

PLEP - Guidelines and Curriculum

1 General Remarks

The Master in Political, Legal, and Economic Philosophy (PLEP) is a Mono-Master Program (120 ECTS credit points) available as a two-year, full-time course of study. Students can enter the program each semester, in spring as well as in autumn. The PLEP program offers an interdisciplinary analysis of practical-political questions and problems of the social world and allows students to engage in intensive debate on normative dimensions of state action, non-state action, and economic action. The PLEP program provides students with a profound philosophical knowledge and introduces interdisciplinary research at the interplay between Philosophy, Political Science, Economics, and Law. Students will be qualified to understand social problems, especially in the realm of politics, economics, and law, by way of philosophical analysis and to analyze and assess solutions put forward as well as to develop them further. Students also learn to analyze crucial concepts and to understand the structure and functional principles and ways of political and economic decision making. Moreover, in working on specific projects students develop the competence to make fruitful interdisciplinary use of research literature, to think autonomously on the problem at hand, and to put the results down in scientific writing. Students have a right to course guidance on a regular basis, ensured by the Institute of Philosophy's manager and conducted by faculty members.

2 Course Achievements

Course achievements are assessed on the basis of the European Credit Transfer System, using ECTS credit points as units of measurement. Each course is graded individually. The lecturer determines the course requirements and informs students accordingly at the beginning of the course. In case of failing the course requirements on the first attempt, a single further attempt may be conducted. Usually, the second attempt will take place the following semester, but it may also be subject of an individual arrangement based on the consultation of the lecturer.

It is possible to compensate for one insufficient grade.

It is not possible to compensate for an insufficient master thesis.

3 Admission Requirements

3.1 General Information

For general information on the admission procedure at the University of Bern, please take a look at the website of the [Admissions Office](#).

3.2 Specific Requirements

In addition to the general admission requirements of the University of Bern, applicants need to be equipped with either of the following Bachelor degrees:

- a) BA-Major in Philosophy (90 credit points) or
- b) BA-Major in Political Science (90 credit points) or
- c) BA-Major in Economics (90 credit points) or
- d) BA-Major in Law (90 credit points)

If in case of a) (BA-Major in Philosophy) the applicant cannot account for 60 credit points in either Political Science, Economics, or Law, additional courses have to be taken on Bachelor level in either Political Science, Economics, or Law for an amount of 15 credit points total before the completion of the PLEP program. They are accounted for extracurricular. The credit points will be displayed in the transcript of records (Diploma Supplement).

If in case of b), c), and d) the applicant cannot account for 60 credit points in Philosophy, the following four introductory courses have to be taken on Bachelor level as additional courses within the first two semesters. They are accounted for as extracurricular. The credit points will be displayed in the transcript of records (Diploma Supplement).

- a) Introductory course in Ethics (6 credit points)
- b) Introductory course in Political Philosophy (6 credit points)
- c) Introductory course in Philosophy of Law (6 credit points)
- d) Introductory course in Action Theory (6 credit points)

4 Language Skills

The PLEP program is aimed at domestic students as well as students from abroad. The courses are conducted in English. Courses that have to be taken additionally (introductory courses etc.) can be conducted in German, including course requirements and examinations.

4.1 English Language Skills

Applicants have to prove their English language skills when applying. A minimum result in either of the following language tests is required.

Language test minimum result

- TOEFL Internet 92
- TOEFL Paper 580
- IELTS 6.5
- Cambridge First Certificate in English

TOEFL and IELTS must have been taken within the preceding 36 months. Test results older than that will not be accepted.

For further information see the [University of Bern's Academic English Services](#).

Applicants whose prior studies were conducted in English and who studied in an environment where English is the main language are dispensed from proving their English language skills.

4.2 German Language Skills

Applicants from abroad who have to take additional courses conducted in German have to prove **sufficient German language skills** when applying. See the [University of Bern's test regulations](#) for details.

See also the University of Bern's information on [German as a foreign language](#) and the [International Office's](#) information.

5 Coursework

The PLEP program consists of the following two parts:

- a) Coursework
- b) Master thesis

5.1 Mandatory Coursework

The mandatory coursework and course achievements are as follows:

- a) 3 seminars (7 credit points each)
- b) Colloquium "Methods of Practical Philosophy" (4 credit points)
- c) Colloquium "Master Thesis" (4 credit points)
- d) 1 compact course (4 credit points)
- e) 1 project (paper dealing with a freely chosen topic in consultation with the supervisor, ca. 8000 words, may contain preliminary work for the master thesis) (6 credit points)
- f) Freely chosen courses or course achievements in Philosophy on Master level for an amount of 21 credit points total, including seminars (7 credit points each), colloquia (4 credit points each), compact courses (4 credit points each), conducting tutorials (6 credit points each)
- g) Master thesis (30 credit points)
- h) Courses in Economics, Political Science, and Law on Master level for an amount of 30 credit points total.

5.2 Master Thesis

The master thesis (ca. 25000 words, excluding bibliography, 30 credit points) is a more comprehensive treatment of a specific topic from the areas of political philosophy, philosophy of economics, philosophy of law, or of the ethics of public affairs. It has to be written (and finished) during the last term and is supervised individually. The topic can be freely chosen in consultation with the supervisor. The master thesis has to be presented and discussed in the mandatory Colloquium Master Thesis. It can be written in German or English.

6 Some Further Remarks on Coursework and Course Achievements

The mandatory coursework is designed to provide students with divergent types of courses, thereby enabling them to further develop and practice different skills, including:

- reading and understanding philosophical texts
- orally presenting key points and arguments of philosophical texts and engaging in discussion and philosophical dialogue
- working together to (better) understand, analyze, assess, and criticize philosophical texts and arguments

- giving valuable and helpful feedback to works of fellow students
- choosing a specific topic of philosophical inquiry and formulating valid research questions (finding out what you are interested in, learning to find and assess articles on the topic)
- autonomously writing philosophical papers, dealing with criticism and defending arguments in view of it, and revising papers to improve their quality further
- conducting tutorials and developing teaching skills (learning the difference between knowing something and being able to explain it)
- being able to assess problems in an interdisciplinary way, including philosophical, methodological, and empirical viewpoints, and bring them together fruitfully

7 Fees

7.1 Application and Registration Fee

7.1.1 Application from abroad

For applications from abroad (and only those from abroad!), a confirmation has to be enclosed confirming that the following was transferred to the Kantonalbank Bern:

- Debit note confirming the payment of: application fee: CHF 105.
- Additional administrative fee: CHF 100; if the application for admission is handed in after the regular application deadline

Name of Bank: Kantonalbank Bern in Bern/Switzerland

BIC/SWIFT Code: KBBECH22

IBAN-No.: CH32 0079 0020 2453 8279 3

Recipient: University of Bern, Admissions Office

All money transfer fees have to be paid by the applicant.

Make sure that your family name and given name/s are stated on the debit note so that the money can be assigned to your application for admission. Once paid, application fees can neither be refunded nor transferred to another semester.

Your eligibility for admission to the program will only be checked after payment of this invoice.

7.1.2 Application from Switzerland

For applications from Switzerland, you do not have to pay any fee in advance. After receipt of your application you will be sent an invoice with a pay-in slip. Your eligibility for admission to the program will only be checked after payment of this invoice.

7.2 Tuition and Semester Fees

7.2.1 Tuition Fees

- Tuition fees are CHF 750 per semester.
- If you have not achieved a degree within twelve semesters of study, you will pay CHF 1,500 in the first semester after the twelve-semester limit has been exceeded. The fees double for each further semester.
- In cases of hardship, the Executive Board of the University of Bern can waive the increase of tuition fees in accordance with Section 2 either in part or in entirety.

7.2.2 Semester Fee

All students pay a semester fee of CHF 34.

This comprises of:

- Occupational accident insurance 8 CHF
- University sports CHF 13
- Social and cultural institutions CHF 13

For students who are members of the Student Union (SUB), the semester fee increases by CHF 21.

Consequently, tuition and semester fees for regular students amount to CHF 805 per semester. See Admissions Office under [tuition fees](#).

The Admissions Office is neither allowed to waive fees nor to grant delay for payment. Applicants who have run into financial difficulty through no fault of their own and who are not in a position to pay the tuition and semester fees in time should contact the [Sozialfonds SUB](#).

For scholarships, grants and other financial support for registered students of the University of Bern please visit the University of Bern website under: [Financial Matters](#) and [Master Grant](#).