

**Examination regulations**

**for the degree program in**  
**DIGITAL NARRATIVES**

**conferring the degree**  
**Master of Arts**

**at ifs internationale filmschule köln**  
**and**  
**Technische Hochschule Köln**

**of**

**February 24, 2016**

By virtue of section 2 (4) and section 64 (1) of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act (*Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen - HG*) of Tuesday, September 16, 2014 (GV., NRW p. 547), Technische Hochschule Köln has determined the following examination regulations by statute:

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## **I. General information**

### **Section 1: Applicability of the examination regulations; module catalog and curriculum**

- (1) These examination regulations (MPO) are to administer the studies and examinations of the Master's program in DIGITAL NARRATIVES at ifs internationale filmschule (hereafter referred to as ifs) in cooperation with Technische Hochschule Köln in accordance with section 66 (6) of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act.
- (2) Based on these examination regulations, ifs is to establish a curriculum (see annex) and a module catalog. The module catalog is to outline the course contents and structure of the Master's program, taking developments in the fields of science and university teaching as well as profession-specific requirements into account. The curriculum is to provide students with a guideline for adequately scheduling their studies.

### **Section 2: Objectives of the program; purpose of the examinations; degree conferred**

- (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 admission to doctoral studies in accordance with section 67 (4), phrase 1, No. 3 of the North-Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act.
- (2) Taking general study objectives into account (section 58 of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act), the program leading to the Master's examination (section 4) focuses on application-oriented topics of the discipline based on scientific findings. It is to enable students to analyze the technological, social and ethical impacts of digitalization and to use their newly acquired knowledge when developing, planning and implementing their artistic-scientific projects. The program is designed to enhance the students' creative skills and prepare them for their Master's examination. Moreover, the program is to provide students with an opportunity to specialize in a specific field and delve deeper into an academic discipline.
- (3) The language of instruction is English.
- (4) The Master's examination (section 5) is to determine whether students have attained sound specialized knowledge required to exercise work in their profession independently and whether they are capable of independently exercising work and conducting research on the basis of scientific findings and methods.
- (5) By passing the examinations listed in section 5, students will have completed a scientific degree program, qualifying them to exercise work in the designated profession. Based on the successful completion of all examinations, students are to be conferred the academic degree "Master of Arts (M.A.)" in accordance with the regulations stated hereinafter.

### **Section 3: Admission Requirements; Aptitude Test**

- (1) To enroll in the Master's program the following admission requirements must be met:
  1. Successful completion of a degree program conferring one of the following degrees: Bachelor's degree, *Diplom*, *Magister*, Master's degree or state examination (*Staatsexamen*) or an equivalent degree from a state or state-recognized institution of higher education (section 49 (6) of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act).

2. Proof of at least 12 months relevant professional experience related to the contents of the Master's program gained after graduating from the first degree program (subsections 2 and 3).
  3. Proof of excellent English language proficiency (subsection 4).
  4. Proof of aptitude for the Master's program (subsections 5-8)
- (2) The professional experience required according to subsection 1 no. 2 must have been gained in a field relevant to the contents of the Master's program. The admissions commission is charged with the decision whether an applicant's professional experience will be recognized (subsections 9 and 10). Several employment periods can be added up to reach the minimum required professional experience of 12 months duration.
  - (3) In exceptional cases, applicants who do not have 12 months professional experience may demonstrate their experience by submitting projects relevant to the contents of the Master's program which they have created and developed independently. The admissions commission (subsections 9 and 10) is to determine the extraordinary artistic quality of these projects and is to assess if these projects can be considered equivalent to the required professional experience.
  - (4) To be admitted to the Master's program applicants are required to provide proof of English language proficiency on at least B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
  - (5) The program related aptitude required according to subsection 1 no. 4 is determined by an expert admissions commission (subsections 9 and 10) by means of an aptitude test which consists of two parts. The applicant can choose to take the aptitude test in either English or German. The first part of the aptitude test consists of a written application which is to include the following documents:
    - a) Resume,
    - b) Letter of Motivation,
    - c) Portfolio (compilation of previously completed artistic and/or research projects),
    - d) At least one and no more than three project proposals to be pursued in the Master's program.
  - (6) Applicants who meet the admission requirements stated in subsection 1 no. 1-3 and whose written application is deemed sufficient will be invited to the second part of the aptitude test. The second part of the aptitude test consists of a program related interview with the admissions commission. Interviews take place at ifs. Upon request, video conference interviews are offered for applicants who live outside of Germany.
  - (7) Applicants are selected based on the following criteria:
    - applicant's academic and professional experience in the field of audiovisual media;
    - quality of the portfolio with regard to the applicant's independent artistic or scientific positioning;
    - creative potential of the project proposal and social relevance of the topic of the project proposal;
    - social skills and ability to work in a team.
  - (8) The result of the aptitude test is to be put on record. The result of the aptitude test is only relevant for the admissions period during which the test was taken.
  - (9) Applicants are selected by an expert admissions commission consisting of up to four members. The Examination Board is to decide on the composition of the admissions

commission for each application period. Members of the admissions commission can be:

- two Professors teaching at ifs  
The Examination Board usually appoints the "Professor of Digital Narrative - Art & Design" and the "Professor of Digital Narrative - Theory" as members of the admissions commissions from the pool of professors. In exceptional cases exceptions to this rule are permissible. Alternatively, the examination board is to appoint substitutes from the pool of professors teaching at ifs.
- the program director or the program coordinator,
- a representative of the executive board or head of studies.

- (10) One of the two appointed professors will chair the commission. The other Professor teaching at ifs and member of the admissions commission will co-chair the commission. In addition to the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson at least one additional member eligible to vote must be present for the admissions commission to have a quorum. Decisions require a simple majority. In case of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.
- (11) In exceptional cases, students may enroll in the Master's program prior to having met the admission requirements stated in subsection 1 no. 1 or 3 if they provide proof of meeting the requirements within one semester of enrollment at the latest.
- (12) Admission is to be denied if the applicant has irreversibly failed the Master's, *Diplom* or other final examination of the degree program in DIGITAL NARRATIVES within the jurisdiction of the German constitution or if he/she has lost the right to take examinations in this degree program. Admission is also to be denied if the applicant has (within the jurisdiction of the German constitution) irreversibly failed (or lost the right to take) a comparable examination of a degree program whose content has strong similarities to that of the program in DIGITAL NARRATIVES and if said failed examination is equivalent to a mandatory examination of the program in DIGITAL NARRATIVES.

#### **Section 4: Standard program duration; scope of the program**

- (1) The standard program duration is four semesters. In compliance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), students are awarded a total of 120 credits (section 12). The standard program duration includes the examination period.
- (2) The program is divided into individual modules. Detailed information can be found in section 23 and the curriculum (annex).
- (3) New students are usually enrolled in the program's first semester every other year in the winter semester.

#### **Section 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 exam (Master's thesis and final oral examination). Examinations in the form of team projects are permissible if a student's individual contribution to be evaluated as an examination is clearly distinguishable and can be assessed accordingly. In order to verify a student's contribution, identifiers such as passages, areas of responsibility, page numbers or other objective identifiers allowing for a clear distinction are to be indicated.

- (2) Module examinations are to be held when the corresponding module has been concluded according to the curriculum. The curriculum is to ensure that it is possible for the examinee to have taken all module examinations by the end of the fourth semester.
- (3) In accordance with section 26, students are to register for the final part of the Master's examination (Master's thesis registration request) by the end of the third program semester.
- (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.
- (5) Examinations are usually held in English. Upon request and if endorsed by the chairperson of the examination board and the examiners, examinations may also be held in German.

### **Section 6: Examination board**

- (1) Technische Hochschule Köln is to establish an examination board which is charged with the organization of examinations and carrying out the duties entrusted to it by these examination regulations. The examination board is to be an independent body of Technische Hochschule Köln.
- (2) The examination board consists of:
  - the chairperson and vice chairperson selected from the pool of professors;
  - the other professors;
  - a representative of the head of studies;
  - two members selected from the pool of department heads or department coordinators at ifs;
  - two members selected from the pool of students.
- (3) Professors of the degree programs are qua their capacity members of the examination board. The head of studies as well as the department heads and department coordinators at ifs elect their representatives. Students elect members of the student council as their representatives. The members of the examination board elect the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the examination board from the pool of professors. Student members are not entitled to vote. The chairperson and vice-chairperson is then officially appointed by Technische Hochschule Köln.
- (4) Deputies are to be elected for all members of the examination board except for the chairperson and the vice-chairperson. Members of the board employed in full-time positions at Technische Hochschule Köln or ifs and their deputies are elected for a term of two years, student members for a term of one year. Re-election is permissible.

## **Section 7: Rights and duties of the examination board**

- (1) The examination board is responsible for the organization of examinations. It is also to ensure that the examination regulations are complied with and that examinations are conducted properly. In particular, it is to decide on objections brought forward against decisions that were made in exam-related matters.
- (2) Moreover, the board is to report to the curriculum commission on developments related to examinations and the duration of studies, if so requested. It is to give advice on potential reforms of the examination regulations, the module catalog and the curriculum. 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 President's Office of Technische Hochschule Köln 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 very same examination period.
- (4) Sessions of the examination board are not open to the public.

## **Section 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 as well as the representatives of the head of studies, as well as department heads and department coordinators 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 observers. 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) The members of the examination board, their deputies, the examiners as well as observers are to be sworn to official secrecy. If they are not employed in the German civil 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 respective student without delay. Prior to any action, the affected student is to be granted the right to be heard.

## **Section 9: Examiners and Observers**

- (1) The examination board appoints the examiners and observers. A person may be appointed examiner if he or she holds 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 – has held an independent teaching position in the subject relevant for the examination. The same regulations apply to observers (expert observers). Examiners are independent for examination purposes.
- (2) An examinee may suggest an examiner to be his or her thesis advisor. If possible, a student's suggestion is to be considered.
- (3) The examination board is to ensure that examination duties are split as evenly as possible amongst all examiners. The chairperson of the examination board is to ensure that the name of the examiner will be announced to the examinee in time. This shall

happen simultaneously to the registration for the examination, i.e. usually at least two weeks before the examination is held 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 deemed sufficient.

### **Section 10: Recognition of examinations and assessments**

- (1) Examinations and assessments completed in the same or other degree programs within the jurisdiction of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region of April 11, 1997 (Federal Law Gazette (BGBl) II 2007; p. 712 - Lisbon Recognition Convention) are to be officially recognized if it can be proven that they do not considerably differ from the examinations and assessments required. If the recognition of such examinations and assessments is denied, the university is to issue a substantiated notification on this matter. If it has been proposed to reject the recognition request the President's Office of Technische Hochschule Köln may be called upon to review the decision.
- (2) Examinations and assessments 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 assessments upon request if they are equivalent to the examinations and assessments required. Such achievements may only account for up to half of the total number of examinations and assessments 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 curriculum (annex). 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 modules.

### **Section 11: Evaluation of examinations**

- (1) Examinations are to be evaluated in a differentiated and comprehensible manner by means of grades. The evaluation is to be explained in writing upon request of the examination board. Grades for individual examinations are to be determined by the respective examiner.
- (2) All module examinations of the program as well as the Master's thesis and the final oral examination are graded examinations pursuant to subsection 1.
- (3) If several examiners participate in an examination, the examiners 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 mean of the individual components pursuant to subsection 5.

- (4) The following grades are to be used for the evaluation of examinations:

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

The grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are invalid.

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

Figures:

up to 1.5	Grade: "excellent"
above 1.5 to 2.5	Grade: "good"
above 2.5 to 3.5	Grade: "satisfactory"
above 3.5 to 4.0	Grade: "sufficient"
above 4.0	Grade: "insufficient"

When it comes to the calculation of grades, only the first decimal is to be factored in; all other decimals are to be dropped without rounding.

- (6) An examination is passed if it is graded "sufficient" or better.
- (7) There are two categories of module examinations: General module examinations (*Modulabschlussprüfung*; overall examination) or module component examinations (*Modulteilprüfung*; cumulative module component examinations or weighted module component examinations).
- (8) A general module examination is a common examination for several courses of a module. It is usually taken at the end of a module or during a course and tests the course contents of the entire module. The entire module is considered successfully completed if the general module examination is passed.
- (9) Module component examinations conclude individual courses of a module. If a module examination consists of several individual examinations, the module is passed if
- a) the examinee has passed all components of a cumulative module component examination.
  - b) the average of the grades awarded for the module component examination is "sufficient" (4.0) or better. The respective weighting factors of the individual module examinations are to be taken into account. The weighting factors for the module component examinations are determined by the examination board and announced to the students at the beginning of the semester at the latest.
- (10) There are different types of module examinations (sections 19 to 22) The module catalog as well as the assignments of the module examinations provide information which

kinds and types of examinations are generally suitable. In addition, the course plan provides information on the types of examinations for the current semester.

- (11) The evaluation of examinations is to be completed and students are to be informed of the results within six weeks of the last examination of the respective module. Students are to be notified of the results of the Master's thesis within eight weeks of submission. Students are to be notified of the result of the final oral examination within two days of the examination. Posting the results on the corresponding bulletin board or on an electronic examination management portal is deemed sufficient.

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

- (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 workload that averagely gifted students need to successfully complete a component of the program. This workload includes courses, preparation and follow-up work of a course, self-study as well as examinations and preparation for examinations.
- (2) The workload required to successfully complete the Master's 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. Pursuant to section 11 (2 and 6), this means that students are awarded the total number of credits for every graded module examination that has been passed with a grade of at least "sufficient", irrespective of the grade received for the examination. A total of 120 credits is required to successfully complete the Master's program.
- (4) An overview of the number of credits assigned to the individual modules and to the Master's thesis as well as final oral examination is provided in the curriculum (annex). More detailed information can be found in the module catalog.
- (5) Complying with section 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.

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

The certificate awarded to graduates in accordance with section 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 Master's 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 section 31 (6) the grade distribution table is part of the Diploma Supplement.

## **Section 14: Retaking examinations**

- (1) Students may retake module examinations if they do not pass them or if the examinations are considered not passed. If a student did not pass a module examination that is made up of several individual components or a combination of different types of examination, he/she only has to retake the components which he/she did not pass. The weighting factor for the retaken component must be the same as for the failed examination.
- (2) Students are to retake an examination immediately after the failed attempt. Examination dates are set by the examination board. If a student fails the retake examination, a date for a third attempt is to be set. The third attempt is to take place immediately after the second attempt. If a student fails to show up for the third attempt, the examination is considered irreversibly failed. Exceptions are possible if students provide evidence that they are not responsible for having missed the examination. Times spent on a mandatory or optional semester abroad or internship and times on leave are not taken into account for the determination of the deadline for the retake, i.e. the deadline is extended by the amount of time spent on leave or on a semester abroad or internship.
- (3) In general, retake examinations are to be the same type of examination as the original examination. The examination board may decide to change the examination type for the retake examination.
- (4) If a student does not pass the Master's thesis or the final oral examination, he/she may retake each examination once. Module examinations may be retaken twice.
- (5) An examination graded at least "sufficient" may not be retaken.

## **Section 15: Absence; withdrawal from examinations; cheating**

- (1) An examination is deemed "insufficient" (5.0) if the examinee fails to show up for an examination and is not able to present a good reason for his/her absence. An examination is also deemed "insufficient" if the student withdraws from it without good reason after the examination has begun or if he/she does not submit the examination within the foreseen time frame. Sentence 1 also applies if the student does not submit his/her Master's thesis in due time.
- (2) The reasons for missing or withdrawing from an examination are to be immediately reported to the examination board in writing and are to be substantiated by the student. In case of sickness, students are required to submit a comprehensible medical certificate attesting to their incapability of taking the examination. If the examination board accepts the student's explanation, he/she is to be notified that he/she may re-register for the respective examination.
- (3) If a student attempts to manipulate the result of his/her examination by cheating or by using non-permissible means, the examination concerned is to be graded "insufficient" (5.0). An examinee who disrupts the proper course of an examination may be expelled from the examination by the examiner or the exam supervisor, usually after having been given prior warning. The examination concerned is to be graded "insufficient" (5.0). The reasons for the expulsion are to be put on record. If the examinee is barred from retaking the examination, he/she may request the examination board to review this decision. This also applies to the decisions of an examiner or exam supervisor in cases described in sentence 1. Possible penalties as set down in section 63 (5) of the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act are to be acknowledged.

- (4) Non-permissible means 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. Re-taking an examination 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**

### **Section 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 (or, if necessary, for the duration of two semesters at the most). Pursuant to sections 19 to 22, a module examination may be subdivided into several individual examinations of the same or 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) There are different types of module examinations (sections 19 to 22). The module catalog as well as the assignments of the module examinations provide information which kinds and types of examinations are generally suitable. In addition, the course plan provides information on the types of examinations for the current semester.
- (3) 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. Examinations are usually held in English. Upon request and if endorsed by the chairperson of the examination board and the examiners, examinations may also be held in German. Additional information is provided in sections 23 and 24, the curriculum (annex), the module catalog and the course plan for the current semester.
- (4) A module's examination type depends on the requirements of the respective module. Admissible types of examination are work samples of projects as well as project documentaries (section 19), written examinations (section 20), oral examinations (section 21) of 10 to 30 minutes duration per examinee and other types of examination (section 22) as well as combinations of the aforementioned types of examination.
- (5) A student's total workload for module examinations made up of a combination of several types of examination is not to exceed the typical workload that a single examination would generate. The same applies to the workload for module component examinations in relation to general module examinations.
- (6) After consultation with the examiners concerned and in observance of the module outline and the feasibility to complete the program within the allotted time frame, 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 to be weighted. Pursu-

ant to section 11 (5), the overall grade is the arithmetic mean of the individual evaluations, unless other weighting factors have been established.

- (7) If other types of examination are to be taken, the examiners are to determine an examination schedule in the first quarter of the course concerned. The examination board is to be notified. The examiners are to announce the examination schedule within this period. Posting the information on the corresponding bulletin board or on an electronic examination management system is deemed sufficient.

### **Section 17: Admission to module examinations**

- (1) Only students who have a valid training contract for the current semester may register for an examination. According to the participation obligation defined in the training contract, all students enrolled in the program in DIGITAL NARRATIVES are admitted to examinations. A separate registration for an examination is not required.
- (2) Students may be required to pass other module examinations in order for them to be admitted to a module examination. Additional information is available in section 24 and the curriculum (annex).
- (3) Admission to a module examination is to be decided upon by the chairperson of the examination board and, in cases of doubt, the examination board itself.
- (4) Admission is to be denied if
  - a) the examinee does not meet the requirements stated in subsections 1 to 2, or
  - b) the examinee has irreversibly failed a comparable examination in a degree program whose content has strong similarities to that of the program in DIGITAL NARRATIVES 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 is only to be denied if the examinee has, within the jurisdiction of the German constitution, lost the right to take examinations in the same program, e.g. by having failed to meet a deadline for retaking examinations.

### **Section 18: Conduct of module examinations**

- (1) 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 deemed sufficient.
- (2) Upon request, students are to identify themselves with an government-issued photo ID.
- (3) If a student – by submitting a medical certificate or in a different manner - substantiates that he/she is 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 section 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 of offsetting a disabled person's disadvantage are considered suitable, the chairperson of the examination board is to decide on the type, date and duration of the examination at his/her discretion after having duly considered all circumstances. This provision also applies to assessments and admission

tests. In exceptional cases, sentences 1 to 3 also apply to persons with temporary health impairments. Requests to offset a disabled person's disadvantage are to be filed in time before the individual examination.

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

### **Section 19: Project Work Samples and Documentaries**

- (1) Project modules usually consist of:
  - interdisciplinary projects which are usually carried out by a group of students. Over the course of these projects students are to independently demonstrate their newly acquired practical and artistic skills (project work samples).
  - a written analysis of the project phase (documentary).
- (2) In addition to these projects which are carried out together with students from other programs, program-related project work samples may also be submitted.
- (3) The examination board is to determine the time frame and content of the documentary prior to the beginning of the project module.
- (4) Project work samples and the respective documentaries are usually assessed by the professors responsible for the module. The examination board may appoint another professor teaching at ifs as co-examiner.

### **Section 20: Written examinations**

- (1) In written examinations the examinee is to prove that – within a limited time frame and with limited resources – he/she is capable of identifying and correctly solving problems stemming from areas covered by the module using common scientific methods of his/her subject field.
- (2) A supervisor is to be present during written examinations. The examiner is to decide whether students may 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 prior to the examination how the individual components of the examination shall be weighted. Each examiner is to evaluate 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 his/her subject field. In such a case, the examination is to be evaluated based on the previously determined weighting of the individual components Section 18 (4) is to remain unaffected.
- (4) Examinations held using electronic equipment are to be treated like written examinations.

### **Section 21: Oral Examinations**

- (1) With the exception of the cases defined in section 18 (4), oral examinations are to be held in the presence of an examiner and a competent observer (section 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 will on prin-

iple be examined by only one examiner in each subject field unless section 18 (4) applies. Prior to grading the examination, the examiner is required to consult with the observer 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. If possible, the grade is to be announced to the student immediately after the examination or within two days of the examination at the latest.
- (3) Students enrolled in the same program are to be given the opportunity to be present during oral examinations as audience, provided that there is enough space and that the examinee does not object. Students may neither be present during the examiners' consultation nor during the announcement of examination results.

### **Section 22: Other types of examination**

- (1) In addition to project work samples and documentaries, written and oral examinations other examination types are permissible. These other types include presentations, term papers, drafts, internship reports, practical work samples, active participation, oral contributions or written records. Additional information is available in the module catalog and the curriculum (annex).
- (2) Other types of examination are usually evaluated by one examiner, unless section 18 (4) applies.
- (3) A term paper (e.g. a case study, research paper, internship report) is to determine whether the examinee is capable of independently completing a written subject-related assignment within a given time frame, using scientific and subject-related methods. The examiner is to determine the topic and length of the paper (e.g. number of pages of the main part) at the beginning of the semester.
- (4) An oral report (e.g. presentation, negotiation) is to determine whether a student is capable of independently solving and adequately presenting a practice-based assignment by means of oral and visual communication within a given time frame, using scientific and subject-related methods. The examiner sets the time frame for the oral contribution at the beginning of the course at the latest. Presentations should not be longer than 20 minutes.
- (5) Term papers and oral contributions 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, identifiers such as passages, chapters, subject fields, page numbers (for term papers) or other objective identifiers allowing for a clear distinction are to be indicated.
- (6) By preparing for a course and performing follow-up course work, active contribution and actual subject-related involvement, students demonstrate their active participation in a course.

## **III. Curriculum**

### **Section 23: Modules and completion of the program; additional modules**

- (1) In all compulsory modules (required and optional required modules), module examinations as described in sections 19 – 22 are to be held. The program's modules are listed

in section 24; the corresponding examination types can be found in the module catalog, unless individually determined by the examination board (section 16 (6)). Modules and courses can be selected according to the curriculum. Additional information is available from the module catalog.

- (2) The program schedule, the examination procedures and the curriculum are to be set up in such a way that it is possible for students to have taken all examinations required according to section 5 (1) by the end of their fourth semester.
- (3) The examinee may take examinations in more modules than the ones needed to gain the required number of credits (additional modules). The results of these additional examinations may be listed on the examination certificate upon request of the examinee. However, they are not accounted for in the calculation of the final grade.

#### **Section 24: Module examinations**

- (1) Students are required to take the following module examinations:
  - Project 1 (15 credits)
  - Digitality and Change 1 (7 credits)
  - Narratives and Methods 1 (8 credits)
  - Project 2 (15 credits)
  - Digitality and Change 2 (7 credits)
  - Narratives and Methods 2 (8 credits)
  - Project 3 (18 credits)
  - Digitality and Change 3 (6 credits)
  - Narratives and Methods 3 (6 credits)
  - Project 4 (5 credits)
  - Master's Thesis (25 credits)
- (2) Additional information is available from the module catalog and the curriculum (annex). Modules and their components are subject to change. Changes to the list above are made by the examination board and are to be published each semester.

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

##### **Section 25: Master's thesis; purpose; topic; examiners**

- (1) The Master's thesis is a scientific theoretical paper relating to the module "Project 3". The Master's thesis is to provide evidence that the examinee is capable of independently completing an assignment on a subject pertaining to his/her field of study 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.
- (2) The topic of the Master's thesis may be determined by any ifs professor who can be appointed as examiner in accordance with section 9 (1). This examiner may also function as thesis adviser. Upon request of the examinee, the examination board may also appoint an adjunct professor or an examiner from outside of the university as thesis adviser in accordance with section 9 (1) if it has been determined that no ifs professor is able to function as thesis adviser for the intended topic of the Master's thesis. Students may write their Master's thesis at an institution other than ifs if this institution provides sufficient advice and assistance. Students are to be given the opportunity to suggest topics for their Master's thesis.

- (3) Upon request, the chairperson of the examination board is to ensure that an examinee is provided with a topic for the Master's thesis in time.
- (4) A Master's thesis may be written in the form of a joint team project of a joint team project if the individual student's contribution to be evaluated is clearly distinguishable and can be assessed accordingly and meets the requirements stated in section 1. In order to verify the student's contribution, it must be clearly indicated and distinguishable which parts of the project, passages, pages (or similar) he or she contributed.
- (5) The Master's thesis is to be written in English. Upon request and if endorsed by the chairperson of the examination board and both examiners, the Master's thesis may also be written in German.

### **Section 26: Admission to the Master's thesis**

- (1) Students are admitted to the Master's thesis if they meet the admission requirements stated in section 17 (1) and have, pursuant to section 12, obtained a total of 90 credits by passing the examinations required according to section 24 during their first three program semesters.
- (2) The registration for the Master's thesis is to be addressed in writing to the chairperson of the examination board and to be submitted to the examination office. The registration request is to include the following:
  1. a statement on previous attempts to write a Master's thesis or another final examination and on attempts to take the Master's examination;
  2. a statement on which examiner is willing and able to prepare the topic of the Master's thesis and to function as thesis adviser, and
  3. the suggested topic of the Master's thesis.
- (3) Students may revoke their 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 to the Master's thesis. In cases of doubt, the decision lies with the entire examination board. Admission is to be denied if
  - a) the student does not meet the requirements stated in subsection 1, or
  - b) the supporting documents 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. 1.

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

### **Section 27: Assignment of the topic and writing 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 to be the day on which the chairperson of the exami-

nation board informs the student of the topic of the Master's thesis assigned by the thesis adviser. The time of assignment is to be put on record.

- (2) Students have four months to write the Master's thesis (time of assignment to the day of submission). The topic and assignment must be designed in a way that allows for the Master's thesis to be completed within this time frame. In exceptional cases, the chairperson of the examination board may extend the deadline of submission by up to four weeks if the student concerned submits a request prior to the deadline, in which he/she explains the reasons for extending the deadline. The thesis adviser is to be consulted on the request. The main part of the Master's thesis is to be between 50 and 80 and no more than 100 pages long.
- (3) Students may withdraw from a topic of 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 doing so. If a student undertakes a second attempt to write a Master's thesis in compliance with section 14 (4), the student is only permitted to withdraw from the thesis if he/she did not do so during his/her first attempt.
- (4) Section 18 (3) applies accordingly.

### **Section 28: Submission and evaluation of the Master's thesis**

- (1) Students are to submit their Master's thesis to the chairperson of the examination board, or at a location determined by the chairperson, by the submission deadline. The examination board determines at the beginning of the admissions phase in which form the Master's thesis is to be submitted. 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 at which the thesis is submitted to the postal service. When submitting the thesis, the student is required to declare in writing that he/she has written the thesis himself/herself – in case of a joint team project his/her part of the thesis, which can be clearly identified – and has used no other than the sources and means listed in the paper. Sources of quotations are to be identified in the text.
- (2) The Master's thesis and final oral examination are to be assessed by the examinations commission and to be evaluated by two examiners. One of the examiners is to be the thesis adviser. The other examiner is to be appointed by the examination board. If section 25 (2) sentences 2 and 3 apply, he/she must be a professor at ifs. If possible, students' suggestions concerning examiners are to be considered.
- (3) The examinations commission is appointed by the examination board and generally consists of the examiner, the co-examiner and the secretary to the commission. The examination board may appoint additional observers for the final oral examination. The observers do not assess or evaluate the examination, however, they are to be heard before the grade is determined. The examinations commission consists of up to five members from the following groups:
  - Main examiner and head of the commission:  
ifs professor as an in-house thesis adviser, usually one of the two professors of the program;
  - co-examiner:  
ifs professor,  
adjunct lecturer as a thesis adviser from outside of ifs;
  - first observer:  
a representative of the executive board or head of studies;

- second observer:  
ifs professor,  
program director or program coordinator;

- minutes:  
program director or program coordinator or their assistant.

- (4) The examinee will be informed of his/her examiner and co-examiner at the time of admission to the Master's thesis. The examinee will be informed of the members of the examinations commission for the final oral examination at the time of admission to the final oral examination.
- (5) 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 mean of the two grades. If there is a divergence of 2.0 or more, the examination board is to appoint a third examiner. In this case, the grade for the Master's thesis is the arithmetic mean 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.
- (6) According to Section 14 (4) the Master's thesis may be retaken once.
- (7) Students are to be notified of the results of the Master's thesis within eight weeks of submission.

#### **Section 29: Final oral examination (*Kolloquium*)**

- (1) The final oral examination complements the Master's thesis. It is to be evaluated as an independent examination and is normally to be held within ten weeks of submission of the Master's thesis. It is 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) Only students who have passed all module examinations and whose Master's thesis has been graded at least "sufficient" may take their final oral examination.
- (3) Admission is to be requested in writing and submitted to the examination office. In accordance with section 26, students may register for the final oral examination when they apply for admission to the Master's thesis. In this case, students are admitted to the final oral examination as soon as the examination office has received all required supporting documents.
- (4) The final oral examination is held by the examinations commission and evaluated by the two examiners of the Master's thesis. If section 28 (5) applies, the final oral examination is to be held by those examiners whose individual evaluations were used to calculate the grade for the Master's thesis.
- (5) The duration of the final oral examination is approximately 45 minutes.
- (6) According to Section 14 (4) the final oral examination may be retaken once.
- (7) Students are to be notified of the result of the final oral examination within two days of the examination.

- (8) A cumulative grade is calculated with the grades awarded for the examinations of the module "Master's thesis". The individual components are weighted as follows:
- Master's thesis 70 %
  - Final oral examination 30 %.
- (9) Pursuant to section 24 (1), 22 credits are awarded for a successful Master's thesis and 3 credits for a successful final oral examination, thus 25 credits total according to section 12.

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

### **Section 30: Results of the Master's examination**

- (1) The examinee has passed the examination if he/she has obtained 120 credits. 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 final oral examination.
- (2) The examinee has 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 of having failed the Master's examination. This notification is to include information on legal remedies. Upon request the chairperson of the examination board will issue an official document listing the examinations and assessments taken by the student and their respective evaluation, as well as the examinations missing in order for the student to complete 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 assessments and their respective evaluation.

### **Section 31: Examination certificate; final grade; diploma supplement**

- (1) Graduates are to receive a certificate on the passed Master's examination without delay, if possible within six weeks after the last examination. This examination certificate is to include the evaluations and credits for all module examinations, the topic of the Master's thesis, the grades and credits for the Master's thesis and the final 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 awarded for the module examinations, the Master's thesis and the final oral examination, all of which have been weighted by the corresponding credits.
- (3) The examination certificate is to be signed by the chairperson of the examination board and is to bear the date of the day on which the last examination was taken.
- (4) Graduates are to receive their Master's certificate (*Masterurkunde*) along with the examination certificate. The Master's certificate bears the same date as the examination certificate. The Master's certificate confirms that the Master's degree has been awarded in compliance with section 2 (5).
- (5) The Master's certificate is signed by the President of Technische Hochschule Köln, the chairperson of the examination board and the ifs chief executive director and bears the seals of Technische Hochschule Köln as well as ifs.

- (6) 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. The diploma supplement is signed by the chairperson of the examination board.

## **VI. Final provisions**

### **Section 32: Inspection of examination papers**

After having taken a module examination or having completed the Master's thesis and the final oral examination, the examinee is, upon request, to be granted an inspection of the written examination concerned, of – if available – the examiners' records related to the written examination and of 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 completion of the corresponding final oral examination. Access to these documents is to be requested with 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.

### **Section 33: Invalidity of examinations**

- (1) If a student cheated during an examination and the cheating is detected only after the examination certificate or the document mentioned in section 30 (2) sentences 3 and 5 was issued, the examination board is entitled to subsequently amend the grades for those examinations during which the student cheated and to declare 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 in this matter and if this situation was detected only after the examination certificate or the document mentioned in section 30 (2) sentences 3 and 5 was 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 section 30 (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 section 30 (2) sentences 3 and 5 was issued.

### **Section 34: Entry into force; transitional regulations**

- (1) These examination regulations enter into force on March 1, 2016 and are published in Technische Hochschule Köln's official communication (*Amtliche Mitteilungen*).
- (2) These examination regulations apply to all students who enroll in the Master's program in DIGITAL NARRATIVES at ifs in cooperation with Technische Hochschule Köln in the winter semester 2016/2017 or later.
- (3) Executed based on the resolution of the examination board of November 27, 2015 and after legal review by the President's Office of Technische Hochschule Köln on February 17, 2016.

Cologne, February 24, 2016

The President  
of Technische Hochschule Köln

p.p.

*[signature of Prof. Becker]*  
Prof. Dr.-Ing. Klaus Becker  
Managing Vice President

**Annex:**  
Curriculum

This is a translation of the original German examination regulations for the Master's program in Digital Narratives offered by ifs international filmschule in cooperation with Technische Hochschule Köln. For all legal purposes, solely the German version shall be considered binding.

Cologne, June 28, 2016



Technische Hochschule Köln  
On behalf of the President

*[Signature]*  
(Michèle Lohr, Conference Interpreter M.A.)

Academic year	Number of modules	Module title	Credits per semester				Total	Grading	Type of examination	Examination
			1	2	3	4				
1	1	Project 1	15				15	graded	Overall exam	Work sample
	2	Digitality & Change 1	7				7	graded	Overall exam	Term paper
	3	Narratives & Methods 1	8				8	graded	Overall exam	Work sample
	4	Project 2		15			15	graded	Overall exam	Work sample
	5	Digitality & Change 2		7			7	graded	Overall exam	Term paper
	6	Narratives & Methods 2		8			8	graded	Overall exam	Work sample
2	1	Project 3			18		18	graded	Overall exam	Work sample
	2	Digitality & Change 3			6		6	graded	Overall exam	Oral examination
	3	Narratives & Methods 3			6		6	graded	Overall exam	Work sample
	4	Project 4				5	5	graded	Overall exam	Presentation
	5	Master's Thesis and Colloquium				25	25	graded	Cumulative exam	Master's thesis, oral examination
	11		30	30	30	30	120			