

Master's Dissertation

Code: 42987
ECTS Credits: 10

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
International Relations, Security and Development	TFE	1

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Teaching groups languages

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

Prerequisites

This course has no academic prerequisites to begin, although there are conditions that must be met in order to present the Master's Final Project (TFM) for public defense and final evaluation. These include obtaining approval from the assigned supervisor, as well as fulfilling the requirements set out in this Course Guide.

Students should take into account the following:

- a. The TFM is a compulsory project for all students.
- b. The course coordinator will provide students with a document to be completed, in which they must specify the topic they wish to work on and the approach they plan to take. Based on this information, a supervisor will be assigned.
- c. There will be a public defense of the research project.
- d. The process will conclude with the submission of the final project, in accordance with the procedures and timelines established in the "Guía de Elaboración de TFM", which will be provided at the start of the course.
- e. The TFM may be written in Spanish, Catalan, or English.

Objectives and Contextualisation

1. Demonstrate competencies in all aspects related to the development of an academic or applied project, as outlined in the Contents section.
2. Analyze the international reality and recognize its complexity using the theoretical tools studied in the Master's programme, while adopting a forward-looking perspective (trend projection and early identification of emerging topics).
3. Analyze, synthesize, organize, and plan projects and assignments related to the field of study.
4. Conduct research in the scientific literature, demonstrating command of documentary and bibliographic resources specialized in International Relations, and integrate this information to formulate and contextualize a research topic.
5. Apply theoretical frameworks and approaches, as well as conceptual elaborations, in the analysis of international relations.
6. Design, plan, and carry out a project on international relations that meets the standards of academic rigor and excellence.
7. Diagnose problems related to international relations, security, and development in the proposed countries, regions, and areas of the international system; and, based on this diagnosis, generate useful recommendations for decision-making, especially if the project has an applied dimension.
8. Possess and understand knowledge that provides a foundation or opportunity to develop original ideas and/or apply them.
9. Integrate knowledge in order to, when relevant, formulate normative evaluations.
10. Be able to communicate findings to both specialized and non-specialized audiences clearly and unambiguously.

Learning Outcomes

1. CA24 (Competence) To generate innovative and competitive professional and/or research-related proposals based on the conclusions presented in the Final Master's Degree Project.
2. CA25 (Competence) To draft a research project on a topic of international relations that includes all phases (design, planning and implementation) and meets the criteria of rigour and academic excellence.
3. CA26 (Competence) To use inclusive and non-discriminatory language when drafting and presenting the Final Master's Degree Project.
4. CA27 (Competence) To identify issues related to international relations, security and development in the proposed countries, regions and sectors within the international system and propose viable and sustainable solutions.
5. KA21 (Knowledge) To design a socially and ethically responsible research project.
6. KA22 (Knowledge) To recognise guidelines for intervention in matters of security and development, particularly in the context of peace processes and peacebuilding, from different theoretical perspectives.
7. KA23 (Knowledge) To reflect the complexity and implications of current sociopolitical processes in the research project.

8. SA25 (Skill) To apply the knowledge acquired by solving problems in diverse and/or little-known settings, within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the research project.
9. SA26 (Skill) To identify the most appropriate qualitative and interdisciplinary methodologies for analysing the topic addressed in the Final Master's Degree Project.
10. SA27 (Skill) To structure the transmission of information on a particular research project in accordance with the appropriate guidelines and with specialised language.
11. SA28 (Skill) To use scientific literature to gather information that helps approach and contextualise a research topic, demonstrating a command of specialised documentary and bibliographic resources on matters of international relations.
12. SA29 (Skill) To systematically apply the appropriate methodological instruments in the research project.

Content

1. General

- a. The TFM is a mandatory project for all students.
- b. As previously mentioned, the TFM will include a public defense of the research project.
- c. The TFM may be written in Spanish, Catalan, or English.

2. Types of TFM

a. Academic

This modality consists of an original research project that applies theoretical frameworks and appropriate methodological tools to conduct a rigorous investigation and reach conclusions that contribute to advancing knowledge on the chosen topic. The project must demonstrate mastery of methodological criteria and the various instruments necessary to carry out independent research. In other words, it should reflect the ability to explore issues related to the scope of the Master's programme, such as international relations, security, and development.

The work must be presented in the format of a scientific article, following the standards of a peer-reviewed academic journal. It should include: a clear and concise abstract (approximately 150 words), identification of keywords, formulation of research questions and hypotheses, an analytical or theoretical framework, literature review and state of the art, development of the topic, conclusions, bibliography, and, if applicable, annexes.

This modality is recommended for students who plan to continue their academic trajectory (e.g., doctoral studies) or aim to publish their work in a specialized journal.

b. Applied

This modality consists of an original research project that applies the knowledge acquired during the Master's programme to produce a structured document such as a report, a policy paper, or a state of the art review. The aim is to present an organized analysis of a specific issue intended for potential policymakers, stakeholders, or other relevant actors.

The document must include a clear and concise abstract (approximately 150 words), identification of keywords, clearly defined questions and objectives, development of the analysis, recommendations, bibliography, and, if applicable, annexes.

Examples include:

- A report on a well-defined topic, intended for an organization or decision-maker requiring reliable and well-structured information. Topics might include the status of international negotiations, the implementation of agreements, or recent changes in a particular region or international organization. The report should define the state of the issue, the actors involved, the agenda, positions, possible scenarios, etc.

- An analysis of the evolution and current state of key reports produced by an organization (e.g., Human Development Report, World Development Report, Global Burden of Violence), or of a specific academic literature (e.g., debates on the resurgence of violence in Central American countries after peace agreements). This task involves selecting a focused and well-defined body of documents (e.g., reports or articles), analyzing and organizing them, and drawing conclusions about similarities, differences, trends, and key debates, with the aim of offering a useful and structured introduction to the topic.

- A policy paper in the strict sense: a document directly oriented toward recommending courses of action to various actors (governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, etc.) regarding a specific issue. It begins with a clear problem statement, analyzes current scenarios and their potential evolution, and proposes well-argued recommendations or concrete policy options.

This modality is especially recommended for students aiming to build a professional profile oriented toward public administration, policy advocacy, social change, or the internationalization of the private sector.

3. Formal Requirements for Both Modalities (Academic and Applied)

a. The maximum length of the TFM is 10,000 words, including references and footnotes. The cover page, abstract, and annexes are not included in the word count.

b. The project must be based on clearly formulated research questions and well-defined objectives. Without research questions, it is not possible to complete a TFM. These questions must also be realistically answerable within the scope and length of the project.

c. The introduction must specify the objectives, research questions, hypotheses and variables (if applicable), the chosen approach, and the overall structure of the work. In the case of an applied TFM, it is essential to identify the target audience, that is, the intended "clients" or readers of the report.

d. The work must include a concluding section that presents findings and/or recommendations and responds to the questions initially posed.

e. In terms of referencing, an abbreviated citation system should be used throughout the text (Harvard, Chicago, or APA style), and a complete bibliography of all sources cited, including digital references, must be provided at the end of the document.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Supervised			
Public presentation and defense of the TFM project	2	0.08	
Trainings and informative meetings with the TFM coordinator	16	0.64	
Tutoring sessions with the supervisor	8	0.32	
Type: Autonomous			
Study, literature search, reading and analysis	220	8.8	

There are three stages to completing the TFM:

1. Selection of the topic and assignment of a supervisor

This stage will begin with an information session led by the course coordinator. Afterwards, students will be provided with a document they must complete, in which they will indicate their professional interests, initial ideas for the topic they wish to explore, the intended approach, the preferred TFM modality, and other relevant aspects.

Once the proposals have been reviewed and discussed with the teaching staff, the course coordinator will assign each student a supervisor and facilitate initial contact between them. Supervision cannot be guaranteed for topics that fall outside the areas of knowledge and research represented by the teaching team of the course.

2. Drafting and public defense of the TFM project

Students will submit a TFM project following a standard template included in the "Guía de Elaboración del TFM", which must first be reviewed with their assigned supervisor. This project will be defended orally before a panel made up of two faculty members. The panel will provide feedback and suggestions for improvement, request additional clarifications if necessary, and assess the student's ability to articulate and defend a research proposal.

In general terms, the TFM project must specify the research topic, temporal or geographical scope, research questions, methodology, and research design, as well as the TFM modality that best fits the topic and the student's interests and abilities. For academic projects, students must also formulate a research hypothesis and define the theoretical contribution the work aims to make. For applied projects, students must justify the political, institutional, or social relevance of the selected topic and clearly define the target audience of the work.

In both cases, the proposal must include an initial annotated bibliography with at least five references (books, academic articles, or reports) that address the same topic or use a similar theoretical or analytical framework.

The project and its defense account for 30% of the final TFM grade.

3. Writing, submission, and evaluation of the TFM

Based on the feedback received during the defense of the TFM project, as well as the guidance provided by the supervisor, students will proceed with the preparation of the final version of the TFM.

The final work must be submitted via the Virtual Campus by the deadline established. It will be evaluated by a panel of three members, one of whom will be the student's supervisor. The evaluation will follow a rubric available in the "Guía de Elaboración del TFM".

The final work accounts for 70% of the total TFM grade. This grade is distributed as follows: the supervisor assigns 50% of the 70%, and each of the other two panel members assigns 25%, respectively.

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

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final project	70%	2	0.08	CA24, CA25, CA26, CA27, KA21, KA22, KA23, SA25, SA26, SA27, SA28, SA29
Public defense of the TFM project	30%	2	0.08	CA24, CA25, CA26, CA27, KA21, KA22, KA23, SA25, SA26, SA27, SA28, SA29

The evaluation of the TFM consists of two parts:

1. The assessment by a panel and the course coordinator of the quality of the TFM project presented and the student's performance in its public defense (30%).
2. The assessment of the final written work by three professors (including the supervisor) (70%). For this, a grading rubric will be used, which will be shared at the beginning of the process with both students and faculty. This rubric, included in the "Guía de Elaboración del TFM", defines the academic objectives and requirements, and clearly outlines the expected levels of achievement in terms of both content and format, with their corresponding translation into a numerical scale.

Evaluation Period

The ordinary assessment takes place during the first week of July. Exceptionally, students may opt for an advanced assessment in February if the TFM is the only subject that the student must pass to obtain the master's degree. Also on an exceptional basis, the supervisors can agree with the course coordinator that the work does not meet the minimum requirements to be evaluated. In such cases, and with appropriate justification, the student may be allowed to submit the TFM in September.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this course, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted exclusively for support tasks, such as grammatical correction or text translation, but not for generating analysis or argumentative content. Students must clearly indicate which tools were used and include a critical reflection on how these tools influenced both the process and the final outcome of the project. Failure to be transparent about the use of AI will be considered a breach of academic integrity, and may lead to partial or total penalisation of the final grade, or more serious disciplinary measures depending on the severity of the case.

Plagiarism and Other Irregularities

In accordance with academic regulations, any irregularity that could result in a significant change in the grade of an evaluation activity will result in that activity being awarded a mark of 0. If multiple irregularities are detected in evaluation activities within the same course, the final grade for the course will be 0.

Bibliography

There is no general bibliography. The course coordinator, and in particular supervisors, will be able to advise specific literature on research methods and techniques, writing process or on the topic addressed in the TFM.

In the evaluation, the diversity of sources will be assessed and it will be taken into account that the contribution of both male and female authors is adequately reflected.

Software

Does not apply

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.