

Master's Dissertation

Code: 44035
ECTS Credits: 12

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

Contact

Name: Joan Miquel Verd Pericas

Email: joanmiquel.verd@uab.cat

Teaching groups languages

You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject. Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2023.

Teachers

Jose Pedro Lopez Roldan

Francesc Josep Miguel Quesada

Juan Rodriguez Soler

Joel Marti Olive

Oriol Barranco Font

Dafne Muntanyola Saura

Mireia Bolibar Planas

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 (MD) 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 MD 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 and objectives of the MD, the Final Report may have two types of structure, which are presented below. One of them should be chosen according to the objectives and contents of the MD:

A. If the MD is oriented to developing of a small research, it will consist of the following parts:

1. Introduction. 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 the general and specific objectives will be presented.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will present, *a priori*, two types of content. On the one hand, the *state of the question* addressed will be shown, that is, those scientific publications that deal with the object of study and/or problems raised in the TFM will be reviewed. On the other hand, the *conceptual framework* of the research will

be presented, in which the relevant theoretical concepts will be reviewed and the theoretical construction of the problem to be studied will be addressed. These two parts are flexible, and the tutor can recommend, depending on the existing literature or depending on the problem addressed, giving more prominence to one or the other; or even concentrate only on one of the two parts.

3. Analysis Model

In this section, the research questions or hypotheses will be presented. These questions or hypotheses must be explicitly stated and developed, and must be susceptible to empirical testing. In addition, a diagram of the analysis model will be presented in which the relationships between the main concepts used in the work are made explicit. This diagram of the analysis model may also represent the main hypotheses of the work, in the case of proposing hypotheses in the MD. In case of using quantitative methods, the operationalization of the main concepts will also be presented in this section. In case of using qualitative methods, the main blocks of the interview, discussion group or observation protocol will be presented.

4. Methodology

In this section the type of *methodological research design* that has been carried out (qualitative, quantitative or mixed) will be explained. The section will present also what have been the most important decisions of this methodological research design and how these decisions are justified. In relation to the sources of information used, these may be secondary statistical data, documentary data (obtained through a sampling logic that must be explicit and transparent) or data obtained directly by using qualitative research methods, based on the use of interviews, discussion groups or observations. The section should explicitly justify why the chosen sources and types of data are used, as well as the methodological advantages and disadvantages of the decisions made. It will also be necessary to describe the fieldwork carried out, in case of using own data. Regarding the analysis of the data obtained, it will be necessary to explicitly indicate what type of specific analysis has been adopted and what has been the procedure followed.

5. Analysis / Results

This section should present all the data processing carried out in the research. If the length of the analysis implies exceeding the number of pages recommended for the report, a short summary will be presented and the complete analysis will appear in an appendix. The data analysis should lead to a concrete answer to the research questions posed (or to verify the hypotheses of the research).

6. Conclusions

The conclusions will have to respond to the objectives set out in the MD. In this section, the findings made should be synthesized and their theoretical, methodological and/or empirical relevance discussed. In this sense, it is advisable to compare the results obtained with those collected in the literature reviewed and identify the (possible) differences. It is also recommended to reflect on the (possible) limitations of the work and extract policy recommendations or applied knowledge in relation to the object of study addressed.

7. Bibliography

8. Appendix

It 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. A. If the MD is oriented to the evaluation of a policy, it will consist of the following parts:

1. Introduction. Presentation of the research question and objectives of the study

The construction of the problem and the objectives of the evaluation will be presented. The interest of the evaluation, its relevance and some general and specific objectives will also be justified.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will contain, *a priori*, two types of information. On the one hand, *the estate of the art* regarding the issue addressed will be shown, that is, those scientific publications that deal with the object of study and/or problems raised in the MD will be reviewed. On the other hand, the *conceptual framework* of the research will be presented, in which the pertinent theoretical concepts will be reviewed and the theoretical construction of the central problem on which the evaluation is to be carried out will be addressed. These two parts are flexible, and the tutor can recommend, depending on the existing literature or depending on the problem addressed, giving more prominence to one or the other, or even concentrating only on one of the two parts.

3. Theory of change

In this section the pertinent evaluation questions will be presented, consistent with the problems raised. The theory of change will also be developed (summary of the elements to be considered in the construction of the intervention, target population, inputs, outputs, outcomes...) and it will be presented using a diagram.

4. Methodology

This section will present, first, the type of methodological design of the evaluation carried out (qualitative, quantitative or mixed) and what the most important decisions of this design have been. As for the sources of information, these may be secondary statistical data, documentary data (obtained through a sampling logic that must be explicit and transparent) or data obtained directly through qualitative research methods, based on the use of interviews, discussion groups or observations. The section should explicitly justify why the chosen sources and types of data are used, as well as the methodological advantages and disadvantages of the decisions made. This section should also describe the fieldwork carried out, in case of using own data. In relation to the analysis of the data obtained, it will be necessary to explicitly indicate what type of specific analysis has been adopted and what has been the procedure followed.

5. Analysis / Results Obtained

In this section, all the data processing carried out should appear. If this analysis involves exceeding the number of pages indicated for the report, a summary will be presented (in this second case, the complete analysis will appear in the appendix). The data analysis should lead to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluated public policy, based on the variables identified in the literature.

6. Conclusions

They should summarize the objectives of the evaluation carried out and explain to what extent these objectives have been achieved. This section should also point out the elements that have not been empirically verified and the (possible) limitations of the work. It will also be necessary to compare the results obtained with the reviewed literature and discuss the (possible) differences detected.

7. Bibliography

8. Appendix

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

Length (excluding Appendix): 10,000 words (30-35 pages one and a half spaces).

Declaration of originality of the Master's Dissertation

At the end of MD (after the Bibliography and before the Annexes) there must be a statement of originality like the following one:

Declaration of originality

I declare herewith that this essay is my own original work. Furthermore, I confirm that:

- This work has been written exclusively by me without receiving any kind of help, from another person or using any kind of technology.
- I have not used or paraphrased any document, data or information without due acknowledgment of the original authorship, nor have I used them extensively to substitute or disguise my own writing.
- I have clearly referenced in accordance with the Faculty's requirements all the sources used in the work (whether from a printed source, the Internet or any other source), both in the text and in the Bibliography list.
- I have not falsified or manipulated the data used or the findings made.
- No part of the work has been used previously, or at the same time, for other courses or subjects within the Master, or as an exercise within other evaluation processes. In the case of having used any fragment of these characteristics, I have requested explicit permission from the tutor and I have left a record of its use by placing a footnote in the text itself, clearly explaining which is the fragment used.

I appreciate that any false claim in this statement will result in disciplinary action according to the recommendations of the Faculty of Political Science and Sociology. I confirm that I understand that my work may be electronically checked for plagiarism or improper use of artificial intelligence tools through the application of a detection software and that it may be stored for eventual future comparison.

Name and surname of the student:

Date:.....

Signature:

Methodology

The learning activity of this module is based on the orientation and individualized follow-up of the MD by the supervisor (tutor) 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 MD are also part of the activities of the module. These *collective moments* consist of three plenary sessions (meetings) and two follow-up sessions. The defence of the final 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 handing of assignments 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 MD.

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 supervisors and evaluators.

First follow-up session

The basic lines of the project of MD will be presented: objectives, theoretical framework (state of the art and review of relevant theoretical concepts), hypothesis or specific research questions, methodology (methodological design, methods and techniques). and bibliography. It is recommended to check the rubric placed in the Virtual Campus to verify in greater detail the requirements of this first follow-up session.

All the contents presented in this follow-up session will have been previously agreed with the supervisor. On the date set for follow-up, *Assignment 1* will also be sent to the supervisor. This Assignment will consist of a research project of about 1,500 words.

Second follow-up session

The theoretical framework, the analysis model (or theory of change) and the methodological design of the investigation or evaluation will be presented. It is recommended to check the rubric placed in the Virtual Campus to verify in greater detail the requirements of this second follow-up session.

All the contents presented in this follow-up session will have been previously agreed with the supervisor. On the date set for follow-up, Assignment 2 will also be sent to the supervisor. This Assignment 2 will consist of the theoretical framework and research design of the MD (5,000 words).

II. Assignments

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

Assignment 2: Theoretical framework and design of the research/ evaluation (5,000 words).

Assignment 3: Draft of the Final research report / evaluation (10,000 words).

Assignment 4: Final research/ evaluation report (10,000 words).

The Final Report may 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 academic year.

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: 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 MD will be the result of the following evidence 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 ten days after the final report delivery. The board will be formed by the supervisor of the MD and a member of the teaching staff of the module (called *methodological evaluator*). The specific date and time for the defence will be agreed between the tutor, the methodological evaluator and the student; therefore, it will be flexible and can be adapted to the student's availability, as long as it is done within the period set by the Faculty.

The defence of the MD will consist of an oral presentation of a maximum of 20 minutes. The members of the board will then ask their questions, and after the intervention of the board the student will have a turn of reply. Finally, the board 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

APA norms of citation (seventh edition):

<https://normas-apa.org/wp-content/uploads/Guia-Normas-APA-7ma-edicion.pdf>

ASA norms of citation: <https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/asastyleguide.pdf>

Guia sobre com citar i com evitar el plagi: <https://www.uab.cat/doc/GuiaCitesiPlagiEstudiants>

Software

This module does not use any specific software