STUDY AND EXAMINATION POLICY

International Bachelor of Arts in Human Development (HuD)

CVJM-Hochschule
International YMCA University of Applied Sciences (IYU)
Kassel, Germany

Content

All status, functional and professional designations used in this study and examination policy in a male or female form also include the other gender. Double forms have been omitted for better readability.

1 Admission Regulation

1.1 Admission Requirements

(1) In general, the admission to education on university level in Hessian is regulated in Article 63 of the *Hessian Higher Education Laws* (HHG) and the legal provisions based thereon.

(2) Special rules and procedures apply for foreign students. Their school credentials have to be equivalent to what German applicants need to be eligibly enrolled. The equivalence has to be officially verified and approved by the *Hessian Ministry of Sciences and Arts* (MSA).[1]

(3) The applicant must agree with the overall aims of the IYU as stated in its *Guiding Principles*.

(4) A personal conversation with the Program Head (in person, phone or Skype) is compulsory.

(5) The applicant must submit evidence of practical experience in the area of the program.

(6) A professional or academic reference must be submitted as well as a character reference. Also, the applicant has to submit a personal statement of his motivation to study HuD.

1.2 Admission Procedure

(1) The program starts with the beginning of the winter semester (1st of September). The application deadline is the 30th of April. Later applications may be considered.

(2) After the eligibility of the applicant's transcripts is officially proven (see above), the Admissions Committee decides if the applicant will be admitted. This Committee consists out of three university professors and a student. The University Senate chooses its members.

(3) The Admissions Committee decides on the admission by simple majority. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson decides.

(4) The applicants admitted will receive notification of their admission. In this notification the IYU also determines the date by which the applicant has to accept the admission. The admission notification will become ineffective unless it is confirmed in due time.

(5) If the number of applicants exceeds the possible enrolment number, the applicants who have been rejected will receive notification of their rejection and the position allocated to them on the waiting list. The position on the waiting list will depend on the applicant's academic record to date and his letters of reference.

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[1] Further information can be found at www.anabin.de.

1.3 Recognition of Previous Education (e.g., credit points from other universities)

(1) Qualifications from other (domestic or foreign) universities may be recognised (this is according to the *Lisbon Recognition Convention*[2]), if there isn't a major difference between the qualification and the course to be taken. The non-recognition needs to be explained.

(2) The Examination Committee decides upon the recognition. In doubt, subject matter experts will be asked for advice.

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[2] For further information: *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.*

2 Program Structure

2.1 Calculation of ETCS Credit Points

(1) The Credit Points of HuD are calculated according to the regulations of the *European Credit Transfer System* (ECTS)[3]. One credit point is equivalent to a workload of 25 - 30 hours. Students will have a maximum workload of 1,800 hours/academic year. This equals 60 ETCS credit points, which totals 180 credit points for the three year Bachelor program. Included in this calculation are self-study times and the Applied Research Project (ARP).

(2) Credit points will be awarded as follows:

Applied Research Project:	18 ETCS
Mandatory and Elective Modules	150 ETCS
Bachelor Thesis	12 ETCS
Total:	*180 ETCS*

2.2 Full-time, Part-time and Individualized Study Plans

(1) Due to the diverse nature of the students taking HuD coming from all around the world, the program can be studied full-time or part-time making sure that individual (cultural) needs are met. In its full-time version the program takes three years, however it may be extended to lighten the workload. This is possible through the modularized structure of HuD. The maximum period of time in which HuD has to be finished is six years.

(2) In general, the program runs over a period of six semesters (this includes the internship, which is an integral part of the Applied Research Project and the Bachelor Thesis).

(3) Together with the program head and/or the program manager each student designs an individual study plan, which can be altered if needed. Each semester is divided into two terms, each eight weeks long (pure study time). For each term students enrol in the courses they plan to take in that term. Obviously, with such individualized study plans the order of courses in which the program is taken, varies. The program head and the program manager have to make sure that the order in which students take the program makes sense from an academic point of view.

2.3 Instructional Design of the program

2.3.1 HuD consists of the following types of instruction:

    a. Lectures and Seminars

    b. Practice tutorials and exercises

    c. Interactive E-learning instruction including Distance Learning Material

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[3] Further information can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/ects_en.htm.

     d. Self-study times tutored online

     e. Internship and applied research project

     f. Team projects, coaching and mediation practice

2.3.2 General Program Structure

(1) In addition to the predetermined modules (basic as well as consolidating), which are part of the curricula (the HuD module handbook), students may enrol for other modules, including modules from additional subject fields as long as they fit.

(2) It may also be possible to take suitable courses at other universities world-wide. Here the *International Coalition of YMCA Universities* is of great help to facilitate student-exchanges.

(3) The major parts of instruction take place through the Internet (which means that people can study from where they live) and during face-to-face residencies. Additionally, there will be a practice module, which leads into an applied research project ensuing the Bachelor thesis.

(4) HuD follows a team-based approach. Students will often be asked to work in teams.

(5) Communication between instructors and students takes place through Moodle, Email, Skype or phone.

2.3.3 Blended- and E-Learning

(1) Blended learning combines longer interactive online phases with shorter periods of face-to-face instruction, so called residencies. The latter are explicitly skills-based (e.g., peer coaching, mediation role plays, public speaking, facilitation). In HuD residencies are two weeks long and take place at several locations around the world (e.g., Hintersee in Germany, Nairobi in Kenya and Bangalore in India). There are three residencies during the program.

(2) Asynchronous E-learning offers a great flexibility for students and instructors. The only technical equipment required is a computer and Internet connection. Appropriate tools and didactical methods (e.g., chat, discussion forums, wikis, etc.) are provided through the Learn Management System (LMS) Moodle.

(3) Students will be introduced to Moodle through the IT-expert at the IYU.

2.3.4 Distance Learning Materials

(1) Distance learning materials, particularly designed for the online environment to make sure that they are didactically well prepared and therefore effective, are provided on Moodle. Instructors may get advice and an introduction into Moodle if needed.

(2) Students work on the materials individually and jointly following the social-constructivist understanding of the blended learning model of the IYU.

(3) Instructors are asked to mainly refer to online sources in order to keep costs for literature low. They are also in charge of adhering to copyright laws. In doubt, the program head can be consulted.

2.4   The role of Instructors

(1) Instructors should be more than subject matter experts teaching relevant material. They are expected to also accompany and coach students ("learn coach").

(2) Instructors ought to offer appealing learning scenarios that students can relate to. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to be present in the online learning environment and to keep in close contact with students. Frequent feedback is important.

(3) As an applied university, instructors are also working professionals being able to consult students with regards to possible careers.

(4) Instructors are not responsible for technical difficulties. Here the IT-expert at the IYU ought to be contacted.

(5) At the end of a course students are asked to evaluate the course and to give constructive feedback with regards to the instructor's performance. A special link for evaluation can be found in each Moodle course.

3 Internship and Applied Research Project (ARP) Regulation

3.1 Scope of the Regulation

(1) The Internship and ARP Regulations define the aims, content and structure of the three-month internship being part of the Applied Research Project.

(2) The document *ARP Information & Guidelines* further describes goals, objectives, learning outcomes, responsibilities and procedures of the ARP. This shall be handed out to students in due time.

3.2 Aims and Content

(1) At an applied university practical experience is an asset. However, an internship is often not sufficiently serving the academic purpose. Therefore HuD asks learners to combine their internship with academic research.

(2) As in any practical work, students are expected to gain subject-specific practical experience. They are advised to carefully observe how practitioners work in the field, they are asked to shadow experienced experts critically reflecting and analysing what they observe. Main focus will be questions around policies, ethics, systems, structures, roles, transfer, and professionalism.

(3) Ideally the student's ARP findings shall lead into the Bachelor-thesis (e.g., by using data collected in the field). Students are advised to decide on their field of research interest at an early stage of their course so that reflection on the practical learning can become part of their thesis.

3.3 Structure and Duration

(1) In the regular course of the program, the ARP takes place during the 5th semester. However this may differ due to individualized study plans.

(2) The ARP comprises 540 hours of workload (which equals about 3.5 months). This includes 18 weeks of practical learning (450 hours, 25 hours/week) and 90 hours of work on the ARP report.

(3) Students successfully pass the Internship/ARP by presenting the ARP report and by gaining a positive reference of the site supervisor. Students are gaining 18 credit points, but no grade.

3.4 Internship/ARP placements

(1) It is the student's task to find an internship/ARP placement. They may either stay in their professional field designing their ARP in this context or they may choose another internship organization to gain a new experience.

(2) Students are asked to present an internship contract to the HuD program head at least one month before the internship/ARP starts. Contract forms (in German and English) are available from the person in charge of internship placements at the IYU.

(3) Students have to make sure that they find a site supervisor who is sufficiently educated (e.g., social worker, pastor) to oversee and evaluate the student's practical work. Care should be taken to ensure that the scope and objectives of the human service observations are adequate for producing a suitable applied research project including the academic report.

3.5 Site Supervisor and Academic Guidance

(1) People involved in the ARP are:

   a. *Site Supervisor*: see above under 3.4 (3).

   b. *Person in charge of internship placements at the IYU*: signs the internship/ARP contract on behalf of the university making sure that the placement is suitable and fulfills the terms and requirements outlined by the university. This person may also be consulted for all questions concerning finding and choosing an appropriate placement and helps to mediate in case of conflict.

   c. *Academic Guidance*: students are accompanied through an academic supervisor and through peer discussions on Moodle. The Academic Supervisor is in charge of helping the students to write their ARP reports and of marking them.

   d. *HuD Program Head and Program Manager*: supervises students and check in with them occasionally.

3.6 Internship/ARP Contract

(1) Before the internship starts, a contract between the host organization and the university ought to be signed.

(2) This contract clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, rights and obligations of the students, the host organization and the IYU.

(3) The contract comprises an individual training plan including a clear focus for the ARP.

3.7 Individual Training Program

(1) At the beginning of the internship, the student and the site supervisor work on an individual training plan for the duration of the internship. This includes proposed learning outcomes, clear tasks of the student and a research question for the ARP.

(2) The research question (or ARP focus) should also be evaluated by the academic supervisor.

(3) The training plan is part of the Internship/ARP contract and has to be sent to the HuD program manager no later than two weeks after the internship started. It has to be signed by the site supervisor and the student.

3.8 Peer Interaction

(1) During the whole duration of the internship/ARP a Moodle course accompanies the student's internship and research effort.

(2) Here students are encouraged to coach and mentor each other, to exchange their experiences and to give constructive feedback. This is also where the topics of the respective research projects should become subject of intercultural discussions.

(3) The academic supervisor oversees and guides the discussions.

3.9 Cooperation between the Internship Organization and the IYU

(1) The person in charge of internship placements at the IYU cooperates with the internship organization. He or she may also visit students during their internship.

(2) Ideally, the ARP should be harmonized with the interests of host organization that they can also profit from the student's findings.

3.10 Assessment of the Internship/ARP

(1) The requirements for approval of the internship/ARP are:

   a. Confirmation of the internship organization concerning the student's working hours.

   b. Submission of an assessment of the internship organization, showing that the internship has been completed successfully.

   c. Submission of the ARP report to the academic supervisor. More details with regards to the report can be found in the *ARP Information Guidelines*.

(2) The internship/ARP is a pass/fail course. No grade will be assigned.

(3) If the student's performance does not meet the requirements (as outlined in the contract or the training program) during the internship, the program manager shall explore what actions need to be taken to help the student to successfully complete the internship/ARP.

(4) If a student fails the internship/ARP, the examination committee will have to decide on further steps required. If necessary, the internship will be extended or repeated. The extension shall not exceed a period of six months.

4 Examination Policy

4.1 Scope of Policy

(1) This Examination Policy including grading guidelines applies to the B.A. in Human Development at IYU.

(2) In general, HuD qualifies students to work in the area of human development. This can be either personal, organizational or community development with a particular focus on multicultural and/or international settings. The program's profile is shaped by the special emphasis of the YMCA to concentrate on youth empowerment and spiritual development in light of the Christian faith.

(3) The curriculum of the program including learning outcomes and assessment criteria is laid out in the module handbook.

4.2 Purpose of the Examinations

(1) The exams of HuD consist of module assignments students have to work on throughout the program and of the Bachelor-thesis as the academic capstone at the end.

(2) The exams serve as criteria to proof that the student is able to master the expected learning outcomes of the module. Some courses are more academic than others, which mean that some assignments focus on competencies others on knowledge.

(3) Not all assignments are graded; some are just on a pass/fail basis (mostly modules which are skills-based).

(4) Students who pass the exams will be awarded with the degree "Bachelor of Arts".

4.3 Examination Committee

(1) The IYU's examination committee is in charge of the organisation of the exams. It consists of the full-time professors of HuD and one instructor from each of the three main subjects of the IYU (theology, social work, management). The committee elects a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the committee.

(2) The committee is responsible for the compliance with the examination policy. It oversees the accurate execution of the exams. Its particular task is to deal with appeals to grading decisions taken.

(3) The committee has a quorum if there are at least two or more members besides the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson present at the meeting. A simple majority is sufficient for decision-making. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson decides.

(4) The members of the committee are bound to confidentiality.

(5) The candidate shall be informed immediately of any negative decisions of the Examination Committee or its Chairperson. Before that, the candidate shall be given an opportunity for a fair hearing.

4.4 Examination Board for the Bachelor Examination

(1) The Examination Committee establishes an Examination Board; it shall consist of at least one examiner and one co-assessor. Only teachers from the respective subjects may be appointed as examiners. The Examination Board functions independently. The Examination Committee ensures that the examining duties are distributed equally among the examiners.

(2) The candidate may suggest one of the examiners as an advisor for his Bachelor thesis. This suggestion should be taken into consideration as far as possible. The co-examiner for the Bachelor thesis shall be a teacher appointed by the Examination Committee.

(3) The Chairperson of the Examination Committee shall ensure that the candidate is informed of the examiners' names in good time. This information should come together with the notice of admission to the examinations, usually at least two weeks before assignment of the Bachelor thesis.

4.5 Assessment Criteria and Grading

(1) General criteria for assessing the student's performance are their ability to reproduce, critically reflect, analyse and the transfer of knowledge and skills.

(2) Grades evaluate the student's performance. The grades are determined by the instructor who taught the course for which the grade is given for based on clear and transparent learning outcomes.

(3) Only modules are graded, not individual courses. If several instructors were teaching a module together, they will have to come up with one grade for the whole module either by developing just one assignment for the module or by determining the grade by the arithmetic average of the individual marks.

(4) To permit a more differentiated assessment of the examination and academic performance, the grades 1.0 to 5.0 may be scaled up or down by 0.3. German grades can only be: 1.0, 1.3, 1.7, 2.0, 2.3, 2.7, 3.0, 3.3, 3.7, 4.0, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.0. Not possible are any other percentage-grades, e.g., 2.5 or 1.6. Also not possible are the grades 0.7 and 5.3.

(5) In accordance with the recommendations of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) of the 2nd of October 2004 and the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) of the15th of August 2000 as amended on the 22nd October 2004, the following grading is applied:

German grades	ECTS definition	ECTS conversion	%
1.0, 1.3	excellent	A	92-100%
1.7, 2.0, 2.3	good	B	83-91%
2.7, 3.0	satisfactory	C	79-82%
3.3	correct	D	73-77%
3.7, 4.0	sufficient	E	69-72%
4.3, 4.7, 5.0	fail	FX/F	below 68%

(6) Some courses of HuD are only on a pass/fail basis. A student passes with a performance percentage higher than 69% (4.0). If a course can be graded with pass/fail has to be approved by the program head.

(7) Once the examination has been passed, the corresponding credit points will be allotted, indicating the amount of time the student has spent on his studies (module certificate).

4.6 Compensations for Students with Disabilities

(1) If a student can prove (medical attest) that he cannot sit an examination in its usual form, completely or in part, because of a disability or chronic disease, the Chairperson shall make sure that equal examination performance can still be achieved. This may be done through giving the student more time or to hold the exam in a different format. The same applies to other academic performance.

(2) The regulations on compensations for disabilities apply to all performance records throughout the program.

4.7 Repeating Examinations

(1) A module examination, which has been failed, may be repeated twice.

(2) The Bachelor thesis may be repeated once.

(3) An examination marked "sufficient" or better cannot be repeated.

4.8 Absence, Withdrawal, Deception, Infringement of Regulations, Extensions

(1) An examination performance is rated "insufficient" if

    a. the candidate does not hand in his or her exam in time or does not appear to or participate in an examination without a valid reason;

    b. the candidate does not achieve the required performance before the end of the course (e.g., no or too little participation).

This also applies in cases where the candidate does not submit the Bachelor thesis before or on the due date.

(2) The reasons given for withdrawal or absence must be submitted to the program head and the Examination Board immediately, in writing and with credible evidence. In the case of an illness a medical certificate may be required. If the Examination Committee accepts the given reasons, the candidate will be informed that he or she may apply for a re-examination.

(3) If the candidate tries to influence the examination results by deception or by the use of non-approved or non-declared aids, his or her examination performance will be rated "insufficient" and thus as failed. Plagiarism is not permitted and results in a failing grade. The student may appeal the decision in writing contacting the Examination Board immediately.

(4) In some cases students are allowed to work together for assignments (e.g., team projects). Students may even be encouraged to work together, however the individual student's performance should still be obvious.

(5) The instructor of a course may grant extensions. However, the student has to ask for an extension before the due date of the assignment producing valid evidence that he or she cannot hand in the assignment in time. It is in the instructor's discretion if he or she approves the extension. The student has also to inform the program head of the request for extension including the reasons.

4.9 Assessment of Performance in the Seminars and Lectures

(1) Each module finishes with one or more assignments and with one grade. A passing grade is necessary that the student receives the credit points allocated for the module. This happens once the module is successfully passed.

(2) Module exams can be done while the course is still running or after it is completed. They should not be held more than six weeks after the last course of the module is completed.

(3) Assignments/exams have to make sense with regards to the learning outcomes they want to test. It is in the instructor's digression what form of exam he or she may chose. However, it should conform as close as possible to what is outlined in the module handbook.

(4) Forms of exams include (but are not exclusive to):

    a. a written exam (answering questions);

    b. a written paper (essay, literature analysis, report, etc.);

    c. a presentation (on Moodle or face to face);

    d. a group facilitation (online or face to face);

    e. an oral tutorial;

    f. forum contributions, quizzes, contributions to glossaries, wikis or blogging;

    g. practical assessments (mediation role play, taped coaching sessions);

    h. individual or team projects (research projects, youth-work related projects, project proposals).

Additional forms of creative assessment might also be possible and may be discussed with the program head.

(5) It is the instructor's task to clearly outline expectations, learning outcomes and the assessment method from the very beginning of the course (course outline/syllabus).

(6) A module exam is passed if the performance has been assessed as at least "sufficient". If a student fails, he or she may repeat the assignment within the following 10 weeks.

(7) Instructors are expected to mark the assignments in a timely manner; they should not take longer than 10 weeks after the exam was handed in.

(8) Students have to be present and participate – in the classroom and in the online learning environment (on Moodle). If a student does not participate or participates

only marginally and with unsatisfactory contributions, he or she may not pass the course. It is in the instructor's digression how to grade participation (e.g., what percentage of the total grade are based on participation), however participation has to be taken into account.

4.10 Timing of the Bachelor Thesis

(1) The final exam of the program is the Bachelor thesis. Its topic should relate to the ARP and it should be applied to soon enough to make sure that the thesis can be completed in due time for completion of the program.

(2) The application for admission to the Bachelor-thesis should be handed in before the second to last semester and it has to be finished within one year after the program ended.

4.11 Admission Requirements for the Bachelor Examination

(1) All of the basic modules have to be successfully passed before the admission to the Bachelor thesis can be granted. The application for admission must be directed to the Chairperson of the Examination Committee. The following documents must be enclosed with the application if they have not been submitted earlier:

   a. evidence of the admission requirements stated above;

   b. a statement concerning any previous attempts to write a Bachelor thesis.

(2) The application should include the name of the professor who supervises and grades the thesis.

(3) The application for admission may be withdrawn or changed in writing up to the date of notification of the decision on the application.

(4) The Chairperson of the Examination Board or, in case of doubt, the whole Board shall decide on the admission. Admission shall be denied if

   a. the requirements as stated in (1) are not met, or

   b. the documents submitted are incomplete.

4.12 Bachelor Thesis

(1) The purpose of the Bachelor thesis is to show that the candidate is able to work independently, and within a given deadline, on a practically oriented task within his subject area, taking both its subject-specific details and an interdisciplinary context into account and applying scientific and professional methods.

(2) The Bachelor thesis may be assigned and supervised by any instructor who can be appointed as an examiner in accordance with rules stated above. If it is obvious that the chosen topic of the Bachelor thesis cannot be mentored by a professor in this subject area, the Examination Board may also, following an application by the candidate, appoint an honorary professor or an instructor as a supervisor. With the consent of the Chairperson of the Examination Board, the Bachelor thesis may be written at an institution outside the University if sufficient mentoring is available

there. The candidate shall be given an opportunity to make suggestions for the subject field of the Bachelor thesis.

4.13 Assignment and Writing of the Bachelor Thesis

(1) The Chairperson of the Examination Board shall assign the subject of the Bachelor thesis. The assignment date is the date on which the Chairperson of the Examination Board informs the candidate of the topic set by the supervisor of the Bachelor thesis; this date shall be recorded.

(2) The working time (period between assignment and submission of the Bachelor thesis) shall be at least two months and three months at most. The topic and scope of the Bachelor thesis has to be clearly outlined that it can be accomplished within the given time. As an exception and following an application giving reasons and submitted before the deadline, the Chairperson of the Examination Board may extend the working time by up to four weeks. The supervisor of the Bachelor thesis shall be heard concerning this application.

(3) The topic of the Bachelor thesis may be returned only once and only within the first four weeks of the working time without stating reasons. If a student works on his or her second attempt, it may only be returned if the candidate did not make use of this possibility when working on his or her first Bachelor thesis.

4.14 Submission and Assessment of the Bachelor Thesis

(1) The Bachelor thesis must be submitted to the Chairperson of the Examination Board before the end of the prescribed period. The date of submission shall be put on record. The candidate has to add a written statement that he or she wrote the thesis independently and that he or she used no sources or aids other than those declared and given with the quotations.

(2) Grading of the Bachelor thesis should be done as soon as possible, but no later than 8 weeks after submission.

(3) If the Bachelor thesis is passed, the student is awarded 12 credit points for it.

4.15 Result of the Bachelor Examination

(1) The Bachelor examination is passed if the results of the module exams and the Bachelor thesis total at least 180 credit points.

4.16 B.A. Certificate; Overall Score

(1) A certificate shall be issued without undue delay, if possible within four weeks of the last exam. This certificate shall contain the grades achieved in the basic, consolidating and elective modules, the topic and grade of the Bachelor thesis, and the total of credit points.

(2) In order to calculate the overall score, the arithmetically calculated total sums of the basic and consolidating modules shall each be taken at single value, those of the elective modules at half value, and the Bachelor thesis at single value.

(3) The grades are presented as outlined above.

4.17 Inspection of the Examination Records

(1) After the exams are over, the candidate may, upon official request, review his or her exam including comments made on it.

(2) Any application for inspection of the records shall be submitted to the Chairperson of the Examination Board within a month of issue of the certificate. The Chairperson shall determine the place and time of the inspection.

4.18 Invalidity of Examinations

(1) If the candidate has tried to cheat during an examination and this is discovered only after the certificate has been issued, the Examination Board may retrospectively correct the grades for those exams in which the candidate has cheated, or declare the examination failed wholly or in part.

(2) If the requirements for admission to an examination were not met without the candidate planning to cheat and this does not become known until after the issue of the certificate, the fault shall be remedied by passing the examination. If the candidate deliberately gained admission wrongfully, the Examination Board shall decide on the legal action to be taken.

(3) The incorrect certificate shall be withdrawn and re-issued if appropriate.