

M.A. Development Studies

A degree programme of the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences.

The information in this infosheet is pertinent for the degree programme starting in winter semester 2025/26 (version 2019).

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[Web page of the degree programme](#)
Information for prospective students

PDF download



Last revised in May 2025

How to apply

Degree awarded: Master of Arts (M.A.)

Language of instruction: the entire programme is taught in English

Entry qualifications

To be eligible for a place on this degree programme, you must have:

- An above-average university degree (Bachelor's, *Magister*, *Diplom*, state examination) from a university in Germany or abroad based on at least three years of study in **social sciences**, i.e. economics, anthropology, demography, empirical social or human geography, sociology, political science, administrative science or any other equivalent degree with a minimum of **60 ECTS credits in one or several of these disciplines**. (Any past achievements and qualifications gained in 'Wirtschaftswissenschaften' (combined business and economics programmes) must be derived specifically from economics ('Volkswirtschaftslehre') modules)
- Out of the 60 ECTS credits referenced above, **10 ECTS credits must come from empirical research methods**, such as data collection, data analysis, mathematics and/or statistics. Please note that a general course in research methods is not enough and does not count in this case.
- The final grade for your undergraduate degree should be equivalent to **2.5** or better according to the German grading scale or ranked among the best 50% of your cohort.
- Adequate **knowledge of English at level B2** of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), unless English is your native language or language instruction for your prior education.

International applicants with a university degree from abroad must provide proof of [German language proficiency](#) at **level A1 CEFR** (beginner's level). If you do not have proof of German proficiency at the time of application or enrolment, you can submit it during your first year at the University of Passau.

Application before completion of your undergraduate degree

You can apply for a place on this programme before completing your undergraduate degree, provided you will have achieved at least 140 ECTS credits by the time teaching starts on the Master's programme. You will have to submit your transcript of records, which must show how many regular semesters of study you have completed, how many ECTS credits you have attained, and that your projected final grade is expected to be 2.5 or better according to the German grading scale. Among the 140 ECTS credits, there must be 60 ECTS credits in social sciences, including 10 ECTS credits in empirical research methods.

You will have to provide proof of having completed your undergraduate degree to the Student Registration Office by 30 September the following year. This deadline cannot be extended by taking a leave of absence.

For more information, please contact Dr Christian Dölle (Christian.Doelle@uni-passau.de).

Application

Starting semester: This programme starts in October each year.

The **application deadline** is **31 May**.

[Please apply online.](#)

If you have any questions on the application process, please contact the [Student Registration Office](#), Innstr. 41, 94032 Passau, Germany; phone: +49 851 509 1127; e-mail: registry@uni-passau.de.

Information for new students

Please visit our website to find out everything you need to know as you're [starting out on your studies](#) and for information on the [Orientation Weeks](#).

The following videos are particularly helpful for new students:

- [At the start of the degree programme](#)
- [Semester cycle](#)
- [Important documents for your studies](#)
- [European Credit Transfer System \(ECTS\) and the standard period of study](#)
- [Course types](#)
- [Language courses and placement tests](#)
- [Examinations](#)
- [Online portals for your studies](#)
- [Scientific methods](#)
- [Leisure activities](#)
- [Advice centres](#)

Modules, module catalogue, overall grade calculation

The curriculum is modularised, and each module has a specific ECTS credit load. When you pass a module exam, you acquire the number of ECTS credits allotted for that module. You will also receive a mark on your exam; however, this does not affect the number of ECTS credits awarded – you receive the full credit load for a pass and no credits for a fail. As this master's degree programme comprises a total of 120 ECTS credits, you should aim to gain **approx. 30 ECTS credits each semester** to complete the programme within the standard period of study.

In the [module catalogue](#) you will find detailed descriptions of the content of all modules and courses, as well as any module prerequisites and information on the examination format. There is no fixed sequence in which you should complete your module examinations; however, you should generally pass the introductory modules before attempting the more advanced modules.

As a rule, you will receive marks for all modules. The final grade for your degree is calculated based on the ECTS-weighted module marks and the mark you attain on your master's thesis.

Courses

The individual courses for the modules can be found in **Stud.IP**, the University's learning management system: [Master Development Studies \(Version SS 2019\) \(Master\)](#)

OVERVIEW OF MODULES

When planning out your studies, please use the [module catalogue](#) and check that they are applicable to the specific version of the [study and examination regulation](#) under which you are studying the programme.

Module Area A: 'Foundation'

The module group 'Foundation Modules' consists of two examination modules that have to be completed by all students.

Module Group 'Foundation Modules'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
L	Methods and Theories of Development Research	2	5
S	Interdisciplinary Development Seminar	2	10
Total for 2 modules:		4	15

Module Area B: 'Research'

The module group 'Research Methods' consists of modules about research methods as well as a research seminar and two research colloquia. Students must earn a minimum of **25 ECTS credits** in this module group to proceed. Completion of the *Research Seminar* and the *colloquia* is compulsory for all students on the programme. Apart from the colloquia, all modules in this group are examination modules.

Module Group 'Research Modules'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
L+T	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods	4	5
SE+T	Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods	4	5
L+T	Advanced Quantitative Research Methods (Evaluation of Development Policies)	4	5
SE+T	Advanced Qualitative Research Methods	4	5
SE	Research Seminar	2	5
C	Development Studies Colloquium I	1	3
C	Development Studies Colloquium II	1	2
Total for 6 modules:		16	25

Module Area C: 'Specialisation'

A minimum of **40 ECTS credits** must be gained in this module area. All modules in this module area are examination modules.

You are **required** to complete **at least one module each from three of the five module groups** forming the core subject areas. The module groups forming the core subject areas are:

- *Economics*
- *Southeast Asian Studies*
- *Sociology and Politics*
- *Sustainability and Resources*
- *Geographies of Development*

You will specialise in a field or further consolidate your knowledge by completing additional modules.

You have the **option** of placing a **study focus** on **one** of the following areas, which will then be **indicated in your final transcript**:

- **Southeast Asian Studies**

The subject area 'Southeast Asian Studies' will be shown in the final transcript if you gain at least 20 ECTS credits in the core subject area 'Southeast Asian Studies' and at least another 10 ECTS credits in an Asian foreign language (module area D: 'Transfer').

- **Economics**

The subject area 'Economics' will be shown if you earn at least 20 ECTS credits in the core subject area 'Economics' and another 5 ECTS credits in *Advanced Quantitative Research Methods* (module area B: 'Research').

- **Sustainability**

The subject area 'Sustainability' will be shown if you gain at least 20 ECTS credits in the core subject area 'Sustainability and Resources' and another 10 ECTS credits in either *Natural Resource Management in Asia* (module area C: 'Specialisation' – Module Group 'Southeast Asian Studies') or in *Sociology of Sustainability – Reflexive Perspectives* (module area C: 'Specialisation' – Module Group 'Sociology and Politics').

Module Group 'Economics'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
L+T	Health, Development and Public Policy	4	5
L+T	Micro Development Economics	4	5
L+T	Growth, Inequality and Poverty	4	5
SE	Development Economics	2	7
L+T	Economics of Education	4	5
L+T	Behavioural Public Economics	4	5
L+T	Economics of Corruption	2	7
L+T	Anticorruption and the Design of Institutions	4	5
SE	Experimental Ethics and Corruption	2	7
SE	Lab and Field Experiments: Corruption, Conflict and Cooperation	4	10
L	Behavioural Game Theory	3	5
L+T	Fundamentals of International Trade	4	5
L+T	Empirics of International Trade	4	5
SE	Strategy and Innovation Consulting	2	7
L+T	Strategy for High-Tech Start-ups	4	5

Module Group 'Southeast Asian Studies'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
SE	Natural Resource Management in Asia	2	10
SE	Between Success and Failure: Development Policies and Projects in Southeast Asia	2	10
SE	Democratisation, Elite formation and Social Development	2	10
SE	Multiple Modernities of Southeast Asia	2	10

Module Group 'Sociology and Politics'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
SE	Sociology of Sustainability – Reflexive Perspectives	2	10
SE	Urbanism	2	10
SE	Conflicts, Disasters, Processes of State-Building	2	10
SE	Organisations, Institutions and Development	2	10
SE	International Media, Development Cooperation and Development Journalism	2	5
SE	Cooperation and Conflict in International Relations	2	5

Module Group 'Sustainability and Resources'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
SE	Agricultural and Rural Development	2	10
SE	Sustainability	2	10
SE	Gender and Development	2	10
SE	Sustainability and Resources: Materiality and Infrastructure in Society	2	10

Module Group 'Geographies of Development'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
L	Regional Development	2	5
SE	Regional Development	2	10
L	Mobilities and Development	2	5
SE	Mobilities and Development	2	10
L	Human and Environmental Relations	2	5
SE	Human and Environmental Relations	2	10

Module Area D: 'Transfer'

In the module group 'Transfer Modules', a total of 15 ECTS credits must be earned.

The module *Applied Development Studies* is **compulsory** for all students. This project module should be closely related to your master's thesis. You can complete this module **either** with an **individual research project** under the supervision of an examiner from module area C: 'Specialisation' **or** with an **internship** supervised by the chairperson of the Board of Examiners.

Students opting for the **Foreign Language module**¹ choose one of the following languages and gain **10 ECTS credits**:

- Chinese
- Czech
- English (available from level C1 CEFR)
- French
- German as a foreign language (available from level A2 CEFR)
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Thai

For French and Spanish language courses, students have to choose between the Cultural Studies and Business/Economics specialisation starting from the Intermediate ('Aufbaustufe') level. For all other language courses, students have to choose the Cultural Studies specialisation.

For '**Development Studies in Perspective**', the chairperson of the Board of Examiners may also approve modules from other master's programmes at the University of Passau upon request.

Apart from *Applied Development Studies*, all modules in this group are examination modules.

¹ If you **have existing knowledge of the language** you want to study and have not previously studied this language at the University of Passau, you are required to take a [placement test](#), the results of which are binding. You do not need to take a placement test if you have no prior knowledge of the language, please register for the beginner's level A1 CEFR.

Module Group 'Transfer Modules'

Module type	Module title	WCH	ECTS credits
Project/ Internship	Applied Development Studies (at least four weeks)	N/A	5
T	Foreign Language	8	10
L/SE	Development Studies in Perspective	2–4	10
L/SE	Development Studies in Perspective I	2–4	5
L/SE	Development Studies in Perspective II	2–4	5
Total for 2–3 modules:		2–8	15

Master's thesis

All students have to complete a master's thesis. You will be awarded **25 ECTS credits** for receiving a pass mark on your thesis.

Key of abbreviations

C	=	Colloquium
CEFR	=	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
ECTS	=	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
L	=	Lecture
SE	=	Seminar
T	=	Tutorial
VLE	=	Virtual Learning Environment
WCH	=	Teaching contact hours per week

During your studies

Helmut-Schmidt-Programme (Master's Scholarships for Public Policy and Good Governance)

For highly qualified graduates from threshold or developing countries, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Bonn, Germany, yearly grants up to ten full scholarships to cover the expenses for the whole two-year curriculum at the University of Passau. [Further information on the scholarship programme](#)

Internship or research project

As part of this degree programme you will complete either an *internship* or your own *research project*. This will be done in the module 'Applied Development Studies', (Transfer Modules, module area D). If you opt for the internship, this must be carried out in accordance with the [internship guidelines](#). Please note that the internship will not be arranged for you; it is up to you to look for an internship opportunity and agree on the internship contents and structure with your internship employer.

Kuwi netzwerk e.V. and the Centre for Careers and Competencies (ZKK) can support you in your search for a suitable internship. You may also be eligible for a scholarship, if you decide to complete an internship abroad. On the [ZKK website](#), you will find confirmation letter templates for internships.

Study abroad

Even if [studying abroad](#) is not an obligatory part of the degree programme, you can still spend a semester or more abroad as part of the programme. If you need help planning your stay abroad, get in touch with the [International Office](#).

Master's thesis

Your thesis should demonstrate your ability to independently carry out academic research by applying scientific methods to a clearly defined subject matter. Prior to commencing the thesis, you will have to accumulate a minimum of 80 ECTS credits in this degree programme, of which 5 ECTS credits must stem from the Research Seminar module (module area B: Research).

You will write your thesis in English. You will be given four months to write the thesis, which should have a maximum length of 15,000 words and will be awarded **25 ECTS credits** for receiving a pass mark on your thesis.

Completing your degree studies

You have passed the master's examination when you have gained pass mark on all required modules and the master's thesis, and acquired at least 120 ECTS credits. You will then graduate and be awarded the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A.)**.

At the end of the degree programme, you should submit a [written request for your final degree documents](#) (i.e. the final transcript, degree certificate etc.) to the Examinations Office.

Key competencies and career planning

With the so-called ZKK courses (the German abbreviation ZKK stands for the [Future: Career and Competencies Section](#)), the University offers you a comprehensive range of transferable skills seminars and computer courses for free. ZKK also offers a wide range of careers and internship advice services, such as the [careers portal](#), which make it easier for you to start your career later on.

Voluntary completion of additional modules

If you earn more than the required 120 ECTS credits in your degree programme, these additional credits are listed separately in your final transcript. However, the marks attained in these additional modules do not count towards the final grade for your degree.

You can acquire various [additional qualifications and certificates](#), and all students enrolled at Bavarian universities can take advantage of the online courses of the [Bavarian Virtual University \(Virtuelle Hochschule Bayern\)](#).

Doctoral study

This master's programme enables you to work according to scientific principles and thus gives you the prerequisites for [doctoral study](#). When undertaking a doctoral project, you should ideally have already done research in the field of your future doctoral topic in your master's thesis. The University of Passau offers excellent conditions for pursuing a scientific research project within the framework of a doctorate.

Important exam-related rules and regulations

Study and examination regulations; module catalogue

- [General study and examination regulation \(AStuPO\) for the master's degree programmes of the faculty](#)
- [Subject-specific Study and Examination Regulation \(FStuPO\)](#)
- [Module catalogue](#)

Programme duration and credit points

The standard period of study is **four semesters** (120 ECTS credits).

The maximum duration of study is six semesters. If you have not passed all required examinations after the sixth semester, you will fail the degree programme in the first instance; however, you will then be given an additional two semesters in which to complete the missing assessments. This period is not interrupted by a leave of absence or de-registration.

If you have not passed all required modules by the end of the eighth semester, you will fail the programme without the possibility of re-sitting the examinations. It is important to understand that this "endgültig nicht bestanden" status, which means "final fail", also bars you from enrolling in the same degree programme at other German universities.

Resitting failed examinations

You may resit failed module examinations up to **two times**. You may re-attempt a failed master's thesis *once*; however, you must do this with a new topic.

Resitting passed examinations for mark improvement

A maximum of four passed examination modules can be repeated once for voluntary mark improvement. Only the better mark attained is shown on the degree certificate and included in the final grade calculation. The last opportunity to repeat an examination for mark improvement is in the semester following the last examination taken during the degree programme. You can [register for mark improvement](#) at the Examinations Office.

Credit transfers

If you wish to have coursework and assessments completed elsewhere or for another degree programme counted towards your degree, please contact the [degree programme coordinators](#).

Cheating in examinations; plagiarism

If you attempt to influence the result of an assessment by cheating (e.g. plagiarism or use of unauthorised examination aids), the assessment in question is assigned a mark of 5.0 ("insufficient", "nicht ausreichend") or "fail" ("nicht bestanden").

When preparing written work such as seminar papers, master's theses, etc. you must do so in compliance with the [University of Passau's Rules for the Ascertainment of Good Research Practice](#). Such written work should usually be submitted in electronic form.

Illness and inability to attend examinations

If you fall ill before an examination, you must decide before the examination whether you want to withdraw from the examination due to illness. You will need a medical certificate. If you become ill during an examination and have to abort the examination, you also have to provide a medical certificate.

In either case you must submit the completed [Inability to Attend Examinations Due to Illness Form](#) at the earliest opportunity. You should submit the form and medical certificate to the Examinations Office as described in the [information sheet on inability to attend examinations](#).

If you fall ill for a longer period of time during the semester, it may be expedient for you to take [leave of absence](#) for the whole semester. If that is the case, please seek advice from the Student Registration Office and the Advice Centre for Students with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses.

Academic adjustments (exam access arrangements)

If you have a disability, are chronically or psychologically ill, you may be able to apply for [academic adjustments](#), including access arrangements (e.g. extra time for written exams). The advice centre for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses will be happy to advise and support you with your application.

Service and advice centres

Academic Advice Service

The [Academic Advice Service](#) staff provide general advice on all degree programmes and on questions that may arise during your studies. Please make an appointment if you wish to talk to us in person, by telephone or online.

Academic Advice Service, Innstr. 41, 94032 Passau
Drop-in hours: Wednesdays 9:00–12:00
Phone: +49 851 509 1154
E-mail: advice@uni-passau.de

Programme advisers and programme coordinators

If you have a more in-depth questions about your degree programme (e.g. on specialisation, integration of periods of study or work abroad, or credit transfers), please contact the [programme coordinator](#):

Dr Christian Dölle
Innstrasse 40 (Nikolakloster Building), Room 227b, 94032 Passau
Phone: +49 851 509 2623
E-mail: christian.doelle@uni-passau.de

Examinations Office

The [Examinations Office](#) has overall responsibility for all exam-related matters. Visit the Examinations Office website for important information and applications concerning your degree programme.

iStudi Coach: job-market coaching for international students

The University's [iStudi Coach](#) offers specific advice to international degree-seeking students enrolled at the University of Passau. This service is specifically targeted at international students – which is what the “iStudi” stands for – and helps you with all your questions regarding your studies, career orientation and everyday life in Passau.

The “**iStudi Pass**” programme helps you to prepare for entering the job market in and around Passau. To be able to answer your questions as fully as possible, the iStudi Coach works together closely with the Academic Advice Service, the Future: Careers and Competencies Section and the International Office as well as a network of partners within and outside the University.

Student Committee of the Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences

The [student committee](#) can help you with matters related to student life from a student perspective. It organises the Orientation Week before the start of studies, represents student interests in the University's policy committees and organises numerous leisure activities.

Innstrasse 40 (Nikolakloster Building), Room 235, 94032 Passau

Phone: +49 851 509 2613

E-mail: fachschaft-sobi@uni-passau.de

kuwi netzwerk international e.V.

With a membership figure of around 3,000 – comprised entirely of students and alumni of the cultural studies-related degree programmes of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities – [kuwi netzwerk international](#) provides assistance finding internships as well as other forms of employment; *kuwi netzwerk international* also provides advice to students on writing up timetables and all other study-related questions.

Information on all [advice services and student societies](#) can be found online.