

Università  
della  
Svizzera  
italiana

Faculty  
of  
Informatics

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# Study Regulations 2013

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5 march 2013



In view of the Cantonal Law of 3 October, 1995 concerning the Università della Svizzera italiana, the Statute of the Università della Svizzera italiana of 2 May 2003, the Faculty Council met on 5 March 2013 and in accordance with the decision of the University Council of USI of applying the Bologna Declaration, enacts the following regulation.

### **Art. 1** **In general**

1. The Faculty offers a complete curriculum in informatics.
2. The degree programme includes:
  - Three years of foundation studies culminating in the degree of Bachelor;
  - A subsequent period (usually two years) of in-depth studies in a special field, delivering the degree of Master;
  - Doctoral studies.

### **Art. 2** **Degree titles**

1. The Faculty awards the following qualifications:
  - Bachelor of Science in Informatics / Laurea triennale in scienze informatiche;
  - Master of Science in Informatics / Laurea magistrale in scienze informatiche;
  - Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence / Laurea magistrale in intelligenza artificiale;
  - Master of Science in Computational Science / Laurea magistrale in scienza computazionale;
  - Master of Science in Cyber-Physical and Embedded Systems / Laurea magistrale in Cyber-Physical and Embedded Systems;
  - Master of Science in Software & Data Engineering / Laurea magistrale in Ingegneria dei dati e del software;
  - Doctor of Philosophy in Informatics / Dottorato in scienze informatiche;
  - Doctor of Philosophy in Computational Science / Dottorato in scienza computazionale.
  - In addition, jointly with the Faculty of Economics, the Faculty awards the following qualifications:
    - Master of Science in Financial Technology and Computing / Laurea magistrale in informatica e tecnologie per la finanza;
  - Master of Science in Management and Informatics / Laurea magistrale in Management e Informatica.

For the academic year 2020-21 the Faculty offers the Master specialistico per l'insegnamento dell'informatica.

3. The Faculty may organize, on its own or jointly with other institutes, study programmes of a professional nature.

**Art. 3  
Scope and  
cross-reference**

1. The present Regulations govern all assessment and grading procedures for the award of the degree titles outlined in Article 2.
2. The conferment of a PhD is governed by a separate, appropriate set of rules.

**Art. 4  
Language**

The operating language of the Faculty is English. Lectures and seminars are held in English. Examinations, tests, essays and semester projects are to be written in the official language of the Faculty.

**Art. 5  
System of  
evaluation**

1. The grading system adopted for the courses, the Bachelor project, and the Master's thesis is on a numerical scale. The scale goes from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 10, increasing in units of 0.5; with 6 being the minimum passing grade. Some courses may be graded with a binary scale (pass or fail).
2. To earn the ECTS points assigned to each course the candidate must pass the relative examination with a grade equal to or higher than 6, or with a pass ('P').
3. The final grade (GPA) is calculated as the average of all course grades and the grade assigned to the Bachelor's/Master's project, each one being weighted on the basis of its ECTS value, as laid out in the study plan. Binary evaluations are not factored into the calculation of the GPA, with the exception of recovery exams (see Article 5.4). The GPA is rounded up to the second decimal.
4. A pass will be considered as equivalent to a '6' mark when assigned in a retake exam, and as such counts in the calculation of the overall average grade (see Article 26).
5. The evaluation of intermediate tests, including projects, presentations, examination credits (partial tests), is at the instructor's discretion. The instructor determines independently how and when these tests contribute to the final grade of the course.

**Art.6  
European  
Credit Transfer  
System (ECTS)  
and requisites**

1. The curriculum is based on the 'European Credit Transfer System' (ECTS).
2. The degree of Bachelor of Science in Informatics requires the acquisition of 180 ECTS credits.
3. The degree of Master of Science in Informatics requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits.
4. The degree of Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits.

5. The degree of Master of Science in Computational Science requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits.

6. The degree of Master of Science in Cyber-Physical and Embedded Systems requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits.

7. The degree of Master of Science in Software & Data Engineering requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits.

8. The degree of Master of Science in Financial Technology and Computing requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits.

9. The degree of Master of Science in Management and Informatics requires the acquisition of 120 ECTS credits.

10. The degree of Master specialistico per l'insegnamento dell'informatica requires the acquisition of 107 ECTS credits.

- Art. 7**  
**First Cycle**
1. The Bachelor's curriculum constitutes a period of basic training, with no direct professional outlets.
  2. The detailed study plan for the three years is published in the 'Plan of Studies'
- Art. 8**  
**Admission requirements**
- Applicants may be admitted to the Bachelor's degree programme on condition that they satisfy the general entrance requirements of the Università della Svizzera italiana.
- Art. 9**  
**Terms and condition for the award**
1. The degree of Bachelor of Informatics is awarded after six study semesters and the acquisition of 180 ECTS credits, to be obtained according to the terms and conditions set out in Articles 10 and following.
  2. To obtain the degree of Bachelor students are expected to:
    - Pass all the examinations prescribed in the study plan;
    - Perform a Bachelor Project.
- Art. 10**  
**First Year: Requirements and time limits**
1. To successfully complete the first year, students need to earn 60 credits, according to the terms set out in the study plan.
  2. First-year examinations must be passed in full by the end of the second year of matriculation. Failure to comply with these conditions will result in the candidate's expulsion from the Faculty.
- Art. 11**  
**Requirements and time limits for completing the degree**
1. The time limit for earning the Bachelor degree is five years. Failure to comply with these conditions will result in the candidate's exclusion from the Faculty.
  2. In the case of mature-student admissions (known as 'su dossier') or transfers from another University, a committee of faculty members will set the requirements for the award of the Bachelor on a case-by-case basis. The minimum standard requirement is that the candidate must be matriculated at the Università della

Svizzera Italiana for at least two semesters and obtain at least 60 ECTS credits.

#### **Art. 12 Bachelor Project**

1. To earn the Bachelor degree, each student is expected to write a project report during the sixth semester; the Jury appointed to evaluate the final paper is made up of Faculty members.
2. The Bachelor project is a personal work developed by the student on a topic to be selected in agreement with one of the instructors.
3. The Bachelor project is evaluated with a grade of 1 to 10, as indicated in Article 5. The evaluation is taken into account when calculating the average final grade of the Bachelor, weighted on the credit value prescribed in the study plan.
4. Any misconduct in the writing up of the Bachelor's project is sanctioned according to the provisions of Article 38.

#### **Art. 13 Bachelor Advisor**

Each student is assigned an Advisor upon entering the Bachelor Program. The Advisor, chosen amongst the Faculty professors, is available to discuss and offer advice to the student on issues or questions of any kind regarding study-related matters.

#### **Art. 14 Mobility**

A student can take part in a mobility or student exchange programme and undertake a semester in another university for a maximum of 30 ECTS in one semester. The student must discuss the choice of host institution and the study plan with the Bachelor director and obtain approval. The mobility period generally lasts one semester; it may be extended, subject to approval of the Bachelor director, to a maximum of two consecutive semesters.

## **Cap. III Master of Science offered by the Faculty of Informatics**

#### **Art. 15 Specialisation**

1. The Faculty organises, on its own and jointly with other Faculties, a cycle of specialisation (Master) in specific areas.
2. A list of available Master's degrees and their study plans is published in the "Plan of Studies".

#### **Art. 16 Admission requirements**

1. Admission to a Master's programme is granted for applicants who earned a Bachelor's degree from Università della Svizzera italiana in Informatics or in a field compatible with the chosen Master programme, or a degree that is considered equivalent.
2. Complementary examinations on specific subjects may be required should the previous learning of a candidate fail to match the chosen Master's profile satisfactorily.
3. Upon admission, the Master director may also define an ad-hoc study plan that includes specific mandatory courses. These courses are an integral part of the 120 ECTS credits of the Master program.
4. In exceptional and documented circumstances, students may be admitted with a reduced study programme. This decision is made by the Faculty Council in each specific case, following the advice and opinion of the Master director.

#### **Art. 17 General organisation and award of degree**

1. To qualify for a Master's degree, the candidate is required to:
  - pass all the examinations described in the study plan;
  - submit and successfully defend an acceptable Master's thesis.
  - Debits must be fulfilled within the 2nd semester, or according to a personalised study plan defined by the Master director.
2. The credits assigned to the different activities are specified in the plan of studies of the respective Master's programmes.

**Art. 18**  
**First semester:**  
**requirements**  
**and conditions**

3. Debit requirements may be fulfilled by following and passing regular courses, or by passing ad-hoc exams at the discretion of each course instructor.

In order to continue their Master's studies, students are required to obtain at least 24 ECTS by the second semester. Failure to comply with these conditions will result in the candidate's expulsion from the Faculty.

**Art. 19**  
**Requirements**  
**and time limits**  
**for completing**  
**the degree**

1. To obtain the degree, candidates have to acquire the minimum number of credits in the courses prescribed by the plan of studies of each Master. Only credits obtained in the courses described in the study plan of the specific master will be recognized.
2. The time limit for earning the Master degree is three years. Master directors may, on a case-by-case basis, extend this time limit considering the student's complementary examinations (debits). Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the candidate's expulsion from the Faculty.
3. Up to 30 ECTS of an USI-INF MSc program can be covered by course work acquired while being enrolled at another University. In exceptional cases, and upon written request by the student that puts forward a sufficiently strong motivation, the Faculty may grant a higher total number of transferrable credits. Each external course must be explicitly accredited by the program director, who may consult the corresponding USI course instructor(s) for guidance:
  - a. the amount of credited ECTS is at most the number of ECTS of the course at USI;
  - b. several external courses may be combined to cover a single, larger course at USI, and a single large external course may cover several smaller courses at USI;
  - c. any substituted USI course must be fully covered by external courses – both in scope and extent. External courses that cover only part of an USI course can thus not be counted, even if their number of ECTS is equal or even larger than the USI course. Nor can an external course with fewer ECTS substitute one with more ECTS at USI – irrespective of the external course's contents.

It remains at the discretion of the program director – in consultation with USI course instructors – to grant (in case of (c)) or request (in case of (a-b)) ad-hoc exams for individual to-be-substituted USI courses.

**Art. 20**  
**Master's**  
**Thesis**

1. The Master's thesis is a personal work that demonstrates the student's skills in using the methodological instruments acquired during their curriculum, applied to a specific problem.
2. The student is assisted and guided by a supervisor, generally a member of the Faculty or one of its appointed instructors.

3. Upon approval by the Master's Director, a student can do an external Master thesis (for example in the industry). In such a case, the student is guided by a supervisor and by an external co-supervisor approved by the Master's Director.
4. The thesis will also be read and evaluated by a second instructor of the Faculty as co-examiner. In agreement with the Master's director, the co-examiner may be an expert in the field, from outside the Faculty.
5. The thesis examines a topic within one's specialisation field, chosen by the candidate in agreement with the supervisor.
6. The workload required to elaborate and write up the thesis must be broadly commensurate with the number of credits indicated in the study plan.
7. The Master's thesis is examined orally before a Jury comprising the supervisor, the co-examiner, and the Masters' director or a delegate.
8. After the oral examination, the jury expresses its evaluation with a grade from 1 to 10, in accordance with Article 5. The evaluation of a Master thesis must follow the 'Guidelines for Master thesis grading'.
9. Students may embark on their thesis only if they have successfully completed the courses of the Master's programme and acquired a minimum of 60 ECTS credits.
10. Students may only defend their thesis after passing all first semester courses and acquiring a minimum of 75 ECTS credits.

**Art. 21**  
**Master**  
**Advisor**

For each student, the director of the respective Master programs serves as an Advisor, and therefore is available to discuss and offer advice to the student on issues or questions of any kind regarding study-related matters.

**Art. 22**  
**Mobility**

A student can take part in a mobility or student exchange program and undertake a study semester in another University for a maximum of 30 ECTS. In this case, the student must discuss the choice of host institution and study plan with the Master director to obtain approval.

**Art. 23**  
**Examinations**

1. Examinations are based on the course subjects that make up the degree curriculum.
2. An examination is a test designed to assess a candidate's knowledge and skills.
3. The official course instructor is responsible for organising an examination designed to assess the knowledge and skills acquired by a student from the given course unit.
4. Each instructor shall inform the Director of Bachelors' or Masters' studies of their own assessment method, to ensure that it is compatible with the present Regulations.

**Art. 24**  
**Organs and authorities**

1. The administration of examinations involves the following organs:
  - The Director of Bachelors' and the director of Masters' studies;
  - The Examiners;
  - Any committee instituted by the Faculty Council.
2. The Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies is a professor designated for this role among the members of the Faculty Council, with a fixed-term mandate. He/She ensures that the present Regulations are duly enforced for any aspects relating to the organisation and conduct of examinations. The Faculty may designate more than one Director at any one time.
3. Course instructors are also the designated examiners for their respective course units. Should an impediment occur, the Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies will appoint a replacement for the absent course instructor.



**Art. 25  
Format of  
examinations  
and languages  
used**

1. Examinations may be written or oral, or involve both a written and an oral component.
2. It is the responsibility of course instructors to define, at the beginning of the term, the format of their own examination.
3. For every oral examination, in addition to the instructor an assistant or another Faculty member must be present, and minutes must be taken.

**Art. 26  
Examination  
sessions**

1. There are two examination sessions for each course unit:
  - An ordinary session (at the end of each semester);
  - A supplementary (or recovery) session (at the end of the summer).
2. An ordinary session comprises examinations on all the course units taught in the semester that precedes the session.
3. Students who have obtained a grade between 4 and 6 (4 included, 6 excluded) are allowed to register for the recovery session. Students who have obtained a grade under 4 will have to retake the whole course.
4. Students failing the examination for one of the compulsory courses a second time will have to retake the whole course, allowing for the maximum number of attempts specified in Articles 10, 11 e 19.

**Art. 27  
Registration  
and withdrawal  
from  
examinations**

1. In order to register for examinations a student must be duly matriculated at the Faculty, have paid tuition fees for the semester (according to the University's Admission and Matriculation Regulations), and satisfy the terms and conditions set out in the present Regulations.
2. Candidates shall enter their application to the Examinations Secretary no later than the closing date and in the format required.
3. Registration for examinations is compulsory.
4. A student who is absent on a mobility leave has no right to register and thus take examinations for courses offered during that semester, unless these examinations are based on courses attended in previous academic years.
5. An examination is invalid in the following cases:
  - if the candidate has not properly registered for the examination within the time limits and in the format required;
  - if the candidate registered and sat the examination when they had no right to do so, hence in breach of Regulations.
6. A candidate is entitled to withdraw from a course and thus from an examination up until to 6 weeks into the semester by notifying the Secretary.

**Art. 28  
Unjustified  
Absence**

1. A candidate who fails to attend an examination or leaves the examination without a good reason or explanation shall be considered to have failed that examination. In such a case the examination is registered as 'NP' (non presentato), which equals to a grade of 1.
2. The reason for absence must be serious and the student must produce proper evidence.
3. In case of doubt, the decision rests with the Dean, in agreement with the Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies. The Faculty is entitled to investigate the doctor's sick note further and, if need be, consult a fiduciary doctor.

**Art. 29  
Misconduct**

If during an examination reasonable evidence is found to suspect that a candidate is cheating, or the candidate is caught in the act, the examiners shall draft a report for the attention of the Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies. The latter shall, if appropriate, launch a disciplinary investigation under Article 38.

**Art. 30  
Results**

1. The examiners will notify the examination results to the Secretary in the format required.
2. The Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies may consult the examiners on their examinations and the grades attributed.
3. After each examination session the Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies sends each candidate a written notification of his/her results.
4. If a candidate has exhausted all retake possibilities or has exceeded the maximum time limit to complete their studies, the Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies may pronounce the student's expulsion from the Faculty.

## Cap. V Degree award

### Art. 31 Requisites verification

For the conferment of the Bachelor's/Master's degree, the Secretary verifies that the requisites laid out in these Regulations have been duly met and notifies any shortfalls in good time.

### Art. 32 Honour

1. On completion of each degree curriculum the successful student in informatics is awarded a final grade, namely the average mark calculated on the basis of all marks received in the activities prescribed by the specific study plan, in accordance with Article 5.
2. The diploma (conferred by the Dean on successful candidates) shows an overall average grade, which is reflected in an honour or distinction award scale, worded as follows:
  - summa cum laude: for a final average mark equal or higher than 9;
  - magna cum laude: for a final average mark in the 8 to 9 range (8 included, 9 excluded);
  - cum laude: for a final average mark in the 7 to 8 range (7 included, 8 excluded);
  - legitime: for a final average mark in the 6 to 7 range (6 included, 7 excluded).
3. A student withdrawing from a study programme without completing the full degree requirements may request a transcript certifying all grades and credits earned.

### Art. 33 Award

1. The Bachelor's/Master's degree is awarded officially during the diploma award ceremony, together with the degree title and the student's curriculum transcript.

## Cap. VI Accreditation procedure. Leave of absence

### Art. 34 Recognition of equivalence of results obtained outside the Faculty

1. The Faculty may take due account of an applicant's examination results in other Universities and exempt him/her from courses and examinations (and the corresponding credits).
2. If a general cooperation agreement with partner universities or institutions of higher education exists, its terms and conditions will be applied, replacing a case-by-case accreditation procedure.

### Art. 35 Leave of Absence

1. A student may be granted a leave of absence for one or more semesters on grounds of maternity, military or civil service, serious illness or other circumstances that at the Dean's discretion represent a major impediment to the smooth progress of the applicant's studies.
2. Students on leave remain matriculated at the University; by paying a reduced administrative fee, in accordance with the University's Admission and Matriculation Regulations, they retain the benefits connected with a student status though excluded from attending classes or any other degree-related activity.
3. A student who is absent on leave has no right to take examinations or defend the Master's thesis.
4. Students absent on leave are allowed to take examinations on course units that they had previously attended.

## Cap. VII Final Provisions

### Art. 36 Role and authority

The role and authority of the Faculty Council, of the Dean and of the delegates are set out in the Statutes of the Faculty and in these Regulations.

### Art. 37 Exceptions

In exceptional cases the Faculty Council has the right to waive these Regulations, but only in favour of the student.

### Art. 38 Disciplinary measures

1. The Faculty Council may apply sanctions, through the disciplinary measures set out below, to the following instances of student misconduct:
  - insubordination and breach of the University's internal order;
  - cheating during an oral or a written examination;
  - plagiarism in the process of preparing a written paper (term paper, internship report or project, Master dissertation, etc.); a student is guilty of plagiarism when they submit a piece of written work containing one or more portions copied or closely paraphrased from an unidentified original, without acknowledging the source or formally quoting; or when they pass off as their own research findings obtained or published by third parties.
2. In all cases covered under Article 38.1 above, the Faculty Dean, having heard the Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies, and noted the outcome of the preliminary review conducted by both, fully respecting the student's right to be heard, may pronounce (also cumulatively) the following sanctions, allowing for the degree of responsibility of the student and the gravity of the offence:
  - the student is admonished (written reprimand);
  - the offending examination or term paper is declared void; in this case the examination or term paper shall be recorded with a '1' grade, the lowest fail result and considered failed as per Article 5;
  - the student is suspended for one or more examination sessions, class attendance being nonetheless permitted;
  - the student is denied the right to acquire any credits on the basis of term papers for the duration of one or more semesters;

- the student is suspended for one or more semesters, and consequently prevented from sitting any examinations relating to the course units held during that period;
  - all the examinations taken by the student during the session in which they were caught cheating are annulled; therefore, all such examinations will be assigned the minimum grade ('1'), recorded as failed and considered failed as per Article 5.
3. This does not rule out the exercise of authority by other official organs, who may pronounce the student's expulsion.
  4. The student has the right to appeal against the Dean's decision by submitting their grievance to the Faculty Council.

### Art. 39 Grievances and appeals

1. Any decision that affects a student's rights and expectations, including examination results, must be notified in writing.
2. The student has the right to dispute and lodge an appeal against any such decisions whether taken, in particular, by the Dean, the Director of Bachelors' and Masters' studies, single instructors, an examination jury, committees or services, and so elicit a Faculty resolution.
3. A student may appeal against a Faculty decision by lodging a formal complaint to the Tribunale cantonale amministrativo, Via Pretorio 16, 6901 Lugano.
4. Formal complaints and appeals must be filed within 30 days of receipt of the notification, and must be clearly substantiated in writing. The procedure is analogous to the administrative procedure of the State and Canton of Ticino, except for interruptions due to legal holidays.
5. No fee is charged for complaints. A fee may be charged if an appeal is rejected either wholly or in part, and generally an advance of up to CHF 500 is required ahead of the decision.

### Art. 40 Validity and enforcement

1. The present Regulations enter into force on 5 March 2013 and apply in their entirety to all students matriculating in 2013/2014 and after.
2. Students who matriculated in previous years will refer to the Regulations of October 2005 and March 2009 including any amendments decided by the Faculty. However, all disciplinary measures provided for in the Regulations of March 5 2013 apply immediately to all students.

## List of updates

- Art. 2.1 and 2.2 new by decision of the FCM of 05.3.2013, and amended on 11.03.2014, 15.09.2015, 15.12.2015 and 09.05.2017.
- Art. 2.1 amended by decision of the FCM of 09.06.2020 and ratified by the Senate on 18.06.2020.
- Art. 6 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013, 11.03.2014, 15.09.2015, 15.12.2015 and 09.05.2017.
- Art. 6.10 added by decision of the FCM of 09.06.2020 and ratified by the Senate on 18.06.2020.
- Art. 13 amended by decision of the FCM of 09.10.2018.
- Art. 14 new by decision of the FCM of 03.04.2012.
- Cap. III amended by decision of the FCM of 15.09.2015.
- Art. 16.4 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 16.1, 16.3, 16.4 amended by decision of the FCM of 03.03.2020 and ratified by the Senate on 02.04.2020.
- Art. 17.1b amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 17.1c new by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013 and 09.10.2018.
- Art. 17.3 new by decision of the FCM of 03.03.2020 and ratified by the Senate on 02.04.2020.
- Art. 18 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 18 amended by decision of the FCM of 10.11.2015.
- Art. 19.2 amended by decision of the FCM of 09.10.2018.
- Art. 19.3 new by decision of the FCM of 03.03.2020 and ratified by the Senate on 02.04.2020.
- Art. 20.3 amended by decision of the FCM of 01.02.2011.
- Art. 20.5 amended by decision of the FCM of 08.06.2011.
- Art. 20.7 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 20.8 amended by decision of the FCM of 08.06.2011.
- Art. 20.10 amended by decision of the FCM of 08.06.2011.
- Art. 20.10 amended by decision of the FCM of 11.03.2014.
- Art. 21 amended by decision of the FCM of 09.10.2018.
- Art. 22 new by decision of the FCM of 03.04.2012.
- Art. 23.4 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 24.1 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 24.2 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 24.3 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.

- Art. 27.6 amended by decision of the FCM of 10.03.2015.
- Art. 28.3 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 29 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 30.2 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 30.3 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 30.4 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 38.2 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 39.2 amended by decision of the FCM of 05.03.2013.
- Art. 39.3 amended by decision of the FCM of 10.03.2015.
- Art. 39.4 amended with ratification of the FCM of 14.02.2017.

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