

Master Thesis / Trabajo de Fin de Master

*12 creds.,
Compulsory
2nd semester*

*Universidad de Salamanca
Universidad de Valladolid*

Aims and Objectives

A Master thesis is an original contribution to knowledge, written by a student under the guidance of a supervisor.

Course Program

The Master Thesis should include:

- **Title** (should be concise, eloquent, and interesting. It should bear a relationship to the contents and it should not be general and vague.)
- **Introduction** (aims, hypothesis): The introduction has to be solid. It should explain the angle you take on the topic or how you have interpreted the questions you raise in your dissertation. The introduction should start with what you do in this paper and formulate your major contribution. What is your topic and why is it important? State the issue you are dealing with as simply as you can. Motivate the problem and your hypothesis. Provide a concrete definition of a problem/issue and the way in which you would like to solve it.
- **Literature survey** – the background theory should be a review of relevant literature on the subject. What attempts to analyze this subject have been made so far? From what perspectives? What other kind of approaches have been attempted on this subject? Explain your approach and how it fits into the series of interpretations advanced so far on the subject.
- **Methodology**– development of your theory
- **Middle chapters** - There is no recipe for a perfect order. But your argument should flow naturally from your assumptions to your conclusions through the middle chapters. The order in which you present your argument is extremely important. You will have to figure out how one aspect of your theory depends on the understanding of something of something else. Place yourself in the reader's position and imagine what you need to say

- first, second, or third, etc. so that he can understand you better.
- **Conclusions:** The ending has to be a tight conclusion of what you have argued so far. It should be a brief summary and a synthesis of your contribution. It should come as a logical consequence of your argument and should tie all the strands together.
 - **Bibliographical references:** Make sure that you do not omit relevant papers by researchers in the field, nor your supervisor, or by potential academics with whom you may want to work with in the future.

Language: All MA thesis have to be written in English

Assessment

The student will present and defend his/her master thesis before a board made up of three members of the faculty. S/he will be required to answer and comment on the questions posed by the members of the Board.

Additionally, the supervisor will elaborate an evaluation report on the master thesis, and submit it to the members of the board, who will use it as one more element in their deliberations.

The student can only proceed with the defense of his/her master thesis once s/he has successfully completed all the other courses (for a total of 48 credits).

The master thesis will be evaluated according to the following elements:

- the written work.
- The presentation, defense and Q&A session.
- The supervisor's written report.

Bibliography and Resources

The student will work with his/her supervisor, who will suggest the appropriate bibliography, depending on the topic and the approach selected for the thesis.

Schedule

Students can start with their master thesis as soon as they have a topic to study, and a supervisor to work along with him/her. Both the topic and the supervisor should be selected during the first semester, though deadlines are flexible to allow students to meet and take classes with professors from the courses taught at UVA during the second semester. In any case, late March is the final deadline.

Students must discuss with their supervisors the deadlines for handing in the material to them for final corrections. Master theses can be presented and defended either in end of June/mid-July every year, or in the first/second week of September.

It is important to allow for ample time for your supervisor to read your first draft, and then for an additional period of time in which you will have to improve your text on the grounds of the feedback you received from your supervisor. Most certainly, your supervisor will need to re-read your improved version. This will take another period of time. Also, bear in mind that the month of August is the official period of holidays at both universities and professors may not be available. Because of this you should plan writing your MA Thesis quite early on in the second semester. It is therefore essential, especially for the September date, that students discuss with their supervisors when they should hand in the final version of their theses for the final reading. In some cases, professors may require that this be done in late July since most probably they may not be available in August.

Students must hand in four bound copies of their thesis and one pdf copy on a hard disk and make them available to the members of the board at least 10 days before the date set for the public defense. Always remember to submit a courtesy copy of your MA thesis to your supervisor.

In addition, students will have to mail a pdf version of their Thesis to the two Directors of the Master Program at UVA and USAL.

Plagiarism

Students should bear in mind that plagiarism is a serious offense. The MA thesis as well as all other papers they submit in this program have to be original and the texts which you cite or from which you have taken your ideas, have to be referenced accordingly. Failure to do so means a Fail and possible expulsion from the program.

Students have to turn in a signed statement confirming that the thesis has been written by them.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON HOW TO WRITE an MA THESIS IS POSTED ON THE WEBSITE.