
Master Thesis

Professor: Ramon Xifré

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Office hours: Tuesday, 15:00 - 17:00 h (prior appointment required)

Course Type: Compulsory

Credits: 6 ECTS

Term: 1st, 2nd, 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 MT 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.**

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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.

During the first term, all students will be assigned to a group and a project. The MT Coordinator will manage the formation of student groups, the authorization to perform a particular MT project and the assignment of a MT Supervisor.

As a necessary requisite for submitting the final work in June, students need to hand in two (2) Progress Reports and four (4) Tutoring Reports over the year. 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) and the tables and figures which are considered particularly relevant. Additional material can be placed in 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. There is an official, compulsory document template and cover page that needs to be followed.

Final submission

Students need to submit the following three items as part of their final submission, all of them online.

A) As a group:

1. the final version of the master thesis;

B) Individually:

2. the co-evaluation of the group peers;

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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 is enough evidence of different effort and involvement among them. To individualize the grades, all members of the group will be requested, anonymously and individually:

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

There are two 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 before the end of the academic year.

I. REGULAR EVALUATION - JUNE

Individual student grades will be determined according to these elements:

<i>Assessment element</i>	<i>Weight</i>
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 %

II. RETAKE EVALUATION

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 before the end of the academic year. 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 and the MT Coordinator. In any case, the new submission must meet the formal criteria of a master thesis.

B. If in a group, some members do not pass the course, the student(s) who has (have) failed will be asked to prepare a 10-page individual paper (excluding appendices) and hand it before the end of the academic year. 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 any case:

1. The Academic Committee will appoint a MT Supervisor for the new project (generally, the Supervisor of the original group);
2. The MT Coordinator will communicate to the students the main issues that need to be improved as well as the calendar of the resubmission.
3. The new submission date must be before the end of the academic year.

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.

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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."

Calendar and Contents

FIRST TERM, 2022

First MT Lecture	September 29, 14 h.
Group Formation Deadline	November 1
Second MT Lecture	November 10, 14 h.

SECOND TERM, 2023

Third MT Lecture / Workshop	January 30, 15 h.	On-line activity
First Progress Report Deadline	February 15	
Fourth MT Lecture	March 13, 13.15 h.	

THIRD TERM, 2023

Fifth MT Lecture incl. Finance Module	April 26, 15 h.
Second Progress Report Deadline	May 1
Sixth MT Lecture	May 22, 13.15 h.
MT Submission Deadline	June 9, 12 h.
MT Presentations	June 22 and June 23

MT Retakes	Before the end of the academic year
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Reading Materials/ Bibliography/Resources

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

Learning outcomes

- Recognize relationships between the different managers in an international company.
- Master the preparation of a capacity diagnosis.
- Recognize the formal structure of a business plan, improvement plan for company internationalization and / or an applied research study on a specific topic.
- Master the tools to successfully negotiate with agents and distributors.
- Master the tools to develop a successful price negotiation.
- Mastering the preparation of a report on the country and sector of economic activity.
- Evaluate information on export conditions.
- Recognize business opportunities in foreign markets.
- Mastering the structure of the balance sheet of the international company.
- Establish the appropriate guide to analyze the solvency of a company.
- Mastering the development of the financial part of a business plan.

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- Know the financing instruments for international operations.
- Recognize the financial risks associated with international operations.
- Locate the importance of logistics in foreign trade.
- Mastering the components of the merchandise supply chain.
- Understand the importance of culture in the international negotiation process.
- Recognize the importance of intercultural negotiation.
- Distinguish the different forms of organization of the international company.
- Mastering the scope of globalization in small and medium-sized businesses

Competences

BASIC COMPETENCES

CB6. Possess and understand the knowledge that provides a basis or an opportunity to be original in the development or application of ideas, often in a research context.

CB7. That students know how to apply the acquired knowledge and their ability to solve problems in new or little-known environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study.

CB8. That students are able to integrate knowledge and face the complexity of formulating judgments based on information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.

CB9. That students know how to communicate their conclusions and their knowledge and reasons that support them to specialized and non-specialized audiences in a clear and unambiguous way.

CB10. That students possess the learning skills that allow them to continue studying in a way that will be largely self-directed or autonomous.

GENERAL COMPETENCES

Instrumental skills

G1. Search, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information. Managing the information acquired from its analysis, its assessment and the synthesis of that information.

G2. Relate concepts, knowledge and tools from different areas.

G3. Communicate orally and in writing in English

Personal generic competencies

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G4. Leadership and management capacity of multicultural, interdisciplinary, competitive, changing and complex groups.

G5. PERSUASION. Detect customer needs and supplier requirements to adapt the products and services offered.

G6. Put into practice the essential elements to be able to carry out a negotiation.

Systemic generic competencies

G7. Understand an organization with a global perspective.

G8. Implement initiatives and changes within an organization.

G9. Promote respect for multicultural values: equality, solidarity, commitment.

Competencies for applicability

G10. Make the knowledge and skills acquired effective in an advanced way.

G11. Apply quantitative criteria and qualitative aspects in decision making.

G12. Apply the concept of networking through the use of the Internet and other networking techniques.

G13. Organize and manage time efficiently in the development of tasks.

SPECIFIC COMPETENCES

E1. Identify the phases of internationalization of a company (expansion, internationalization, and rationalization of activities).

E2. Mastering the internal analysis of the company to diagnose the viability of starting the first phase of internationalization and consolidating the process

E3. Train to diagnose the viability of rationalizing the internationalization resources of the multinational company.

E4. Analyze, synthesize and interpret the data and master its application in the analysis of the business potential of the country.

E5. Interpret the current and future situation of the international economic, legal, social, and political environment.

E6. Recognize and identify sources of information and international documentation (public and private) on the business potential of a country and a sector of economic activity.

E7. Evaluate and select the pool of countries with potential for the internationalization of the company, identifying the strategic fit of the company with the opportunity that each one represents.

E8. Advanced ability to use and develop information synthesis and communication tools for international companies.

E9. Analyze in depth the sector, competition, market, consumer, and distribution of each preselected country.

E10. Evaluate the selection of the appropriate country to develop the process of internationalization of the company.

E11. Design the international logistics network to support internationalization.

E12. Integrate the corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies of the company in the internationalization process.

E13. Define and develop a market research project for decision making in an international business environment.

E14. Design, organize and manage the sales force that will be deployed in new markets.

E15. Integrate the different areas of the company in business decision making in a simulated international environment.

E16. Master and resolve the legal-administrative procedures and procedures required in the internationalization process.

E17. Recognize and apply financial information, systems, and models to develop international financial operations.

E18. Select, organize, motivate, and lead the human resources of the company in an international environment.

E19. Mastering the tools and advanced capacity to successfully develop a negotiation at an international level, taking into account the importance of the specific socio-cultural aspects of each region.

E20. Master and know how to use the different forms of organization of the international company.

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 and innovation 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 academic and applied 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.