

COVID19 Procedure adjustments: admission conditions and enrolments Septembre 2020

Due to the COVID19 pandemic and the ensuing health crisis, many students are unable to obtain final, official documents related to their prior academic qualifications, for a variety of reasons. The Graduate Institute is aware of these difficulties and has adjusted its policies to be as accommodating as possible. These accommodations, while providing a temporary solution to an unprecedented crisis, put these students in a vulnerable position and should be resolved as quickly as possible.

An important distinction must be made between the process used to satisfy admission conditions on one hand and that used to enrol (“immatriculate”) students in Swiss higher education, on the other.

Admission conditions

Some students received an admission offer that is conditional upon successful completion of a prior degree: typically, bachelor degree for MA admission or master degree for PhD admission.

We are aware and understand that due to the health crisis, some universities had to postpone final evaluations, their corrections, processing and the award of these degrees, and that these students are therefore not able to document these prior degrees in good time before starting their study programme with us.

Please note that the requirement of completing the prior degree has a firm legal basis, both in the Graduate Institute’s Academic Regulations and in Swiss Higher Education regulations. Specifically, Article 2.1 of our master Academic Regulations reads:

Article 2 Admission

1. Applicants must fulfil the following conditions:

- be in possession of a bachelor’s degree (worth at least 180 *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS – credits*) or a degree/diploma deemed to be equivalent in one or more disciplines relevant to the programme concerned, as indicated in the Guidelines;
- satisfy any other conditions, especially the language requirements, stipulated by the Institute.

Article 2.1 of our PhD Academic Regulations reads:

Article 2 Admission

1. External candidates

- a. Any candidate holding a post-graduate university diploma (or a degree deemed equivalent), in a discipline relevant to the chosen programme and meeting the Institute's general conditions of admission is eligible to apply to the PhD programme.
- b. Candidates must send their application within the set deadline and submit the supporting documents required by the Institute, including but not limited to a provisional thesis topic and a brief description of the topic to be researched.
- c. Admission decisions are taken by the relevant department on the basis of the candidate's application file and the quality of their Master dissertation (if applicable), as well as the relevance of the topic. The decision cannot be appealed.

Failing to comply would jeopardise not only the quality of our academic programmes, but also our accreditation.

It is therefore a challenging balancing act to comply with these strict requirements while accommodating the unprecedented difficulties faced by our new students this year.

Consequently, the Graduate Institute has decided that new students who are not able to document successful completion of their prior degree will be permitted to enrol for the autumn 2020 semester only, with the following provisions:

- Students must make every reasonable effort to complete their degree requirements and obtain an official confirmation from their university as quickly as possible during the autumn 2020 semester.
- Students who anticipate that they will not receive their prior degree must inform the Admission Office as quickly as possible. They will not have permission to pursue their studies in the 2020-21 academic year.
Students who fail to pass their final evaluations will be able to apply again for admission in September 2021.
If the awarding university is responsible for the degree not being conferred (for example, because of prolonged closures or administrative delays), then a deferral request can be submitted.
- By the start of the spring 2021 semester in February 2021, students who are still unable to document their prior degree award will not be permitted to pursue their study programme. Their exact status will be determined per individual circumstances. Possible outcomes include exclusion (student would need to re-apply for admission); suspension until the degree award can be confirmed; deferral; or other, to be decided by the academic administration of the Graduate Institute.

We encourage students who are unable to document their prior degree award to delay their arrival in Geneva, in order to minimize the financial, logistical and emotional risk of not being

able to continue beyond the autumn semester. Instead, we advise these students to take advantage of our remote learning possibilities. Our admission team remains available to discuss the options and support students who face this situation.

Enrolments (“immatriculations”)

All students who have registered for courses will receive a Swiss higher education identification number (“SIUS”) regardless of whether they participate in person or remotely.

Exceptionally, we will be able to enrol students who present an official, original confirmation of their prior degree award, issued by their previous university and signed by a qualified university official, even if this document is not an official final transcript or degree diploma. This document must be shown in person to a member of the admission team, to allow its authentication.

The final, original, official transcript and degree diploma must then be shown, in person, as soon as they become available and no later than the start of the spring 2021 semester. Failure to do so may result in the student not being permitted to continue their study programme. Their exact status will be determined per individual circumstances. Possible outcomes include exclusion (student would need to re-apply for admission); suspension until the degree award can be confirmed; or deferral; or other, to be decided by the academic administration of the Graduate Institute.

Notes:

1. Students who had previously enrolled at a Swiss institution of higher learning already have a unique identification number (SIUS). They must ask that previous Swiss institution to issue an “exmatriculation certificate” indicating this number. A new SIUS number cannot be assigned.
2. Students who completed their secondary education in Switzerland must show us their original, official Swiss high school diploma (“maturité” or matura”) in addition to their prior university degree(s).
3. If your prior university uses an online authentication service, this is acceptable in lieu of the paper transcript and diploma. Typically, you or your prior university’s Registrar will provide us with a URL and security access codes, QR code or similar.
4. Paper transcripts should be submitted in their original sealed envelope, to the extent possible.