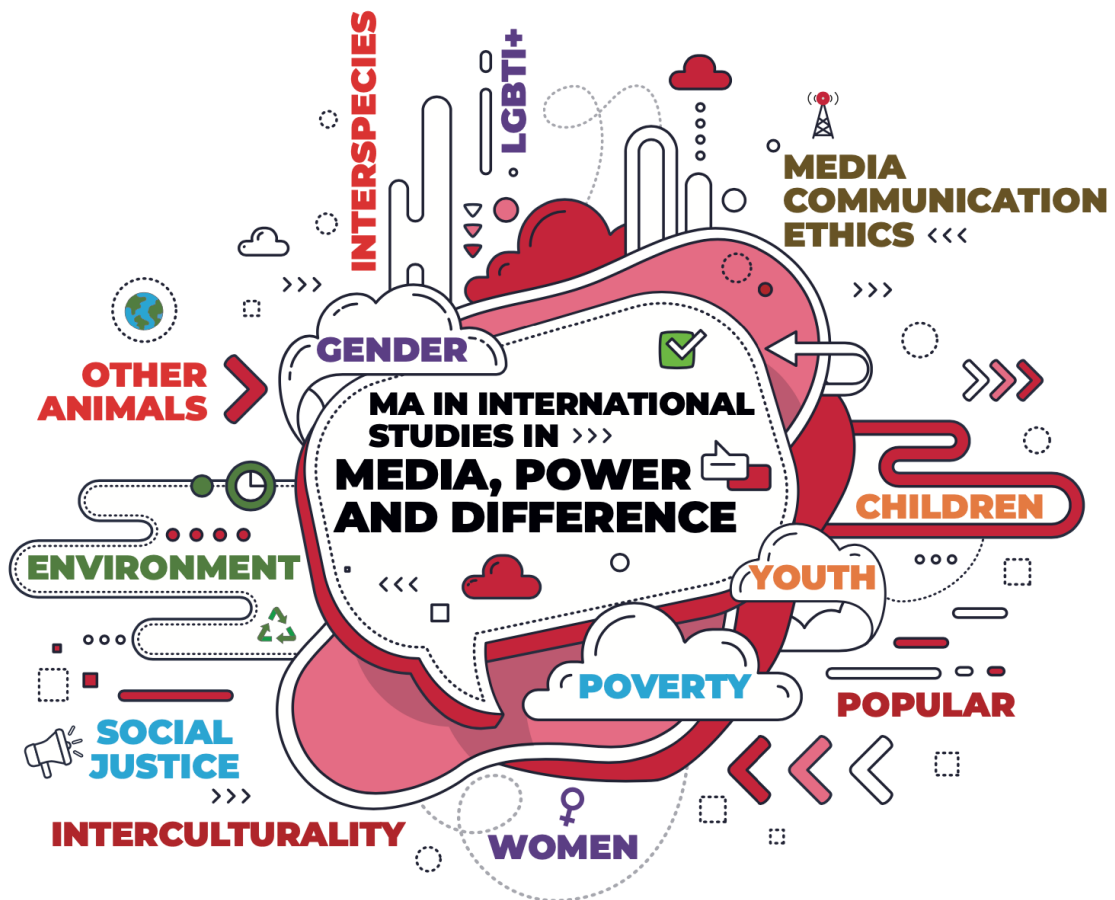


**MA in International Studies in Media,  
Power and Difference**  
Department of Communication

**Dissertation Guidelines 2021-2022**



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## **1. GENERAL INFORMATION**

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The 15 ECTS of the Master's Final Project have to be passed through the submission of a work in order to show the student's research skills. The project has also to be presented in a public dissertation session in front of a Committee made up of three doctor lecturers.

### **1.1 Objective**

The Master's Final Project has the objective to prove the intellectual maturity and the research skills of the student. It has to be an original project, as a result of the personal work of the student under the guidance of a supervisor.

### **1.2 Dedication of the student**

The dedication of the student for the Master's Final Project is of 375 hours. These hours include the work of literature review, sample collection if required, research time, the discussion with the supervisor and the writing of the project.

### **1.3 The supervisor**

The Master's Final Project is carried out under the monitoring of a supervisor, which is assigned to the student by the coordinator during the second term.

Eligible supervisor are the doctors who give teaching in the Master, the doctors of the Department, doctors of UPF as co-supervisor with a doctor from the Department, doctors outside UPF as co-supervisor with a doctor from the Department.

### **1.4 Submission's Deadline**

The project must be submitted by June 19<sup>th</sup> 2022 (the time limit is midnight). We encourage early submissions.

Delays won't be admitted. All the students which won't deliver or pass the Master's Final Project will be able to register it in the next academic year, provided that they fulfil the requirements about continuity and number of calls. Please note this involves a fees surcharge.

### **1.5 Language**

The project can be written in English, Spanish or Catalan. The oral presentations can be conducted also in any of these three languages.

### **1.6 Dissertation's Deadline**

The Project will be defended publicly in front of an assessment committee made up of three doctor lecturers.

The dissertation will take place at the beginning of July. The exact days will be notified through email during the academic year.

The period between the delivery and the public dissertation won't be in any case inferior to fifteen calendar days. During this time, the project will be available to all the doctor lecturers of the Department.

### **1.7 Publication of the Project**

Projects awarded with the excellent mark (greater than or equal to 9) will be published in RECERCAT, the Catalan digital research repository, for public dissemination. Students must attach the related permission when delivering the project. Students can provide a final version of their project for publication if typos and other minor issues need to be corrected.

### 1.8 Submission documentation (get the forms at:

<https://www.upf.edu/web/mediapoweranddifference/treball-de-fi-de-master>

To be delivered to the Secretary of the Department of Communication

- Form for the delivery of the Master's Final Project
- Permission to publish the project in the Catalan Digital Research Repository (RecerCat)
- One PDF copy of the Master's Final Project uploaded to the master's programme Moodle, stating in the subject "TFM Name.Family name. (100 MB maximum allowed).

### 1.9 Assessment

The final evaluation of the dissertation will be done through the presentation and oral defence of it. The examination committee will be made up of three research and teaching members of the Department of Communication at the UPF. The committee will issue a grade that will have to take into account the following elements:

- Quality of the project (75% of the final grade of the tribunal)
- Oral presentation (25% of the final grade of the tribunal)

In the quality of the project, the committee will also take into account the evaluation of the tutor. This includes for each student:

- Participation in tutoring sessions (physical or virtual)
- Compliance to the working plan and timing

For the calculation of the final grade, none of the qualifications may be less than 4.

For more details on the criteria used by the committee to assess both the project and the presentation please check section 5 in this document.

### 1.10 Committee

- The supervisor of the project (as chair of the committee)
- Two doctors chosen by the coordinator of the programme and the Dept. of Communication.

## 2. FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

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### 2.1 Cover and first page

All types of final project must include:

1. Cover page with:

- Title of the document
- Author or authors' name
- Supervisor
- Publication date: **Academic Year 20--/--**
- The name of the collection: **Research Project of the MA in International Studies on Media, Power, and Difference**
- Name of the sub-community: **Department of Communication**
- Name of the University: **Universitat Pompeu Fabra**

First page with:

- Abstract: maximum 150-word length in the same language of the Project
- Keywords: a list of keywords about the content, with a maximum length of 200 characters
- Type of the project (PhD proposal, Research Dissertation, Theoretical Dissertation, Journal Article)

## 2.2 Digital file

The document must be uploaded in PDF format. If there are some annexes, they must be embedded in the text file. **The size limit per file must be inferior to 100MB.**

A second file can be uploaded if necessary for supplementary material (audio/video recordings, extra images, etc.). Standard formats are recommended.

## 3. SUPERVISION PROCESS

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The Supervisor's role is to assist the student in the development of a suitable project and methodology. The supervisor is neither going to provide a topic nor to tell the student what to research. Yet he or she will assist the student in the project design, research and writing.

Students must agree with the supervisor on the most suitable points of contact (office, video-meeting, email) and a timetable for delivery of draft chapters and for working sessions.

The supervision process will consist of **three working sessions** where the supervisor will:

- Assist in the project design
- Point in the direction of useful sources and references
- Provide feedback and advice for initial drafts (including single chapters, questionnaires, interview guides, etc.)
- Comment once upon final drafts of dissertations (they must be delivered well in advanced of the final project submission date; each supervisor will provide a deadline for this and will review the final draft only once)

Students will:

- Be proactive in contacting their supervisors to arrange a schedule and working plan, delivering drafts, etc.
- Be properly prepared for each supervision session by having a clear idea of the ground they want to cover and the questions they want to ask
- Submit their best work to the supervisor, even if the material is 'in draft' –the supervisor may return work that is not properly checked for spelling and grammar, or is not properly referenced
- Not expect the supervisor to correct spelling and grammatical mistakes or to do proof-reading
- Avoid emailing large quantities of text two days before a deadline with a request for comments and critique the next day

## 4. TYPES OF FINAL MASTER DISSERTATION

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There are four eligible types of dissertation. Students must adhere to one type:

Type 1. *PhD Proposal*

Type 2. *Theoretical Dissertation*

Type 3. *Research Paper*

Type 4. *Journal Article*

The four types aim for the student to acquire the following knowledge:

- Disciplinary knowledge
- Methodological knowledge

The capacities and skills acquired by the student in any modality must be as follow:

- The ability to gather, select, systematize and manage information, documentation, and bibliographical materials
- The capacity to design, structure, and articulate a research project or academic paper
- The capacity to pose and form original proposals to solve relevant research problems
- The capacity to articulate a complex discourse
- The capacity for criticism and self-criticism
- The capacity for analysis and synthesis
- The capacity to work alone
- Rigour in the presentation of the written material

What follows are the requested structure for each type:

### **Type 1. PhD Proposal**

This consists of a research proposal devised to expand later as a doctoral thesis. This type of dissertation does not involve the collection of data nor the production of results, discussion or conclusion, since its aim is to design a future PhD research. For this reason, it is expected that the state of the art and methodology sections are much more developed than in the rest of dissertation types. This type of dissertation must include at least the following sections:

- a) Introduction to the specific topic chosen and a justification of its importance, novelty, and academic relevance.
- b) State of the art of the topic (literature review & theoretical framework).
- c) Research problem, research questions, and/or hypotheses, objectives.
- d) Methodology, specifying the particular tools to be used as research techniques.
- e) Structure and contents of the research to be carried out, definition of the main concepts around which the research is to be constructed.
- f) Bibliography, documentation and materials to be used for the aims of the research (note this is not the references list for the project but a reflection on what main sources you will use in your research).
- g) Timeline of execution of the project
- i) List of references used in the dissertation

Length: The Dissertation must be between 9,000 and 12,000 words. This translates to approximately 30 to 50 pages of 1.5 spaced text (references included; appendixes not included).

### **Type 2. Theoretical Dissertation**

A theoretical, or non-empirical, dissertation focuses on secondary research – you use data collected and presented by other researchers to develop an argument. This type of dissertation doesn't have any data you've generated at all; rather, it is entirely literature-based. This is likely to be the methodology of theoretical analysis: selection and discussion of theoretical material and descriptive material, in context, and detailed comparison of theories in terms of their applicability. Here, the focus of attention is not so much to discover something about the social world, as to reach a judgement about the value of key concepts or theories in understanding that world. This type of dissertation is less constrained in terms of format, but theoretical essays should include the following sections:

- a) Introduction to the specific topic chosen and a justification of its importance, novelty, and academic relevance; introduction of your argument, overview of structure of the dissertation.

- b) Literature review, showing how your work fits within the context of other's work; selection and comment on the relevant literature.
- c) Development of your argument in the context of the literature review, topic, case study, etc.
- d) Conclusion and/or discussion.
- f) List of references.

Length: The Dissertation must be between 9,000 and 12,000 words. This translates to approximately 30 to 50 pages of 1.5 spaced text (references included; appendixes not included).

### **Type 3. Research paper**

This consists of an empirical research conducted on a topic and delivered in the form of a typical research paper. This dissertation contains empirical results of any sort (from text/image analyses, surveys, interviews, documentary observation, ethnography, etc.). It shall include at least the following sections:

- a) Introduction to the specific topic chosen and a justification of its importance, novelty, and academic relevance.
- b) Literature review.
- c) Research design:
  - Research problem, research questions, and/or hypotheses, objectives.
  - Methodology, specifying the particular tools used in the research.
- d) Results.
- e) Conclusion and/or discussion.
- f) Reference list.

Length: The Dissertation must be between 9,000 and 12,000 words. This translates to approximately 30 to 50 pages of 1.5 spaced text (references included; appendixes not included).

### **Type 4. Journal article**

This consists of a theoretical or empirical work with the same features as type 2 and 3 but delivered in the form of a journal article. To this end, students must select an academic journal for publication in accordance with the supervisor. The final format and length must be therefore adapted to the journal's submission guidelines. For the sake of providing context to the assessment committee, this type of dissertation must attach an introduction to the paper including:

- Full name and website address of the journal to which the paper will be submitted
- Aims and scope of the journal where the paper will be submitted (you can just copy their aims and scope)
- Indexing: the journals you have chosen must be an indexed journal with blind peer review, include any relevant details regarding where it is indexed (it is enough to report on the top indexing, for instance if the journal is indexed in SJR or JCR for instance)
- Similar papers previously published in this journal that your paper complements or quotes.
- Adequacy of your paper to the journal (why your contribution will be of interest for this journal)

Length: Follow the journal instructions (plus add one page maximum with the above-requested details about the journal)

**REGARDING THE TOPICS OF CHOICE:**

Please note that all dissertations must be an innovative contribution **to the topics of communication on diversity and difference as addressed in this programme**. Therefore, they must be consistent with the **equal and fair treatment of all individuals**. Explicit or implicit endorsements of any kind of violence towards human or nonhuman individuals will thus not be accepted.



## 5. ORAL PRESENTATIONS PROCEDURE

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### Members of the committee

- A chair (the supervisor of the final project to be assessed)
- Two more members (two doctors selected by the coordinator & the department)

### Procedure

The oral presentations will be conducted according to the following procedure:

1. Welcome by the commission's chair
2. Student's presentation (15')
3. Comments by the two members of the committee (15')
4. Student's final discussion (5')

*The total time for each oral presentation cannot exceed 40 minutes.*

After the session the committee will deliberate but no public notice will be made at this moment. The grade will be notified privately to each student by the secretary on the week after.

### Assessment

The final evaluation of the dissertation will be done through the presentation and oral defence of it. The examination panel will be made up of three research and teaching members of the Department of Communication at the UPF (one is the tutor of the project). The tribunal will issue a grade that will have to take into account the following elements:

- Quality of the project (75% of the final grade of the tribunal)
- Oral presentation (25% of the final grade of the tribunal)

#### Assessment criteria for the quality of the project (75%):

- Tutor assessment (*participation in tutoring sessions, compliance to the working plan and timing*)
- Quality of the project:
  - *Rationale*: Is there a reasonable, well-structured exposition of ideas?
  - *Form*: Is the project following the standard formatting of an academic presentation?
  - *Hypothesis/objectives/research questions/ formulated*: Are they clear, enough, original?
  - *Theoretical foundations*: Is the work well grounded on literature review or on a particular theoretical approach or approaches? Is there a sound theoretical justification of the project?
  - *Creativity and innovation*: Is the project inventive, imaginative in some aspect?
  - *Methodology and fieldwork (not applicable to theoretical dissertations)*: Is the applied methodology well explained? Is there a well research design? Are the methodological choices reasonable?

#### Assessment criteria for the oral presentation (25%):

- *Audibility*: Can the student be heard clearly throughout?
- *Pace*: Is the pace of the speech, or flow of ideas, too fast or too slow?
- *Fluency*: Is the speech pattern fluent, indicating familiarity with the material?
- *Tone and Energy*: Is there sufficient variation in tone? Does the presenter seem enthusiastic?
- *Eye Contact*: Is the presenter making eye contact across the audience?
- *Body Language and Gesture*: Is the presenter's posture upright and confident?
- *Structure and Cohesion*: Was the structure clearly outlined? Is the order logical and easy to follow? Is the balance of various elements effective? Is timing accurate?
- *Visual Aids*: Is there a suitable amount? Are they easy to read? Do they effectively support the oral delivery? Does the presenter use them competently?

**6. ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (The members of the committee will use this form)**

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**Dissertation assessment**

**MA in International Studies in Media, Power and Difference**

<b>REVIEWER</b>	
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<b>DISSERTATION IDENTIFICATION</b>				
<b>Author</b>				
<b>Title</b>				
<b>Supervisor</b>				
<b>Date of defence</b>				
<b>Type of project</b>	PhD proposal	Theoretical paper	Research paper	Academic paper

<b>RECOMMENDED GRADE (0 to 10)</b>	
<b>Comments for the student:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

**Assessment criteria:**

**Y:** Yes, sufficiently / **NE:** Yes, but not enough / **N:** Not at all / **DA:** It doesn't apply

<b>1. RATIONALE</b>		<b>Y</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DA</b>
Is there a reasonable, well-structured presentation of ideas? Is the information presented in clear blocks, with titles and subtitles that are relevant in terms of their location throughout the written discourse and their correspondence with the information that they precede? Does the report include all the required sections?					
Is coherence preserved, from the presentation and justification of the project idea and the presentation of the project's objectives, to the project's final conclusions?					
Is the research well-motivated and justified within the domain of social communication and the topics and aims of the MA in International Studies in Media, Power and Difference?					
	<b>Comments for the student:</b>				

<b>2. CONTENT</b>		<b>Y</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DA</b>
Does the introduction clearly summarise what the research project is about?					
Are the sections sufficiently and suitably developed and argued? Is the reader taken into consideration? ?					
Are the arguments exhaustively explained and justified and, where applicable, contrasted against or integrated with different points of view. Is there a solution proposed to deal with any discrepancies or, if possible, has a new proposal been put forward?					
Is the work grounded enough in a review of the literature or in a particular theoretical approach or approaches? Is a theoretical justification of the project included?					
Do the conclusions clearly summarise the research topic, aims and findings and interpret those findings within the chosen theoretical framework?					
Does it include a sufficient number of relevant and reliable references?					
	<b>Comments for the student:</b>				

<b>3. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DA</b>
Is there a clear definition of key concepts for the project?				
Are objectives/hypothesis/research questions well formulated, realistic and justified? Does the project include a discussion and justification of research focus/problems?				
Is there a detailed account and justification for the methods adopted?				
Is a clear justification of data collection/generation process and instruments included?				
Does it include a reflective account of the research process, including challenges, problems, weak/strong points, limitations and ethical issues (if applicable)?				
<b>Comments for the student:</b>				

<b>4. CREATIVITY &amp; INNOVATION</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DA</b>
Does the project have an inventive or imaginative aspect?				
Does the project represent progress with respect to previous works, and make a genuine contribution to the corresponding scientific/professional area in connection with the needs to which said works attempt to respond?				
Does the project reflect or is it applicable to the reality to which it is addressed?				
<b>Comments for the student:</b>				

<b>5. FORMAL ASPECTS</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>DA</b>
Are the grammar, spelling, and punctuation of the dissertation correct (facilitating the understanding of the written discourse)?				
Does the project correctly apply the reference rules (Chicago style) in tables, figures, citations, and bibliographical references?				
Does the project make correct use of citations in the text?				

Does the table of contents accurately reflect what is included in the project?				
Are the pages of the dissertation numbered?				
Does the dissertation meet the formal characteristics outlined in the final project guidelines (like page limits)?				
<b>Comments for the student:</b>				

<b>6. FOR THE TUTOR</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>NE</b>	<b>N</b>
Has the student complied with the working plan and timing of the project as agreed with the tutor? Has the student attended and prepared the tutoring sessions?			
<b>Comments for the student:</b>			