in writing to the examination board and present an explanation and appropriate evidence. In case of illness, students are required to submit a comprehensible medical certificate confirming that they are incapable of taking the examination. If the examination board accepts the student's explanation, the student will be notified that they may request to register for the respective examination again.
- (3) If a student attempts to manipulate the result of their examination by cheating or by using unauthorized resources, the examination concerned will be graded "insufficient" (5.0). A student who disrupts the proper course of an examination may be expelled from an examination by the examiner or proctor, usually after prior warning. In such a case, the examination concerned is graded "insufficient" (5.0). The reasons for the expulsion are to be put on record. If the student is barred from retaking the examination, they may request the examination board to review this decision. This also applies to the decisions of an examiner or proctor in cases described in sentence 1. Possible penalties as set down in § 63 (5) HG are to be acknowledged.
- (4) Unauthorized resources are all documents and resources not explicitly allowed to be used during the examination concerned. Students are required to mark other people's intellectual property (text passages, images, statistics, etc. by other authors from offline or online sources) adopted in their

written papers or examinations as quotations. Whether an examination may be retaken in cases of alleged plagiarism may be subject to meeting certain conditions, such as the successful participation in a seminar or workshop on academic writing. In cases of severe plagiarism (copying of long text passages not marked as quotations) or in case of multiple or serious cheating attempts, the examination board may decide that the examination is deemed irreversibly failed.

## **II. Module examinations**

### **§ 16 Objectives, length and type of module examinations**

- (1) The Master's program is divided into individual modules, each of which concludes with an examination. The content of a module may be taught in one or more courses with different methods of teaching and study. The courses of a module usually run for the duration of one semester. Pursuant to §§ 19 to 22, a module examination may be subdivided into several individual examinations of the same or a different type. The examinations are to determine whether students are proficient in the essential topics and methods taught in the modules and whether they are capable of independently applying the knowledge and skills acquired.
- (2) On the basis of the courses offered, the examination requirements are to be aligned with the learning outcomes defined for the individual module, which are outlined in the module catalog. Students may be required to be familiar with relevant contents of previous modules. Additional information is provided in §§ 23 to 25, the study plan (annex 1) and the module catalog.
- (3) A module's type of examination depends on the requirements of the individual module. Admissible types of examination are written examinations of up to 180 minutes (§§ 19 and 20), oral examinations (§ 21) of 10 to 30 minutes per student, and other types of examination (§ 22) as well as combinations of the aforementioned types of examination.
- (4) A student's total workload for module examinations which are made up of a combination of several types of examination is not to exceed the typical workload that a single type of examination would generate.
- (5) In consultation with the examiners and considering the studiability of the program and the module description, the examination board is to determine the examination type and modalities for each module, usually at the beginning of each semester. If an examination within a module consists of several components or a combination of different types of examination, the examination board is also to specify how the individual components are weighted. Pursuant to § 11 (5), the overall grade is the arithmetic average of the individual evaluations, unless other weighting factors have been established.
- (6) The examination board determines the examination period for written and oral examinations in consultation with the examiners usually two months before the examination period. The examination period is uniform and binding for all students who intend to take the respective module examination. Posting the information on the corresponding bulletin board or on an electronic examination management system is sufficient.
- (7) In case of other examination types, the examiner determines the examination schedule before the start of the course and informs the examination board. The examiner is to announce the examination schedule within this period. Posting the information on the corresponding bulletin board or on an electronic examination management system is sufficient. § 18 (1) sentences 2 and 3 do not apply.

## **§ 17 Admission to module examinations**

- (1) Students are to request their admission to examinations within the registration period determined by the examination board, using the electronic registration/withdrawal system provided by the Office of Student and Examination Services. Students may alternatively submit a written registration request to the Office of Student and Examination Services. Students are required to verify that their registration was properly recorded by consulting the appropriate registration lists. Only registered students may take part in an examination.
- (2) Students may only be admitted to an examination if they
  - a) are enrolled or registered at TH Köln as regular students
  - b) are cross-registered students pursuant to § 52 (1 and 2) HG and have neither taken nor registered for an examination in the subject concerned as regular students.
- (3) Students may be required to pass other module examinations in order for them to be admitted to a module examination; refer to § 25, the study plan (annex 1) and the module catalog for detailed information.
- (4) In cases of doubt, the examination board decides on admission to the module examination.
- (5) Admission is to be denied if
  - a) the student does not meet the requirements stated in subsections 1 to 3, or
  - b) the student has irreversibly failed a comparable examination in a degree program whose content has strong similarities to that of the program "Digital Games" or has irreversibly failed a Master's or other type of final examination in the same degree program within the jurisdiction of the German constitution.

In all other cases, admission may only be denied if the student has, within the jurisdiction of the German constitution, lost the right to take examinations in the same program, e.g. due to having failed to meet a deadline for retaking examinations.

## **§ 18 Conducting module examinations**

- (1) For the module examinations specified in §§ 19 and 20, one examination date per semester is usually scheduled. The examinations are to be held within the examination periods stipulated by the examination board and are announced at the beginning of the semester or towards the end of the previous semester. No courses are to be held during the examination period.
- (2) Students are to be informed of the individual examination dates and their admission to the examinations at least two weeks prior to the examination concerned. Posting the information on the corresponding bulletin board or on an electronic examination management system is sufficient.
- (3) Upon request, students are to identify themselves with an government-issued photo ID.
- (4) If a student substantiates – by submitting a medical certificate or in a different manner - that they are not capable of completely or partly taking the examination or assessment in its intended form due to a permanent disability or chronic disease pursuant to § 3 of the German Act on Equal Opportunities for Disabled Persons (*Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz*), the chairperson of the

examination board may extend the time frame allotted for writing an examination or the deadline for taking an examination. The chairperson may also allow the student to take an equivalent examination in a different form. If several equivalent ways for reasonable adjustments are considered suitable, the chairperson of the examination board is to decide on the type, date and duration of the examination at their discretion after having duly considered all circumstances. This provision also applies to assessments and admission tests. In exceptional cases, sentences 1 to 4 also apply to persons with temporary health impairments. Requests for reasonable adjustments are to be filed in time before the individual examination.

- (5) Examinations which conclude a program and retakes of examinations whose passing is a prerequisite for continuing a program are to be evaluated by a minimum of two examiners.

## **§ 19 Written examinations**

- (1) In written examinations, students are to prove that – within a limited time frame and with limited resources – they are capable of identifying and correctly solving problems stemming from areas covered by the module using common scientific methods of their subject area.
- (2) A proctor is present during written examinations. The examiner decides whether students are allowed to use additional resources.
- (3) A written examination is normally drawn up by one examiner only. In specific cases, especially when a module examination covers several subject fields, the examination may also be drawn up by more than one examiner. In such a case, the examiners jointly determine how the individual components of the examination shall be weighted prior to the examination; each examiner evaluates the entire written examination irrespective of the individual components and their weighting. Due to the special character of a subject field, the examination board may alternatively determine that an examiner shall only evaluate that part of a written examination that covers their subject field. In such a case, the examination is evaluated based on the previously determined weighting of the individual components. § 18 (5) remains unaffected.
- (4) Examinations held using electronic equipment are to be treated like written examinations.

## **§ 20 Written multiple-choice examinations**

- (1) Written examinations may be completely or partly conducted as multiple-choice examinations. In multiple-choice examinations, students are asked to answer written questions under supervision by selecting the correct answers from a list of suggested solutions. Multiple-choice examinations may be held in modules suitable for this type of examination upon request by the examiners and with approval of the examination board.
- (2) The questions asked in examinations are to target the knowledge and skills taught in the module concerned and need to ensure reliable examination results.
- (3) It is the examiners' responsibility to determine the examination questions and the suggested solutions (examination exercises). It is to be recorded in writing which of the suggested solutions are accepted as correct answers.
- (4) The evaluation of a written examination is to include the following information:

1. The number of questions asked and the number of questions answered correctly by the student
  2. The minimum number of questions required to be answered correctly in order to pass the examination
  3. In case the examination has been passed, the percentage by which the number of correctly answered questions exceeds the minimum requirements
  4. The grade obtained by the student
- (5) When evaluating examinations, examiners are to pay attention as to whether a frequent occurrence of wrong answers to a specific question might indicate that the question was worded incorrectly. If it is determined after the examination that individual questions or possible solutions are erroneous, the examination exercises concerned will not be factored in. This reduced number of exercises is to form the basis of the evaluation. Reducing the examination exercises shall not put students at a disadvantage.

## **§ 21 Oral examinations**

- (1) With the exception of the cases defined in § 18 (5), oral examinations are held in the presence of an examiner and a qualified co-examiner (§ 9 (1)) or in the presence of several examiners (panel examination) as group examinations or individual examinations. If an examination covers several subject fields, each student is examined by only one examiner in each subject field unless § 18 (5) applies. Prior to grading the examination, the examiner is to consult with the co-examiner or the other examiners.
- (2) A written record of the essential topics and the results of the examination, in particular facts that are essential to the grading of the examination, is to be kept. The grade is to be reported to the students immediately after the examination.
- (3) Students enrolled in the same program are to be given the opportunity to be present at oral examinations as audience, provided that there is enough space and that no student has objected to this provision when registering for the examination. However, no audience is allowed during the examiners' consultation or during the announcement of examination results.

## **§ 22 Other types of examinations**

- (1) Besides written and oral examinations, other types of examination may be chosen for module examinations, for example presentations, term papers, prototypes, blog entries, project reports, concepts, documentation or lab reports.
- (2) Other types of examination are usually evaluated by one examiner, unless one of the provisions set down in § 18 (5) applies.
- (3) A term paper (e.g. a case study or research paper) is to determine whether the student is capable of independently completing a written technical assignment within a given time frame, using scientific and subject-related methods. The examiner determines the topic and length of the paper (e.g. number of pages of the main part) at the beginning of the semester. The grade given for the term paper is to be announced to the student three weeks after the term paper was submitted at the latest.

- (4) An oral report (e.g. presentation, negotiation, mediation) is to determine whether the student is capable of independently solving and adequately presenting a practice-based assignment by means of verbal communication within a given time frame, using scientific and subject-related methods. The examiner determines the duration of the oral report at the beginning of the semester. A written record of facts that are essential for the grading of the oral report is to be kept. Students are to be informed of their grade within one week of the oral report at the latest.
- (5) Term papers and oral reports in the form of a joint team project may be treated as an examination if the individual student's contribution to be evaluated as an examination is clearly distinguishable and can be assessed accordingly. In order to verify the student's contribution, aspects such as passages, subject fields, page numbers (for term papers) or other objective criteria allowing for a clear distinction are to be indicated.

### **III. Progression of studies**

#### **§ 23 Basic structure**

- (1) During the first two semesters of "Advanced Game Development", students take two of the three courses "Game Arts", "Game Design" and "Game Programming" per semester. At the same time, they work on their Master's project, receive theoretical-historical instruction in "Advanced Media and Game Studies" and take part in the classes of the module "Reflection & Community" (Mentoring, Game Lab Lectures, Teaching & Research Practice).
- (2) In the third semester, the Master's project is integrated directly into the work on the Master's thesis. The module concludes with the final presentation of the Master's thesis and its assessment by the supervising lecturers. In parallel to this Master's thesis module, only the classes and activities of the module "Reflection and Community" run in the third semester.

#### **§ 24 Modules and completion of the program, additional modules**

- (1) In all compulsory modules (required modules and required electives), module examinations as described in §§ 19 – 22 are to be held. The program's modules are listed in § 25; the corresponding types of examination can be found in the module catalog, unless individually determined by the examination board (§ 16 (4) sentence 1). Modules can be selected according to the study plan. Additional information is available in the module catalog.
- (2) The progression of studies, the examination procedures and the study plan are to be set up in such a way that it is possible for students to have taken all examinations required according to § 5 (1) by the end of their third semester.
- (3) Students may take examinations in more modules than the ones needed to earn the required number of credits (additional modules). If a student selects more than the required number of modules from the catalog of required electives and concludes them by passing the respective module examination, these are also considered additional modules. In this case, those module examinations with the best grades are considered required examinations unless the student has specified differently prior to the first examination. The results of the remaining examinations may be listed on the examination certificate upon request of the student. However, they are not accounted for in the calculation of the final grade.

## **§ 25 Module examinations**

In the degree program, module examinations must be taken in the following subjects, whereby two of the three courses in the Optional Core Elective Courses must be taken:

01. MA Project Preparation (10 ECTS; not graded)
02. Optional Core Elective Courses – Advanced Game Development 1: Game Arts, Game Design, Game Programming (10 ECTS; weighting of the grade: 15.38%)
03. Advanced Media & Game Studies 1 (5 ECTS; weighting of the grade: 7.69%)
04. Reflection & Community 1 (5 ECTS; not graded)
05. MA Project Development (10 ECTS; weighting of the grade: 15.38%)
06. Optional Core Elective Courses – Advanced Game Development 2: Game Arts, Game Design, Game Programming (10 ECTS; weighting of the grade: 15.38%)
07. Advanced Media & Game Studies 2 (5 ECTS; weighting of the grade: 7.69%)
08. Reflection & Community 2 (5 ECTS; not graded)
09. MA Thesis (25 ECTS; weighting of the grade: 38.46%)
10. Reflection & Community 3 (5 ECTS; not graded)

## **IV. Master's thesis and final oral examination/disputation**

### **§ 26 Master's thesis; purpose; topic; examiners**

- (1) The Master's thesis usually consists of a practical media component as well as a component on media theory. Students may determine the ratio of both parts of the project. However, neither part may account for less than 20% of the overall project. It is to demonstrate that students are capable of independently completing an assignment on a topic from their subject field within a given time frame by elaborating on subject-related specifics as well as on interdisciplinary contexts and by making use of scientific and subject-related methods. Interdisciplinary collaborations for Master's theses are possible. Examiners from other faculties may be chosen as thesis advisors if the topic of the thesis so allows.
- (2) The topic of the Master's thesis may be determined by any professor who may be appointed as examiner in accordance with § 9 (1). This examiner may also be the thesis advisor. Upon request of the student, the examination board may also appoint an honorary professor or a qualified adjunct lecturer as thesis advisor in accordance with § 9 (1) if it has been determined that no professor of the faculty can function as thesis advisor for the intended topic of the Master's thesis. If approved by the chairperson of the examination board, students may write their Master's thesis at an institution outside the university if this institution provides sufficient advice and assistance. Students are to be given the opportunity to suggest topics for their Master's thesis. Examiners from other faculties may be chosen as thesis advisors if the topic of the thesis so allows.
- (3) Upon request, the chairperson of the examination board is to ensure that a student is provided with a topic for the Master's thesis in time.
- (4) A Master's thesis may also be written as a team project if students' individual contributions to be evaluated are clearly distinguishable and can be evaluated accordingly and if it complies with the requirements stated in subsection 1. In order to verify a student's contribution, their passages, page numbers or other objective criteria allowing for a clear distinction are to be identified.

- (5) In general, the Master's thesis is to be written in English. However, if approved by the chairperson of the examination board and the thesis advisor, it may also be written in German.

## **§ 27 Admission to the Master's thesis**

- (1) Students are admitted to the Master's thesis if they meet the admission requirements stated in § 17 (2 and 5) and have, pursuant to § 12, obtained a total of 60 credits in the examinations required as per § 25.
- (2) The Master's thesis registration request is to be addressed in writing to the chairperson of the examination board and to be submitted to the Office of Student and Examination Services. The following documents are to be submitted at the time of registration, unless already submitted in the past:
  - 1) proof of having met the admission requirements stated in subsection 1
  - 2) a statement on previous attempts to write a Master's thesis or another final examination and on attempts to pass the Master's examination
  - 3) a statement on which examiner is willing and able to prepare the topic of the Master's thesis and to function as thesis advisor
  - 4) the suggested topic of the Master's thesis
- (3) Students may revoke the registration for the Master's thesis in writing up until the day the decision on admission is announced. In this case, the registration will not count as a failed attempt.
- (4) The chairperson of the examination board decides on the admission to the Master's thesis. In cases of doubt, the decision lies with the entire examination board. Admission is denied if
  - a) the student does not meet the requirements stated in subsection 1, or
  - b) the documents to be submitted are incomplete, or
  - c) within the jurisdiction of the German constitution, a final thesis written by the student has been evaluated as "insufficient" and may not be written again, or if the student has irreversibly failed one of the examinations stated in subsection 2 sentence 2 no. 2.

## **§ 28 Assignment of the topic and completing the Master's thesis**

- (1) The topic of the Master's thesis is to be assigned by the Chairperson of the Examination Board. The time of assignment is the day on which the chairperson of the examination board informs the student of the topic of the Master's thesis assigned by the thesis advisor. The time of assignment is to be put on record.
- (2) Students have four months to complete the Master's thesis (day of assignment to the day of submission). The topic and assignment must be such that it is possible to complete the Master's thesis within the given time frame. In exceptional cases, the chairperson of the examination board may extend the submission deadline by up to six weeks if the student concerned submits a request prior to the deadline stating the reasons for extending the deadline. The thesis advisor is to be consulted on this request. The written part of the Master's thesis is to be between 40 and 50 and no more than 70 pages long. For Master's theses that are entirely written, up to 100 pages are possible.

(3) Students may return a topic for their Master's thesis only once and only within the first two weeks of the assigned time frame. They are not required to state a reason for their withdrawal. If a student undertakes a second attempt to write a Master's thesis in compliance with § 14 (2), the student is only permitted to return the topic of their thesis if they did not do so during the writing of their first Master's thesis.

(4) § 18 (4) applies accordingly.

## **§ 29 Submission and evaluation of the Master's thesis**

- (1) Students are to submit two hardcover copies of their Master's thesis to the chairperson of the examination board, or to a location determined by the chairperson, by the deadline of submission. The practical part of the thesis must be attached to both copies on a data storage device (e.g. DVD, flash drive). These two data storage devices also contain a digital version of the Master's thesis in the format of a standard program (e.g. Word, PDF). The time of submission is to be put on record; if the thesis is submitted by mail, the decisive criterion is the point of time when the thesis is submitted to the postal service. When submitting the thesis, students are required to declare in writing that they have written the thesis – in case of a team project their part of the thesis, which has been identified accordingly – without assistance and have used no other sources or resources than the ones indicated and stated in quotations.
- (2) The Master's thesis is to be evaluated by two examiners. One of the examiners is to be the thesis advisor. The other examiner is appointed by the examination board. If § 26 (2) sentences 3 and 4 apply, the second examiner must be a professor. If the examiners' evaluations differ from each other and the divergence of both grades is less than 2.0, the grade for the Master's thesis is the arithmetic average of the two grades. If there is a divergence of 2.0 or more, the examination board appoints a third examiner. In this case, the grade for the Master's thesis is the arithmetic average of the two better grades. However, the Master's thesis can only be graded "sufficient" or better if at least two of the grades are "sufficient" or better.
- (3) Students who pass the Master's thesis are awarded 20 credits in accordance with § 12.

## **§ 30 Project presentation and final oral examination**

- (1) The presentation of the Master's project and the subsequent oral disputation complement the Master's thesis, are each to be assessed independently and should take place within eight weeks of submission of the Master's thesis. They aim to determine whether the student is capable of orally presenting and independently justifying the findings of the Master's thesis, its scientific and methodological fundamentals as well as inter- and multidisciplinary contexts, and of assessing the thesis' significance for practice.
- (2) Students may only be admitted to the project presentation with subsequent oral disputation if they
  1. have passed all module examinations,
  2. are enrolled or admitted as students or auditors in accordance with § 52 (2) HG,
  3. have successfully participated in the MA Colloquium in the module "MA Thesis"
  4. have obtained a grade of at least "sufficient" for their Master's thesis.

- (3) Students are required to submit a written registration request for the presentation of their Master's project with subsequent oral disputation to the Office of Student and Examination Services. Students need to submit proof of having met the admission requirements stated in subsection 2, unless such proof has already been presented to the Office of Student and Examination Services. In accordance with § 27, students may register when they apply for admission to the Master's thesis; in this case, students are admitted to the final oral examination as soon as all required proof and documents have been submitted to the Office of Student and Examination Services.
- (4) The presentation of the Master's thesis and the subsequent oral disputation are usually conducted and evaluated by the examiners of the Master's thesis. If § 29 (2) sentence 6 and 7 applies, the project presentation and oral examination are to be held by those examiners whose individual evaluations were used to calculate the grade for the Bachelor's thesis.
- (5) The presentation of the Master's project should last at least 15 minutes and may not exceed 30 minutes. The subsequent oral examination lasts 30 minutes. The provisions for oral examinations (§ 21) apply accordingly.
- (6) The project presentation followed by an oral disputation can be repeated once.

## **V. Results of the Master's examination**

### **§ 31 Results of the Master's examination**

- (1) Students need to accumulate 90 credits to pass the Master's thesis. This requires students to have passed all required module examinations and to have obtained a grade of at least "sufficient" for the Master's thesis and the project presentation with oral examination.
- (2) Students have failed the Master's examination if one of the examinations stated in subsection 1 has been irreversibly evaluated as "insufficient" or is irreversibly deemed "insufficient". Students are to be notified (in writing) of having failed the Master's examination. This notification is to include information on legal remedies. After the student's removal from the student register, the chairperson of the examination board will, upon request, issue a certified document listing all examinations and coursework taken by the student and the respective grades, as well as the examinations missing in order for the student to pass the Master's examination. This document must include the information that the student has irreversibly failed the Master's examination. Upon request, the chairperson of the examination board will issue a document listing only the completed examinations and coursework and the respective grades.

### **§ 32 Examination certificate; final grade; diploma supplement**

- (1) Graduates are to receive an English certificate on the passed Master's examination promptly, if possible within four weeks after the last examination. This examination certificate is to include the grades and credits for all module examinations, the topic of the Master's thesis, the grades and credits for the Master's thesis, the presentation with oral examination, the final grade for the Master's examination and in case of transfer credits, the name of the institution where the examination was taken.
- (2) The final grade for the Master's examination is the average of the grades for the module examinations, the Master's thesis and the project presentation with oral examination, which have been weighted by the corresponding credits. If a student has selected more than the required number of modules from the catalog of required electives and has passed them with a grade of at

least "sufficient", only the grades of the modules the student determined as required electives at the time of admission to the examination, or those with the best grades, will be considered for the calculation of the final grade.

- (3) In accordance with § 24 (3), grades for additional modules are not accounted for in the calculation of the final grade.
- (4) The examination certificate is signed by the chairperson of the examination board and bears the date of the day on which the last examination was taken.
- (5) Graduates are to receive their Master's certificate (*Masterurkunde*) in English along with the examination certificate. The Master's certificate bears the same date as the examination certificate. The Master's certificate certifies that the Master's degree has been awarded in compliance with § 2 (6).
- (6) The Master's certificate is signed by the dean of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences and by the chairperson of the examination board and bears the seal of TH Köln.
- (7) In addition to the Master's certificate and the examination certificate, graduates are to receive an English-language diploma supplement, which corresponds to the guidelines and agreements of the German Rectors' Conference.

## **VI. Final provisions**

### **§ 33 Inspection of examination papers**

After each attempt to pass a module examination or the Master's thesis and the presentation with oral examination, students are to be given access (upon request) to the written examination concerned, to – if available – the examiners' records related to the written examination and to the examination records of an oral examination. Access to a Master's thesis that was graded at least "sufficient" is to be granted only after the corresponding presentation with oral examination have taken place. Requests to access these documents are to be addressed to the chairperson of the examination board within one month of the announcement of the grade for the module examination or within one month of the delivery of the examination certificate or the certification on irreversibly failing the Master's examination. The chairperson is to determine time and place of the inspection.

### **§ 34 Invalidity of examinations**

- (1) If a student cheated during an examination and the cheating was detected only after the delivery of the examination certificate, the Master's certificate or the certifications mentioned in § 31 (2) sentences 3 and 5, the examination board is entitled to retroactively amend the grades for those examinations during which the student cheated and to render the Master's examination failed or partially failed.
- (2) If the requirements for admission to an examination were not met but the student did not attempt to cheat and if this matter was detected only after the delivery of the examination certificate, Master's certificate or the certification mentioned in § 31 (2) sentences 3 and 5 were issued, this shortcoming is offset by the student's passing of the examination. If the student deliberately effected a wrongful admission, the examination board is to decide on the legal consequences with

due regard to the Administrative Procedures Act (*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz*) of North Rhine-Westphalia.

- (3) If necessary, the incorrect examination certificate, the Master's certificate and the diploma supplement or the incorrect document as per § 31 (2) sentences 3 and 5 are to be collected and reissued. A decision pursuant to subsection 1 is to be ruled out if five years or more have passed since the examination certificate or document as per § 31 (2) sentences 3 and 5 was issued.

### **§ 35 Entry into force; transitional regulations**

- (1) These examination regulations will come into force on March 1, 2016 and will be published in TH Köln's official communication (*Amtliche Mitteilungen*).
- (2) These examination regulations apply to all students who enroll in the Master's program "Digital Games" at Technische Hochschule Köln as of the summer semester 2018.
- (3) The examination regulations are published on the basis of the resolution of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences at Technische Hochschule Köln of January 28, 2016 and after legal review by the Executive Board of Technische Hochschule Köln on February 17, 2016.

Cologne, February 22, 2016

The President  
of Technische Hochschule Köln  
On behalf of the President

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Klaus Becker  
Managing Vice President

### **Annex**

- Study plan (as a graphical overview of modules)

| <b>SEMESTER 1</b>                                   | <b>SEMESTER 2</b>                                   | <b>SEMESTER 3</b>                            |
|---|---|--|
| <b>MA Project Prep (10 ECTS)</b>                    | <b>MA Project Dev (10 ECTS)</b>                     | <b>MA Thesis (25 ECTS)</b>                   |
| <b>Core Elective 1.1: Game Arts (5 ECTS)</b>        | <b>Core Elective 2.1: Game Arts (5 ECTS)</b>        |  |
| <b>Core Elective 1.2: Game Design (5 ECTS)</b>      | <b>Core Elective 2.2: Game Design (5 ECTS)</b>      |  |
| <b>Core Elective 1.3: Game Programming (5 ECTS)</b> | <b>Core Elective 2.3: Game Programming (5 ECTS)</b> |  |
| <b>Advanced Media &amp; Game Studies 1 (5 ECTS)</b> | <b>Advanced Media &amp; Game Studies 2 (5 ECTS)</b> |  |
| <b>Reflection &amp; Community 1 (5 ECTS)</b>        | <b>Reflection &amp; Community 2 (5 ECTS)</b>        | <b>Reflection &amp; Community 3 (5 ECTS)</b> |
| <b>30 ECTS</b>                                      | <b>30 ECTS</b>                                      | <b>30 ECTS</b>                               |