

**Course-Specific Examination Regulations  
for the Master's Course of Study  
in Cognitive, Digital and Empirical English Studies  
at RWTH Aachen University**

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**Please note: This publication is an English translation. Only the German original of these regulations as published in the Official Announcements of RWTH Aachen University (“Amtliche Bekanntmachungen”) is legally binding.**

Based on §§ 2 (4) and 64 of the law governing the Universities of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (Higher Education Act – HG) in the version of the announcement dated September 16, 2014 (Law and Official Gazette of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia; GV. NRW p. 547), most recently amended by Article 1 of the Act Concerning Further Measures to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Higher Education of December 1, 2020 (Law and Official Gazette of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia p. 1110), RWTH Aachen University (RWTH) has issued the following regulations:

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## I. General

### § 1

#### Scope of Application and Academic Degree

- (1) These examination regulations apply to the master's program in Cognitive, Digital and Empirical English Studies at RWTH Aachen University. They only apply in conjunction with the currently valid version of the General Examination Regulations (GER), supplementing it with an additional set of course-specific regulations. In cases of doubt, the provisions of the General Examination Regulations take priority.
- (2) Students who successfully complete the master's course of study are awarded the academic degree of Master of Arts RWTH Aachen University (M. A. RWTH) by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

### § 2

#### Objectives of the Course of Study and Language Provisions

- (1) This is a master's degree program according to § 2 (3) GER, which builds upon the bachelor's degree program in Literature and Linguistics or Philosophy, Literature and Linguistics.
- (2) The general educational objectives and outcomes are set out in § 2 (1,3, and 4) GER. For further information and provisions on the educational objectives and learning outcomes of this master's course of study, please refer to Appendix 2 of the present regulations.
- (3) The course of study is taught in English. Insofar as individual modules are taught in another language, this is to be indicated in the module handbook.

### § 3

#### Admission Requirements

- (1) A recognized first university degree according to § 3 (4) GER is required to be eligible for admission.
- (2) To meet the educational prerequisites necessary to be able to successfully complete the master's course of study in Cognitive, Digital and Empirical English Studies, the applicant must have the knowledge and competencies evidenced by 60 credit points (CP) in the following areas:
  - Linguistics at least 10 CP
  - English literature at least 10 CP
  - English language proficiency at least 10 CP
  - Cultural Studies at least 10 CP
  - Statistics at least 4 CP

The credit points must have been earned for assessments comparable to that of the bachelor's degree program in Literature and Linguistics or Philosophy, Literature and Linguistics at RWTH.

- (3) For admission conditional on the completion of additional requirements, § 3 (6) GER applies. If additional requirements corresponding to more than 30 credit points are imposed, admission to the master's course of study will be denied.

- (4) For this master's course of study, English proficiency must be proven according to § 3 (9) GER.
- (5) When determining whether the admission requirements are met, § 3 (12) GER applies.
- (6) General regulations for the recognition of prior exams and assessments are stipulated in § 13 GER.

#### § 4 Standard Period of Study, Curriculum, Credit Points, and Scope of Study

- (1) The standard period of study, including the completion of the master's thesis, is four semesters (two years) full-time. The course of study may be commenced in either semester.
- (2) The program consists of two compulsory sections, "Foundations" and "Focus", and the core elective section "Interdisciplinary and Professional Perspectives". In the core elective section, the "Internship" module is mandatory. In addition, core elective modules amounting to at least 20 CP must be taken.

For successful completion of the degree program, a total of 120 credit points must be earned. The master's examination is comprised of the following components:

Section	CP
Foundations (mandatory)	40
Focus (mandatory)	33
Interdisciplinary and Professional Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internship (mandatory module)</li> <li>• Core Elective Modules</li> </ul>	4 20
Master's Thesis	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>

- (3) The degree program comprises between 13 and 15 modules, including the master's thesis module. All modules are specified in the module handbook. The weighting (with credit points) of the assessments to be taken in the individual modules is carried out according to § 4 (4) GER.

#### § 5 Obligatory Attendance in Classes

- (1) According to § 5 (2) GER, obligatory attendance can only be stipulated in the following course types:
  1. Tutorials
  2. Seminars
  3. Colloquia
- (2) Classes with obligatory attendance in accordance with paragraph 1, shall be indicated as such in the module handbook.

## § 6 Exams and Exam Deadlines

- (1) General regulations on exams and exam periods are stipulated in § 6 GER.
- (2) If successful completion of modules, exams or module components according to § 5 (4) GER is stipulated as a precondition for participation in other exams, this is indicated the module handbook.

## § 7 Types of Exams

- (1) General regulations on the various types of exams are stipulated in § 7 GER.
- (2) The duration of the written exam shall be 60 to 120 minutes.
- (3) The duration of the oral exam shall be 20 to 60 minutes.  
An oral exam may be carried out as a group exam with up to four candidates.
- (4) Term papers are to range from 12 to 15 pages (6,000 to 7,500 words). The term paper topic (or topics) will be assigned in the second week of lectures. The latest possible submission deadline is four weeks after the end of the lecture period. The grading of the work by the examiners will take place no later than five weeks after this deadline. For students who have not taken this first assessment opportunity or who have to submit a second attempt at a term paper, the next possible assignment date and therefore the start of the repeat attempt is the assignment date of the following semester. Accordingly, the deadline is also that of the following semester. For empirical papers, the deadline is extended by one week. Generally, there is only one deadline per semester.
- (5) The length of a project paper is 8 to 12 pages (4,000 to 6,000 words). The submission, evaluation, and retake modalities correspond to those of the term papers in § 7 (5).
- (6) For written exams in the form of a portfolio, the following applies in detail:  
The portfolio is to be 25 to 30 pages in length. The submission, evaluation, and retake modalities correspond to those for term papers in § 7 (5).
- (7) The written version of the **oral presentation** shall range from 4 to 8 pages in length. The duration of the presentation is 15 to 30 minutes.
- (8) Active participation in courses can be documented by ungraded assignments completed throughout the semester. Possible forms of delivery are in particular written - also e-learning supported - assignments (e.g. abstracts, essays, lesson protocols, presentation handouts), presentations, session moderations, project work, or portfolios.
- (9) The examiner determines the duration and, if necessary, other modalities of the respective assignment at the beginning of the course.
- (10) Admission to module exams may be conditional on the successful completion of module components in accordance with § 7 (15) GER. This is outlined for the relevant modules in the module handbook. Passed module components are valid for all attempts at assessments that are part of a course offered in a given semester or year. At the start of the semester, or by the first session of the course, the lecturer shall provide the students with precise criteria online, in the CMS, regarding opportunities to improve their grades by completing additional module

components, specifically indicating the number and type of tutorials that can be taken for extra credit and the mode of correction and assessment.

### **§ 8 Assessment and Grading**

- (1) For general regulations on the assessment of exams and the grading process, please refer to §10 GER.
- (2) If an exam consists of several partial assessments, each partial assessment must be passed or, if it is graded, at least given the grade "sufficient" (4.0).
- (3) A module has been passed if all associated assignments and exams have been passed with a grade of at least "sufficient" (4.0), and all other credit points earned or module components completed according to the relevant course of study-specific examination regulations.
- (4) The overall grade is formed from the module grades and the grade of the master's thesis in accordance with § 10 (11) GER.

### **§ 9 Examination Board**

The responsible Examination Board according to § 11 GER is the Examination Board of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

### **§ 10 Retaking Exams or Rewriting the Master's Thesis, and the Loss of the Right to Take an Exam**

- (1) General regulations governing retaking exams, rewriting the master's thesis, and the loss of the right to take exams are stipulated in § 14 GER.
- (2) Modules that can be freely selected within the core elective section of this master's program can be substituted once without giving reasons upon application to the examination board, provided this is permitted according to the relevant module handbook. It is not possible to substitute mandatory modules.

### **§ 11 Deregistration, Non-Attendance, Withdrawal, Deception, Non-Compliance**

General regulations on deregistration, non-attendance, withdrawal, deception, or non-compliance are stipulated in § 15 GER.

## II. Master's Examination and Master's Thesis

### § 12

#### Type and Scope of the Master's Examination

- (1) The master's examination consists of
  1. exams that are to be completed based on the structure of the course of study according to § 4 (2) and detailed in the module handbook, as well as
  2. the master's thesis.
- (2) The order in which students shall take the courses is based on the curriculum (Appendix 1). The master's thesis can only be registered once the student has attained least 76 credit points.

### § 13

#### Master's Thesis

- (1) General regulations for the master's thesis are stipulated in § 17 GER.
- (2) Further details regarding the supervision of the master's thesis are outlined in § 17 (2) GER.
- (3) The master's thesis is to be written in English.
- (4) The master's thesis writing time is usually six months at maximum alongside studies. In justified exceptional cases, the writing time can be extended by a maximum of up to six weeks upon application to the examination board in accordance with § 17 (7) GER. The written work should not exceed 80 pages (200,000 characters).
- (5) The work required for preparing and writing the master's thesis shall correspond to 23 credit points.

### § 14

#### Acceptance and Assessment of the Master's Thesis

- (1) General regulations for the acceptance and evaluation of the master's thesis are stipulated in § 18 GER.
- (2) Two printed and bound copies of the master's thesis (typewritten and paginated) are to be submitted to the Central Examination Office by the set deadline. Additionally, the thesis must be submitted as a PDF file on a data carrier.

### III. Final Provisions

#### § 15 Viewing of Examination Records

The reviewing of exam documents shall be carried out in accordance with § 22 GER.

#### § 16 Entry into Force, Publication, and Transitional Provisions

- (1) These regulations shall be published in the official announcements of RWTH Aachen University (“Amtliche Bekanntmachungen”) and enter into force on the day after publication.
- (2) These regulations apply to all students who are enrolled in the “Cognitive, Digital and Empirical English Studies” master’s course of study at RWTH.

Issued based on the resolutions of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities dated January 27, 2021.

It is pointed out that, in accordance with § 12 (5) NRW Higher Education Act, any claims regarding a violation of procedural or formal requirements of the regulatory or other autonomous rights of the University may no longer be asserted after one year has elapsed since the official publication of this announcement unless:

- 1) the announcement has not been properly published,
- 2) the Rectorate has objected, prior to publication, to the decision of the committee adopting the regulations,
- 3) the University has been previously notified about the defect of form or of procedure in a complaint, specifying the infringed legal provision and the fact which gives rise to the defect, or
- 4) the legal consequence of the exclusion of complaints was not pointed out in the public announcement.

The Rector  
of RWTH  
Aachen University

Aachen,  
dated \_\_\_\_\_

March 3, 2021

sgd. Rüdiger

\_\_\_\_\_  
Univ.-Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Dr. h. c. mult. Rüdiger



**Appendix 1: Curriculum**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Module</b>	<b>SWS</b>	<b>CP</b>
<b>Foundations</b> Required modules	Theories in Cognitive and Empirical Literary Studies	4	10
	Computer-Based Approaches to Language	4	10
	Applied Literary Theories	4	10
	Cognitive Linguistics and Semiotics	4	10
<b>Focus</b> Required modules	Participation in empirical research projects and studies	./.	1
	Literary Studies and Linguistics: Empirical Methods	4	10
	Literary Studies and Linguistics: Empirical Research	4	10
	Empirical Literary and Linguistic Studies: Research Experience (E-LiLi)	4	8
	Research and Project Colloquia	6	4
<b>Interdisciplinary and Professional Perspectives</b>	Internship	./.	4
	Elective modules (freely combinable for 20 CP)		20
Master's Thesis	Master's thesis		23

## Appendix 2: Educational Objectives and Outcomes of the Master's Program

This master's program is designed to impart high-quality scientific knowledge in an interdisciplinary manner that allows students to gain the corresponding methodological and research skills simultaneously.

The modular structure of the program provides students with increasing familiarity and skills in applying cognitive science, computational and empirical theories, models, and methods of analyzing phenomena of production and reception of both literary and non-literary forms of communication and media. Following current, empirically oriented language theories, communication is always understood in a multimodal fashion. This comprehensive semiotic understanding also paves the way for the inclusion of virtual and augmented reality and, more generally, the space-boundedness of communication.

The course of study incorporates the different research traditions of the sub-disciplines of linguistics and literary studies while at the same time strengthening the overlaps and ways in which they complement each other. It does this through four jointly designed modules and by making the resulting integrated understanding of the subject the basis of competence for concrete empirical investigations. The inclusion of interdisciplinary course content – e.g. cognitive psychology, computer science, and neuroscience – particularly distinguishes the program and is guided by the idea of involving students from the arts and humanities more in the technical and scientific disciplines the University is known for.

To be admitted to the program, prospective students must have acquired skills in literary and cultural studies, linguistics, philosophical considerations pertaining to the individual fields, as well as basic knowledge of cognitive, computer-based, and empirical approaches. They shall be familiar with methods of scientific work and practiced in analyzing problems, hypotheses, and other research questions empirically.

The learning outcomes of the program reflect its focus on innovativeness and interdisciplinarity. The combination of cognitive science, computer-based and empirical linguistics, and literary studies, as well as the other interdisciplinary components, allows students to consolidate their competencies in a way that philological courses of study in the traditional sense do not impart. The successful bridging between language- and text-oriented disciplines on the one hand, and the cognitive-psychological and medical prerequisites of literary and non-literary, linguistic and non-verbal communication on the other, leads to a solid understanding of the cognitive functions of communication.