



GENEVA CENTRE OF  
HUMANITARIAN STUDIES  
CENTRE D'ÉTUDES  
HUMANITAIRES GENÈVE

## Continuing education

### Master's of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Humanitarian Action

## Study regulations

A Joint Centre of



UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE



INSTITUT DE HAUTES  
ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES  
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT  
GRADUATE INSTITUTE  
OF INTERNATIONAL AND  
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

## **Article 1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) jointly award a Master's of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Humanitarian Action (hereinafter the "MAS") through the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies.
- 1.2 The programme title is provided in English on the degree: "Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Humanitarian Action".
- 1.3 The programme is governed by these study regulations, the study plan, and the laws and regulations of the University of Geneva, the Canton of Geneva and Switzerland. This is a non-binding translation of the original study regulations in French. Only the French version is authoritative, which means that, if there is a discrepancy between the French and English versions, the French version will prevail.

## **Article 2. Programme organization and management**

- 2.1 The Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies' Programme Steering Committee ("the Steering Committee"), which defines, oversees, monitors and assesses the Centre's continuing education activities, is responsible for organizing and managing the programme for the MAS in Humanitarian Action.
- 2.2 The Steering Committee has five members:
  - the Director of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies, who is a professor at the University of Geneva and should, as a general rule, be an ordinary professor involved in teaching the MAS
  - two University of Geneva or IHEID professors or lecturers involved in teaching the MAS
  - two experts in the field.

The majority of the three full members of the Steering Committee must be from the University of Geneva and should, as a general rule, be professors or members of the teaching staff.

- 2.3 The Director of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies chairs the Steering Committee.
- 2.4 The members of the Steering Committee are appointed jointly by IHEID and the University of Geneva via the Board of Directors of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies, upon the recommendation of the Director of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies. Members are appointed for a four-year term, which may be renewed.
- 2.5 The Director of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies is also the MAS Director.
- 2.6 The MAS Director ensures that the MAS programme is properly implemented and that student assessment procedures are in place. The MAS Director must also make sure that students receive regular feedback from their teachers about their learning progress and their grades.
- 2.7 The decisions of the Steering Committee are taken by a simple majority of the members present. Where there is a tie, the chair casts two votes.

## **Article 3. Admission terms and procedures**

- 3.1 The following individuals are eligible for admission to the MAS:
  - a. those holding a Master's degree from a Swiss or foreign university or a specialized university, or a degree deemed equivalent, or

- b. those holding a Bachelor's degree from a Swiss or foreign university or a specialized university, or a degree deemed equivalent, and
- c. with at least two years of professional experience in humanitarian, development or social work.

3.2 Admission to the MAS may also be subject to the following prerequisites:

- a. C1 or equivalent level of proficiency in English, the teaching language
- b. the acquisition of specific skills.

3.3 Candidates must include all requested documents with their application.

3.4 The Steering Committee makes admissions decisions based on the candidates' applications. The Steering Committee will consider a candidate's academic background, as well as their command of English, experience, career goals and educational objectives. Where necessary, an interview may be held to complete the admissions procedure. When deciding whether to admit a candidate, the Steering Committee will also determine which, if any, of the prerequisites set out in Article 3.2 above will apply. In order to be admitted, the candidate must fulfil the prerequisites three months before the start of the MAS programme. If they fail to do so, the decision to admit the candidate will be revoked. The candidate will be able to submit another application at a later date, provided they meet the admission requirements in effect at the time of their subsequent application.

3.5 The Steering Committee is entitled to admit candidates who do not meet the criteria set out in Article 3.1 a), b) and c) based on their application and subject to Article 3.2 above. In this case, candidates must be able to demonstrate that they have the required knowledge in the selected field, provide official proof of their professional experience and show that they are capable of following the programme.

3.6 Once a candidate has been admitted and has paid the tuition fees within the deadlines set by the Steering Committee, they will be enrolled with the University of Geneva and registered as a continuing education student taking the MAS in Humanitarian Action; they will also be enrolled at IHEID. The University of Geneva's administrative and legal procedures therefore apply, as do its regulations.

3.7 If the candidate is unable to pay the tuition fees within the set deadline, they can write to the Steering Committee to request to pay the fees in instalments, providing the reasons for their request. If the Steering Committee agrees to the request, it will inform the candidate of the new payment terms and deadlines. Students must pay all tuition fees before they can be awarded their degree.

3.8 Candidates who, prior to applying for the MAS, successfully completed a CAS in the field of humanitarian action, worth up to 10 ECTS, a DAS in the field of humanitarian action, worth up to 25 ECTS credits, or five short courses, worth up to 10 ECTS credits, can ask for those ECTS credits to be transferred to the MAS, on the following terms:

- a. The candidate must submit their MAS application within the stated deadlines and meet the MAS admissions criteria.
- b. Their MAS application must include a written request for the credits obtained from the CAS, DAS or the short courses to be transferred to the MAS. Credits can only be transferred for courses completed up to the three years prior to their application.
- c. As these courses are an integral part of the MAS programme, the ECTS credits obtained from a CAS, a DAS or the short courses in the field of humanitarian action will be transferred to the MAS once the candidate has been admitted.

Credits can be recognized from a combination of CAS, DAS and short courses. In this case, the Steering Committee will specify in its admission decision which modules, classes or other

activities the student still needs to complete, the minimum and maximum timeframe for completing the MAS and the remaining tuition fees due.

- 3.9 The Steering Committee sets the total tuition fees for each edition of the MAS programme. The amount applies to the maximum length of study, as set out in Article 4.1 below.
- 3.10 The course will, as a general rule, be given every year. The Steering Committee may decide not to run the course if, in particular, not enough students are signed up.

## **Article 4. Length of study**

- 4.1 The programme must be completed within the following timeframe:
  - a. For the standard option: the programme should be completed in no less than 14 months and no more than 16 months.
  - b. For the flexible option: the programme should be completed in no less than 14 months and no more than 40 months.
- 4.2 The Steering Committee may grant exemptions to the length of study if there are reasonable grounds for doing so and if the student submits a written request stating their reasons. Extensions cannot be granted for more than six months beyond the maximum length of study.

## **Article 5. MAS programme**

- 5.1 The MAS programme includes:
  - the programme for a DAS in the field of humanitarian action (all modules except for the final dissertation)
  - the programme for a CAS in the field of humanitarian action, to be selected from among the CASs offered by the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies
  - five elective short courses
  - a final assignment (research workshops and an MAS dissertation).

The programme is taught over 14 months. If the student fails the final assignment on their first attempt, they may be given two additional months to resubmit the assignment, making a total of 16 months. The MAS is worth 60 ECTS credits.

- 5.2 If the student has been awarded a scholarship covering their tuition fees and/or living expenses, they must complete the programme on a full-time basis (i.e. over the course of 14 months). This is the standard programme. Other students may choose to take the flexible option, in which case they must complete the programme in no less than 14 months and no more than 38 months. If the student fails the final assignment on their first attempt, they may be given two additional months to resubmit the assignment, making a total of 40 months. Students must decide which programme option they will choose when they register for the MAS, or during the first 14 months of the programme.
- 5.3 The study plan sets out the number of compulsory modules, the module names, the list of DAS, CAS and elective short courses available, the requirements for the final assignment, and the number of ECTS credits for each DAS, CAS and short course, as well as for the research workshops and the MAS dissertation. The study plan is drawn up by the MAS Director and approved by the Steering Committee. It must be pre-approved by Faculty of Medicine's College of Professors and then approved by the Faculty of Medicine's Participatory Committee and the competent IHEID bodies.
- 5.4 The DAS, CAS, short courses and research workshops may be taught in a variety of ways: through in-person classes, online classes, practical work, seminars and other activities that are in

line with the programme. They may be taught in person, remotely (e-learning) or in a blended-learning format.

## **Article 6. Assessments**

- 6.1 Details of the assessments terms for the DAS, CAS, short courses, research workshops and the MAS dissertation are provided to students at the start of the programme. Assessments must be conducted within the stipulated deadlines.
- 6.2 To pass, students must obtain a grade of at least 4.00:
- a. as their average grade for the modules for the CAS or DAS
  - b. on the final exam for each short course
  - c. on the MAS dissertation.

If a student passes the modules for a CAS or DAS, they are awarded all of the ECTS credits for the CAS or DAS in one go. If a student passes a short course or the MAS dissertation, they are awarded the ECTS for that particular course or assignment.

In addition, students are required to attend the research workshops as part of their preparation for the MAS dissertation. As part of these workshops, the students must complete written and oral exercises, which are not graded but for which the students will receive a 'pass' or 'fail' assessment. A student who obtains a 'pass' has successfully completed the workshop. If the student passes all of the workshop assessments, they are awarded the related ECTS credits.

- 6.3 If a student receives a grade below 4.00 as their average grade for the modules for a CAS or DAS, on the final exam for a short course or on the MAS dissertation, the student is allowed to take the assessment or exam on which they received less than 4.00 a second time. The second attempt will be organized as promptly as possible, taking into account the attendance constraints for international students and the maximum length of study. If, on their second attempt, a student receives a grade below 4.00 as their average for the DAS or CAS modules, on the final exam for a short course or on the MAS dissertation, they will be expelled from the programme and will not be awarded the MAS degree.

If a student fails one of the assessments for the research workshops, they are allowed to take the assessment as second time. The second attempt will be organized as promptly as possible, taking into account the attendance constraints for international students and the maximum length of study. If the student obtains a 'fail' on their second attempt, they will be expelled from the programme and will not be awarded the MAS degree.

- 6.4 If a student does not turn up for an assessment that they have signed up for, the student is deemed to have failed that assessment unless there are valid grounds for their absence. Valid grounds include an illness or accident. The student must inform the Steering Committee immediately in writing of the reasons for their absence; as a general rule, this must be done no later than three days following the assessment. The Steering Committee will decide whether the reasons for the absence are valid and set the deadline by which the student must have taken the assessment. The student must provide a medical certificate as well as any other information deemed useful.
- 6.5 Students are required to regularly attend and actively participate in classes; they must be present for at least 80% of the weekly classes for each module.
- 6.6 Students can complete the assessments for the DAS and CAS modules and the short courses and write the MAS dissertation in either French or English.
- 6.7 If a student does not complete the programme and has a valid reason for not doing so, they can request a certificate from the Steering Committee listing the modules, short courses and other activities that they completed, and the grades and number of credits obtained, provided that they

are not in a position where they could be expelled from the programme.

## **Article 7. MAS dissertation for the final assignment**

- 7.1 The MAS dissertation is worth 10 ECTS credits. Details about the content of the dissertation, other practicalities, the supervision process and submission requirements are provided in a specific document that students will receive at the start of the programme.
- 7.2 The MAS dissertation is carried out under the supervision of one of the MAS teachers, as appointed by the MAS Director. The MAS dissertation supervisor must hold a PhD and be a professor, research and teaching associate, senior lecturer, lecturer, or research and teaching fellow at the University of Geneva or IHEID. It is possible to have two supervisors, provided that one of the two supervisors holds a PhD.
- 7.3 Once the supervisor deems the MAS dissertation to be satisfactory, a jury of two people is created. The jury comprises the MAS dissertation supervisor and a second reader, who is a member of the teaching staff at the University of Geneva, IHEID or another university, or an expert or practitioner in the relevant field.
- 7.4 Students must obtain a grade of 4.00 or above on their MAS dissertation. If a student successfully completes the MAS dissertation, they are awarded the related ECTS credits.
- 7.5 If a student obtains a grade below 4.00 for the MAS dissertation, they can submit their work a second time. The second attempt will be organized as promptly as possible, taking into account the attendance constraints for international students and the maximum length of study. If they fail their second attempt, they will be expelled from the programme.

## **Article 8. Graduating**

- 8.1 The MAS in Humanitarian Action is awarded upon the recommendation of the Steering Committee, once the requirements set out in Articles 6 and 7 above have been met and the MAS tuition fees set out in Articles 3.6 and 3.7 above have been paid in full.
- 8.2 The degree is jointly awarded and signed by the Rector of the University of Geneva, the Director of IHEID and the Director of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies.
- 8.3 If a student does not obtain all 60 ECTS credits, the Steering Committee may, upon the recommendation of the MAS Director, instead award a DAS or CAS in Humanitarian Action, depending on the number of ECTS credits obtained and provided that the student is not in a position where they could be expelled from the MAS programme and has met the requirements for the relevant DAS or CAS. The student must immediately submit a written request to the Steering Committee in order to change programmes, setting out their reasons.
- 8.4 Since the CAS and DAS in the field of humanitarian action are an integral part of the MAS programme, individuals who have obtained a MAS cannot be awarded a DAS or CAS as well. To prevent the duplication of degrees, any DAS or CAS obtained in the field of humanitarian action must be handed in before the MAS in Humanitarian Action can be awarded.

## **Article 9. Cheating and plagiarism**

- 9.1 A student caught cheating or attempting to cheat, including plagiarism or attempted plagiarism, fails that particular assessment and is not entitled to a second attempt (see Article 9.2 below).
- 9.2 Depending on the severity of the case and whether it was premeditated, the Steering Committee may decide that the failure is definitive or may cancel all of the grades obtained by the student

for other modules taken during the same exam session and/or for the MAS dissertation.

- 9.3 The Faculty of Medicine's Dean's Office, upon the recommendation of the Steering Committee, will involve the University's disciplinary council if:
- i) disciplinary proceedings are deemed appropriate
  - ii) if the student has failed definitively, leading to the student being expelled from the programme.
- 9.4 The Steering Committee or the Faculty of Medicine's Dean's Office must have heard the student beforehand, and the student has the right to consult their file.

## **Article 10. Elimination**

- 10.1 A student is expelled from the MAS programme if they:
- a. definitively fail the assessments for the CAS or DAS modules, the final exam for one of the short courses or the MAS dissertation, or fail to comply with the required deadlines or procedures, as set out in Articles 6, 7 and 8 above
  - b. fail one of the assessments for the research workshops, in accordance with Article 6 above
  - c. do not actively and regularly take part in at least 80% of the weekly classes for each module, as required in Article 6 above
  - d. do not obtain all the ECTS credits required for the programme within the maximum length of study stipulated in Article 4 above.
- 10.2 If a student is caught cheating or attempting to cheat, including plagiarism or attempted plagiarism, they may also be expelled from the MAS, in keeping with Article 9 above.
- 10.3 The decision to expel a student is taken by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and the Director of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies, upon the recommendation of the Steering Committee.
- 10.4 An expelled student must pay all fees due and is not entitled to a refund, regardless of when the expulsion takes place.
- 10.5 If a student wishes to withdraw from the programme, they must inform the Steering Committee immediately in writing; as a general rule, the student should do this within three days after they stop attending classes. A student who wishes to withdraw from the programme must still pay all fees due and is not entitled to a refund, regardless of when they decide to leave, unless they have a valid reason for their withdrawal, as described in Article 6.4 above.

## **Article 11. Appeals procedures**

- 11.1 A student may lodge an appeal with the relevant body against any decision taken under these study regulations, within 30 days following notification of the decision.
- 11.2 The University of Geneva's regulations of 16 March 2009 governing appeals procedures (RIO-UNIGE) apply.
- 11.3 The appellate decision may then be appealed before the Administrative Chamber of the Court of Justice within 30 days following notification.

## **Article 12. Entry into force and transitional provisions**

- 12.1 These study regulations came into effect on 1 September 2021. They apply to all candidates and students beginning their studies on or after that date.

- 12.2 They replace the regulations of 17 September 2012, subject to Article 12.3 below.
- 12.3 Students already studying for a MAS in Humanitarian Action when these study regulations took effect are also subject to these study regulations. The conditions for transitioning from the old regulations to these regulations are set out in a transitional directive drawn up by the Steering Committee and approved by the Director of the Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies and the Dean of the University of Geneva's Faculty of Medicine.
- 12.4 Article 3.8 of these regulations applies to students who wish to be admitted to the MAS in Humanitarian Action and who obtained a DAS in Humanitarian Action in the 2018/2019, 2019/2020 or 2020/2021 academic year or a CAS in Health and Humanitarian Emergencies, in Communication, Advocacy and Negotiation in Humanitarian Settings, or in Humanitarian Distance Learning: Designing Strategies and Projects for Humanitarian Action in the 2018/2019, 2019/2020 or 2020/2021 academic year. They will be subject to these study regulations, in accordance with the transitional directive drawn up by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will specify in its admission decision which modules and classes will be recognized, the number of ECTS credits that will be transferred, which modules, classes or other activities the student still needs to complete, the minimum and maximum length of study for completing the MAS and the tuition fees due. Credits can be transferred in this way up to three years after obtaining the initial DAS or CAS in humanitarian action.