Sociology, Social Policy, Social Work

Degree conferred
Master of Arts in Social Sciences: Sociology, Social Policy, Social Work

Options
For information on the optional award of the distinction «Bilingual curriculum» (French – German), please contact the relevant Department (see Contact).
Three options available:
- Sociology
- Social Policy and Social Work
- Politics and Society

Languages of study
Study in German. A number of lectures may be offered in English.

Commencement of studies
Commencement of studies in the Autumn Semester (September) or in the Spring Semester (February)

Access to further studies
Ph.D.

This study programme has an international and interdisciplinary orientation. It provides specialised, in-depth knowledge of social phenomena, institutions, structures, processes, practices and their change. The main focus is on the topics of social inequalities, poverty, work, conflicts, delinquency and gender, and on the cross-sectional fields of politics, social policy and social work. Emphasis is placed on theory-driven comparative research and teaching, as well as on the ability to think critically and call things into question. The methodological training covers a wide range: both qualitative and quantitative empirical methods of social research are taught.

Students choose one of the three Master’s options and may complement the in-depth programme by means of a complementary minor study programme. The study programme is offered in German (a number of lectures may be offered in English). Bilingual studies (German/French) are possible.

Profile of the study programme
The goal of this Master’s programme is to convey specialised, in-depth knowledge of social phenomena, institutions, structures, processes, practices and their change. At its core are the actions of people, groups, organisations and states and the relationships between them. Further matters of interest are the way in which people live and shape their relationships and how they give meaning to their actions and the world they live in. The orientation of the programme is international and interdisciplinary. The emphasis is on theory-driven comparative research and teaching, as well as the ability to think critically and argue on the basis of evidence and reasoning. The methodological training is broadly conceived: both qualitative and quantitative empirical methods of social research are taught. Students completing the programme are capable of conducting and interpreting complex, qualitative and quantitative research. This opens the gateway to a variety of professions and fields of activity.

Fribourg Profile
The language of tuition is German, a number of lectures may be offered in English. Bilingual studies (German/French) are possible.

One of the following options must be selected:

- **Option Sociology**
  This option combines sociological theories and empirical social research with the analysis of various topics dealing with issues in the Global North and the Global South. In particular, it offers in-depth comparative analyses of current challenges in various areas of society under conditions of increasing transnationalisation of economics, politics and culture, exacerbation of ecological problems, growth of the world population, and demographic aging in developed market societies and in countries and regions of the Global South. This option promotes a theoretically sound, critical awareness of global inequalities and connections and serves as an introduction to international social analyses.

- **Option Social Policy and Social Work**
  Two core issues are paramount in this option. Social and cultural differences (such as education, income, gender or nationality) are central to the justification and understanding of social inequalities. In many cases these reflect varying degrees of access to economic, social and other societal resources. In such instances, latent and manifest social problems develop, which can culminate in political and economic conflicts or delinquency. The topic Production of Welfare focuses on the question of differences between welfare regimes. Social policy and social work are understood as institutional answers to prevention or management of social problems and conflicts on a local, national and global/international level.

- **Option Politics and Society**
  This option has a politological orientation. One focal element is that students should be given the opportunity to study aspects of comparative political studies at a more intensive level in lectures and seminars. Here, special attention is paid to political developments in Western and Eastern Europe, which also include illiberal tendencies in politics and society (e.g. populism, increasing power of the executive). Another element is that a central actor of the political system, the state, is examined in a European and a global context. Invariably, strength and weakness of the state are also functions of a social context in which other actors, crises and conflicts are able to challenge the state or even call it into question.

The specialisation programmes worth 30 ECTS credits «Sociology», «Social Policy and Social Work», «Politics and Society» and «Gender, Society, Social Policy» are smaller units which allow
students to complement this Master’s programme within the Domain.

**Learning outcomes and career openings**

**Learning outcomes**
The course of studies provides competences with regard to a variety of problem-related or societal demands by a social lifeworld which is constantly changing. The aim is to raise awareness of real or perceived changes in social problem areas so as to enable a critical reaction in a given situation using scientific insights and concepts, and employing quantitative and qualitative methods.

**Career openings**
This Master's programme provides the theoretical and conceptual tools required for (executive) posts in public and private organisations, and for research and teaching, as well as in the media. This training readies students for a professional activity in a wide variety of fields, such as analysis, planning, development, leadership, implementation and evaluation of projects in the social services sector; market research and opinion polling, teaching and training, and work within associations, international organisations, development cooperation organisations, or relief agencies.

**Organisation des études**

**Structure of studies**
90 ECTS credits + 30 ECTS credits as an option in a minor study programme freely chosen, 3-4 semesters

**Curriculum**
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/QmKD2 (German)

**Admission**
Master’s degree programmes are built on the knowledge and abilities that were acquired when obtaining a Bachelor’s degree.

Holders of a Bachelor’s degree awarded from a Swiss university can be admitted to a Master's degree programme within the corresponding discipline (requires the acquisition of minimum 60 ECTS credits at Bachelor level in the corresponding discipline) without any additional requirements. The same applies to holders of a Bachelor’s degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the Bachelor’s degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg.

Holders of a Bachelor’s degree awarded from a Swiss university or holders of a Bachelor’s degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the Bachelor’s degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg, can be admitted to a Master’s degree programme within another discipline with prerequisites (must be successfully completed before starting the Master's degree programme) or additional requirements (can be completed during the Master's degree programme). According to existing agreements, holders of a Bachelor’s degree awarded from a Swiss university of applied sciences can also be admitted with prerequisites or additional requirements.

*The respective conditions of admission for each Master’s degree programme are reserved.*