

## **Master Thesis Guidelines** (MRes Internal Regulations Annex 1)

### **Introduction**

Candidates for Master of Research in Management Sciences are, according to *Real Decreto 1393/2007* 29th October, article 15.3, required to write and publicly defend a Master Thesis. The Master Thesis is a key component and the last academic requirement that the participants in the Master of Research in Management Sciences Programme have to fulfil before they are conferred their degree.

According to the Master of Research Programme Regulations for the academic year 2018-2019, the Master Thesis corresponds to 15 ECTS and its development and defence will take place during the month of July, in the fourth and final module of the programme. Upon successfully completing the Master Thesis, participants will be awarded 15 ECTS. It is a required condition to have successfully completed the first 3 modules of the programme, thus obtaining a minimum of 45 ECTS.

The tutor, assigned to each participant at the beginning of the academic year, is the person responsible for supervising the Master Thesis. The M.Res. Master Thesis permits the students to conduct an individual research study by using concepts and methods learned during the academic year. The elaboration of the M.Res. Master Thesis will help the candidates acquire the following competencies:

- The skills needed to develop a research paper from a rigorous qualitative and/or quantitative perspective.
- The ability to structure the research paper, from the justification/motivation of the research question to the writing of the paper.
- The ability to use suitable strategies to search for information.
- The ability to communicate effectively, especially in writing, when practicing the pre-writing processes and writing up the paper.

No limitations are imposed on the topic selected for the Master Thesis research, except that it should be relevant to the field of study selected. The nature of the research may be one of the following three types:

1. **Theoretical research**, which advances our state of knowledge or understanding in a certain field.
2. **Applied research**, which typically involves the use of existing knowledge and methods to investigate a new application or to solve a real-world problem.
3. **Literature review**, which analyses in depth the state of the art within a specific line or interest of research.

A research paper is the outcome of a research process and, in this sense, it provides evidence of your work. Therefore, as this is your first experience in research, it is advisable to make all your decisions explicit on the paper (why your topic is relevant, why you chose a given methodological approach, why you chose a measuring instrument and not another...).

However, we must not forget it is a text as well, and the main objective of a text is to facilitate the readers' comprehension. In the case of this academic genre, because of its argumentative nature, there is still another objective to fulfil and that has to do with ensuring the readers' adherence to our own perspectives. This involves that, besides the need to ensure accuracy in our explanation (i.e., that the text reflects what we did and why), we need to ensure its degree of readability and persuasion. In order to do that, please pay attention to:

- the way information is organized in your text
- whether any information gaps can be identified
- the clarity of your argumentation
- the way the different parts of the text connect
- the degree of formality of the language used
- whether you are using the necessary domain-specific terms
- whether the reader may find a word or expression 'surprising'
- whether you are appealing to the readers' knowledge universe
- the discursive resources you can use to include the reader in the conceptual dialogue set by your work

As you can tell, writing your Master Thesis is one of the key processes in your formation as a researcher. It is the M.Res. programme Direction's wish to help you enter the research path in as fruitful and joyful a way as possible. M.Res.

The M.Res. will provide you support to get familiar with the norms in Academic Writing; How to organize articles, grouping by themes; How to structure a literature review; some tutorials on English for Academic purposes and feedback on 1<sup>st</sup> Master Thesis draft.

## Registration and Deadlines

Students must submit the Master Thesis Extended Abstract on January 28<sup>th</sup> 2019 through the M.Res Master Thesis Preparation and Defense website.

The defence of the Master Thesis will be held July the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and the 12<sup>th</sup> in an open session. To reach this date, students must upload the final document on the M.Res Master Thesis Preparation and Defense website (Program Manager) on June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Having these final deadlines in mind, the suggested working schedule is as follows:

- **Introductory Week:** Presentation of research lines and Master Thesis proposals by researchers.
- **October:** Meeting with the M.Res. Director. Only the M.Res. programme Director can propose the tutors for every student.
- **October-November:** First meeting with tutors.
- **End of November:** Research line & tutor decided.
- **January 28<sup>th</sup>:** Submission of an extended abstract to the M.Res Master Thesis Preparation and Defense website (see appendices 1 and 2). Information regarding the characteristics of this abstract is provided in appendix 2.
- **April 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Submission of 1<sup>st</sup> Draft of M.Res. Master Thesis to the M.Res Master Thesis Preparation and Defense website
- **April-May.** Oral presentation of your Master Thesis to the research group
- **June 26<sup>th</sup>:** Due date of the final version of the Master Thesis at the Registrar's Office.
- **July 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>:** M.Res Master Thesis Defenses

The content of the Master Thesis has to be developed closely with the tutor, and in the

framework of one of ESADE research groups. For this reason it is compulsory to make a presentation to the research group you/your tutor are affiliated. It is recommended to do this presentation late April or May, before the process of elaboration of the Master Thesis is finished. This will allow you to get feedback from the members of the research group and improve the research done.

### **Formal Requirements**

The Master Thesis must be written in English, on plain white A4 paper (i.e. 21.0 centimetres [8.27 inches] by 29.69 centimetres [11.69 inches]) and the margins should be set to Word's default: top and bottom 2.54 centimetres (1.00 inches), right and left 3.17 centimetres (1.25 inches). Letter font should be Arial or Times New Roman, 12-point.

Please ensure that pages are numbered. Be sure to spell check the manuscript. It is recommended a min length of 5000 words, excluding cover page(s), abstract, index, bibliography and appendices or annexes. If preferred you can use the formatting and bibliography requirements defined in a recognised publication on your specific field of research. The master thesis should comprise an abstract.

Master Theses will be submitted on the Master Thesis website.

### **Grading and Assessment of the Master Thesis**

In terms of outcome, the Master Thesis consists of a formal or practical research on a topic approved by an academic department or a research group. For this reason, each student has to present their proposal to the research group or department (recommended during April - May). In addition, a written report by the tutor will be required.

The M.Res. Master Thesis requires a written paper and an oral defence evaluated by an academic committee convened for that purpose. The student will be evaluated upon:

- a) the overall quality and significance of his or her master thesis (70%),
- b) the oral defence of his or her findings (30%,)

A Committee, proposed by the tutor and approved by the Doctorate Committee, consisting of 3 doctors will be responsible for giving the final evaluation. The objective of

this committee is to assess the scientific and intellectual maturity of students, as the result of their learning throughout the academic year.

The participant will be given 30 minutes to defend his or her Master Thesis. 20 minutes can be dedicated to the presentation. During the presentation, the Committee cannot interrupt the participant. The Committee will ask a series of questions about the Master Thesis to the participant and will discuss the submitted Thesis. The students will answer all the questions posed by the members of the Committee once they have all finished posing them. Total presentation and defence time cannot exceed an hour.

Grades will follow the grading scale (0 to 10) to be applied in all official higher education degrees in Spain (Real Decreto 1125/2003 of 5 September, published in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* (BOE) num. 224, 18 September 2003, p. 24997). Dates of the public defence will be announced at the beginning of each academic year.