



Graduate
Program
in Economics

Master's Research Thesis Guide

Master in Economic Analysis

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Master's students of the IDEA Program are required to write a research paper (10 ECTS credits) in their field of interest. As a two-years program, IDEA is conducive to the stimulation of the student's creativity, providing him/her with the tools and the environment necessary to be able to successfully write a master's thesis. In order to guide the student in this process, the program requires that all students follow these steps:

- 1 **Informative Session.** The Informative Session is the first meeting that starts the process of writing a master's thesis. In this meeting, we discuss the steps to be followed: the students learn how to choose an advisor, are informed of the deadlines they have to meet, and are told what is expected from a master's thesis. Meeting attendance is mandatory.
- 2 **Advisor Choice.** Students must inform the program of their advisor choice by a preannounced date. Before informing the program, all students must have had a preliminary meeting with the advisors to obtain their approvals. The entire IDEA faculty is potential advisors (see the IDEA web site for a comprehensive list; please note that this includes all the fields of specialization that IDEA offers).
- 3 **First Advisor Meeting.** The advisor discusses with the student all the practical aspects involved in writing a master's thesis and establishes a calendar to be followed. Potential research questions or areas of interest are also discussed. The role of the advisor is to guide the student in the process of writing a research paper, providing advice and support in the student's research activity.
- 4 **Topic Choice.** The student chooses the topic of his/her master's thesis (please note that this choice must be approved by the advisor). The student determines a research plan that is overviewed and approved by the advisor.
- 5 **Supervision.** The student and the advisor meet regularly, starting in the month of February (or earlier). In these meetings, the advisor follows and assesses the student's advances towards writing the master's thesis, giving him/her comments and suggestions.
- 6 **Thesis Submission and Public Defense.** On a pre-specified date (in the month of June), the student submits his/her research paper to the IDEA Program. In the month of July, the student defends his/her research thesis before a committee. The committee

evaluates the student's work. Both the paper and the presentation are (exclusively) in English.

Format

Style Recommendations

Although there are no formal format requirements for the master's thesis, we make the following recommendations: between 20 and 50 pages long, in Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaced, and footnotes in Times New Roman 10.

Structure Recommendations

Notwithstanding the specificities of each master's thesis, the thesis includes the following sections:

- 1 **Cover Page.** The cover page includes the title of the master's thesis, the name of the student, the name of the advisor, the name of the master's program, the name of the university, a short abstract, acknowledgements and all the sources of financial support received during the period.
- 2 **Introduction and Core of the Paper** Includes: the economic question addressed in the paper and the hypothesis of the study, the reasons for developing this research and how it has been developed, the methodology that has been used and the results that have been obtained.
- 3 **Conclusions.** A summary of the main conclusions drawn from this work.
- 4 **References.** The bibliography includes all the relevant references. These are cited following the standards in the literature.
- 5 **Appendix.** (if deemed appropriate)

Evaluation Criteria

Students present their work before a committee that evaluates the thesis and the presentation. The students are expected to answer questions and address comments raised by the committee members. Before the defense date, each member of the committee receives a copy of the submitted master's thesis. Notwithstanding the specificities of each thesis, the role of the committee is to evaluate the following points:

- 1 **Presentation.** The committee evaluates the student's oral presentation and his/her ability to answer questions.
- 2 **Innovative aspects of the Master's Thesis.** The committee assesses the student's ability to answer the research question and the consistency between the working hypothesis and the content of the thesis. The committee also assesses the novelty of the work as well as the student's ability to define the object of study and analyze the discussions that occur around it.
- 3 **Conclusions.** The committee assesses the student's ability to draw the main conclusions. These conclusions should go beyond a simple summary of the main results.
- 4 **Literature.** The committee assesses whether the student includes the relevant literature.