

Università  
della  
Svizzera  
italiana

Faculty  
of  
Biomedical  
Sciences

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# Study regulations 2020

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1 January 2020



The University Council (USI Council), taking into account the Law on the Università della Svizzera italiana, the University of Applied Sciences, and Research Institutes of 3 October 1995 (art. 11), and the Regulation for admission and enrolment at USI of 14 April 2000, decrees:

**Art 1.**  
**Scope**  
**and referral**

1. The present regulations govern the procedures for examination and validation required to obtain the medical qualifications awarded by the Faculty of Biomedical Sciences:
  - Bachelor of Medicine (B Med);
  - Master of Medicine (M Med).
2. The awarding of a doctorate in medicine (Dr. med.), a research doctorate in biomedicine (PhD), a continuing education qualification (Certificate, Diploma, Master of Advanced Studies), and any other qualification is governed by separate specific regulations.
3. The conditions for admission to the Faculty and relative tuition fees are defined in the Regulation for admission and enrolment at USI.

**Art 2.**  
**ECTS**  
**credits**

1. The calculation of study credits is made in observance of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The amount of ECTS credits per learning unit shall correspond to the average real effort. It is assumed that one ECTS credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of actual student work.
2. The Bachelor of Medicine includes 180 ECTS, corresponding to a standard study period of three years full-time. In case of part-time study, the duration is extended accordingly.
3. The Master of Medicine includes 180 ECTS, corresponding to a standard study period of three years full-time .
4. The acquisition of credits is the result of passing the relevant examinations or other forms of evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> I termini di genere maschile utilizzati nel presente Regolamento si riferiscono sempre anche ai loro corrispettivi femminili.

**Art. 3  
Language**

1. Bachelor's degree courses are taught in German. Individual teaching units can be held in English.
2. Master's degree courses are taught in English. Individual teaching units can be held in Italian or German.

**Art 4.  
Start of  
studies**

The Bachelor's and Master's courses in medicine begin in the autumn semester.

**Chapter II  
Admission to medical studies****Art. 5  
Admission  
to medical  
studies**

1. The requirements and procedure for admission to medical studies and the allocation of study places are defined in the "Regulation for limitation of admission to medical studies at USI" of 2 December 2016, in the "Regulation for admission and matriculation at USI", and in the present Study regulations for medical studies.
2. The application deadline for medical studies is set by swissuniversities, every year on 15 February. Late applications shall not be considered.
3. Admission to medical studies is gained through USI, while enrolment in subsequent semesters follows the provisions of USI.

**Art 6.  
Admission  
to the Master's  
degree**

1. Admission to the Master's degree in Medicine requires a Bachelor of Medicine of 180 ECTS or equivalent, obtained at a university acknowledged by USI.
2. Bachelor of Medicine graduates from a Swiss university are admitted to the Master in Medicine without any conditions, depending on the availability of study places.
3. For all other Bachelor's degrees from an acknowledged university, equivalence to the Bachelor of Medicine is validated for its content.
4. Students who have been excluded from medical studies at any other university or from a comparable course of study, or who have already completed such a course at a Swiss university at the Master's level, are not admitted to the USI Master in Medicine.

## Chapter III Bachelor

### Art. 7 Bachelor's degree

1. Students enrolled in USI shall complete the Bachelor's degree at the University of Basel (UniBas).
2. The regulations of the UniBas Faculty of Medicine for the Bachelor of Medicine shall apply to the organization of studies and the validation of knowledge acquired.
3. The Diploma and Diploma supplement are issued by USI.
4. In case of litigation, the provisions of USI shall apply.

## Chapter IV Master

### Art 8. General structure

1. The Master's degree program includes:
  - four semesters of theoretical and clinical training (1. – 4. semester)
  - one semester of clinical practice (5. semester);
  - one final semester for the complementary topics, the completion of the Master's thesis, the preparation for, or repetition, the final and Federal exams (6. semester).
2. The clinical training consists of
  - 2 days a week, for 12 weeks, during the 1. - 4. semester at affiliated clinical institutions
  - 16 days at medical practices, 8 days at general practitioners and 8 days at pediatricians
3. Participation in clinical training is binding and subject to monitoring.

### Art 9. Bodies and responsibilities

1. The bodies responsible for organizing the study program and the examinations are
  - a. the Study officer (DS)
  - b. the Examination officer (DE)
  - c. the Study Board (CS)
  - d. the Examination Board (EC)
2. The DS is a full professor of the Faculty, coordinator for the organization of the Master's program.
3. The DE is a full professor of the Faculty that ensures the application of the present regulations in all matters related to the examinations. The CS includes 4 professors, the person responsible for clinical practice and the DS who chairs the Board. It defines the study program in all its details and oversees the Master's thesis. The EC includes 4 professors responsible of the study modules, the head of the OSCE's and the DE who chairs the Board. It defines the examination program in all its details and, in particular, decides in the first instance on disputes relating to the examinations.
- 5.

- Art 10. Obtaining the title**
- The Master's degree in medicine is obtained after:
- passing the examinations at the end of each of the first four semesters, related to the modules taught during the corresponding semester (30 ECTS for each semester);
  - completing one semester of clinical practice (30 ECTS);
  - writing the Master's thesis (15 ECTS);
  - receiving approval for the required portfolio cases;
  - passing the final Faculty exams (15 ECTS for semester VI).
- Art 11. Assessment of knowledge**
- The knowledge acquired is assessed by means of:
- Multiple-choice written exams;
  - Structured objective clinical examinations;
  - Master's thesis.
- Art 12. Conditions of progress during studies**
1. Enrolment in semester III is subject to the successful completion of the first year's examinations (60 ECTS).
  2. The start of the elective term during semester V is subject to the successful completion of examinations in the second year (60 ECTS).
  3. Enrolment in semester VI is subject to the documented completion of the clinical practice during the elective term.
- Art 13. Evaluation system**
1. The assessment grade, depending on the type of evaluation, is either pass/fail or numerical, on a scale of 1 to 10 with increments of 0.5, where 10 is the highest and 6 the minimum pass mark.
  2. The assessments of written examinations are numerical. Assessments for clinical examinations are pass/fail.
  3. The written examination assessed with a grade less than 6 may be repeated a maximum of two times.
  4. The failed clinical examination may not be repeated and calls for the repetition of the year.
  5. The ECTS credits corresponding to each teaching unit are acquired when the relevant examination obtains a pass mark or validated otherwise. In the pass/fail assessment, pass is required in all cases.
- Art 14. Examination sessions**
1. Two examination sessions are foreseen:
    - One regular session;
    - One make-up session.
  2. At the end of each semester there is a regular session (winter and summer). Before the beginning of the autumn semester, a make-up session (autumn) is foreseen.
  3. All the examinations for the teaching units and the courses given during the semester preceding the relevant session are part of the regular session. The make-up session includes the exams for which there are candidates.

- Art 15. Registration for exams**
1. A student who is duly enrolled in the Faculty, who has paid tuition in accordance with the "Regulations for admissions and enrolment at USI" and who meets the conditions set out in the present Regulations may register for the exams.
  2. The application for enrolment must be sent to the Faculty secretariat within the terms and in the form requested by the secretariat.
  3. The Faculty secretariat is responsible for verifying the validity of the application and communicates any impediments. However, with regard to the deadlines set out in both the study plan and the present Regulations, the responsibility lies with the student itself.
  4. If the candidate has registered or has been admitted or has taken an exam without being entitled to it, the exam will be considered null and void by the secretariat at the time of registration of the grade.
- Art. 16 Withdrawal from exams**
1. The student may withdraw from an exam up to five days before the date set for the latter, communicating this in writing (by post, fax or e-mail) to the Faculty secretariat. The date of the postmark or of the electronic transmission applies.
  2. The registration is, in the above mentioned case, considered as not having taken place. For exams already taken, the grades obtained for each exam are retained, whatever the result, regardless of the justification for withdrawal from other exams
  3. A student who fails to appear or to complete an examination without valid justification shall be deemed to have failed that examination.
  4. Any justification is considered only if it is submitted by the student to the Faculty secretariat in writing within ten days of the exam itself. The reason for the absence must be compelling (serious health problems or other severe impediment) and duly substantiated by the student. The DE may ask for more in-depth clarifications regarding the justification or a medical certificate and, if necessary, may refer the matter to a trusted physician.
- Art. 17 Multiple-choice written examination**
1. The multiple-choice written examination (MC) is a test in which the knowledge and skills acquired during the prior semester are evaluated.
  2. Starting from the second semester, the knowledge and skills acquired in all prior semesters are evaluated.
  3. The definition of the MC questions is the competency of each responsible of module and of transversal topics in collaboration with the designated teachers.
  4. EC validates all MC questions.
  5. A MC exam with a maximum duration of four and a half hours is organized for each semester.
  6. The validation criteria for the MC questions are defined by the EC.
  7. The evaluation of the MC questions may be performed by a third-party specialized institute.
  8. For the transition to the following year, the average of the two semester MC exams is applied.

9. A maximum of two exam retakes per year are permitted. A third failure leads to exclusion from medical studies at any Swiss university.

**Art. 18  
Objective  
structured  
clinical  
examination**

1. The Objective Clinical Structured Examination (OSCE) is a practical test that evaluates the clinical capabilities of students.
2. For each semester an OSCE is organized, covering four (during 1. – 4. semester) or 12 stations (6. semester and Federal examination).
3. For each individual station, the active participation of actors simulating a clinical case prepared by the EC is foreseen.
4. The assessment and satisfaction criteria of the OSCE are defined by the EC.
5. The OSCE assessment of semesters I-II is formative.
6. For the transition to the fifth semester, the sum of the two OSCE semesters applies.
7. The retake of the OSCE is not possible.

**Art. 19  
Final Master  
examination**

1. The final examination of the Master will take place during the summer session of the 6. semester including a MC testing all the knowledge provided during the whole study program and a 12-station OSCE.
2. The final Master's examination may be retaken no more than two times in the summer session of the following years.
3. Successful completion of the Master's final examination is a prerequisite for enrolment in the Federal examination.

**Art. 20  
Optional  
courses**

1. The study curriculum includes a wide range of optional courses.
2. Each optional course includes 12 hours of lessons and is awarded with 1 ECTS.
3. The list of optional courses is defined annually by the Faculty Council, by proposal of the CS and duly published on the website.
4. Students enroll in two optional courses per semester by May 31.
5. An optional course is activated with at least five students.
6. Each optional course is subject to evaluation, either with pass/fail or numerical score.
7. The form and mode of assessment is the responsibility of the teacher.
8. Each student is required to acquire two optional courses per semester.

**Art. 21  
Additional  
support and  
assistance for  
exams**

1. Information concerning the use of additional tools for examinations is communicated to students well before beginning the exams' sessions.
2. Students needing special assistance or arrangements for medical reasons in order to take the exams must notify the DS before registering for the exams.

**Art. 22  
Unlawful  
acts**

If, in the course of an examination, there are indications that a student is resorting to illicit means, the supervisors must submit a written report to the DE, which, if appropriate, will initiate the procedure provided for in Article 31 of the present Regulation.

**Art. 23  
Collecting and  
disclosing  
examination  
questions**

1. Given the prevailing public interest in providing reliable and valid examinations, it is prohibited to collect or disclose examination questions.
2. Any written or digital recording of examination questions during an exam session shall result in failing the exam with grade 1.
3. The collection or disclosure of exam questions after the examination may be punished by disciplinary measures in accordance with Art. 31 of the present Regulations.
4. The EC may also request the Rectorate to exclude the student from one or more semesters or to exclude them completely from the program.

**Art. 24  
Examination  
review**

In a complaint or appeal instance, the student concerned has the right to view the examination for a period limited to one hour for MC and half an hour for OSCE, limited to the parts deemed to be incorrect.

**Art. 25  
Portfolio**

1. The portfolio is a collection of clinical cases discussed and approved by the referring lecturer in the context of the patient's bedside training or in the medical practices provided in the individual modules.
2. The clinical case is described in the form of a structured report.
3. Clinical cases are defined by the module responsible.
4. The number of clinical cases is defined annually by the CS based on the proposals of the module owners and communicated to the students.

**Art. 26  
Master's  
thesis**

1. The Master thesis (MT) is a paper written individually that proves the student's ability to apply a suitable methodology to analyze and investigate a topic in clinical, biomedical, bioinformatic or humanistic fields.
2. The list of MT topics combined with the thesis director is defined annually by the CS and published online.
3. The thesis director is a member of the Faculty (full professor, assistant professor, associate professor, private lecturer, group leader of affiliated institutes) or a professor of a Faculty of (bio) medicine at another Swiss university or a third party with the prior approval of the board of professors.
4. The thesis director may be assisted by a co-director appointed by him/her.
5. The supervision of MT may be delegated to third parties, while the responsibility remains with the thesis director in these cases as well.
6. The thesis director defines the content, the plan and the method of the MT in the structured form provided for and signed jointly with the student and provides, if necessary, for its submission and approval by the competent Ethics Committee.

7. The MT must be submitted by 31 May of the third year of the Master's.
8. The thesis director approves or rejects the MT.
9. In the latter case, the student submits a new MT on a new topic. A second failure leads to exclusion from medical studies at a Swiss university.
10. For further details, please refer to the "Directives for the Master's thesis".

**Art. 27**  
**Elective term**

1. The Elective term (semester of clinical practice) consists of at least six months of clinical activity in an acknowledged institution in Switzerland or abroad.
2. For more details, please refer to the "Directives for the Elective term".

## Chapter V

### General provisions

**Art. 28**  
**Acknowledgement of studies undertaken at other Faculties**

1. The Faculty may accept the enrolment of students who have studied at another Faculty after the first semester of the USI Bachelor's program, on the basis of the equivalence of the courses attended and passed at the given Faculty with the courses given at the USI Faculty of Biomedical Sciences, following the principles applicable for student mobility and equal treatment.
2. For students coming from another program, the DE defines the equivalences and the relative assessment of effective equivalence on the basis of the knowledge and skills acquired, the relevant level of studies, and defines a personalized curriculum.
3. The Faculty may provide additional prerequisites only for students with different study curricula.
4. General collaboration agreements with other universities and higher education institutions may replace individual acknowledgement procedures.

**Art. 29**  
**Request for equivalence**

1. The request for equivalence is made after enrolment in the University and at the time of enrolment in the chosen course of study. The application contains in particular the following elements:
  - A description of the studies undertaken at the original Faculty, at other acknowledged institutes, offices or organizations, and an indication of the corresponding studies undertaken at the Faculty for which it applies for equivalence;
  - The credits acquired for each course and relevant assessments;
  - An official certification of the studies undertaken, the evaluation methods and criteria, the credits and evaluations obtained outside Università della Svizzera italiana.
2. The studies undertaken for which equivalence is acknowledged are validated in ECTS credits with any related grades or evaluations.
3. The DE may at any time request the submission of original documents.



**Art. 30  
Leave**

1. In the event of maternity, compulsory military or community service, severe illness or other circumstances which, in the opinion of the Dean, represent significant obstacle for the proper conduct of studies, the student may be granted leave which, as a rule, may not exceed two semesters. Any exception is subject to the authorization of the Dean.
2. The student on leave shall maintain his or her enrolment by paying a reduced tuition fee, in accordance with the Regulations for admissions and matriculations at USI and shall benefit from the legitimacy as a student without attending any educational activity.
3. As a rule, students on leave do not have the right to take exams or defend their Master's thesis.
4. The student on leave in the autumn semester is suspended from the following winter examination session. Students on leave in the spring semester are suspended from the following summer and autumn exam sessions; however, if they renew their enrolment for the following autumn semester, they may take the autumn session exams. During proven maternity, military or community service or severe illness leave, it is possible to take the exams of courses that have already been attended.

**Art. 31  
Disciplinary  
measures**

1. The Faculty Council may sanction with the disciplinary measures provided for in the following paragraph related to the following behavior of students:
  - Indiscipline and violation of the internal university rules;
  - Recourse to illicit means during a written or oral examination;
  - Plagiarism in the drafting of a written work (semester paper, internship or project report, Master's thesis, etc.); in particular, plagiarism is committed when a student delivers a written work that has not been drafted, even if only in part, by him/herself or in which the research results or third-party research are passed off as his/her own.
2. For the cases mentioned in Art. 31 para 1, the Dean, who carried out the investigation by the DE and the Dean himself, in accordance with the student's right to be heard, may pronounce (even cumulatively) the following disciplinary measures, taking into account the student's responsibility and the seriousness of the offence:
  - A warning;
  - The cancellation of the exam or written work in which the illegal act was found; in this case, the exam or written work will be marked with the grade 1 and considered as failed;
  - The suspension from one or more examination sessions, with the possibility nevertheless to attend courses;
  - The suspension for one or more semesters from the possibility to acquire credits relating to written works;
  - The suspension from one or more semesters and consequently from the exams related to the courses given in the suspended semesters;

- The cancellation of all examinations taken in the session in which the offence was found; in this case, the examinations will be marked with the grade 1 and considered as failed.
3. Other university bodies are reserved the right to pronounce the exclusion of the student or to report the facts to other authorities.
  4. The concerned student may file a complaint against the Dean's decision to the Faculty, on behalf of which the Complaints Commission decides.

**Art. 32  
Litigation**

1. All decisions relevant to the student's rights or expectations, including exam assessments, shall be communicated in writing.
2. If such decisions are taken in particular by the Dean, the DE, individual instructors, examination juries, commissions or services, the student may file a complaint and seek a decision by the Faculty, on behalf of which the Complaints Committee shall decide.
3. The student may appeal against the Faculty's decisions to the Cantonal Administrative Court, Via Pretorio 16, 6901 Lugano.
4. Complaints and appeals must be submitted within 30 days from the notification of the decision and justified in writing. The law of procedure for administrative cases of the Canton of Ticino applies by analogy, excluding interruptions for judicial holidays.
5. A fee of up to CHF 500 may be charged for rejected appeals in whole or in part and usually requested on deposit prior to the decision.

**Art. 33  
Revision**

1. These Regulations or the individual provisions thereof may be amended by the Faculty Council by an absolute majority of its members.
2. Any proposed amendment must be placed on the agenda in advance and communicated to the members at least 10 days before the meeting of the Faculty Council.

**Art. 34  
Effective  
date**

These Regulations enter into force on 1 January 2020 and replace the previous Regulation of 1 August 2017. It applies to all students enrolled from the academic year 2020-21.

1. The training program of the 1. – 4. semester shall be calculated as follows:
  - 2 introductory weeks = 3 ECTS
  - 2 transversal disciplinary hours per week x 12 weeks = 3 ECTS
  - 2 multidisciplinary hours per week x 12 weeks = 3 ECTS
  - 4 hours per week in groups of 24 x 12 weeks = 5 ECTS
  - 4 hours per week in groups of 8 x 12 weeks = 5 ECTS
  - 2 optional courses = 2 x 12 hours = 2 ECTS
  - 2 days at a clinic of hospital = 15 hours effective x 12 weeks = 180 hours = 6 ECTS
  - 8 hours of individual study = 8 x 12 = 96 hours = 3 ECTS
  
2. A total of 30 ECTS per semester, in accordance with the criteria in force under the "Bologna system", i.e.
  - 1 ECTS= 25-30 hours total work time
  - 1 semester = 30 ECTS = 750-900 hours total.

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