

GUIDE TO MASTER'S THESES AT THE FACULTY OF ARTS

Approved by the Board of the Faculty on 17 December 2013

Modified by the Board of the Faculty on 11 July 2024

Modified in the Faculty Council on 18 March 2026

INTRODUCTION

Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation and quality assurance process of official university courses, states that the aims of official master's courses are either to provide students with advanced or multidisciplinary training oriented towards academic or professional specialization or to promote the undertaking of research tasks.

The URV's teaching regulations, which are approved for each academic year by the Governing Council, include the general guidelines applicable to the master's thesis guides published by the URV's faculties and schools.

The Master's Thesis (hereafter MT) is a compulsory subject that forms part of the master's degree courses of the Faculty of Arts and that, depending on the specific degree course, is worth between 6 and 30 ECTS credits. It is carried out during the final stages of the course.

Article 1. Aim

1.1. The MT is defined as an independent piece of work that allows the student to their acquisition of the training content and the learning outcomes associated with the master's degree.

1.2. The MT is defined as an autonomous and individual piece of work although it may be written collaboratively in master's courses that specify this in their MT teaching guides. In such cases each must be individually assessed.

1.3. Types of MT:

1.3.1. **Research MT:** focused on the formulation and resolution of research questions through a rigorous methodology, contributing to the knowledge and deep understanding of a specific topic within the field of study.

1.3.2. **Innovation or Transfer MT:** combines a professional focus with the promotion of innovative ideas, allowing students to apply their theoretical knowledge to solve real problems or develop new proposals in their field of study. This modality can include the creation and development of projects, the design of action plans, the elaboration of feasibility studies and the development of prototypes.

1.4. Approaches to the MT:

1.4.1. **Service and Learning Programme (SLP):** MTs that adopt a Learning and Service (SLP) approach allow students to combine their academic goals with social service through collaborative projects with external entities and organisations that seek to address specific social needs. This approach promotes practical training and social responsibility.

1.4.2. **Interdisciplinary MT:** Interdisciplinary MTs facilitate collaboration and integration of knowledge between different academic disciplines, offering students a unique opportunity to explore their subject of interest from different perspectives. This approach promotes creativity, innovation and complex analysis.

1.5. MTs, whether they are Research, Professional, Innovation or Transfer, may incorporate Service and Learning (SL) or an interdisciplinary approach, thus enriching the students' experience and promoting comprehensive and practical training.

Article 2. Organisation

2.1. In order to coordinate the MT for each course, those departments that are responsible for the subject must designate an MT coordinator who is responsible for:

- Writing the teaching guide for the subject.
- Ensuring the smooth implementation and running of the subject.
- Assigning tutors to students.
- Coordinating and supervising the collection of evidence, the updating of online spaces and the communication of organisational decisions.
- For courses where it is required, preparing and publishing the MT subjects that are on offer and organising the system for assigning them. For other courses, facilitating and managing the proposal of subjects by students.
- Ensuring that students have the relevant information regarding the structure, characteristics, style, length, presentation and defence of the MT.
- Appointing the examination panels to evaluate the students' public defences of their MTs.
- Ensuring that grades are introduced to the official records of the subject and resolving any incidents that may arise during the writing and defence of the MT.
- Taking any organizational decisions that are not specified in the present guide.

To provide support for each MT coordinator, the departments responsible for the subject may create an MT committee for each master's degree. Any such committee must be headed by the MT coordinator.

2.2. The MT coordinator, in collaboration with the rest of the teaching staff involved in the MT, is responsible for writing the teaching guide in accordance with the Teaching Regulations. The teaching guide and the work plan are reviewed and updated in accordance with the criteria established in the regulations so as to ensure that students are fully informed about the requirements and deadlines governing their MTs.

2.3. At Faculty level, the General Coordinator of the BT/MT is responsible for the overall coordination and supervision of the whole MT process, and for acting as a point of contact between the Faculty Council, the academic departments and the students.

Article 3. Registration, defence and evaluation

3.1. Master's courses of more than 60 ECTS credits that set specific requirements for registering for the MT must clearly state the nature of these requirements in the teaching guide of the corresponding MT.

3.2. The deadlines for submitting, defending and evaluating the MT must be published in the respective work plans and must be in line with the academic calendar of the Faculty of Arts.

Article 4. Responsibility and teaching load

4.1. The Faculty will assign the teaching for the MT of each course to the different departments in accordance with the specifications of each curriculum. The teaching load for the MT is calculated in accordance with the criteria specified in the Teaching Regulations. Each department distributes this teaching load among its teaching staff in accordance with the indications of the master's degree coordinator.

4.2. The Faculty also appoints a General BT/MT Coordinator, who coordinates and supervises the execution of the entire MT process at faculty level, ensuring the uniform application of the established quality standards and criteria.

4.3. The departments may set up MT committees for each degree, chaired by the MT coordinator, to provide support in the management and periodic review of policies and procedures related to MTs.

Article 5. Assignment or choice of topic

5.1. The MT coordinator is responsible for managing the assigning of MT topics and tutors to registered students.

5.2. Each MT coordinator must state whether students must choose a topic from a predetermined list and/or whether they can propose their own topics.

5.3. The coordinator of the MT must publish the list of available topics for courses that require a predefined list of topics. Students must then present a list of their preferences in order of priority. The MT coordinator will assign the MT topics to the students and then tell each student which topic and tutor they have been assigned. In addition to the student's preferences, the assignments are based on the number of credits passed by the student and their academic transcript. The subject assigned and the corresponding tutor will be communicated within the established deadline.

5.4. Students who wish to propose their own topics must submit their proposals to the MT coordinator, who will decide in conjunction with the tutor whether or not to accept them. The tutor, in coordination with the assigned tutor, will assess the viability of each proposal and decide whether or not to accept it, formally informing the student of the decision.

Article 6. Supervision

6.1. The MT must be completed under the supervision of at least one tutor, who must be a teacher in the department and/or of the master's degree.

6.2. The MT coordinator must assign the MT tutor to the student on the basis of ambit of the project and with the prior agreement of the tutor.

6.3. The MT tutor will aim to facilitate the learning process and has the following responsibilities:

- Evaluating, assisting and guiding the student during the MT.
- Supervising the progress of the MT.
- Ensuring that the objectives are complied with.
- Participating in evaluating and grading the MT.

6.4. Tutorials consist of face-to-face or online interviews scheduled as part of the MT calendar. If students do their MT while they are on a mobility programme, tutorials will be carried out online in compliance with the instructions of the tutor.

6.5. Students who have to do all or some of the MT at institutions or organisations other than the URV must have a tutor from that institution or organisation who will help define the content and implementation of the MT. In this case, the Faculty and the institution must draw up an agreement.

Article 7. Evaluation

7.1. The MT will be evaluated by means of two examination sessions. Students may request to bring forward or delay the period in which they carry out the MT in accordance with the procedures established in the Regulations Governing Registration of the URV. (Consultar: Intranet>Gestió acadèmica>tràmits administratius).

7.2. The assessment of the MT is designed to test and demonstrate the acquisition and command of the competencies associated with the master's degree. Assessment is carried out in accordance with the criteria published in the respective teaching guides, all of which establish the criteria regarding continuous assessment, the academic work presented and the public defence of the work. The Academic and Master's Degree Registration Regulations will be applied if all or part of the work is found to be plagiarised.

7.3. The person responsible for evaluating the MT is, depending on the respective teaching guides, the project tutor and/or the examination panel which, in accordance with article 8 of these regulations, is responsible for evaluating the public defence of the MT.

7.4. The formal regulations governing the presentation of theses must comply with the criteria established by the URV regarding the deposit of work in the URV's institutional repository.

7.5. Students have the right to write, present and defend the MT in a language other than Catalan or Spanish if this is stipulated in the relevant teaching guide. If they wish to do this, they must make the request when they present their choice of topics in order of preference or when they present their proposed MT topic.

7.6. The MT is graded on a scale of 0 to 10 to one decimal point. Students who obtain a final grade of excellent may be put forward by the MT coordinator for a distinction in accordance with the Academic and Registration Regulations.

7.7. Students have the right to review the final grade in accordance with the Academic Regulations.

Article 8. Defence of the MT

8.1. Students must defend their MT in public and in person. However, in exceptional cases, a student, in conjunction with the tutor, may submit a formal written application to be allowed to defend the project via an online platform. They must give the reasons why they want to do this in the application. On the basis of this application, the coordinator may decide to authorize the defence via an online platform, subject to the technical, administrative and financial conditions being in place. Students studying for their qualifications online will conduct their defences online.

8.2. The MT defence will be evaluated by an examination panel made up of a minimum of three members of the teaching staff designated by the MT coordinators. The panel must be constituted and publicized sufficiently in advance.

8.3. Each master's course will specify where, in which format and how many copies of the MT should be submitted.

8.4. The MT coordinator will inform each student of the time, date and place of the public defence at least 7 days in advance.

8.5. The MT defence must have a duration of no more than 30 minutes. After the student has completed the defence, the members of the panel may ask questions or request clarifications. The president of the tribunal will be in charge of moderating the session to ensure that the time is distributed in a fair and respectful way.

Article 9. Intellectual property

The intellectual or industrial property rights arising from the MT will be subject to the terms and conditions established by the current legislation. In all cases, the name of the author(s), the nature of the work and the affiliation with the URV must be cited whenever any use is made of the MT.

Article 10. MTs containing confidential information

10.1. Students who wish to include confidential information in their MTs must inform their tutors.

10.2. To comply with the regulations, the student must present to his/her MT tutor the confidentiality agreement (annex 1) duly stamped by the collaborating entity that is considered to be the owner of the confidential information and signed by a competent individual from this entity. If the owner is a physical person, the owner or their legal representative must sign this document.

10.3. Confidential information is any information considered as such by a legally established entity prior to the execution of the MT. Confidential information may refer to methods, procedures, models, techniques, circuits, programmes (software), and any other information that may be subject to legal protection.

10.4. For reasons of academic transparency, under no circumstances can a final project be considered to be confidential in its totality.

10.5. There will be two versions of any MT that contains confidential information: the full version and the abridged version. Both versions must have a preamble stating that the MT contains confidential information and giving the name and full address of the entity or physical person to whom the confidential information belongs.

10.6. The full version will make it clear, either by headings or footnotes, exactly what information is considered to be confidential. The abridged version will include a simplified explanation of the missing material so that the project as a whole does not lose continuity. This version will clearly show the approval of the collaborating entity and is the version that must be deposited at the URV's institutional repository and, if necessary, in the departmental repository once the MT has been defended.

10.7. The members of the examination panel must have access to the full version of the MT before and during the defence. Likewise, they must be notified that some of the information they are to assess is confidential, and they will inform all those who may attend the public oral examination.

10.8. The oral examination will remain open to the public and, therefore, representatives of the owners of the confidential information can attend. Likewise, the oral presentation, graphics, demonstrations, etc. will be from the full version. Nevertheless, any of the parties involved in the defence may request for public access to be restricted.

10.9. Once the students have been assessed by the panel, the panel will return all the full versions of the documentation, with the exception of one copy that will be deposited at the secretary's office of the MT coordinator's department for a minimum period of ten days in order to resolve any claims. In the case of work in non-textual formats, such as audiovisual productions or prototypes, a digital copy or an appropriate record of the work will be kept in the secretary's office or in the MT area of the virtual campus. In the event of a complaint, the digital copy or record must remain at the secretary's office or in the MT area of the virtual campus until it is completely resolved.

10.10. The Faculty accepts no responsibility for the misuse of this confidential information, apart from the individual responsibility that it may give rise to.

10.11. Any person or entity who is interested in the confidential information in an MT should contact the entity or physical person to whom the information belongs and whose name is stated in the preamble referred to in section 10.5. The Faculty accepts no liability with regards to this information.

Article 11. Deposit of the MT

11.1. The MT will be deposited at the URV's institutional repository. Those which have been awarded a grade equal to or higher than 8 must be available for consultation by anyone who wishes to use them for teaching, research or personal study purposes. The MT will be deposited in the institutional repository in accordance with the criteria established by the URV.

11.2. Each department may have a repository for storing digitalized MT and/or create a paper archive. In the case of work in non-textual formats, such as audiovisual productions or prototypes, a digital copy or an appropriate record of the work will be kept in the secretary's office or in the MT area of the virtual campus.

First additional provision

In the case of interuniversity master's degrees, the application of this guide will be adapted to the specific stipulations of the corresponding agreements. These provisions must be specified in the respective teaching guides.

Second additional provision

The vice-rector's office responsible for postgraduate studies is delegated by the rector as the competent body for resolving any issues relating to the application and interpretation of these guide and for making any exceptions should this be necessary. In this last instance, students must provide their reasons for the exception that they have requested and provide the necessary supporting documentation.

Final provision. Entry into force

These regulations come into force during the 2024-25 academic year.

**ANNEX 1: FINAL MASTER'S DEGREE PROJECT CONFIDENTIALITY
AGREEMENT**

Mr/Ms, with ID card number.....

And Dr, holder of identity card number, dean of the Faculty of Arts, based at Campus Catalunya, Avinguda de Catalunya, 35, 43002 Tarragona, as delegated by the rector of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili, with Tax Identification Number Q-9350003-A and based at Carrer de l'Excorxador, s/n, 43003, Tarragona.

And Mr /Ms, holder of identity card number, legal representative of, Tax Identification Number and based at

Agree to the following

CLAUSES

ONE: Students who wish to include confidential information in their Master's Thesis (MTs) must inform their MT tutors and submit this agreement duly stamped by the collaborating entity that owns the confidential information and signed by a competent individual from this entity. If the owner is a physical person, the agreement must be signed by that person or by their legal representative.

TWO: Confidential information is any information considered as such by a legally established entity prior to the execution of the MT. Confidential information may refer to methods, procedures, models, techniques, circuits, programmes (software), and any other information that may be subject to legal protection.

THREE: There will be two versions of any MT that contains confidential information: the full version and the abridged version. The full version will specify which information is considered to be confidential and will be submitted to the members of the examination panel. The abridged version will include a simplified explanation of the missing material so that the project as a whole does not lose continuity. This version will clearly show the approval of the collaborating entity and is the version that must be deposited at the URV's institutional repository and, if necessary, in the departmental repository once the MT has been defended. Both versions must state that the MT contains confidential information and give the name and full address of the entity or physical person to whom the confidential information belongs. Any person or entity who is interested in the confidential information in an MT should contact the entity or physical person to whom the information belongs.

FOUR: The members of the examination panel must have access to the full version of the MT before and during the defence. Likewise, they will be aware that some of the information they are to assess is confidential, and they will inform all those who may attend the public oral examination. In principle, the defence of the MT is open to the public. The oral presentation, graphics, demonstrations, etc. will correspond to the full version. Nevertheless, any of the parties involved in the defence may request that public access to be restricted.

FIVE: Once the students have been assessed by the panel, the panel secretary will return all the full versions of the documentation, with the exception of one copy that will be deposited at the secretary's office of the MT coordinator's department for a minimum of ten minimum in order to resolve any claims. Should any claims be made, this copy will remain in possession of the Secretariat until they have been satisfactorily solved.

SIX: The Faculty accepts no responsibility for the misuse of this confidential information, apart from the individual responsibility that it may give rise to.

..... (place), (date) (month) 20.....

The dean Representative of the entity The student Approval of tutor

(signature and stamp) (signature and stamp) (signature) Mr/Ms