



MASTER'S THESIS REGULATION

2017/2018

UNIVERSITY MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)

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I. APPLICATION AND OBJECTIVES

Article 1 - Applicability

This regulation applies to the organisation and running of the diverse administrative and academic procedures which are necessary for the application, writing process, presentation and evaluation of the Final Master's Thesis (FMT) for students completing an MBA.

The content of this guide is complementary to all other rules and regulations in effect at UCAM that are related to the definition, elaboration, advising, presentation, defence, evaluation and administrative management of the FMT.

The FMT Committee has been formed with the objective of complying with these guidelines, following directions given by the University.

Article 2 – FMT Objectives

After concluding the FMT, the student should have thorough academic command and skills in order to:

1. Apply knowledge acquired in MBA classes.
2. Search for specialized information from adequate sources, summarise and analyse it.
3. Know and apply the scientific method and/or business method while elaborating the FMT
4. Effectively communicate the most relevant aspects of the FMT.

II. TOPIC SELECTION AND ADVISOR ASSIGNMENT

Article 3 - Direction of the Thesis

1. The FMT is a **personal and individual** paper written by the student. This paper consists in the development, composition and completion of an **original** academically directed essay which will allow the student to show the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with the Master.
2. All members of the academic staff will suggest 5 topics for the students to develop their Thesis.
3. Before 27th November, the FMT Committee will publish the topic list, and will start accepting applications for the FMT for all enrolled students.
4. The FMT topic can be chosen by the student either:
 - a) selecting a topic from the list published by the FMT Committee, or
 - b) proposing a different topic, following his preferences and experience. In this case, the FMT Committee will evaluate the viability of the proposal.

In any case, the FMT can focus on one of the following situations:

- Identification of a problem in the context of a specific situation within a business, and issuing a report with proposed solutions.
- Study of a general aspect that affects an entire economic sector or business group, and the development of a combination of recommendations and conclusions.
- Development of an innovative perspective and its application on a business or sector, while critically analysing its implantation from all possible viewpoints.
- Elaboration of a new business plan.
- Study of a topic linked to any of the knowledge areas of the Master, going into detail about the precedents and contemporary state of the theme, perhaps accompanied by empirical application or quantification of the matter.

5. With the due date being the 15th December, all enrolled FMT students should send the FMT topic proposal, using the URL announced in the Virtual Campus.

III. SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE FOR THE STUDENT

Article 4 – Advisor assignment

1. The FMT Committee will discuss the proposals, and before the 22th December, will release a provisional list of appointed academic advisors. Students can request changes during five days, and then the final list will be published.
2. Any subsequent change to a different topic or advisor needs to be mutually agreed between the student and the advisor, and as long as the FMT Committee authorises it.

Article 5 – Student guidance

1. Before 24th November, an informative meeting will be held, and students will be given necessary information about the objectives, process and convocation of the FMT, as well as the content of this Regulation Guide. This meeting is **mandatory** for all students enrolled in the FMT.
2. Before 10th February, all students should attend their first meeting with their FMT advisors. In the meeting, the following subjects should be addressed:
 - Definition of the **objectives** of the FMT and how they are reflected in the title;
 - Establishing a **calendar** for paper draft reviews, with at least three meetings in addition to the first meeting;
 - Description of the general thesis writing process: future electronic communications, due dates to send rough drafts to the advisor, etc.
 - Establishing a **final due date** for the student to hand the Thesis in to the advisor. The advisor should have enough time to be able to write a critical review.

Article 6 - Responsibilities of the academic advisor for the FMT

1. The role of the FMT advisor is to supervise and to indicate the direction which the student should take in order for the paper to be academic. However, the responsibility of writing the paper falls directly on the student, who should dedicate himself constantly to his work in order to keep up with the pace required.

The duties of the advisor during the FMT writing process are:

- Schedule and hold the paper review meetings, mandatorily attended by the student (4 minimum, including the first one for preparation). It is the advisor's responsibility to meet with the student on the scheduled day and time.
- After the first meeting between the student and the FMT advisor, the latter will turn in to the Technical Secretary of the Business Department a short report about the objectives and the schedule of planned work/meetings.
- Inform the student about the FMT characteristics and urge him to learn and comply with this Regulation Guide, paying special attention to the **style, presentation and structure** guidelines.
- Help the student by advising him on their FMT content and progress.
- Give advice and supervise the student's research methods.
- Supervise the rough drafts of the paper, while making sure they complete the objectives.
- Revise the FMT formal aspects in order to assure a clear fulfilment the style standards outlined in this Regulation.
- Check to make sure the work is original, using all means possible.
- Scheduling a final due date for the student to send him FMT (never more than one week before the final presentation), so that the advisor can write a critical review.
- Release a critical review of the FMT (Annex III) that will contain a general evaluation of the paper and a detailed description of either its strong points or all the aspects and recommendations that the student should follow to improve it.

2. So that the advisor can write the critical review, the final FMT must be sent to the advisor by the date agreed between the advisor and student.

It is recommended that the student dedicate 7 days before sending the final paper to the advisor, to ensure it comply with the style, presentation and structure requirements.

Article 7 – FMT Originality

1. In order to guarantee the originality of a FMT, it is expressly forbidden to:

- Present a paper written by another as one's own.
- Copy a section of text deliberately (even if it is cited as a source), copy phrases or paragraphs of various authors and combine them (even if all sources are cited

correctly), and copy text maintaining its structure but changing some words for others (paraphrasing), if this makes up more than 30% of the corresponding chapter.

2. According to the University Internal Regime Regulations, these acts will be considered a serious offence, and the actions taken are established in said Regulation.
3. If plagiarism is detected, the student will get a failing grade and in no case such Thesis may be defended.

IV. STYLE AND STRUCTURE RULES

Article 8 – Text style and presentation and structure rules

1. The style and rules for presenting a Final Master's Thesis are found in the rules in “*Style Guidelines Applied to the MBA Master's Thesis*” (Annex X).
2. The structure of all Final Master's Theses are listed in the document “*Structure Guidelines for the Final Master's Thesis*” (Annex XI).

V. CONVOCACTION AND FORMAL PRESENTATION OF THE FMT

Article 9 – Thesis final examination

1. The FMT Committee will examine Thesis in September and in November. For doing that, a formal call will be published at least two months before, defining the date, place and time when the defences will take place.

Students should strictly follow the indications given by the FMT Committee.

Article 10 – Deposit and Formal Presentation of the FMT

1. The deadline for the FMT Deposit will be **7th September** for the first examination and **16th November** for the second one.
2. Advisors will send a critical review of each Thesis (Annex III) to the FMT Committee, at least 48 hours before the defences.
3. To qualify for the defense and evaluation of the FMT, students must:
 1. Hand in one spiral binding **paper copy** (to the Secretary of The Business Department)
 2. Upload a **digital copy** (a single pdf file; archives in other format will not be accepted) to the Virtual Campus.
 3. Send the Thesis in a pdf file to the FMT supervisor.
 4. Hand in the electronic edition contract (duly signed), authorizing or not the publication of the TFM in the institutional repository, if it is selected for this purpose by the TFM Committee.

5. Complete an **assessment survey** on the performance of the academic advisor. This information is completely confidential, will be analyzed exclusively by the FMT Committee, and aims only to the continuous improvement of the Master teaching quality. This survey should be completed using the URL announced in the Virtual Campus.

If any of these requirements are not fulfilled, the Deposit will not be considered as completed.

VI. DEFENSE AND ASSESSEMENT OF THE FMT

Article 11 - Composition of the FMT Panel

1. The FMT Panel will be made up of two professors from the Business Department.
2. The advisor of a FMT cannot be part of the Evaluating Panel.
3. The Panel members will receive information about the examination, the advisor's review of the paper, and a digital copy of the FMT, with enough time to evaluate everything.

Article 12 - FMT Defense

1. The FMT defence will be a public session in front of a Panel composed following article 11, and will happen according to the protocol established in Annex XIII (that the student should read beforehand).

Each member of the Panel will have received the FMT advance and will have read it closely. For this reason, the student should not recount everything they wrote in their paper during the defence. In the 10 minutes that students have, they should explain the motivation behind selecting their topic, the objectives of the Thesis, the methodology he has used, and the results and/or conclusion obtained. If using PowerPoint, it is recommended to not use more than 10 slides (one per minute). The student should also rehearse their presentation at least once.

2. The FMT defences will take place **the 19th and 20th September** for the first examination, and the **28th and 29th November** for the second one.
3. If a student fails the FMT in both examinations he should enrol again in the MBA Thesis. Students enrolled for the second time (or successive) will have the same TFM advisor appointed in the previous course. And, if they wish to change the subject, they must do so in agreement with said advisor.

If a student enrolled for the second time (or successive) wish to change the advisor, then he must follow the general procedure established in this Regulations: present the topic proposal in the established time and manner.

Article 13 –FMT Assessment

1. The FMT Panel evaluates the Thesis, taking into account the scientific and technical quality of the paper, to the clarity of the presentation and to the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with the Master. The Panel will also keep in mind the advisor's review, the presented work and the public exposition of it.

More specifically, the Panel will determine the overall FMT grade following these criteria¹:

- Public defence of the FMT (25%).
- Scientific and methodological level, quality, relevance and originality of the paper (35%).
- Acquisition of knowledge and skills associated the FMT (30%).
- Formal aspects and writing style (10%)

Each one of the members of the panel will evaluate each of these four criteria independently, on a scale of 0 to 10, an individual evaluation which will be reflected in the act (Annex VI).

The average mark of each criteria will be obtained by calculating the mathematical mean of each of the panel members' individual marks.

The final FMT mark will be obtained by weighing the percentages of each criterion; this mark will be moved to Annex VII.

The final marks will be registered in a corresponding Official Act (Annex VII), that the President of the Panel will turn into Business Department Technical Secretary so that it may be passed along to the FMT Committee.

2. Once all the FMT have been evaluated and completed in each convocation, the final marks of the students will be published on MBA Virtual Campus.

3. **Under no circumstances** can the panel inform the student of the mark before they are published publically.

4. Students who have scored 9,0 or higher can be classified as having a Degree with Honours, at the discretion of the evaluating panel and following general University Regulation.

5. If the student has failed to pass, the panel will complete a document of Comments and Possible Areas of Improvement (Annex VIII) that the Business Department Secretary will pass along to the student for a better defence in future convocations.

This report should be **detailed, thorough and extensive**. It should gather all the reasons why the paper cannot be defended before a panel, making an explicit reference to four criteria in article 13.1 of this Regulation, so if that student follows the recommendations and improve his Thesis, he will be able to pass the FMT in the next convocation.

¹ In the last three sections, the advisor's review will be kept in mind.

Article 14 – Objection procedure

1. If a student does not agree with the awarded grade, he can presentation of a reasoned claim to the TFM Committee (Annex IX). Regulations that apply to any claim for examinations or evaluations at UCAM will be applicable.
2. The FMT Committee will respond to every complaint within 5 working days, starting on the day the claim was filed.

CALENDAR OF IMPORTANT DATES

MBA FINAL MASTER'S THESIS, 2017/18

ACTIVITY	DEADLINE
Publication of topic list	24th November
Informative meeting	24th November
Presentation of the FMT proposal	15th December
List of assigned advisors	22nd December
Mandatory meeting with FMT advisor	10th February
FMT presentation for first convocation	7th September
FMT defence: first convocation	19th & 20th September
FMT presentation for second convocation	16th November
FMT defence: second convocation	28th & 29th November