
Master Thesis

Professor: Ramon Xifré

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Office hours: Thursday, 15 – 17 h (prior appointment required)

Course Type: Compulsory

Credits: 6 ECTS

Term: 1st, 2nd and 3rd

Course Description

The Master's Thesis (MT) is an original written work, prepared by students in groups, that integrates and develops the training, competencies and skills acquired along the MSc IB. The MT is a 6 ECTS course and, in terms of individual student time dedication, it requires a 150-hour workload. The MT will be defended before and Examination Committee in June.

Each group works in the MT project under the direct supervision of a faculty member, acting as the group Supervisor. Another faculty member is appointed as MT Coordinator, with the role of coordinating and overseeing the development of the whole course and for all MSc IB students, as well as providing general guidance and training about the MT. The MT Coordinator will set up several MT lectures throughout the year to assess the progress of the work done by groups and to address potential difficulties.

The MT can be, among other possibilities:

- a full-fledged internationalization plan for an existing company;
- a detailed proposal for the creation of a new company with an international vision;
- an in-depth study of the business implications of an international/multinational trend.

Objectives

The MT should allow the students to put in practice the knowledge acquired throughout the Master in a real or simulated situation.

The work necessarily needs to be done from a business perspective and with an international dimension.

Methodology

Organization

The MT is to be done in groups of **two or three** students.

The MT Coordinator will ask the MSc IB faculty for proposals of projects and, after examination and consultation with the Program Director, shall produce a short list of those. In the first MT lecture, the MT Coordinator will inform students about the MT projects proposed by the faculty. Students can choose one of those projects or make a MT project proposal on their own. In any case, preferences over an MT project will only be accepted for consideration if they are submitted by a full team of students, that is, each comprised of three or four people.

By the second MT lecture, all students will need to be assigned to a group and to a MT project. The formation of student groups, the authorization to perform a particular MT project and the assignment of a MT Supervisor are tasks that will be led and managed by the MT Coordinator in communication with the Program Director.

Students need to hand in two progress reports during the year and inform the MT Coordinator of the meetings they have with the Supervisor. For the MT to be presented and defended, the Supervisor needs to authorize it.

MT Paper

The MT final report's maximum extension will be 25 pages, inclusive of an Executive Summary (2 pages maximum) the tables and figures which are considered particularly relevant; i.e. references to tables or figures outside the main text in the report should be kept to a strict minimum. Additional material can be relegated to the appendix, without any further limitation on length; as a reference, appendices are expected to be between 30 and 50 pages long. The following fields are necessary: title, abstract, and keywords. All pages must be numbered, the typography shall be Arial, Calibri or Times of size 12 and the maximum interline space is 1.5. The cover page needs to follow a template and simple style documents are preferred.

Submission

Students need to submit the following **three items**.

A) As a group:

1. the final version of the master thesis, in electronic and paper versions

B) Individually:

2. the co-evaluation of the group peers

3. the individual learning report on the MT

The submission of these three elements is unitary and failure to submit any of those may result in the student failing the course.

NB. The competences, the learning outcomes, the assessment elements and the quality of the learning process included in this Teaching Plan will not be affected if during the academic trimester the teaching model has to switch either to an hybrid model (combination of face-to-face and on-line sessions) or to a complete on-line model.

Evaluation criteria

Students work in the MT in groups but grades are individual to each student, i.e. members of a given group might get different grades if there are signals of different effort and involvement. To individualize the grades, all members of the group will be requested, **anonymously and individually**,

- to cross evaluate their group peers
- to submit an individual report on their individual learning experience.

There will be 2 periods established for the defence of the MT: one regular period at the end of the regular course in June and, if the course is failed, a retake period in December.

I. REGULAR EVALUATION - JUNE

Individual student grades will be determined according to these elements:

Assessment element	Weight
Continuous assessment	
It includes three elements: a) attendance to sessions and the proper submission of all required reports; b) input from the co-evaluation by peers; c) the assessment of the individual written report	30 %
Final work and presentation	
It includes five elements: a) motivation and relevance; b) methodology and results; c) discussion and conclusions; d) written style and clarity; e) degree of internationalization and scope for applicability	50%
Oral presentation	
The main assessment criteria will be clarity in the exposition and the ability to answer the questions from the evaluation committee.	20 %

MSc in International Business

II. RETAKE EVALUATION - DECEMBER

A. If all members of a group fail the master thesis course in the regular examination, the entire group will be asked to submit a new master thesis. The new submission will preferably be about an entirely new topic although it is also possible to resubmit a complete revision of the project presented in the regular evaluation, only if this explicitly authorized by the program Director. In any case, the new submission must meet the formal criteria of a master thesis, i.e., it must be an original work corresponding to a 6 ECTS course of individual workload. The submission needs to be 25 pages long (excluding appendices) and between 50 – 60 pages long (all material included).

B. If in a group, some members do not pass the course, the student(s) who has(ve) failed will be asked to prepare a 10 page (excluding appendices) individual paper. The new work shall be an original contribution that:

- either extends the submitted master thesis in the regular evaluation, e.g. focusing on one of the functional dimensions of the project (financial, marketing, logistics, operations, etc.) or extending the analysis to a different territory;
- or, an entirely new project about international business that shows the student has acquired the contents, skills and competences of the MSc IB program.

In both cases:

- The Program Director and the MT Coordinator will appoint a supervisor for the new project.
- The new submission will take place in early December and the new presentation before the examination committee in mid-December.
- In all cases, the originality of the new submission will be carefully examined and it cannot reproduce any content of a previous submission

NB. Students are required to attend 80% of classes. Failing to do so without justified reason will imply a Zero grade in the participation/attendance evaluation item and may lead to suspension from the program

Students who fail the course during the regular evaluation are allowed ONE re-take of the evaluation, in the conditions specified above. If the course is again failed after the retake, the student will have to register again for the course the following year.

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade

after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism is to use another’s work and to present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code,” students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.”

Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

They will be provided throughout the course on an individual basis.

Bio of Professor

Ramon Xifré is Associate Professor of Economics and Research Director at ESCI–UPF, Faculty at UPF Barcelona School of Management, and Policy Research Fellow in the Public-Private Sector Research Center at IESE Business School.

His main interest is the competitiveness of the Spanish and EU economies and the related policies and structural reforms on issues like business environment, internationalization, R&D&I and industrial policy. He has led and participated in numerous research projects on these areas, commissioned both by public and private organizations, and he has published one book and dozens of articles on these topics.

From January 2009 to December 2011 he was on leave serving as Senior Economic Policy Advisor at the Spanish Prime Minister Economic Bureau. He has been member of Board of Directors of ICEX and regularly addresses international audiences on investment climate and competitiveness issues for Spain and the EU.

He holds a BA from Universitat Pompeu Fabra, MSc from the London School of Economics, was “Marie Curie” Fellow at the University of Munich (LMU) and he received his Economics PhD from Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

Calendar and Contents

First Term, 2021

First MT Lecture	September 30, 14:30 h.
Group Formation Deadline	November 1
Second MT Lecture	November 11, 14:30 h.
First Progress Report Deadline	December 1

Second Term, 2022

Third MT Lecture / Workshop	January 31, 15 h.
Fourth MT Lecture incl. Finance Module	February 28, 15 h.
Second Progress Report Deadline	March 15

Third Term, 2022

Fifth MT Lecture	April 20, 13.15 h.
Sixth MT Lecture	May 26, 13.15 h.
MT Submission Deadline	June 10, 12 h.
MT Presentations	June 22 and June 23

MT Retakes	December 2022
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