

**Master Thesis Guidelines**  
**Master of Research in Management Sciences**  
**(MRes)**

**Academic year 2008-2009**



## 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 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 2008-2009, the Master Thesis corresponds to 15 ECTS and its development and defence will take place during the months of June, July and September, in the fifth and final module of the program. Upon successfully completing the Master Thesis, participants will be awarded 15 ECTS. It is a required condition to have successfully completed the first 4 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 MRes 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 MRes 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 Masters 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 narration (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 MRes Program Direction's wish to help you enter the research path in as fruitful and joyful a way as possible. With this objective the MRes includes a module consisting of two open sessions (October 10<sup>th</sup> and February 6<sup>th</sup> respectively) and the possibility to schedule individual coaching sessions to discuss any writing problems<sup>1</sup> you may encounter while working on your Master Thesis. From February 6<sup>th</sup> onwards, you will have the possibility to schedule an individual coaching session to discuss any problems you may have related with your Master Thesis Writing.

### Registration and Deadlines

Students must register the Master of Research Thesis before June 15<sup>th</sup>. A document signed by the tutor, including a tentative title and an abstract about 150 words must be handed into the Registrar's Office. (See document attached).

The defence of the Master Thesis will be held at the end of September in an open session (September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>). To reach this date, students must hand in the final document at the Registrar's Office on Thursday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

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

- **End of September:** Presentation of research lines and groups
- **October 10<sup>th</sup>:** First seminar *Writing your Master Thesis*
- **Meeting with the MRes director**
- **November-December:** First meeting with tutors
- **End December:** Research line decided
- **February 6<sup>th</sup>:** Second seminar *Writing your Master Thesis* and submission of abstract and name of possible revisors
- **End of June:** Submission of first draft of Master Thesis to your tutors and reception of feedback

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that matters related with research domain should be addressed to your tutor.

- **July:** Revision of first draft and presentation to the Academic Departments
- **July 23:** Final version of the Master Thesis

### 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 abstract and bibliography. If preferred you can use the formatting and bibliography requirements defined in a recognised publication on your specific field of research.

One black and white, two sided printed copy of the Master Thesis should be handed in. The Registrar's Office will make copies and bind them. One copy will be for the participant, one for the tutor, three copies for the members of the Board of Examiners and the original copy will be sent to the Library for public consultation. Six cover pages colour- printed and signed by the student and tutor must be also handed in (you should ask for it at the Registrar's Office).

A digital copy in Adobe Acrobat (pdf format) should also be delivered to the Registrar's Office in CD-Rom format.

### Assessment of the Master Thesis

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 June or July), and two professors will grade the written document. In addition, a written inform of the tutor will be required.

The MRes 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 both:

a) the overall quality and significance of his or her master thesis,

and

b) the oral defence of his or her findings.

A Committee, proposed 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 present his or her Master Thesis. During this time, the Committee cannot interrupt the presentation. The Committee will ask a series of questions about the Master Thesis to the participant and will discuss the submitted Thesis. Total presentation and defence time cannot exceed an hour.

Grades will follow the grading scale 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.

## MRes Master Thesis Proposal

### Student

Name and Family Name: ..... Code: .....  
Address: .....  
Town/City: ..... Country: .....  
E-mail: ..... Tel: .....

### Tutor

Name and Family Name: .....

### Research Group/ Department

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### Master Thesis Proposed Title:

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### Abstract (if preferred, attach a separate sheet):

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### Evaluators proposed (must be in the Research Area)

1. ....
2. ....

Barcelona, ..... 200....

Approval  
Tutor

Approval  
Programme director

(Reserved for use by the Registrar's Office)

REGISTER

Number: ..... Date: .....