

Master's Degree Dissertation

Code: 43665
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4310486 Teaching in Secondary Schools, Vocational Training and Language Centres	OB	0	A

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: catalan (cat)

Prerequisites

None.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The structure of this module is common to all specializations. Yet, each specialization sets specific research topics and procedures, closely related to students' performance during the internships that are part of the practicum module.

The Masters Dissertation, namely TFM, is conceived as a learning activity whose main objective is to get students to integrate the knowledge and the skills acquired during the Masters. It takes the form of a small research study based on data obtained during the internship. It should combine theory and reflections upon data obtained through processes of observation or during the implementation of the teaching unit students need to design and put into practice as part of the requirements of the practicum module.

This small research is conducted under the supervision of a university tutor. The calendar for the Masters establishes the mandatory dates for the tutorial meetings between students and tutors.

The course is worth 6 ECTS and can only be taken if students passed the practicum module.

Competences

- Adopt an attitude and ethical behavior and act according to ethical principles of the profession.
- Analyze and recognize their own skills to develop those necessary for the development and professional practice.
- Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Communicate effectively both verbally and non-verbally.
- Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
- Generate innovative and competitive professional activities and research.
- Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
- Make effective use of integrated information and communications technology.
- Own the learning skills necessary to carry out continuous training, both in content and teaching specialty, as in the general aspects of teaching.
- Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
- Understand and analyze the historical characteristics of the teaching profession, its current situation, perspectives and relationship with the social reality of each period.
- Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.
- Use critical reasoning of personal work and use resources for professional development.

Learning Outcomes

1. Adopt an attitude and ethical behavior and act according to ethical principles of the profession.
2. Analyze and recognize their own skills to develop those necessary for the development and professional practice.
3. Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
4. Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
5. Demonstrate a good command of oral and written expression in teaching.
6. Effective use of integrated information and communications technology.
7. Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
8. Own the learning skills necessary to carry out continuous training, both in content and teaching specialty, as in the general aspects of teaching.
9. Participate in improvement proposals in different areas from reflection based on practice.
10. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
11. Understand and analyze the historical characteristics of the teaching profession, its current situation, perspectives and relationship with the social reality of each period.
12. Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.
13. Use critical reasoning of personal work and use resources for professional development.

Content

Students must produce a written Masters Dissertation which later be defended in public.

During the Viva and through their dissertation students should demonstrate they have acquired the theoretical background and the professional skills necessary to become educators at a secondary school or at a state language school.

Methodology

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face classe attendance imposed by the health authorities.

After the second internship period, coordinators of each specialization will provide students with the guidelines on how to produce the Masters Dissertation. The Masters Dissertation is an individual assignment carried out under the supervision of a university tutor. When possible, students' practicum tutors will also tutor their Masters Dissertation. Tutors have the responsibility of guiding students on the process of conducting their study and on supervising the elaboration of the final written dissertation. Students will be group together in seminars. Yet, students' research studies should all be original.

Tutors will establish which tutorial meetings will be held with their entire group of students and which will be carried out individually. Group meetings will be devoted to discuss theoretical and methodological issues related to the topics chosen by the students in the group. Students should also learn to formulate research questions and to reflect upon their teaching performance during their internships. Individual tutorials will be devoted to narrowing down the scope of the research objectives and to guide students on the process of analysing data and choosing the best tools to do so.

Students are expected to present for discussion parts of their final dissertation during these tutorial meetings. There's a minimum of three compulsory tutorial sessions. A week later after the first tutorial students should hand in a document with a proposal for their dissertation. This document should include the following information: provisional title, research objectives, rationale and methodology.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Seminars with the tutor in charge of guiding and assessing the process of writing a Masters dissertation and the resulting document.	22	0.88	2, 6, 9
Type: Supervised			
Supervision of the whole process (elaboration of a Masters dissertation & preparation of the viva).	40	1.6	2, 6, 9
Type: Autonomous			
Producing the written dissertation and preparing the viva	88	3.52	2, 6, 9

Assessment

The Masters dissertation should be written in Catalan, except for the students registered in the English & French specializations, who will elaborate it in English or French. The same language requirement applies to the Vivas. Students should prove they understood the academic texts they used to create the theoretical framework of the study. The evaluation of the written tasks should take into account the quality of the content but also aspects related to the quality of the text (accuracy, cohesion, layout, etc.). During the viva students should also demonstrate they are fluent and accurate speakers of Catalan (or English/French in the case of these two specializations). Students can get a FAIL if they do not have a good command of the target language.

The process of elaborating the Masters dissertation should undergo four phases: (1) Selecting a problem or a research question closely linked to the objectives and/or results of the implementation of a teaching unit during the internships, (2) Narrowing down the scope of the research/question and selecting the tools to gather and analyse data (3) Analysing the data, and (4) Producing the written dissertation and defending it orally.

Structure

1. Introduction. Overview of the dissertation and its rationale.
2. Justification. Definition of the research topic and its justification based on personal, social or professional criteria.
3. Research questions and objectives. The topic must be narrowed down in the form of research objectives and questions. The objective should clearly state whether the dissertation is a diagnostic study, an action-research or a literary review on an issue relevant for the field of Educational Sciences.
4. Theoretical framework. Students should define the theoretical and methodological framework of their study by making reference to a minimum of 5 other studies. They are not expected to produce a thorough state of the art but they need to contextualise their dissertation in a particular educational field and refer to the relevant works/authors linked to the topic chosen or the type of innovation conducted.
5. Methodological framework. Definition of the type of study conducted to fulfil the objectives set in section 3 above. Students should also present the tools to gather information (documents, questionnaires, interviews, field notes, students' products, classroom materials, etc.,) and to analyse the data obtained. If the study is a description and analysis of an innovative teaching proposal students should refer to the tool used to establish the departing point (questionnaire, interview, observation grid, etc.) and to justify the appropriateness of the proposal.
6. Context. Description of the context in which the study is conducted.
7. Analysis. Descriptive or interpretative examination of data collected. Discussion of the results obtained. Students should be able to distinguish the description of the results from their interpretation. Results should be linked to the theoretical framework.
8. Conclusions and suggestions of improvement. This section should include (a) an overall assessment of the study conducted (b) the answers to the research questions, (c) a critical reflection of the methodology employed, (d) a statement of the benefits of the study/ innovative proposal and (e) a list of possible new research questions or suggestions for new innovative proposals.
9. References.
10. Annexes.

Format

General mandatory guidelines:

- Language: Catalan (except for the English and French specialization, in which the dissertation must be written in the target language).
- Length: Maximum 70.000 characters, including spaces (approximately 25 pages), excluding annexes.
- References should be cited using APA citation style.

The title page should include the following information:

- Students' full name
- Title
- Submission date and Vivadate
- Specialization
- Students' full name
- The title page should be followed by an automatic index listing the different sections and the corresponding pages.

The pages should be automatically numbered. Students own the authorship of their work but in case they plan to get it published, they need the consent of their tutor and must acknowledge that the study was conducted in the framework of this Masters programme.

Submission and Viva

The General Coordinator of this Masters programme, in joint collaboration with the coordinators of each specialization, would, in due time, publish the submission dates and procedures, as well as the Viva dates and venues.

Submission procedure

Students must submit their work in the dates fixed by coordination. They should send a digital copy to the Masters General coordinator and to the coordinator of their specialization. In addition, they should give three printed copies to the coordinator of their specialization. If students fail to follow this procedure, they will miss the opportunity to be assessed.

Students can only submit their work and do their Viva on September if they have the authorisation of both the Masters General coordinator and the coordinator of their specialization. They cannot approve such change without a letter from the student justifying the request.

Viva procedures

Oral presentations must be done face-to-face on the dates assigned by the coordinator of each specialization. During their Viva, students will present the context of their study/innovative proposal, the research objectives and questions (or problem to be solved), the results of the study, the conclusions and suggestions for improvement.

The coordinator of each specialization would nominate the members of the jury and will allocate each student to a tribunal. Viva dates and venues will be made public on due time.

Students will have 15 minutes to present their study with the help of some sort of visual support. Jury members will have 10 minutes to pose questions to students, who should reply to them for a period no longer than 5 minutes. See the assessment criteria in the last section.

As a Viva is a public oral defence of the work done, students' relatives or friends are welcome. The same applies to other students or teachers. The audience must show respect for the Viva procedures.

Organisation of the juries

Each jury will be composed of three members elected by the coordinator of each specialization among the teachers participating in the Masters programme or, if necessary, colleagues from the same departments. One of the three members must hold a Ph.D. degree and one must be the students' tutor. Secondary teachers can also be members of a jury if they participate in the Masters programme as school mentors.

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria should be made public and presented to the students. The jury would share the criteria to assess the written Masters dissertation. Criteria should be based upon these premises:

- Quality and relevance of the contents in each section.
- Adequacy of the methodology chosen to the type of study conducted and to the context of the problem observed.
- Justification and coherence in the reflection of the contextualised teaching practice.

Plagiarism will be penalised. If a student commits plagiarism his/her tutor can opt to give him/her an automatic FAIL mark. Students who commit plagiarism cannot take part in a Viva. For further details on plagiarism policies at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, please check:
http://wuster.uab.es/web_argumenta_obert/unit_20/sot_2_01.htm

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Outcomes
Active participation in the seminars and during the process of elaborating the dissertation	10%	0	0	2, 6, 9, 4
Oral presentation	40%	0	0	5, 2, 6, 3
The Masters Dissertation (written document)	50%	0	0	1, 13, 2, 11, 6, 9, 8, 7, 10, 12

Bibliography

A list of suggested readings would be given to students during their first seminar with their tutor.

Bolívar, A., Domingo, J., y Fernández Cruz, M. (2001). *La investigación biográfico-narrativa en educación: Enfoque y metodología*. Madrid: La Muralla.

Cohran-Smith, M., y Lytle, S.L. (2002). *Dentro/Fuera: Enseñantes que investigan*. Madrid: Akal.

Connelly, M., y Clandinin, J. (1995). *Relatos de Experiencia e Investigación Narrativa*. En J.Larrosa, R. Arnaus, V.R. Ferrer, N. Pérez de Lara, M. Connelly, J. Clandinin, M.

Greene (eds.), *Déjame que te cuente: Ensayos sobre narrativa y educación* (pp. 11-59). Barcelona: Laertes.

Guernier, M.C.; Durand, V.; Sautot, J.P. (dir.) (2007) *Interactions verbales, didactiques et apprentissages*. Besançon: Presses Universitaires du Franche-Comté.

Moral, C. (2006) "Criterios de validez en la investigación cualitativa actual". *RIE 24/1*, pp. 147-164.

Reuter, Yves (2006) "Penser les méthodes de recherche en didactique(s)". En Perrin-Glorian, Marie-Jeanne; Reuter, Yves (éds.) (2006) *Les méthodes de recherche en didactiques* (pp.13-26). Villeneuve d'Asq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion.

Reuter, Y. (2007) *Dictionnaire des concepts fondamentaux des didactiques*. Bruxelles: De Boeck

Software

Not special software is needed.