

## Regulations governing the HES-SO and BFH Joint Master in Architecture (JMA)

*The Rectorate of the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland (HES-SO) and  
The University Board of Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH)*

*have, on the basis of*

the agreement of 1 August 2014 between the HES-SO and the BFH,

the inter-cantonal agreement of 26 May 2011 on the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland,

the guidelines of 6 May 2011 for fundamental education (Bachelor's and Master's degree courses) at the HES-SO, and

article 33, paragraph 1, section n of the law of 19 June 2003 on Bern University of Applied Sciences (FaG) und article 62 of the regulation of 5 May 2004 on Bern University of Applied Sciences (FaV)

*decided the following:*

### I. General provisions

Scope **Art. 1** This regulation sets out the normative provisions for the course of studies leading to the Master of Arts HES-SO/BFH in Architecture that is awarded by the HES-SO and the BFH.

The JMA **Art. 2** <sup>1</sup>The Joint Master in Architecture (JMA) is a professional qualification. It is based on competency profiles that are directly related to professional requirements, and takes into account the international context of architectural education.

<sup>2</sup>The JMA follows on from the Bachelor's degree course in Architecture, and aims to provide a qualification that is recognised at a European level. This course must enable students to develop and acquire the following competencies and abilities:

- competence in successfully managing and mastering the architectural planning process;
- the ability to understand relevant mechanisms associated with complex issues and relatively unstructured problems;
- competencies in the areas of methodology, formulation and implementation in the context of an architectural project;
- the ability to add value to and defend their work;
- the ability to work in an inter- and transdisciplinary context, to develop an appropriate research methodology, and to lead a project autonomously.

## II. Management and organisation

Strategic leadership **Art. 3** The Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at the HES-SO and the Department of Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering at the BFH (BFH-AHB) are responsible for the strategic leadership of the JMA.

JMA Council **Art. 4** <sup>1</sup>The JMA Council will consist of:

- a) three delegates, each representing a course campus;
- b) three representatives of the JMA supervisors, each representing a different course campus;
- c) three representatives of the JMA students, each representing a different course campus;
- d) three external experts of internationally recognised competence, each appointed by one of the participating institutions;
- e) the head of the JMA course and the course coordinator, who will take advisory roles.

<sup>2</sup>The JMA Council will organise itself. It will reach decisions on a majority basis. The Council President has the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

<sup>3</sup>The President of the JMA Council will be one of the three delegates representing the architecture schools at each course campus, as set out in paragraph 1, section a.

<sup>4</sup>The Council will meet as necessary, and at least once a year. Extraordinary meetings can be called at the request of no fewer than three members of the JMA Council.

<sup>5</sup>The JMA Council has the following competencies:

- a) providing advance notice of JMA strategy to the relevant authorities at the HES-SO and BFH-AHB;
- b) adjusting the programme to developments in academic and professional circumstances both throughout Switzerland and internationally.

JMA Commission **Art. 5** <sup>1</sup>The JMA Commission is responsible for the operational management of the programme and implements strategy. It will reach the decisions that it regards as necessary for the proper functioning of the JMA. The Commission has four members:

- a) the head of the JMA course;
- b) the JMA coordinator;
- c) two additional members.

<sup>2</sup>Each of the course campuses must always have a representative on the Commission.

<sup>3</sup>The four members of the JMA Commission are to be appointed by the relevant authorities at the HES-SO and the BFH-AHB at the recommendation of the JMA Council. Their mandate is valid for four years and can be renewed.

<sup>4</sup>The committee reaches decisions on a majority basis. In the event of a tie, the coordinator's vote will not be counted.

<sup>5</sup>The JMA Commission is responsible in particular for the following tasks:

- a) developing and implementing JMA strategy;
- b) defining the subject matter and content of courses;
- c) ensuring coherence between research and teaching;

- d) applications for student admission;
- e) managing course plans, modules and accreditation for the Master's degree;
- f) preparing the budget for the relevant bodies;
- g) ensuring quality control and monitoring accreditation;
- h) guaranteeing good coordination between the course campuses.

<sup>6</sup>The Commission organises JMA entities autonomously and may, in particular, form a teaching subcommittee and a research subcommittee.

### III. Admissions and equivalence

Admissions

**Art. 6** <sup>1</sup>Admission to the JMA is made on the basis of an application dossier.

<sup>2</sup>Anyone meeting the following criteria may submit an application dossier:

- a) Possession of a Bachelor's degree in architecture from a Swiss university of applied sciences or an equivalent qualification from an institution of higher education.
- b) Possession of a Bachelor's degree in architecture from a Swiss university or Federal Institute of Technology, or a Swiss or foreign degree regarded as being of equal standing, together with 12 months of professional practice.

Submitting an application dossier

**Art. 7** <sup>1</sup>Application dossiers should be submitted via the online portal of the relevant course campus.

<sup>2</sup> Application dossiers will only be processed if accompanied by proof of payment of the application fee.

Admission committee

**Art. 8** The JMA Commission considers the application dossiers and makes proposals to the HES-SO or BFH for the admission of candidates.

Matriculation

**Art. 9** Students will matriculate at either the HES-SO or the BFH-AHB.

Recognition of equivalent studies

**Art. 10** <sup>1</sup>Students admitted to the JMA may apply for the recognition of equivalent work from previous courses of study at the level of *maîtrise universitaire* or a Master's degree in the field of architecture.

<sup>2</sup>The application for recognition must be included in the application dossier.

<sup>3</sup>A maximum of 50 ECTS credits can be accredited for equivalent work from previous courses.

<sup>4</sup>Qualifications which were acquired during regular work in professional practice, and which conform with the course curriculum, can be accredited following a written application to the JMA Commission; a maximum of nine ECTS credits will be accredited.

#### IV. Course structure

Basis	<p><b>Art. 11</b> The guidelines for fundamental education (Bachelor's and Master's degree courses) at the HES-SO, as set out in Chapter II, form the basis of the conditions for the structure of the academic year, the modular structure and quality assurance.</p>
Length of studies	<p><b>Art. 12</b> <sup>1</sup>Each year of full-time study corresponds to 60 ECTS credits.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>The course may be attended full-time or part-time.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>The course may take a minimum of four and a maximum of eight semesters. Overstepping the maximum length will lead to definite exclusion from the course, unless there are exceptional circumstances (see paragraph 6).</p> <p><sup>4</sup>The maximum length for taking the course does not include any interruptions in the form of leave.</p> <p><sup>5</sup>The maximum length for the course is reduced proportionately for students with equivalent credits.</p> <p><sup>6</sup>The JMA Commission may allow exceptions to the maximum length of the course for valid reasons on the basis of a written application by the student. For students of the BFH-AHB, the applicable valid reasons are set out in article 41, paragraph 4 of the statutes of Bern University of Applied Sciences (<i>Fachhochschulstatut</i>, FaSt).</p>
Long-term interruption of studies	<p><b>Art. 13</b> <sup>1</sup>Long-term interruptions of studies are dealt with according to Article 19 of the HES-SO guidelines.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>The JMA Commission will decide on applications for interruption of studies.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>Interruption of studies can be extended, although the interruption may not amount to more than two years in all. A longer interruption will lead to the student being exmatriculated.</p>
Course organisation	<p><b>Art. 14</b> <sup>1</sup>To obtain a JMA qualification, students must acquire a total of 120 ECTS credits and meet all the requirements of the curriculum.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>The outline curriculum contains the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ obligatory modules;</li><li>▪ elective modules;</li><li>▪ optional modules;</li><li>▪ the Master's thesis.</li></ul> <p><sup>3</sup>Each university accepts the academic responsibility for the modules it offers, under the overall responsibility of the JMA Commission.</p> <p><sup>4</sup>The module descriptions outline the manner in which modules will be carried out, whether they are optional or obligatory, when they take place, what form evaluation will take and the allocation of the associated ECTS credits. The descriptions also provide the length and modalities of the Master's thesis.</p> <p><sup>5</sup>Obligatory modules must be taken if students are to obtain their qualification at the end of the course.</p> <p><sup>6</sup>Elective modules must be chosen from a group of modules.</p>

<sup>7</sup>Optional modules may be chosen freely; they have been approved by the JMA Commission.

Languages of teaching

**Art. 15** <sup>1</sup>French, German and English are the languages in which courses are taught.

<sup>2</sup>Information about the languages in which the various modules are taught, and about the certificates of competency, can be obtained from the module descriptions. Certification of competency is generally tested in the language of teaching.

## V. Students' rights and responsibilities

Taking courses

**Art. 16** Information about the requirements for taking courses can be found in the module descriptions.

Fees

**Art. 17** Students are to pay their fees according to the regulations valid for the HES-SO and BFH respectively.

Consultation

**Art. 18** Students will be consulted appropriately on decisions related to the course.

## VI. Assessment

Assessment

**Art. 19** <sup>1</sup>Competency is assessed for each module; the modalities of the assessment process are set out in the relevant module description.

<sup>2</sup>Competency is to be assessed for certification through examinations or other forms of testing at the end of each module or semester.

<sup>3</sup>Registering to certify a competency follows automatically when a student registers for the related module.

<sup>4</sup>Students who have valid reasons for being unable to certify a competency may do so at a later time.

<sup>5</sup>ECTS credits are awarded for each module as a whole.

<sup>6</sup>ECTS credits are awarded for graded modules if the resulting grade is between A and E. ECTS credits are not awarded if assessment results in a grade F. Competencies can also be graded as "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". ECTS credits will be awarded only for "satisfactory".

Notification of results

**Art. 20** The results of the competency certification for each module will be communicated in writing within 30 days.

Absence from certification of competency	<p><b>Art. 21</b> <sup>1</sup>Modules will not be credited to students who fail appear in person, as required under these provisions, to certify their competency for modules for which they have registered.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>Students who seek to explain their absence by claiming <i>force majeure</i> must submit a written appeal, accompanied by the relevant evidence, to the JMA Commission within three days of the event.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>Uncompleted tests will be graded as fails.</p>
Additional work	<p><b>Art. 22</b> <sup>1</sup>Students who are awarded a grade Fx for a module must provide additional work.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>If the additional work is completed successfully, the student will be awarded a grade E. If the additional work is not completed successfully, the student will receive a grade F.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>The modalities for the additional work will be defined by the person responsible for the module.</p>
Repeating a module	<p><b>Art. 23</b> <sup>1</sup>Each module may be repeated only once; this is subject to paragraph 3.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>The manner in which a module is configured and taught may be different for students who are taking the module for the first time than for those who are repeating it.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>Should it be impossible to repeat the failed module for reasons related to the university's organisational requirements, the JMA Commission will decide whether another form of course work of the same magnitude may be substituted for the failed module.</p>
Definitive fail	<p><b>Art. 24</b> A module has been failed definitively if the retaken competency certification results in a grade F.</p>
Exclusion from a course	<p><b>Art. 25</b> <sup>1</sup>Students who have definitively failed a module that is defined as an obligatory part of the degree course will be excluded from the degree course.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>Students will also be definitively excluded from the degree course if they have not obtained the required number of ECTS credits during the maximum time allowed for the course as set out in article 12, paragraph 3. Any extension of the maximum time allowed for the course must conform to article 12, paragraph 6.</p> <p><sup>3</sup>Students will also have definitively failed, and therefore be excluded from the degree course, if they have failed exams, including retaken exams, with a total value of 20 ECTS credits; this excludes the Master's thesis.</p> <p><sup>4</sup>The decision to exclude a student from the degree course must be communicated by means of an official notification.</p>

## VII. Master's thesis

- Master's thesis **Art. 26** <sup>1</sup>The Master's degree course is completed with a Master's thesis comprising an architectural project and a significant written portion. The latter should include theoretical and critical thinking.
- <sup>2</sup>The guidelines for preparing the Master's thesis govern the modalities of the thesis. The guidelines for preparing the Master's thesis are issued by the JMA Commission.
- <sup>3</sup>The Master's thesis is normally defended publicly.
- <sup>4</sup>If a Master's thesis receives an F, it may be repeated no more than once.
- Submitting a Master's thesis **Art. 27** Only students who have completed all the modules required may submit a Master's thesis.
- Jury **Art. 28** <sup>1</sup>The Master's thesis will be assessed by a jury made up of at least one juror from the institution where the student matriculated and one external, non-JMA, juror.
- <sup>2</sup>The composition of the jury must be approved by the JMA Commission.
- <sup>3</sup>The jury will assess the Master's thesis and its defence. The Master's thesis will be rejected if the jury awards the student's work an F.

## VIII. Title

- Awarding a title **Art. 29** <sup>1</sup>The Master's diploma is awarded to students who have received 120 ECTS credits and fulfilled all the requirements of the curriculum for their chosen field of study.
- <sup>2</sup>The HES-SO and BFH will award those students the title of Master of Arts HES-SO/BFH in Architecture.
- <sup>3</sup>The diploma will be signed by the Rector and the Head of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at the HES-SO, and by the Rector of the BFH and the Director of the BFH-AHB.

## IX. Disciplinary provisions

- Dishonest behaviour **Art. 30** All forms of dishonesty, plagiarism, or attempts at dishonesty with regard to certificates of competency or the Master's thesis, will result in the student forfeiting the corresponding ECTS credits.

## X. Intellectual property and right of use

Intellectual property **Art. 31** <sup>1</sup>The right of use for intellectual property arising from work carried out in cooperation with external partners is to be arranged contractually.

<sup>2</sup>With the exception of copyright, the university retains the rights to any immaterial goods realised in the context of a student's education or of a research contract awarded through or to the university.

## XI. Final provisions

Administration of justice **Art. 32** The administration of justice will conform to the regulations of the university at which the student matriculated.

Interim regulations **Art. 33** Students who began their course of studies before the 2014/15 autumn semester will complete their course under the terms of the regulations for the course of studies and examinations for the Joint Master of Architecture HES-SO and BFH issued on 22 February 2006.

Entry into force and replacement of previous regulations **Art. 34** <sup>1</sup>These regulations come into force on 15 September 2014 and apply to all students matriculated for the JMA.

<sup>2</sup>They replace the regulations for the course of studies and examinations for the Joint Master of Architecture HES-SO and BFH issued on 22 February 2006.

HES-SO

BFH

Place, date and signature

Place, date and signature

The Rector

The President of the University Board

Luciana Vaccaro

Dr. Georges Bindschedler

Approved by the Director of the Education  
Department of Canton Bern:

Bernhard Pulver, Executive Councillor