

## **MASTER'S DISSERTATION REGULATIONS UNIVERSITY OF ALCALÁ**

*Approved at the ordinary meeting of Governing Body, 23 February 2012*

*Modified at the ordinary meeting of Governing Body, 1 June 2016*

*Modified at the ordinary meeting of Governing Body, 14 March 2019*

Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, providing for the organisation of official university degree programmes and modified by Royal Decree 861/2010, of 3 July, states that syllabuses leading to the university degree of master should be completed with the writing and examination of a master's dissertation (hereafter "MD"), which must form part of the syllabus. The MD will be written in the final stage of the degree, will be worth between 6 and 30 credits, and must enable the competences acquired in the course of the degree to be evaluated.

These regulations are intended as a general framework for all MDs written in the University of Alcalá. There may also be specific regulations adapted to the needs of individual master's degrees and to the requirements stipulated in their verification documents, as defined in these regulations.

### **Article 1. OBJECT AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

- 1.1 These regulations contain the basic guidelines regarding the definition, writing, supervision, presentation, examination, assessment and administration of master's dissertations.
- 1.2 The provisions of these regulations are applicable to MDs written as part of master's degrees offered by the University of Alcalá pursuant to Royal Decrees 1393/2007, of 30 October, and 861/2010, of 3 July.
- 1.3 Each degree's academic committee may implement the provisions of these regulations and adapt their guidelines to the specific needs of its programme. In such cases, a copy of its regulations must be submitted to the Official Postgraduate Studies Committee for their approval subject to compliance with these regulations.
- 1.4 With respect to inter-university degrees, the degree's academic coordination committee will agree and draft a set of joint MD regulations for approval by the Official Postgraduate Studies Committees of the partner universities.

### **Article 2. NATURE OF THE MASTER'S DISSERTATION**

- 2.1 The MD entails the student's completion of a project, memorandum or study applying the knowledge acquired in the course of the master's degree.
- 2.2 Each MD's contents will be conditioned by the degree's profile (academic/research, professional or combined), as well as by its inter- or multidisciplinary nature. That said, the contents must be appropriate to the ECTS credit load assigned to this component in the degree's syllabus and to the time allotted to its writing in the teaching guide's schedule of activities.
- 2.3 The degree's academic committee and assessment committee will oversee MD quality and homogeneity in terms of requisites concerning their writing and presentation.

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**Article 3. AUTHOR**

- 3.1 The MD must be the result of each student's individual work.
- 3.2 In exceptional circumstance, the degree's academic committee may, in view of the MD's particular characteristics, grant permission for it to be written by a number of students. In this case, after hearing the students and supervisor involved, the committee must give its grounded approval before work on the MD commences. The agreement document must delimit tasks in such a way as to permit the individual examination and assessment of each student in the group; it must also set out assessment and grading criteria.

**Article 4. THE SUPERVISOR**

- 4.1 The MD must be written under the supervision of an academic supervisor, who will be on the master's teaching staff. The supervisor will be responsible for explaining to the student the characteristics of the MD, providing assistance and guidance during its preparations, monitoring its compliance with the stated goals, and appraising it in the due time and form, as well as authorising its examination, regardless of his or her appraisal of it.
- 4.2 Should it be necessary for the MD to be supervised by a professional or doctor who is not on the master's teaching staff, a co-supervisor will be appointed who is.
- 4.3 Students may write their MDs wholly or to a significant extent in the institutions or bodies where they carry out their external placements. The MD's supervisor will have to liaise with the placement tutor to define the MD's contents, development and assessment. External collaboration of this kind will only be permitted by the master's academic committee subject to the signing beforehand of an educational cooperation agreement between the University of Alcalá and the said body or institution.

**Article 5. MATRICULATION AND EXAMINATION SESSIONS**

- 5.1 Matriculation in the MD will be carried out at the same time and in the same way as for the other components or subjects of the syllabus by means of payment of the public fees corresponding to the credit load. As it is an MD, matriculation is required in all the subjects necessary for completion of the degree.
- 5.2 Matriculation will entitle students to be examined in their dissertation in two of the examination sessions corresponding to the academic year for which they have matriculated.
- 5.3 The master's academic committee will set the dates of the examination sessions each academic year. The dates must allow sufficient time for the final marks to be submitted before 30 September in any academic year.
- 5.4 When matriculating, students must pay the full cost of first matriculation. Students who do not present their MD in the academic year of matriculation may matriculate again in the following academic year on payment of 25% of the cost of first matriculation.

**Article 6. ASSIGNMENT OF SUPERVISOR AND TOPIC**

- 6.1 At the start of each academic year, the master's academic committee will inform students of the criteria regarding the assignment of topic and supervisor. It will also publish basic guidelines regarding the style, length and structure of the MD.

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- 6.2 The academic committee will assign supervisors and MDs at the start of the final term and do its best the choices of students and supervisors alike. Care will be taken to make sure that the assignment of supervisors and topics is appropriate and balanced.
- 6.3 Students wishing to change supervisor or topic must ask the master's coordinator or academic committee for permission to do so in writing within fifteen days of the date the final list is published. A decision will be made regarding the requested change within fifteen days, whereupon, when applicable, a new supervisor and/or MD topic will be assigned, with an eye to the opinions of the interested parties. This decision may be appealed within seven calendar days of its notification before the University's Official Postgraduate Studies Committee.
- 6.4 Supervisors wishing to make a change to their allotted students or topics offered may make a reasoned, written request to the master's coordinator or academic committee for permission to do so within fifteen days of the date the final list is published. A decision will be made regarding the requested change within fifteen days, whereupon, when applicable, a new topic will be assigned to the student with the same supervisor, or a new supervisor and MD will be assigned, with an eye to the opinions of the interested parties. This decision may be appealed within seven calendar days of its notification before the University's Official Postgraduate Studies Committee.
- 6.5 The assignment of supervisor and MD will be effective solely during the academic year for which the student is matriculated. Nevertheless, the academic committee may bear in mind the MD topic and the supervisor when carrying out assignments for subsequent academic years should the student not complete the MD component successfully in the academic year of matriculation.

**Article 7. PRESENTATION.**

- 7.1 Each academic committee will determine the procedure for submitting the MD before its examination.
- 7.2 Students may only submit their MDs once the MD's supervisor has made a written appraisal of it following the procedure established to that end by the academic committee. The academic committee will not be bound by this appraisal.

**Article 8. EXAMINATION.**

- 8.1 The master's academic committee will select one of the following systems for examining the MDs:
- At several fixed periods of the academic year, namely January, July and September.
  - Throughout the academic year, including September.
- 8.2 Once the period for presenting MDs has been decided, the complete calendar of examinations will be published with sufficient time before the date appointed for the examination.
- 8.3 Students will be examined in their MD in public session in the presence of the assessment commission decided by the academic committee. The details of the examination will be set out in the subject's teaching guide.
- 8.4 The master's academic committee will create as many assessment commissions as are required. Each will be composed of three members, one of whom will be

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designated chair, another secretary. At least one member of the assessment commission must be a member of the University of Alcalá's teaching staff.

- 8.5 Only exceptionally, and subject to students' making a formal, motivated request beforehand and to the availability of the necessary technical, administrative and financial means, permission may be given for the examination to be conducted virtually.
- 8.6 Students must expound the goal, methodology, contents and conclusion of their MD in the amount of time specified in the examination notification. They will then respond to the questions, comments or suggestions made by the members of the assessment commission for the amount of time specified in the examination notification.

#### **Article 9. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING.**

9.1 The result obtained will only be published in the exam record when there is certain proof that the student has successfully completed all the other credits in the degree.

9.2 The assessment criteria will be as set out in the relevant teaching guide and will take account of the following aspects among others:

- Originality
- Definition of the object of study.
- Precise delimitation of the dissertation's goals.
- Knowledge and proper use of relevant literature.
- Suitability of methodology to the problem as posed.
- The development of the argument and the presentation of results and conclusions.
- Contribution to the field of knowledge.
- Language use and style.
- Presentation and examination *viva voce*.

9.3 The assessment commission will decide the mark on the basis of the MD supervisor's appraisal and other aspects of the public examination in the proportion established by the academic committee.

9.4 The mark will be awarded on the following numerical scale of 0 to 10 at intervals of one decimal point. It will be accompanied by the corresponding qualitative grade:

- 0 – 4.9: Fail.
- 5.0 – 6.9: Pass.
- 7.0 – 8.9: Good.
- 9.0 – 10: Excellent.

9.5 The mark proposed by the assessment commission will be formalised in an individual examination record signed by each member of the commission, unless the master's academic committee has another system for signing said reports.

9.6 As part of the individual examination record, the academic commission may make a unanimous proposal that an MD achieving the mark of 9 or above be awarded the mention of "Distinction".

9.7 Each year the master's academic committee will meet in the first fifteen calendar days of October to decide the award of distinctions on the basis of the assessment commissions' proposals and, where necessary, the students' overall academic record. Where appropriate, it will take charge of requesting and carrying out the

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modification to the corresponding examination records. The number of distinctions may not exceed 5% of the number of students matriculated in the MD component unless the number of matriculated students is lower than 20, in which case only one distinction may be awarded.

- 9.8 If the final grade is a fail, the assessment commission will inform by word of mouth or in writing the student and supervisor involved of whichever recommendations it deems opportune for the purpose of improving the MD and submitting it for examination in the following examination session.

#### **Article 10. REVIEW OF MARKS.**

- 10.1 The final marks for MDs will be reviewed in compliance of the provisions of the University of Alcalá's Assessment Processes Regulations, approved by Governing Body on 24 March 2011.
- 10.2 The body with powers to settle students' appeals against the final mark awarded to MDs will be a panel composed of three members of the masters academic committee. Its composition must be announced at the start of each academic year.

#### **Article 11. ACCESS TO MASTER'S DISSERTATIONS**

- 11.1 Once the MD has been marked and the appeal period has terminated, its supervisor will send a copy in PDF format to the UAH library, at the email address made available for this purpose. This procedure will not apply in the case of MDs subject to a confidentiality agreement drawn up before their examination.
- 11.2 The MD's author and supervisor may use appendix 4 of the MD regulation to authorize publication of the dissertation in the University of Alcalá's Institutional Repository (E-BUAH).
- 11.3 The master's coordinator must keep' on file for four years a printed or electronic copy of the MDs as the document which originated the mark.

#### **First additional provision**

These Master's Dissertation Regulations do not entail modification to the regulations approved and implemented independently for UAH qualifying master's degrees.

#### **Second additional provision**

All common gender terms used in these regulations to designate single-member bodies, positions or members of the university community will be regarded as employed and used indifferently in the masculine or feminine form, according to the sex of the person or persons who occupy the position or are referred to.

#### **Final provision**

Once approved by Governing Body, these regulations will take effect on the day following their publication in the University of Alcalá's Official Bulletin.

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**APPENDIX 1****RULES FOR SUBMITTING THE MASTER'S DISSERTATION Master's  
Degree in \_\_\_\_\_**

1. The dissertation must have a length of between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
2. The text must be free of typographical and grammatical errors and be written concisely.
3. Bibliographical references, tables, figures and bibliography must follow the \_\_\_\_\_ system.
4. Tables and figures must have captions, give details of sources and contain significant information related to the text.
5. The dissertation must be submitted on A4 paper, be printed with an interlinear space of 1.5 and be bound.
6. The cover and inside cover of the master's dissertation will follow the standard format of the model included in APPENDICES 2 and 3.
7. With respect to contents, in general terms the dissertation must include in a clear and orderly fashion the following elements:
  - Contents
  - Abstract: A summary of the master's dissertation (maximum 250 words).
  - Introduction: Context of the dissertation (background and state of the art) and theoretical framework.
  - Goals: Statement of the dissertation's contribution to the field.
  - Outline of dissertation/material and methods: A description of the methodology used to achieve the intended goals.
  - Development of the dissertation/Outcomes and Discussion: An orderly presentation of the action taken to achieve the goals together with a feasibility study of the action proposed and the potential benefits. In the case of experimental dissertations, there will be an orderly presentation of the experimental results using tables and/or graphs. These shall be duly commented upon, related to each other and/or to the results set out in the introduction.
  - Conclusions: Statement of the milestones reached in achieving the dissertation's goals.
  - Bibliography: This will give details of authorship, year, title, journal or publisher, volume and/or chapter, and page numbers in that order and in accordance with the chosen citation system.
  - Appendices: Any documents that contribute to understanding or clarifying the contents of the dissertation.
8. Appendix 4, duly completed, must be included in the dissertation.

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**APPENDIX 2: MODELS FOR COVERS**



**DISSERTATION TITLE**

**Master's Degree in**

**Submitted by:**  
**NAME(S) AND SURNAME(S)**

**Supervised by:**  
**Dr. NAME(S) AND SURNAME(S)**

**Alcalá de Henares, on**

  


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**DISSERTATION TITLE**

**Master's Degree in**

**Submitted by:**

**NAME(S) AND SURNAME(S)**

**Supervised by:**

**Dr. NAME(S) AND SURNAME(S)**

**Alcalá de Henares, on**





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### APPENDIX 3

Dr.

CERTIFIES HEREBY:

That the dissertation titled \_\_\_\_\_ was written under my supervision by the  
candidate,

Alcalá de Henares, on

Signed:

### APPENDIX 4

**PERMSSION FOR INCLUSION OF MASTER'S DISSERTATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALCALÁ'S  
OPEN INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY, E-BUAH.**

**TITLE OF MASTER'S DISSERTATION:**

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**1.-CANDIDATE (AUTHOR)**

<b>NAME(S) AND SURNAME(S):</b>	<b>ID no.:</b>
<b>DEGREE:</b> <b>Master' Degree in</b>	

**2.- DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR:**

<b>SURNAME(S) AND NAME(S):</b>	<b>ID no.:</b>
<b>DEPARTAMENT or INSTITUTION</b>	

**The undersigned:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	AUTHORISE
<input type="checkbox"/>	DO NOT AUTHORISE
	DO NOT AUTHORISE FOR A PERIOD OF:
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 MONTHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	12 MONTHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	18 MONTHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	24 MONTHS

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Signed (the author)	Signed (the dissertation supervisor)
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