

63134 - Master's Dissertation

Syllabus Information

Academic year: 2023/24

Subject: 63134 - Master's Dissertation

Faculty / School: 107 - Facultad de Educación

Degree: 330 - Complementos de formación Máster/Doctorado
573 - Master's in Lifelong Learning: Introduction to Research

ECTS: 15.0

Year: 573 - Master's in Lifelong Learning: Introduction to Research: 1
330 - Complementos de formación Máster/Doctorado: XX

Semester: Annual

Subject type: 330 - ENG/Complementos de Formación

573 - Master Final Project

Module:

1. General information

The master's final project (MFP) is a compulsory subject that defines the research nature of the master's degree. It is organized around the production of a research project on one of the research lines offered for this purpose by teachers of the master's degree. These teachers are also its directors, either jointly or individually. Specifically, the subject reinforces and makes visible the social commitment of researchers in the choice of the research problem, as well as the respect for people in the methodological development and the usefulness of the results. The subject is in line with the University of Zaragoza's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included in the United Nations Agenda 2030. Thus, the acquisition of the learning results provides training and competencies to contribute as future researchers in education to the achievement of Goal 4: Quality Education. In addition, from the ethical perspective of educational research, the following Goals are integrated: 3: Health and well-being; 5: Gender Equality; and 10: Reduction of Inequalities. The research problems derived from the different lines of research proposed are linked to the rest of the goals.

Its assessment is performed by a board of examiners once the rest of the subjects of the master's degree have been passed. In the case of part-time students, enrolment must be done in the second year; although it is recommended to establish the line of research during the first year in order to guide future work from the possibilities offered by the different subjects of the master's degree. The choice of research field and the direction for the MFP must be done on the dates scheduled in the academic calendar of the master's degree each academic year.

2. Learning results

1. - A good knowledge of the concepts included in the same, relating and comparing them with other close concepts, with the theories that support them and with the operational definitions derived from them.
2. -An adequate argumentation of a sequence of ideas that lead to the identification of a research problem, justifying the need to go deeper into it.
3. - An adequate support of research carried out in the same field, providing both recent and classic data on the topic, which requires the use of scientific databases.
4. -The formulation of the research objectives and, if necessary, the hypotheses derived from the justification of the topic. - In the case of qualitative research, the explanation of the purpose or driving idea and the process of defining the object of research throughout it.
5. -Decision-making on the research design, which requires determining a research methodology, justifying the relationship between the method and the objectives and hypotheses, the delimitation of variables, the selection of an accessible and valid sample, the choice of research procedures and data collection. -The justification for the decision should also be explained in the case of qualitative studies in the following terms: articulation between method (design) and methodology (strategies, techniques and instruments), taking into account the specificity of the object of study, the situation under investigation and the researcher's place in it.
6. -Data analysis based on the nature of the variables, applying the necessary technical or statistical procedures in each case, justifying their use, proposing different alternatives and drawing conclusions from the data found. -Qualitative research should present the analysis of the data in the light of the methodological decisions adopted within the investigated situation, substantiating the process of analysis that has led to the definition of the units and categories of analysis (saturation), as well as the intra and inter dependence between them with respect to the research as a whole. - In the case of non-empirical works, without fieldwork, the analysis should be understood as follows: Theoretical review works: should account for a multi-referential articulation of the state of the question from different perspectives (worldviews, scientific or philosophical discourses), approaches (from different methods and research designs already known to the student) and current lines of research by developing a systematic review of the literature. This review must specify the databases used and the procedures of analysis for their production, authors or factors analysed. -The MFP must include a categorization, organization of the subject matter, assessment of the state of the question, or any other action that allows for the evaluation of an in-depth review work, not a mere reflection of the production without

discussion or deepening, as well as a dialectical analysis of the same.

7. -To formulate general conclusions of the research, integrate them with previous knowledge and research, and recognize both the contributions they make and the critical aspects derived from the research procedure followed.
8. - To present this process in a written format, following the existing conventions on scientific publications (APA format and the publication standards of a scientific journal), with an adequate and sufficient management of both oral and written expression.
9. - To present in oral format, with the support of technologies, the decision-making process followed, the justification of the same and the conclusions obtained, adapting to a context limited by the presentation time, the technologies used and the target audience.

3. Syllabus

There is no established program, given the nature of the subject.

4. Academic activities

The basic learning process planned for this subject involves the individual development of an original research, with the supervision of a director who will guide the student throughout the process. The original research work deals with a specific topic from one of the lines of research offered each academic year in the master's degree. An original is understood to be an unpublished work that is not the result of total or partial plagiarism, nor is it the coupling of numerous studies cited without justification, criticism or discussion. It is also a work that has not been previously published or submitted for assessment unless the student chooses the MFP submission by article. In such case, they must attach a contextualization and prove that it has been submitted for evaluation to a journal indexed in the SCOPUS or JCR databases. In addition, original is understood as a work on an emerging, relevant or significant topic that justifies the existing problem or the need for research detected, so that its results are an important, novel and useful/transcendent contribution to the socio-educational field and professional implementation. The fact that it is original does not exempt the possibility that the work is framed within a broader research group or project, as long as the work and the study collected and presented reflect that it has been produced by the student under the supervision of their director. In any case, both in the written report and in the oral defines of the same, the author must demonstrate their authorship, as well as that of the theoretical framework and the data analysis procedure and their interpretation. In cases where the sample is taken from a previous project, original means that the results are unique, i.e. they are not part of an overall project, they are a section or that other variables and analysis procedures have been taken allowing to put into practice the skills developed throughout the training process of the master's degree.

Students have the possibility of presenting their MFP in the traditional form of a research report or in the form of an article. In the latter case, the research work is communicated through a research article that will follow the standards of a scientific journal of recognized prestige in its field of knowledge (indexed in SCOPUS and/or JCR). The decision to use the article format should be made by the student after reflecting on its characteristics in comparison with the alternative of the other type of MFP. Once the decision has been made, the student and the MFP director will determine the strategy to produce the MFP by article. The article may be written in Spanish, English or in both languages and must comply with the following conditions: the student must appear as first author and no more than four authors may be included. If any author has not participated in the direction of the MFP, they must have the express authorization of the Quality Assurance Committee of the master's degree, or the person appointed by it, in order to be included in the article.

The MFP, as an individual and autonomous task, does not have the same support of face-to-face classes as the rest of the subjects do. However, support sessions called *Learning Research Meetings* are organized throughout the academic year.

The overload of tasks and the lack of knowledge of the time dedication required for some parts of the writing of the MFP may be difficulties not taken into account by the students. In this sense, students, together with their directors, are required to take these aspects into account and to plan a realistic and feasible timetable that allows them to present their work in any of the calls each year. In order to be able to monitor the development of the MFP and to facilitate the planning and completion of the tasks involved, some references are established:

-The selection of the research topic and creation of the design (in the two MFP options) should be available by the end of January for those papers to be presented in the first call and before the end of April for those papers to be presented in the second call.

-The execution of the design with process control requires the establishment of a schedule of relevant dates.

-The preparation of the research report must conform to the following format:

- i. Orthotypographic standards (based in general terms on APA 7th Edition): Times New Roman font, 12 point; 1.5 point spacing; justified alignment; no spaces between paragraphs; 2.54-centimetre margins (top, bottom, left and right).
- ii. The cover page of the report must show the title of the work and the name of the author, director, degree and faculty. The title, in English and Spanish, should be sufficiently informative to allow the reader to get a first idea of the content.
- iii. The content of the report must follow the format corresponding to the chosen modality:

A) Research Report

It is recommended to adopt the APA 7th Edition style in the structure, with a length between 16,000 and 32,000 words, without annexes.

- Abstract: Maximum 250 words followed by a maximum of six keywords.
- Introduction
- Method, Results and Discussion
- Conclusions
- References
- Annexes

B) Article Modality

- Reasoned presentation of the choice of article modality for the MFP and the selected journal (no more than 1000 words). Proof of submission or acceptance shall be included as an attachment.
- A general introduction in which the objectives and development of the MFP are presented. Special reference will be made to the student's contribution as first author of the article. The first authorship of the student, as well as their contribution to the development of the article, should be reflected in their participation -at least- in the definition of the object of study and the proposal of objectives and hypotheses (if any), substantiation and development of the research design and/or research process followed, exploitation and analysis of the data, as well as in the initial and final writing of the manuscript/article. It is advisable that it be accompanied by the bibliographical sources used in the process and not reflected in the article (between 5000 and 6000 words, without bibliography).
- The scientific article must follow the rules of the chosen scientific journal (it must be of recognized prestige in its field of knowledge (indexed in SCOPUS). In the event that it is written in English, the Spanish version must also be submitted.
- Conclusions of the MFP, including the social impact of the article (between 1500 and 2000 words), i.e., indicate and describe the transferability of the work carried out to the socio-educational improvement.

The last task that the student must address is the public defence of the research developed. This is a task that also requires good preparation and adaptation to the specific context of the board of examiners. As in the previous case, preparation for this activity is vital, as well as practice prior to the performance and self-assessment of one's own competence.

See the information in the following documents:

https://educacion.unizar.es/sites/educacion.unizar.es/files/archivos/MASTER_APRENDIZAJE/TFM/normas_generales_tfm.pdf

https://educacion.unizar.es/sites/educacion.unizar.es/files/archivos/MASTER_APRENDIZAJE/TFM/orientaciones_direccion_tfm.pdf

https://educacion.unizar.es/sites/educacion.unizar.es/files/archivos/MASTER_APRENDIZAJE/TFM/orientaciones_elaboracion_tfm.pdf

Critical reflection on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is proposed as a cross-cutting reference for all learning activities, which reinforces the appropriate training and awareness of students with their commitment as researchers.

5. Assessment system

The assessment of the Master's Final Project will take place in a face-to-face event, in a public session, to be held in the premises designated for this purpose by the master's coordinators. It will consist of an oral presentation of the work developed before a panel of three examiners, during 15-20 minutes. After the presentation, each member of the board will ask as many questions as they deems appropriate to assess the technical and scientific quality of the work presented.

The board will follow these assessment criteria:

- The written research report prepared by the student.
- The oral presentation of the same and the answers given to the questions posed by the board.
- Self-assessment by the student on the learning results acquired.
- The director's report

The assessment and grading criteria are determined by the specific learning results according to the assessment rubric available at:

https://educacion.unizar.es/sites/educacion.unizar.es/files/archivos/MASTER_APRENDIZAJE/TFM/rubrica.pdf

The presentation guidelines, the report forms for the director, the self-report forms, the dates of defence and boards are available at <https://educacion.unizar.es/master-aprendizaje/tfm-master-aprendizaje>.

Notice

It should be noted that the University of Zaragoza's Rules of Coexistence will apply to irregularities in the assessment tests through academic fraud, and article 30 of the Rules of Learning Assessment will also apply to irregular practices other than academic fraud.