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**Examination Regulations  
of Faculty 08 - Physics, Mathematics, and Computer Science  
at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz for the Certificate Program “Excellence Track  
(Physics)”**

of 26.04.2021

Based on Section 7 subsection 2 no 2. and Section 86 subsection 2 (1) no. 3 of the University Act (Hochschulgesetz-HochSchG) in the version from September 23, 2020 (GVBl. p. 461, BS 223-41), last revised in Section 31 of the Act from December 17, 2020 (GVBl. p. 719), BS 223-41), the council of Faculty 08 - Physics, Mathematics, and Computer Science at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz has set these examination regulations for the certificate program “Excellence Track (Physics)” on January 13, 2021. They were confirmed by the president in writing on February 23, 2021, Az: 03/02/08/01/00//078. They are as follows.

Section 1

Scope, Program Objectives, Purpose of the Examination

(1) These regulations govern the certificate program “Excellence Track (Physics)”. It is intended for high-performing and research-oriented students and, within the framework of their master’s degree program at JGU, allows them to develop their scientific knowledge and skills, as well as their complementary skills, above and beyond what is usually offered and expected. The goals are to introduce the students to current research and include them in working groups early, as well as to facilitate students’ acquisition of additional scientific knowledge and complementary and transferable skills within a structured program. Faculty 08 (Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science) of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, including possibly other institutions such as the Mainz Physics Academy (MPA), the Max Planck Graduate Centre and other graduate training institutions, is responsible for the implementation according to these regulations.

(2) A certificate is presented after a successfully completed program.

Section 2

Beginning of the Program, Required Coursework and Examinations

(1) The certificate program “Excellence Track (Physics)” can be commenced at two different points in the year and usually takes four semesters to complete. The qualification goals must be reached within the regular master’s degree program in Physics.

(2) For successful participation in the Excellence Track, students must complete 23 additional credits in addition to their regular master’s degree. They must be completed before submission of the master’s thesis and are divided between two sections:

- I. Research-related, scientific competence (scientific knowledge) in Physics amounting to at least 14 credits

and

- II. Complementary skills amounting to at least 6 credits.

(3) In order to acquire the additional scientific knowledge, a laboratory project (either in an experimental or theoretical area) is to be completed. When choosing the courses to be completed within the framework of the Excellence Track, teaching staff will be available in an advising capacity. In addition, participants are encouraged to take part in conferences and workshops relevant to their work and topics. Once the Excellence Track has been successfully completed, the certificate will document the courses completed and conferences and summer schools visited.

(4) For the “Complementary Skills” section, the JGU-offered courses best suited to the participant’s interests and needs will be selected during an optional advising meeting at the beginning of the semester.

### Section 3

#### Admission Requirements, Application

(1) As a rule, a bachelor’s degree in Physics completed in no more than the standard period of study plus one semester is required for participation in the certificate program “Excellence Track (Physics)”. Applicants should be in the top 15% of graduates of their university’s class in the bachelor’s program in Physics. Admission can also be granted after achieving excellent grades at the end of the first semester in the master’s degree program Physics.

(2) The application must include the following:

a) a detailed CV

b) a copy of the bachelor’s degree certificate along with a transcript of records in German or English

c) a copy of a document showing proof of admission to the master’s degree program in Physics (M.Sc.) at JGU

d) a cover letter with a short letter of motivation

(3) A selection committee will examine the applications and invite suitable candidates for an interview. In addition to prior academic performance, the decision process will also take into account further qualifications such as experience abroad, internships, and special life circumstances. A ranking of the candidates will be created according to these criteria. As a general rule, no more than 15% of the master students in a class should be accepted into the Excellence Track.

(4) Registration for the Excellence Track must have been completed at the beginning of the second regular semester of the master’s degree program in Physics at the latest. The prerequisites for acceptance into the master’s degree program in Physics must have been fulfilled.

## Section 4

### Examination Committee

- (1) The faculty council appoints an examination committee to organize the examinations and undertake specific tasks as laid out in these regulations.
- (2) The examination committee is made up of five university professors, one student, one academic staff member and one non-academic staff member. The chair and the deputy chair must be university professors. The examination committee's decisions are based on a simple majority of the members present; in the event of a tie, the vote of the chair will decide the matter. Votes on examination results are to be made according to Section 25 subsection 5 of the University Act. The student member's term of office is one year, the term of office of the other members is three years. A member may be re-elected. If a member resigns from their position before their term of office has come to an end, a successor will be elected to take over for the rest of the term.
- (3) Unless otherwise decided, the examination committee is responsible for all decisions that have to be made on the basis of these examination regulations; the examination committee may assign tasks to the chair of the examination committee. The examination committee enforces the examination regulations. The examination committee periodically informs the faculty about the development of study and examination periods. The report is to be published in an appropriate manner by the university. The examination committee makes suggestions to the respective subject committee for learning and teaching and to the faculty regarding reforms of the degree plan and examination regulations.
- (4) In cooperation with the faculty, the examination committee ensures that it is possible to complete coursework and examinations in the periods of time determined in these examination regulations. For this purpose, the candidate is to be informed in a timely manner about the type and amount of coursework and examinations required in the module as well as about the dates and deadlines. Candidates must be informed in a timely manner about the repeat dates for all coursework and examinations.
- (5) The members of the examination committee have the right to be present during all examinations. They do not have the right to attend meetings where grades are discussed and announced.
- (6) The meetings of the examination committee are not public. The members of the examination committee are obliged to maintain confidentiality. If they are not employed as civil or public servants, they shall be ordered to maintain confidentiality by the chair of the examination committee.
- (7) Negative decisions by the examination committee have to be communicated immediately in writing to the student concerned. Information on the rights to appeal are to be included in the notification.

## Section 5

### Examiners, Observers

- (1) The examination committee appoints the examiners. The committee may ask the chair to carry out the appointment. As a rule, the examiner is the person who teaches the respective module.
- (2) Examiners include university professors, staff members who have a habilitation, academic staff with duties according to Section 56 subsection 1 (2) of the University Act, contract lecturers according to Section 63 of the University Act and lecturers with a specified function according to Section 58 of the University Act. Retired professors, honorary professors, and experienced professionals in their respective fields according to Section 25 subsection 4 (2) of the University Act can be appointed as examiners based on a decision of the examination committee following the recommendation of the faculty council. Only an individual who teaches classes at a higher education institution in the same field as the examination or who did so during the past four semesters or who has proof of relevant practical experience in that field can be appointed as examiner.
- (3) The chair of the examination committee makes sure that the names of the examiners are announced on time, usually at least four weeks prior to the examination date. The candidate for examination may suggest an examiner. No legal right arises from their suggestion. If an examiner no longer works for the university and is still willing to carry out the examination for a module but not the related courses, the student may suggest either this examiner for a repeat examination for the module or the examiner who also offers courses
- (4) The examiners appoint the observers. Observers must at least have the same qualification as certified by the examination or an equivalent qualification. They take the minutes in oral examinations and may also have the task of supervising and marking written examinations. As supervisors during written examinations, they have the right to remove candidates who create disturbances.
- (5) For examiners and observers, Section 7 subsection 6 (2-3) applies.
- (6) In programs of study where cooperation agreements exist with foreign higher education institutions, potential examiners of the foreign higher education institution can be appointed as examiners and observers. Subsections 2 and 5 apply in this case.

## Section 6

### Records of academic achievement

- (1) The participants of the Excellence Track must have notified the Excellence Track's coordination office by the end of the first week of the semester regarding the courses they would like to have counted toward the certificate program during the current semester. When electronically signing up for courses in the campus management system, the students must indicate if the course is to count toward the master's degree program or the Excellence Track. A subsequent change of the assignment is not possible. The participants' names are given to the Student Advising Office so they can be granted access to the relevant area in the campus management system.

(2) The type, scope, as well as requirements and conditions of the coursework and examinations to be fulfilled are in compliance with Faculty 08's regulations for the examination in the master's degree program Physics in the currently valid version.

(3) If courses for the complementary skills section cannot be signed up for through the campus management system, the Excellence Track's coordination office must be informed in writing by the end of the first week of the semester. After these courses have been successfully completed, copies of the proof of attendance are to be submitted to the coordination office.

(4) In case of oral exams, minutes of the exam are to be kept. These must include time and place, those present, as well as the main topics and the examination's result.

(5) The special requirements students with disabilities or a chronic illness may have are to be taken into account in correspondence with the principle of equal opportunity. If a candidate provides evidence that they are not able to take an examination completely or in part due to a prolonged or permanent disability or chronic illness, the chair of the examination committee will allow to extend the preparation period or to compensate for said examination in some equivalent way. In some cases, the examination committee may demand a medical certificate issued by a public health officer (*Amtsarzt*).

## Section 7

### Assessment of Examinations and Graded Coursework

(1) The grades for individual examinations and coursework are determined by the respective examiners. If the grades given by the examiners differ, the grade is the arithmetic average and the final grade is calculated according to subsection 3.

(2) Examinations and coursework will be assessed individually. The following grades are to be used when assessing examinations and coursework.

1	=	very good ("sehr gut")	=	an excellent performance
2	=	good ("gut")	=	a performance which substantially exceeds the average requirements
3	=	satisfactory ("befriedigend")	=	a performance corresponding to the average requirements
4	=	fair ("ausreichend")	=	a performance which, in spite of its flaws, suffices to meet the requirements
5	=	failed ("nicht ausreichend")	=	a performance which does not meet the requirements due to considerable flaws.

Grades may be differentiated by adding or subtracting 0.3. The grades 0.7, 4.3, 4.7 and 5.3 are not assigned.

(3) If an examination or coursework is graded by multiple examiners, the grade is as follows:

for an average of	1.5 or less	=	very good;
for an average of	more than 1,5 to/including 2,5	=	good;
for an average of	more than 2,5 to/including 3,5	=	satisfactory;,,
for an average of	more than 3,5 to/including 4,0	=	fair;
for an average of	more than 4,0	=	failed.

When calculating the final grade, only the first decimal place is taken into consideration; all other decimal places are eliminated without rounding.

## Section 8

### Passing, Failing and Repeating Examinations

- (1) Examinations and coursework are passed if they have been graded at least as “fair” (4.0) according to Section 7 subsection 2 and 3.
- (2) Examinations and coursework that were graded or considered “failed” can be repeated twice. The repeat examination shall be scheduled as soon as possible. If a repeat examination is not registered in time that examination is graded as failed with no option to repeat. It is not possible to repeat an examination or coursework that has already been passed.
- (3) If an examination is failed for the first, second, or final time, the examination committee will inform the student in writing, and this letter shall also include if and when the examination may be repeated. The letter informing a student of a failed examination shall contain a notice about the student’s rights of appeal.

## Section 9

### Absence, Withdrawal, Cheating, Misconduct

- (1) If the candidate misses a registered examination without valid reasons or if they withdraw after the beginning of the examination without valid reasons, the examination is graded as “failed” (5.0). Examinations and coursework are also considered failed if the candidate fails to complete them before the deadline passes. The same applies to written examinations and coursework that are not completed within the given period of time.
- (2) The examination committee shall be informed immediately in writing about the reasons brought forward for the withdrawal or absence according to subsection 1. If the examination committee accepts the reasons, a new examination date will be scheduled. Examination results that are already available will be recognized. If the absence or withdrawal is due to illness, a medical certificate must be submitted. The candidate must submit the medical certificate to the examination committee promptly, i.e. without undue delay and no later than three workdays after the examination date. A regular medical certificate confirming that the student is not able to take the examination is sufficient if the student misses the examination due to illness for the first time. If this happens a second time, the university may ask for a medical certificate which indicates the time of the medical treatment, type, extent and duration of the illness as well as its consequences on the ability to take examinations; alternatively, the university may ask for a medical certificate without these details issued by a public health officer (‘Amtsarzt’). There is no obligation to state the medical diagnosis. The illness of a child

that the candidate has custody of or the illness of a relative that requires special care is treated the same as the illness of the candidate. If the reasons are accepted, the examination will be scheduled for the next possible examination date.

(3) If candidates try to manipulate their examination by cheating or using unauthorized resources, the respective examination will be graded as "failed" (5.0) ("nicht ausreichend"). If a candidate disturbs the proper course of an examination, they can be excluded from continuing the examination – usually after being warned – by the respective examiner or supervisor. In such a case, the respective examination will be graded as "failed" (5.0).

(4) Candidates can request within a month that the decisions according to subsection 3 (1) and (3) be reviewed by the examination committee. The students will be informed immediately in writing about decisions with negative implications and will be provided with a reason as well as a legal basis and information on rights to appeal. The candidate in question shall be granted the chance to comment on the issue prior to the decision.

## Section 10

### Certificate

(1) If the candidate completes all courses and earns 23 credit points according to Section 2 subsection 2, they will promptly receive the certificate "Excellence Track (Physics)", usually within eight weeks after the last examination or coursework has been passed. This certificate lists the courses completed in addition to the regular courses required for the master's degree program Physics, as well as the participation in conferences and summer schools, and the grades of the respective examinations according to Section 7.

(2) The certificate shall display the day on which the last examination or coursework for the certificate program "Excellence Track (Physics)" was completed. The certificate will be signed by the dean of the faculty or the chair of the examination committee and bear the stamp of the faculty.

## Section 11

### Access to Examination Records

(1) Upon written request, the candidate will be granted access to their examination records and examination minutes. Access may only be granted after completion of the certificate program "Excellence Track (Physics)".

(2) The request must be submitted to the chair of the examination committee within one year of completing an examination. The chair of the examination committee decides on the time and place for accessing the examination records.

## Section 12

## Entry into Force

The examination regulations for the certificate program “Excellence Track (Physics)” come into force the day after they have been published in the official gazette of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. The regulations apply to all students registered for the certificate program “Excellence Track (Physics)” and enrolled in the master's degree program Physics starting in the summer semester 2021.

Mainz, on 26.04.2021

The Dean of Faculty 08 - Physics, Mathematics, and Computer Science  
at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz  
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Martin Hanke-Bourgeois