

Master's Dissertation

Code: 44035
ECTS Credits: 12

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4313228 Social Policy, Employment and Welfare	OB	0	A

Contact

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: spanish (spa)

Teachers

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Prerequisites

The Master's Degree Dissertation integrates the content from different courses of the Master's program. In order to be able to properly develop this project, it is essential to have taken or to be taking the module on Social Research Methods and the theoretical modules which are related to the subject matter of study. It is also recommended to be taking the course on Advanced Social Research Methods, if the objective of the MDD is also to develop and expand the knowledge of applied research methods in the social sciences.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The Master's Degree Dissertation (MDD) aims at the students to apply the appropriate theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired during the master's degree to carry out a small research project, design a social intervention project or produce a small evaluation of any social policy. This work will be guided by a supervisor expert on the chosen topic, who will provide ongoing advice. In addition, the students must present the progress of their work in two follow-up sessions and finally make the oral defence before a tribunal. In the MDD it will be necessary to justify the object of research, define the conceptual framework and the methodological design and use correctly the appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods to produce the relevant information and analyze it.

Competences

- Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Design and conduct research projects on work, gender and social policy, using advanced qualitative and quantitative research techniques.
- Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.

- Put forward innovative proposals for the relevant field of study.
- Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
- Use and manage bibliography and IT resources in the field of study.

Learning Outcomes

1. Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
2. Defend a research project orally before a specialist audience.
3. Design social research projects, showing the ability to identify the root of a problem, define research hypotheses and put forward an appropriate methodological design..
4. Draft a research project report in accordance with formal academic structure and criteria.
5. Evaluate the practical implications of empirical research in terms of timing and costs.
6. Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
7. Interpret, apply and identify the repercussions of the different methodological paradigms and their specific methods of social research, for the research model and design and, in particular, to put together a mixed design.
8. Put forward innovative proposals for the relevant field of study.
9. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
10. Use and manage bibliography and IT resources in the field of study.

Content

Depending on the contents of the MDD, the work should have two types of structure, which are presented below.

A. If the MDD is oriented to the evaluation of a policy or the development of a small research, it will consist of the following parts:

1. Presentation of the research question and objectives

The initial research question and the construction of the research problem will be presented. The interest of the research will also be justified and some general and specific objectives will be presented.

2. Theoretical Framework

In the theoretical framework, first, the state of the art will be reviewed, and secondly, it will contain a definition of the object of study that one wants to study or on which the evaluation is to be carried out.

3. Analysis Model

In this section the questions or hypothesis of research or the evaluation questions will be presented. These questions or hypotheses must be explicitly stated and reasoned, and must be susceptible of empirical testing.

4. Methodology

This section should first explain what type of research or evaluation design has been carried out (qualitative, quantitative or mixed) and what have been the most important decisions of this design. As for the sources of information (data collection), these can be both statistical, and based on the use of documents, interviews, discussion groups or observations. This section should explicitly justify why these sources are used, as well as the methodological advantages and disadvantages of the decisions taken. In relation to the analysis of the obtained data, it should also be explicitly stated what type of rationale has been adopted and what has been the procedure followed.

5. Analysis / Results

In this section, all the data processing must appear, or a summary -if the length of the analysis supposes to surpass the number of pages indicated for the dissertation (in this second case the complete analysis will appear in an annex). Data analysis should lead to a specific response to the research questions raised (or to a testing of the hypotheses).

6. Conclusions

The argumentation made in the theoretical section of work should be summarized and a summary and discussion of the results should be presented. The elements that have not been empirically verified and the theoretical and methodological issues that remain open for a possible future development of new research should also be pointed out.

7. Bibliography

8. Appendix

They should contain: Statistical sources: variables, tables, graphs. Register of any qualitative information used. Analysis carried out in the case where only a summary has been presented in the results section.

Length (excluding Appendix): 10,000 words (30-35 pages with 1.5 line spacing).

B. If the MDD is oriented to the elaboration of an intervention project, the work will consist of the following parts:

1. Presentation of the research problem and justification of its interest

Every intervention project starts with a concern and / or need. The first section of the MDD must contextualize the relevance of the topic and define the intervention assignment (objectives, priorities...).

2. Theoretical basis of the intervention

This section will present the theoretical perspective that guides the intervention. This means that the literature review and previous experiences related to the phenomenon addressed will be presented in this section.

3. Methodology

This section should explain what type of evaluation design has been carried out (qualitative, quantitative or mixed) and what have been the most important decisions of this design. Regarding the sources of information (data obtained), these may be of a statistical nature, based on the use of documents, interviews, discussion groups or observations. The section must explicitly justify why these sources are used, as well as the methodological advantages and disadvantages of the decisions adopted.

4. Diagnosis

The diagnosis will include the characterization of the phenomenon or situation on which it is proposed to intervene, the identification of the actors involved and other contextual information that is relevant, based on secondary data, documentary analysis and, if necessary, interviews with the actors. This section has to identify the critical points that justify the need for intervention.

4. Intervention plan or programme

This section will outline the specific objectives of the proposed policy or programme. Depending on the type of programme proposed: delimitation of the target population and details of the projects and actions it comprises, its content, its timing and the actors involved in its implementation. It is possible to synthesize this section, in form of tables, graphs or infographics.

4. Design of the programme evaluation

This section will describe the type of evaluation proposed (on the implementation, outcome or impact of the program) and will briefly introduce its proposed design, methods and evaluation tools.

5. Bibliography

6. Appendix

Statistical sources: variables, tables, graphs. Record of any qualitative information used. Detail of the actions of the intervention programme, if applicable.

Length (excluding Appendix): 10,000 words (30-35 pages with 1.5 line spacing).

Methodology

The learning activity of this module is based on the orientation and individualised follow-up of the MDD by the supervisor assigned by the coordination of the module. However, a series of *collective moments* in which all the students meet with the teaching team that coordinates the MDD are also part of the activities of the module. These *collective moments* consist of three plenary sessions (meetings) and two follow-up sessions. The final presentation of the dissertation is individual and the date is agreed with the two members of the tribunal that will evaluate it.

The dates of the collective moments and the deliveries will be communicated at the beginning of the course.

I. Collective Moments

First plenary meeting

Presentation of the module and the contents and organization of the MDD

Second plenary meeting

Presentation of the Sociology Department's research groups and its lines of research

Third plenary meeting

Choice of the topic of the dissertation and brief oral presentation. Assignment of tutors

First follow-up session

Individual and public presentation of the basic lines of the dissertation (objectives, state of the art, theoretical framework, hypothesis and research design, methods and techniques, and bibliography), previously agreed with the supervisor. Hand the supervisor a research project of about 1,500 words.

Second follow-up session

Individual and public presentation of the theoretical framework and the research design of the intervention or evaluation. The contents of the presentation will be based on the guidelines received by the supervisor. Hand the supervisor the theoretical framework and research design of the MDD (5,000 words)

II. Partial deliveries

Delivery 1: Research / evaluation / intervention project (1,500 words).

Delivery 2: Theoretical framework and design / Theoretical basis of the intervention (5,000 words).

Delivery 3: Draft of the final report / of the intervention programme (10,000 words).

Delivery 4: Final report / Final intervention programme (10,000 words).

The final report can be delivered and presented either in June or in September. The deadline for submitting this final report will be announced at the beginning of the course.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Supervised			
Preparing the partial assignments, the public defense and the dissertation	298	11.92	5, 2, 3, 7, 8, 6, 9, 1, 4, 10

Assessment

The final grading of the MDD will be the result of the following evidences of evaluation: Defence at the First Follow-Up Session (5%), Defence at the Second Follow-Up Session (5%), Written Final Report (75%) and Oral Defence before the evaluation board (15%).

The defence before the evaluation board will be made within a period of two weeks after the final report delivery. The jury will be formed by the tutor of the MDD and a member of the teaching staff of the module (called *methodological evaluator*).

The defence of the MDD will consist of an oral presentation of a maximum of 20 minutes. The members of the jury will then ask their questions, and after the intervention of the jury the student will have a turn of reply. Finally, the jury will deliberate and notify the result of the evaluation.

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Defence of the work progress at the First Follow-Up Session	5%	0.5	0.02	5, 2, 3, 7, 8, 6, 9, 1, 4, 10
Defence of the work progress at the Second Follow-Up Session	5%	0.5	0.02	5, 2, 3, 7, 8, 6, 9, 1, 4, 10
Oral Defence before the evaluation board	15%	1	0.04	2, 1
Written Final Report	75%	0	0	5, 2, 3, 7, 8, 6, 9, 1, 4, 10

Bibliography

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