

Admission regulations of Heidelberg University for the Master's degree programme in Matter to Life

of 23. June 2026

In accordance with § 59 (1) and 63 (2) of the Act on Higher Education of the Land of Baden Württemberg (Landeshochschulgesetz Baden-Württemberg; LHG) of 1 January 2005 (GBl. 2005, p. 1) as last amended by Article 5 of the Act amending the University Hospitals Act and other Acts of 11 December 2025 (GBl. 2025 No. 139) in conjunction with § 6 (4) of the Act on Admission to Higher Education of the Land of Baden Württemberg (Hochschulzulassungsgesetz Baden-Württemberg; HZG) as amended on 15 September 2005 (GBl. 2005, p. 629), the Senate of Heidelberg University adopted the following by-laws on 23. June 2026.

Preamble

The Master's degree programme Matter to Life, leading to a joint degree, is operated jointly by Heidelberg University and Göttingen University. Based on the existing cooperation contract, Heidelberg University will conduct the application and admissions process for both universities in accordance with the following rules.

§ 1 Scope of application

- (1) These by-laws set out the requirements for admission to a course of studies for the joint Master's degree programme Matter to Life as operated by Heidelberg University and the Georg-August-Universität of Göttingen, leading to a joint degree.
- (2) Heidelberg University allocates the 20 university places available each year of study under the collaboration agreement based on the results of the selection procedure set out in these by-laws. Admission to the available university places is allocated equally between the specialisation in "Molecular Systems Chemistry and Engineering" at Heidelberg University and "Complex Systems and Biological Physics" at the study location of Göttingen University.
- (3) The procedures for admission to the Master's degree programme shall be governed by the procedural provisions of the Admission and Registration Regulations (Zulassungs- und Immatrikulationsordnung; ZImmO) of Heidelberg University and the Registration Regulations of Georg-August-Universität of Göttingen, each as amended, unless otherwise provided for in these by-laws.
- (4) The by-laws apply if an admission number for the Master's degree programme in Matter to Life at Heidelberg University is specified in the respective ordinance of the Ministry of Science and Research on the determination of admission numbers for degree programmes in the allocation procedure of universities.

§ 2 Form and deadline for the application for admission

- (1) Applications for admission to the course of studies for the Master's degree programme Matter to Life must be submitted online via the heiCO Campus Management System (CaMS) web portal.
- (2) The following documents must be enclosed with the application for admission to the course of studies:
 1. Evidence of having completed a degree programme with a duration of at least six semesters in Chemistry, Physics, Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Materials Science, Molecular Systems Engineering, Bioengineering, or a degree programme with essentially the same content in the natural sciences or engineering with above-average results. Proof of an above-average Bachelor's degree is provided by a minimum grade of 1.7 (good) or by evidence that the applicants are among the top 5 percent of their year group in the degree programme in which the Bachelor's degree was obtained. Grades from foreign educational institutions are calculated using the modified Bavarian formula.
 2. Officially certified translations in German or English must be enclosed for certificates from foreign educational institutions. If the university entrance qualification and examination prerequisite were obtained in the People's Republic of China, India or Vietnam, a certificate or attestation from the Academic Examination Office (*Akademische Prüfstelle*; APS) must also be submitted.
 3. If the degree in accordance with paragraph 2 number 1 is not yet available by the end of the application deadline, a provisional certificate from the university on the work completed up to that point is required.
 4. Evidence that 50 percent of the credit points have been obtained in the science and engineering subjects relevant to the degree programme, as specified in § 2 (2) no. 1, as well as in mathematics, of which at least one third – cumulatively or alternatively – must have been obtained in the subjects of physics, chemistry or mathematics.
 5. Proof of sufficient language proficiency in English, provided that the applicants' native language is not English. The supporting document must not be more than four years old on the last day of the application period. This can be demonstrated by:
 - a) a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), paper-based, with at least 570 out of 677, or with at least 90 out of 120 points, internet-based;
 - b) the International English Language Test System with a score of 6.5 or better;
 - c) a Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) with a minimum grade of C1;
 - d) a UNICert® certificate: at least a UNICert® II certificate with a minimum mark of 2.3;
 - e) a NULTE certificate: at least level B2+;
 - f) A period of at least two years spent studying or working in an English-speaking country within the three years prior to the receipt of the application for admission, or the successful completion of a degree programme taught in English, shall also be regarded as evidence of sufficient knowledge of the English language.
 6. A personal statement (i.e., self-reflection). The topics for self-reflection will be determined by the admission committee and published on the degree programme's application portal during the application phase.

7. A declaration stating whether the applicant for the course of studies has definitively failed an examination required under the examination rules and regulations for the Master's degree programme Matter to Life or related degree programmes with essentially the same content, or whether their entitlement to take the final exams no longer applies for any other reasons, or whether they are currently subject to examination proceedings in these degree programmes.
 8. A statement laying out which specialisation (Molecular Systems Chemistry and Engineering at the Heidelberg campus or Complex Systems and Biological Physics at the Göttingen campus) best matches the applicant's subject interests (preferred special field).
- (3) If proof of sufficient language proficiency in English has not yet been provided at the time of submitting the application, it must be submitted by 15 July of the year in which the course begins at the latest.
 - (4) Heidelberg University may require that the documents to be enclosed with the application for admission to the course of studies be submitted in the original upon enrolment.
 - (5) Degrees obtained in degree programmes at foreign state or state-recognised universities shall be recognised if there is no significant difference in the skills acquired compared to the degrees that are being replaced. The admissions committee shall decide on recognition. The recommendations of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder and the agreement within the framework of university partnerships must be observed when recognising foreign educational certificates.
 - (6) The application for admission to the course of studies, including the documents required under paragraph 2, must be submitted to Heidelberg University by 01 December of each year for the winter semester, which is the only time when it is possible to start the programme in the first academic semester (cut-off period).

§ 3 Selection committee

- (1) A selection committee is appointed for the Master's degree programme in Matter to Life to prepare the selection decision. It has six members who are full-time scientific personnel, comprising an equal number of professors from Heidelberg University and Göttingen University each. One member must be a member of the group of professors. Students are only eligible to participate in an advisory capacity.
- (2) The members of the selection committee shall be appointed by the faculty council of the Faculty of Engineering at Heidelberg University, following consultation with the faculty council of the Faculty of Physics at Göttingen University. The term of office of the members shall be two years. Re-appointment shall be possible. The chair will be elected from among the members of the selection committee.
- (3) The selection committee shall constitute a quorum if more than half of the members entitled to vote, including professors from both universities, are present.

§ 4 Selection procedure

- (1) The selection decision shall be made based on a ranking list in accordance with the degree of aptitude of the applicant for the course of studies in the Master's degree programme Matter to Life and typically subsequent professional activities. The ranking list shall be drawn up by the selection committee from all persons who participate in the selection

procedure in accordance with an overall score calculated in accordance with the selection criteria for the selection decision and shall determine the ranking of applicants for the course of studies.

(2) The selection criteria for the selection decision are:

1. A relevant university degree obtained with above-average results in accordance with § 2 (2) no. 1 of these by-laws. Proof of an above-average Bachelor's degree is provided by a minimum grade of 1.7 (good) or by evidence that the applicants are among the top 5 percent of their year group in the relevant degree programme at their own educational institution;
2. A personal statement (i.e. self-reflection);
3. The results of the interviews provide information on an applicant's suitability, or more specifically their academic aptitude, for the chosen course of studies and their intended career.

(3) A preliminary selection (round 1) shall take place based on the criteria of final degree mark (§ 2 (2) no. 1) and personal statement (self-reflection; § 2 (2) no. 6), in accordance with § 5. A maximum of 20 points can be achieved in round 1.

(4) Following the pre-selection stage, the selection procedure will comprise two rounds of interviews in accordance with § 6 and 7. Points will be awarded to all applicants invited to the respective round after each round. Once the entire process has been completed, the points will be totalled for the applicants who have progressed to the next stage. A maximum of 10 points can be scored in round 2 and a maximum of 10 points can be scored in round 3. At least four times the number of applicants will be invited for round 2; at least twice the number of applicants for the respective special field will be invited for round 3, in proportion to the number of university places available. Admission to the available university places on degree programmes is granted to applicants in accordance with the final ranking list (§ 8).

(5) If there is a tie in selection rounds 1 and 2, all eligible applicants will be invited to the next round.

(6) The interviews in rounds 2 and 3 will be assessed at 0 points if the applicant fails to attend the interview without any valid reasons. The applicant shall have the right to participate in the selection procedure again at the next available date, provided that written evidence is submitted to the university without undue delay after the examination date proving that there was a valid reason for their failure to attend; in the event of illness, a medical certificate must be submitted.

(7) The interviews for rounds 2 and 3 are conducted by two members of the admission committee, or by representatives appointed by the admission committee, or by Matter to Life Fellows appointed by the admission committee. They are the members conducting the interview.

(8) Minutes of the key questions and answers from the interviews in rounds 2 and 3 must be recorded by an additional person in each case; these minutes must be signed by the members conducting the interviews and the person taking the minutes. Furthermore, the minutes must clearly state the date and venue of the assessment, the names of the interviewers and the minute-taker, the names of the applicants, and the assessments.

§ 5 Pre-selection (round 1)

- (1) A preliminary selection shall be performed among the applicants who meet the criteria set out in § 2, in order to limit the number of participants in the first interview in accordance with § 6. The overall grade for the final academic examination relevant to the degree programme is converted into a score N1 according to the following scale:

1.0 to 1.2	corresponds to	11 points,
1.3 to 1.4	corresponds to	10 points,
1.5 to 1.6	corresponds to	9 points,
1.7	corresponds to	8 points,

Applicants who have achieved grades other than those named above, but who can provide evidence that they were among the top 5 percent of their year group in the degree programme in which they obtained their Bachelor's degree, will be awarded 8 points.

- (2) The personal statement (self-reflection) pursuant to § 2 (2) no. 6 will be assessed on a scale of 0 to 9 by at least one member of the admission committee, or at least one representative of the admission committee, or a Matter to Life Fellow appointed by the admission committee. This score corresponds to N2.
- (3) A total score is calculated as $N_g = N_1 + N_2$. The rankings are drawn up based on these scores.

§ 6 Interview to assess suitability (round 2)

- (1) The interview is intended to assess whether the applicant has sufficient motivation and aptitude for the chosen course of studies. The main focus is on the motivation to engage in interdisciplinary work and research, as well as suitability for the chosen course of studies, which are expected to ensure successful completion of the course of studies.
- (2) The interview will be conducted via a video conferencing system. Applicants will be invited to the interview at least one week in advance. The interviews generally take place 2-3 months after the application phase has ended. The invitation will be sent by email.
- (3) The members who conduct the interviews in accordance with § 4 (7) shall hold an individual interview of approx. 15 minutes with each applicant. The applicant's motivation and specific subject knowledge relevant to the degree programme are assessed in particular.
- (4) Minutes must be kept for the meeting, § 4 (8).
- (5) The individual interview shall end with the members conducting the interview assessing the applicants' aptitude and suitability for the chosen degree programme and their intended career on a scale of 0 to 10 points.
- (6) The sum of the score N_g , calculated in accordance with § 5 (3), and the score for the interview in accordance with § 6 (5) shall be the total score N_3 . The rankings for round 3 will be drawn up based on these scores.

§ 7 Interview to assess subject-specific suitability (round 3)

- (1) The second interview is intended to demonstrate the applicants' understanding of a scientific problem, their ability to participate in scientific discourse, and their capacity to

reflect on research matters. The interview will be conducted via a video conferencing system. Applicants will be invited to the interview at least one week in advance. The invitation will be sent by email. Only applicants who have successfully completed the second round in accordance with § 6 will be invited.

- (2) The interview is conducted by the members responsible for conducting the interview (§ 4 (7)). The interview shall be approx. 30 minutes long in total. It is broken down into two sections of approx. 15 minutes each. The sections can be performed either separately and one after the other, or by combining both sections. This in particular serves to assess the applicant's specialist knowledge in the relevant subjects. To this end, the applicant will be provided with at least one academic text at least three days before the interview, the contents of which will be discussed during the interviews. The individual interview shall end with the members conducting the interview assessing the applicants' subject-specific knowledge as well as their aptitude and suitability for the chosen degree programme and their intended career on a scale of 0 to 10 points.

§ 8 Drawing up the final ranking list for the selection decision

- (1) The total number of points used to draw up the final ranking is calculated by adding together the points scored in the three selection rounds set out in § 5 to 7.
- (2) The admission committee shall make its selection, under consideration of the preferred special field as set out in § 2 (2) no. 8, regarding allocation to the specialisation in Molecular Systems Chemistry and Engineering at the Heidelberg campus or Complex Systems and Biological Physics at the Göttingen campus. This is meant to achieve a balanced distribution of capacity utilisation across the various study locations; this consideration takes precedence over the preferred special fields of individual applicants.

§ 9 Allocation of university places

- (1) The Rector shall decide on the allocation of university places upon recommendation by the selection committee. The Rector has delegated the selection decision to the responsible organisational unit in the university administration.
- (2) Allocation of a university place must be refused if
 1. the documents in accordance with § 2 (2) were not submitted on time or in full,
 2. the applicant for the course of studies has lost their entitlement to take the final exams in the Master's degree programme Matter to Life or in related degree programmes with essentially the same content or is in an ongoing examination procedure for such a degree programme.
- (3) In the case of an application under § 2 (2) no. 2, or § 2 (3), approval is to be granted subject to the condition that proof of the degree and any associated requirements is provided with a deadline set by Heidelberg University, or that the required level of English proficiency is demonstrated by 15 July in the year the course commences. The authorisation shall expire if evidence is not provided in due time.
- (4) In the case of a tie during the selection procedure, applicants will be selected based on the average mark achieved in the higher education qualification required for admission to the Master's degree programme. If the applicants are still level on points after that, the result will be decided by a draw.

§ 10 Entering into effect/expiry

- (1) These by-laws shall enter into effect on the day following their publication in the Rector's Bulletin. They shall apply for the first time for the winter semester 2026/2027.
- (2) The by-laws of Heidelberg University for the university's own selection procedure in the Master's degree programme Matter to Life of 08 December 2022 (Rector's Gazette No. 18/2022 p. 2131) shall cease to be in effect at the same time.

Heidelberg, 23. June 2026

Prof. Dr. Melchior
Rector