uc3m | Universidad **Carlos III** de Madrid
Master in Marketing

MASTER'S THESIS: GENERAL INFORMATION

This guidebook summarizes the procedures followed by the Office of Graduate Studies for students who are planning to write theses for their master's degree.

The thesis is the culmination of graduate work, and it is the formal product. For the thesis, the students should carry out an individual work to demonstrate the knowledge, the skill and the abilities acquired from their studies by solving specific marketing problems of companies in a business environment. Every student will be assigned a tutor, from whom the student obtains proper advice on the thesis. However, ultimately it is the student's responsibility for making adequate progress toward completion of his or her thesis and for producing high quality work.

The period of the subject starts on April and ends in June (see the detailed schedule at the end of the document), but you should start thinking of the topic today better than tomorrow. However, the subject is a 6 credit one, so the thesis should be a reasonable amount of work, but not a PhD thesis.

THESIS PROCESS

To help you with the thesis work, students will have 3 group lectures about how to develop and write a good master's thesis:

a) The first one will provide the general instructions

b) The second session will be about how to approach your project.

c) The third session will be about how to develop your project.

The process follows these steps (see Schedule):

1. Students should present 2 project's proposal ideas (the preferred and an alternative one). A 1 page proposal describing the 2 potential topics for a thesis should be uploaded in the subject in Aula Global.

The naming convention for the initial e-thesis file must be as follows:
Student id #_ last name_ first name_ proposal.pdf

2. A tutor will be assigned to a topic/student that best fits his/her interests.

3. The tutor will contact the student to discuss the initial steps of the project before they start working formally on it.

4. Once the project topic is chosen, students should start working and write a short proposal or draft thesis with a clear central question that they want to pursue, an introduction of the proposal proving knowledge in the chosen area of work, a plan for the thesis structure, clear ideas about your methodology required to successfully complete the thesis

   The naming convention for the initial thesis file must be as follows:
   Student id #_ last name_ first name_ initialthesis.pdf

5. Students should upload in Aula Global.

   The naming convention for the initial e-thesis file must be as follows:
   Student id #_ last name_ first name_ finalthesis.pdf

After the students receive the initial feedback, they should develop their work individually. However, students may have orientation meetings by personal tutorials with the tutor. The tutorials will be 1-hour weekly meetings during the period of tutorials (see Schedule). Such meetings will be organized either as short individual sessions, or as group meetings

THE THESIS FORMAT

The thesis must be original, theoretical and/or applied, and it must demonstrate the skills, competencies, and the knowledge learnt by students. For the applied works, the students should formulate and solve real cases or projects using techniques and skills learnt throughout the master's courses. For the implementation of this type of work the student can use the available data bases in the university, or to collect information through any of the research methods studied in the program. For theoretical projects, the student should

make a critical review of the academic literature that is most relevant to the chosen area, and at the same time, s/he should propose a new analysis of the issue. Both the analysis and synthesis are important skills with a significant weight, since this is what really measures the maturity of the student. The thesis should not be limited to a mere work of recapitulation and documentation of information without any deduction or extrapolation of ideas.

To work on the thesis project, the students will get a template providing indications about the required format (cover, size, font, spacing and indentation). This template is available in Aula Global.

The format specifications of the document should be as follows:
- Main body: 40 pages
- Appendixes: up to 20 pages
- Font Size: 12p and Spacing: 1.5-line spacing
- Margins: Normal (top and bottom margin 2.5 cm lateral and 3 cm)
In cases where plagiarism is suspected, the examiner must return the thesis and report the suspected plagiarism, citing sources of the original material that was allegedly plagiarized. In cases where plagiarism in the thesis is charged, the thesis examination does not proceed, and the thesis will not be passed this academic year.

THE THESIS DEFENSE

The thesis defenses are organized by sessions of 6/7 students.

- The defense is done in a public and oral presentation. The defense is open to the university community and the public. You can invite colleagues, friends, and family members if you would find that helpful/supportive.
- The defense is a brief presentation of your written thesis.
- Prepare and practice your presentation. You should plan your presentation to run about 15 minutes (meaning about 15/20 slides), and then there is 10 remaining minutes for panel questions.
- You can hand a copy of your slides, or any other additional material if necessary.
- Be on time (better if you show up 1 hour before).
- The thesis grade will be communicated by the panel after each session.

The thesis will be defended in the first call July (see the detailed schedule in Aula Global, "FMT Schedule" document). or in a second call, during the second week of September. Note that there is no tutoring in July-August.

EVALUATION OF THE WRITTEN THESIS

Tutors provide an overall judgment of "passed" or "not passed", assessing whether the thesis fulfills the requirement for the program. However, the Master's thesis is evaluated by a panel of two other scholars in the Oral Thesis Defense. Examiners are asked to evaluate the thesis according to a number of criteria as indicated in the grid in the thesis examination form which is presented next. The four central learning goals are:

- **General Knowledge**
  - *Knowledge of marketing disciplines*: graduates will demonstrate their overall competency in all the functional areas of marketing
  - *Knowledge of instrumental disciplines*: Graduates will be able to show competency in complementary disciplines providing useful instruments for marketers.
- **Interpersonal skills**
  - *Oral communication skills:* Graduates will be able to express themselves clearly defending their ideas in the business world.
  - *Written communication skills:* Graduates will be able to write and argument their ideas effectively in the business environment.
- **Conceptual analysis**
  - *Collect and analyze relevant information*: Graduates will be capable of finding, processing and also summarize information.
  - *Use of knowledge for solving practical problems*. Graduates will be capable of analyzing information critically, integrating it with their knowledge in order to solve practical problems and to formulate appropriate decisions.

The following FMT Evaluation Matrix will be used for evaluating the FMT, in response to four learning objectives of the program:

SKILLS	0 - 2,9	3-4.9	5-6.9	7-8.9	9-10
Knowledge of marketing disciplines	The student fails to know the marketing discipline.	The student makes some sever error that requires them to reformulate their work.	The student shows a basic level of knowledge on marketing discipline, but makes small errors.	The student has a sound knowledge of the marketing discipline, but makes a few small errors.	The student shows a perfect knowledge of the marketing discipline.
Knowledge of instrumental disciplines	It is unable to answer the questions of the examiners' panel.	It has difficulties answering some questions of the examiners' panel	It is able to answer the questions of the examiners panel with hesitation and small errors.	It is capable of answering the questions of the committee, providing additional arguments.	The student uses the examiners' questions to delve into the analysis of some features of his/her thesis, as experts in the area would do.

Measurement of the learning objectives "Interpersonal skills" will be done with a 1-10 point grading system in the FMT, in order to quantify the extent to which students have mastered verbal communication skills as well as the level of self-confidence that is necessary to make effective business presentations.

Written communication skills	The written material is well below the standards of composition at university level. There is no sign of a logical and ordered structure. There are many orthographic and grammar errors. Careless editing. Missing or inexact references. Poor quality charts and graphs that do not support text comprehension.	The document contains a structure, but some key elements are not properly defined, and/or there are fragmented parts misplaced. Work readable but not very carefully edited. Tables and graphs are good, but poorly located and only partially support comprehension of the text.	The document follows a roughly ordered structure, and most sentences are meaningful. Care is taken with the editing and there is attention to detail, but there are some editing oversights. Tables and figures have good quality, supporting the comprehension of the text.	The document follows an ordered structure. It is didactic and clearly written. The grammar and orthography is good and most references are accurately used. Tables and figures have good quality, and help to understand some of the text arguments.	The document is logically ordered, clear and concise. The writing is outstanding. It is very easy to read and intellectually stimulant. The editing is very careful with attention to detail. Tables and graphs are easy to follow and naturally integrated with the text. .

Oral communication skills	The presentation is poor, uninteresting and contains no relevant information. It does not follow an appropriate structure The speaker's voice is too low to be understood properly, with long waiting pauses and abrupt changes of slides due to weaknesses in the line of argument.	.The presentation follows the line of argument of the slides and/or any other resources used in the presentation The speaker's voice is acceptable, with only a few hesitations.	The student is able to keep the committee interested and follows a reasonable logical structure. The speaker's oratory grasps attention at some parts, being fluent in general.	The presentation follows a good logical structure that explains the main aspects, and uses informative slides. The speaker's oratory is capable of keeping the committee interested.	The presentation follows an excellent logical structure, controlling the slides or any other resources employed with comfort. The student displays self-confidence and has an excellent oratory, speaking to the committee and the audience.

Measurement of the learning objective "Conceptual analysis" will be done with a 1-10 point grading system in the FMT.

Collect and analyze relevant information	The description of the topic was done with data and opinions taken from irrelevant references and are not validated. Evidence is ignored, inconsistently or inappropriately presented. There is evidence of plagiarism. The problem attempted to be described is wrong because it is not well defined or is not justified that it is not already solved.	The description of the topic includes some data, conclusions and opinions from relevant sources, but data is mixed up with references that are not validated. Little care is shown in the use of tertiary sources. The problem is described but is not sufficiently justified that it is not already solved or is not	The description of the topic includes some data, conclusions and opinions from relevant sources. It is justified that the problem is not solved or is not analyzed from all perspectives. The thesis analyzes the data rigorously. It does not try to hide obvious counter-	The description of the topic includes relevant data, conclusions and opinions from reliable sources, but does not include the current status of the project boundary. The use of tertiary sources is generally avoided. The relevance of the problem to be addressed is well justified by using the	The description of the topic includes relevant data, conclusions and opinions from reliable sources and tertiary sources that relate to the main theme of the project and the state of affairs. The relevance of the problem to be addressed is perfectly justified with the gathered information.

	The thesis presents serious or frequent problems of accuracy when using reference material. It fails to recognize obvious counter-arguments. Arguments are often presented as if they were evidence.	analyzed from all perspectives. The thesis analyzes the data, but the analysis is not too rigorous, hiding obvious counter-arguments or disguising unlikely assumptions as facts.	arguments or disguise unlikely assumptions as facts.	information gathered. The thesis analyzes data rigorously. It does not try to hide any counter-arguments or unlikely assumptions disguised as facts.	The data analysis is exhaustive and correct. The thesis recognizes and confronts any possible counter-arguments. It distinguishes the demonstrable arguments and unlikely but necessary assumptions
Use of knowledge for solving practical problems	The work fails to solve the problem and it does not show the basic knowledge and skills associated with marketing.	The proposed solution is so poor that it cannot be accepted as valid for solving the problem. The solution represents a marginal student contribution.	The work may be considered sufficient for solving the problem, applying few marketing skills. Memory does not make it clear what is the student contribution for solving the problem.	The work may be considered good applying a few marketing skills in the solution to the problem . The solution adopted is justified, and represents a piece of work where the student's contribution is clearly stated.	The work can be considered excellent, applying most of the basic marketing skills to the solution of the problem. The solution adopted is optimal, representing an original contribution from the student.

The weights for each skill are as follows:

SKILLS	WEIGHTS
Knowledge of marketing disciplines	20
Knowledge of instrumental disciplines	20
Written communication skills	10
Oral communication skills	10
Collect and analyze relevant information	20
Use of knowledge for solving practical problems	20