

Master'S Dissertation

Code: 42457
ECTS Credits: 10

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Public Administration	OB	0

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

Students that take this module must have passed the rest of the modules of the program

Objectives and Contextualisation

The objective of this module is to help students to design and elaborate a final master's thesis (TFM) characteristic of research in social sciences. It is an autonomous academic work. It will place the emphasis on rigour in the definition of concepts, the aims of research and the selection of the most appropriate methodology. It will be work in depth the ability to design the research project itself, both in the case it has a mainly theoretical interest and if its focus is placed on empirical cases.

The TFM is a research work that has to delve into some aspect dealt with in one of the other thematic modules studied of the master's degree. The objective is to develop a public management topic relevant from an analytical and empirical point of view. The Master's Thesis must have the formal and contingent characteristics of research in social sciences. It will have to include the definition of a relevant and approachable research question, the proposal of an appropriate focal theory, a methodological research strategy and the design of the project. Eventually, it is possible to complete the analysis through the corresponding empirical evidence.

Competences

- Address complex public intervention situations, possibly involving ethical dilemmas, on the basis of proposals founded both on explicit values and on conceptual and methodological rigour.
- Analyse public policies in different sectorial areas.
- Apply appropriate methodological techniques for rigorous analysis of public intervention in society and the economy.
- Apply concepts, theories and models from various disciplines in the exercise of public administration duties.
- Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Design a well-defined research project in accordance with the criteria of conceptual and methodological rigour in the framework of the social sciences.
- Design and evaluate processes of public intervention in specific social, political and sectorial situations and problem areas.

- Design technical projects and reports using the appropriate research methodology.
- Evaluate projects, reports and analyses produced by others, with appropriate methodological and argumentative criteria.
- Identify, understand and analyse complex social and political phenomena that are important to the exercise of public administration duties.
- Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
- Manage a varied and complex body of data and sources.
- Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.

Learning Outcomes

1. Access the appropriate data sources for the analysis of political science.
2. Address complex public intervention situations, possibly involving ethical dilemmas, on the basis of proposals founded both on explicit values and on conceptual and methodological rigour.
3. Apply the principal theories for analysing processes of preparation, implementation and evaluation of public policies, independently of the sectorial area.
4. Communicate and justify conclusions clearly and unambiguously to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
5. Define the main concepts involved in the problem and the limitations of their corresponding operationalisation.
6. Design an appropriate research strategy to address the problem that has been formulated.
7. Design technical projects and reports using the appropriate research methodology.
8. Evaluate projects, reports and analyses produced by others, with appropriate methodological and argumentative criteria.
9. Identify a research problem, justifying its political and academic importance.
10. Identify the appropriate techniques to respond to the research problem that has been formulated and apply these to the available data.
11. Identify the key questions of a research project within an empirically and analytically significant framework.
12. Identify the limitations of the conclusions of a research project.
13. Identify the relationships that are formed between these variables at an empirical level.
14. Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
15. Interpret these relationships and explain them in terms of the analytic instruments being studied.
16. Present conclusions before critical audiences.
17. Process and prepare the data compiled for analysis using the corresponding software.
18. Recognise theoretically-defined variables in empirical reality and characterise these.
19. Situate a research problem within an academic debate by identifying what is currently known about it and the limitations of previous work.
20. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.

Content

TFM topic selection:

The TFM development includes the following phases:

1. Study the bibliography on the subject.
2. Define an approachable question that guides the work.
3. Structure the work, order the ideas and the available material.

4. If necessary, obtain and analyze data
5. Write the drafts.
6. Prepare in detail the presentation of the final version.

Indicative summary of the TFM:

The three index proposals presented below are generic and indicative. The work must have between 8,000 and 10,000 words.

Proposal 1: Carrying out a research.

1. Presentation of the problem or object of study.

Definition of the object - Empirical interest and analytical interest

Research question

Theoretical framework

Hypotheses

2. Methodology (approach, types of data, techniques to collect them, analysis techniques)
3. Presentation/Description of the data (quantitative or qualitative) / Construction of the case (justification of the selection of cases).
4. Analysis and discussion
5. Conclusions.

Proposal 2: Design of a research project.

1. Presentation of the problem or object of study
2. Definition of the object - Empirical interest and analytical interest.
3. Theoretical framework.
4. Research question and hypotheses.
5. Methodology (approach, types of data, techniques to collect them, analysis techniques).
6. Range and types of conclusions that are foreseen.

Proposal 3: Consultancy report.

1. Presentation of the problem to be analysed and justification of its interest (Context of the subject, comparable practical bones, etc.).
2. Aims of the analysis - questions to be answered.
3. Methodology (approach, types of data, techniques to collect them, analysis techniques)
4. Analysis
5. Conclusions
6. Recommendations (if applicable).

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	25	1	2, 1, 3, 10, 8, 16, 5, 7, 6, 12, 11, 13, 9, 15, 17, 20, 4, 14, 18, 19
Type: Supervised			
Tutoring, presentations and discussion of progresses	75	3	2, 1, 3, 10, 8, 16, 5, 7, 6, 12, 11, 13, 9, 15, 17, 20, 4, 14, 18, 19
Type: Autonomous			
Elaboration of the thesis	150	6	2, 1, 3, 10, 8, 16, 5, 7, 6, 12, 11, 13, 9, 15, 17, 20, 4, 14, 18, 19

In order to carry out the TFM, the student will have individual tutoring by a master's professor. The follow-up scheme will include a minimum of four meetings:

1. Discussion of possible topics and approaches for the work.
2. Discussion of the structure.
3. Discussion of the evolution of the work.
4. Discussion of the draft.

In addition to these meetings with the tutor, all students will attend periodic collective tutoring and discussion sessions with the coordinator of the module and/or other teachers of the Master. In these sessions each student will present their TFM project once. Therefore, in these sessions, the student will receive comments from the teacher in charge of the session, and also attend presentations of ongoing research by the rest of the students and their corresponding methodological discussions.

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.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Defence of the Master's Final Thesis	20%	0	0	2, 1, 3, 10, 8, 16, 5, 7, 6, 12, 11, 13, 9, 15, 17, 20, 4, 14, 18, 19
Master's Final Thesis	70%	0	0	2, 1, 3, 10, 8, 16, 5, 7, 6, 12, 11, 13, 9, 15, 17, 20, 4, 14, 18, 19
Presentation (research design) and collective tutorials	10%	0	0	5, 6, 9, 19

The student must strictly adhere to the delivery schedule uploaded at the Campus Virtual

The evaluation will be carried out by a commission formed by two teachers of the master and will include an oral defence of the TFM by the student. The work must address a specific research question of analytical and empirical relevance. The commission will therefore assess:

1. critical understanding of existing theoretical debates on the subject,
2. the ability to define a concrete and approachable question,
3. the ability to link theory and empirical analysis through appropriate methodology,
4. the ability to publicly present the results of the TFM.

In the final grade of the module the TFM will represent 70% of the grade, the oral defense 20% and the presentation and participation in group tutorials 10%. The final grade can be:

Excellent (9-10 of 10): A TFM with very good definition of the analytical and empirical relevance of the topic, solid conceptual and methodological coherence and consistency, and good written and oral presentation.

Good (7-8 out of 10): A TFM with an interesting question/problem and good definition of the main concepts and methodological tools, but with an improved link between these aspects, as well as between them and the results.

Pass (5-6 out of 10): A TFM with ideas that are not particularly original and in which each of the above aspects can be improved.

Non pass (0-4 out of 10): Problems of structure or content that demonstrate insufficient use of the subjects dealt with in the master's degree.

Bibliography

The bibliography will be suggested by the tutor / a of the Final Master's Thesis, depending on the subject matter to be analysed and the methodology used.

References on reserach desing:

McCauley, A., Ruggeri, A., 2020. From Questions and Puzzles to Research Project, in: The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations. SAGE Publications Ltd

Della Porta, Dontallea y Michael Keating 2008, Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences, Cambridge: CUP

Hanké, Bob 2009, Intelligent Research Design, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Software

The software used will depend on the methodology of each Master's Thesis.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(TEm) Theory (master)	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed