

RESOLUTION of 12 June 2019, issued by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate and Postgraduate Studies of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), publishing the Rules for completing and defending Master's Graduation Assignments at the University of the Basque Country, which were approved during the Governing Board Meeting of 30 May 2019.

The University, during the exercise of its authority, has the obligation to establish the rules and procedures required for tasks to be carried out in the different management areas.

The attached proposal was presented to the Governing Board by the Postgraduate Commission on 17 May 2019, and was approved during the session held on 30 May 2019.

In light of the above, and pursuant to article 10.2 of Act 3/2004 of 25 February, on the Basque University System (BCOG 12 March 2004):

I HEREBY RESOLVE:

To publish in the Basque Country Official Gazette (BCOG) the Rules for completing and defending Master's Graduation Assignments at the University of the Basque Country, which were approved at the Governing Board Meeting of 30 May 2019.

In Leioa, 12 June 2019

The Vice-Chancellor,

NEKANEBALLUERKA.

PS (Resolution of 25 January 2017, BCOG 03/02/2017).

The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Graduate and Postgraduate Studies,

ARACELI GARÍN MARTÍN.

RULES FOR COMPLETING AND DEFENDING MASTER'S GRADUATION ASSIGNMENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY (UPV/EHU)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Royal Decree 1393/2007 of 29 October, modifying Royal Decree 861/2010, establishes in Chapter IV on official Master's courses that: 'These courses shall conclude with the completion and public defence of a graduation assignment, worth between 6 and 30 credits', with no further provisions being established regarding how said assignment should be carried out and how it should be assessed. Consequently, these issues must be regulated individually by each University, in the due exercise of their autonomy.

In this context, and with the aim of unifying the criteria and procedures that guarantee standardised planning and assessment of Master's Graduation Assignments (from here on MGAs), and notwithstanding any possible specificities of individual degree courses, which should be taken into account and regulated and published accordingly by the corresponding Governing Boards of each institution, the following general Rules are established, alongside a series of general provisions which together make up the framework of application for all Master's degree courses.

Article 1. - Aim and scope.

1.1. This regulation specifies the guidelines related to the definition, completion, defence, marking and administrative processing of the MGAs established in the syllabuses of the Master's degrees taught at the UPV/EHU.

1.2. In the case of courses which provide graduates access to regulated professional activities, the MGA will be governed by that stipulated in the requirements for verifying the qualification obtained, although these rules may also be applied in a subsidiary manner.

1.3. These rules are enforced in conjunction with the rest of the UPV/EHU regulations and procedures currently in force referring (among others) to assessment, recognition and the credit transfer system, as well as to student mobility.

1.4. The Board of every Faculty or School may adapt these rules to the characteristics of their specific Master's degree courses. Nevertheless, the rules established by each institution must be approved by the Governing Board and be published in the appropriate place.

Article 2.- Characteristics of the MGA.

2.1. The MGA requires each student to complete a project, draft a report or conduct an original study individually, under the supervision of one or more directors. The assignment requires them to use what they have learned and to further develop the capacities, competences and skills they have acquired during the course.

2.2. The MGA should be aimed at applying the general competences associated with the degree course, training students to search for, manage, organise and interpret relevant data, normally within their area of study, in order to make judgements which include a reflection on relevant social, scientific, technological and ethnic issues, and which facilitate the development of critical, logical and creative thinking and judgement.

2.3. In general, the MGA should be defended and marked once there is reliable proof that the student has passed all the subjects on the syllabus and therefore has all the credits necessary to earn their Master's qualification, with the exception of those pertaining to the MGA itself.

Nevertheless, faculties or schools may assess and allow students to defend their MGAs before they have acquired the credits required to obtain the qualification, providing that students are enrolled in all outstanding subjects on the syllabus. In the case of courses taught in two or more faculties or schools, the conditions in all institutions must be the same.

2.4. The MGA is protected by Intellectual Property Law. Consequently, title to the intellectual property rights corresponds to the author of the work, unless otherwise established in the MGA assignment document accepted by each student, in the terms and under the conditions outlined in current law.

Article 3.- Registration and calls.

3.1. MGA enrolment must be completed within the general enrolment period established by the faculty or school in the corresponding academic year, and once the student has fulfilled the requirements for defending their MGA in accordance with that established in general terms in section 2.3., or alternatively (and where appropriate), in accordance with that established in the rules set out by the individual faculty or school itself.

In both cases, to formalise MGA enrolment, the student must also be enrolled on all the subjects required to complete the syllabus, unless the syllabus establishes a different requisite. Any student who is planning to complete only the MGA during the academic year must formalise their enrolment at the beginning of the course.

3.2. Enrolment gives students the right to participate in two official calls during each academic year. Students who did not defend their MGA or failed their assignment during the calls established during the academic year must enrol once again on the next one.

3.3. Students must specify the language in which they wish to complete and defend their MGA.

3.4. In accordance with their organisational criteria and teaching programme, faculties and schools may schedule MGA vivas in a distributed manner throughout the academic year, or grouped into at least two time periods, bearing in mind that the MGA is completed during the final term of the final year of the Master's degree.

3.5. MGAs should be assessed in accordance with that established in the University's Assessment Regulations, with the secretary of the Examiners' Panel being responsible for ensuring correct implementation and delivery to the administrative services, in accordance with established procedure in each faculty or school. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the faculty or school to ensure compliance with that established in this article.

Article 4.- Appointment of the director and choice of subject matter.

4.1. The MGA must be directed by a lecturer (who must hold a PhD) featured on the list of those eligible for directing an MGA. This person is responsible for explaining to the student the characteristics of the assignment, guiding its development and ensuring compliance with the established aims. They are also responsible for monitoring the student's progress and drafting a written report prior to the viva, to be communicated to the student.

A lecturer who does not hold a PhD may co-direct an MGA alongside one who does. Under exceptional circumstances, and when the Postgraduate Commission so authorises, lecturers who do not hold a PhD may direct MGAs carried out within the framework of vocational Master's degrees, providing the corresponding justification is duly presented.

4.2. The MGA may be directed by a maximum of two people.

4.3. If the student conducts part or all of their MGA within the framework of a practical work experience agreement in an institution or organisation other than the UPV/EHU, the MGA may be directed by someone not on the university staff, providing they hold a PhD and meet the eligibility criteria for directing the assignment established in the original proposal.

4.4. Prior to the end of the enrolment period, the Master's degree Academic Commission shall establish and publish a procedure for appointing directors and shall specify the different issues on which the assignment may focus, as well as the languages in which the MGA can be carried out and defended.

Article 5.- Examiners' Panel.

5.1. Examiners' Panels shall be established during the academic year in the manner stipulated by the faculty or school and in accordance with the number of students enrolled on the degree course and the chosen focus of the MGAs. Each Examiners' Panel should be established bearing in mind the languages in which the MGA is being carried out.

5.2. Each panel should comprise three people and at least one substitute. All members must be included in the list of lecturers (with PhDs) eligible for directing a MGA. At least three must belong to one of the departments running the Master's degree course, except in the case of inter-university courses, which shall be governed by that established in the pertinent agreement. In the case of Master's degrees which provide access to a regulated profession, Panels will be established in accordance with the corresponding guidelines in each case.

5.3. Each Panel shall have a Chair and a Secretary. Unless otherwise specified by the faculty or school, examiners shall be appointed on the basis of teaching status and seniority, criteria which shall govern all their activities.

Article 6.- Submitting and defending the MGA.

6.1. Students must hand their MGA in to the secretary of the faculty or school in which they are enrolled, on paper and/or in digital format, unless the nature of the assignment requires another medium. The number of copies and the handing in date shall be established by the faculty or school itself. The faculty or school is responsible for sending a digital copy of the assignment to each member of the Examiners' Panel, using the system provided by the university for storing and distributing MGAs.

6.2. The MGA must be presented and defended by the student in person. Under exceptional circumstances and when duly justified, the MGA viva may be held by videoconference, providing said decision is authorised in advance by the faculty or school.

If a student is participating in a mobility programme when carrying out their MGA, they may defend their assignment at the guest university, providing both universities agree beforehand to the conditions to be met.

6.3. The MGA may be completed, submitted and defended in any of the languages in which the Master's degree course was taught, in accordance with that stipulated in the qualification verification report, providing competent Examiners' Panels can be established in that language. In all cases, students' right to complete and defend their MGA in either of the two official languages of the Autonomous Community is guaranteed.

6.4. There is a maximum time limit for all vivas. During their viva, students must explain the aims, methodology, content and conclusions of the MGA and respond to any questions, requests for clarification, comments and suggestions posed by the Examiners' Panel.

Article 7.- Assessment and marking

7.1. Once the student has completed their viva and the Examiners' Panel has reviewed the report issued by the director, the examiners will decide on the mark to be awarded in accordance with the assessment criteria published in the MGA teaching guide, always bearing in mind that stipulated in the qualification verification report.

7.2. If a fail mark is awarded, the Examiners' Panel will issue a report to the student outlining recommendations for improving the finished product with a view to re-examination. A copy of this report will also be sent to the director.

7.3. Each MGA will be awarded a mark between 0 and 10 (to one decimal point) in accordance with the following numerical scale, to which a descriptive mark will also be added:

Not Submitted (NS).

0 - 4.9: Fail (F).

5.0 - 6.9: Pass (P)

7.0 - 8.9: Good (G).

9.0 - 10: Outstanding (O).

If students refuse the opportunity to defend their MGA in one of the calls, the descriptive mark awarded is 'Refused'.

The epithet 'with Honours' may be awarded by the faculty or school after the end of the viva period to a maximum of 5% of all students obtaining top marks in their MGA vivas, providing they earned a mark of 9.0 or over.

7.4. The final marks awarded to MGAs may be reviewed or contested in accordance with that stipulated in the corresponding university regulations, although in this case, since the mark is awarded by a panel of examiners, the initial review of the assessment will be carried out by the members of the panel themselves, and only then (if not resolved) will it be referred to the Academic Commission of the corresponding Master's degree course, whose decision may be contested by means of an appeal to the Vice-Chancellor of the university.

7.5. In all cases, the MGA vivas and their awarded marks should figure in the academic files of all enrolled students before 31 October.

Article 8.- Completing and/or directing an MGA in collaboration with an external entity.

8.1. The MGA may be carried out partly or wholly in an institution or organisation other than the UPV/EHU, providing there is a person responsible for its development within said entity. Similarly, the MGA may be directed by a member of staff at the external entity, providing they hold a PhD and are included on the list of faculty eligible for directing an MGA in the original proposal.

8.2. In order for an MGA to be carried out or directed in collaboration with an external entity, the corresponding agreement must first be signed. Said agreement should be processed in accordance with that stipulated in these rules, pursuant to that established in article 25, section g) of the UPV/EHU Governing Board Operating Regulations (BCOG of 5 December 2005).

The Postgraduate Commission shall approve the agreement template for carrying out and/or directing MGAs in external entities, with a view to facilitating its processing and signature.

8.3. Agreements must be signed by a representative of the collaborating entity with sufficient authority, as well as by a member of the management team in the faculty or school responsible for teaching the course, again with sufficient authority.

When the agreement coincides with the template established in these rules, it may be signed directly. If the agreement to be signed is different from the approved template, the faculty or school must first check that its content is in keeping with the terms established in these rules.

Article 9.- Confidentiality.

9.1. Students who use data pertaining to a public or private institution during the course of completing their MGA, or who carry out their MGA in a public or private institution, may have access to sensitive or even secret data, and must take all necessary precautions to guarantee complete confidentiality.

Said precautions shall be regulated by means of a confidentiality agreement which shall reflect (among other aspects) the content of the MGA which must be kept confidential and the institutions authorisation for the student to present and defend their MGA in accordance with that stipulated in these rules.

When the confidentiality agreement coincides with the template previously approved by the Postgraduate Commission, it may be signed directly.

If it differs from said template, it must be approved by the Postgraduate Commission prior to signing.

9.2 Furthermore, everyone who has access to the confidential content of the MGA must sign a document outlining their commitment to respect its confidential nature.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

The rules, as well as anything stipulated in their subsequent development by the Doctorate School, are applicable to all students, both those who commenced their Master's

degree course during the 2018-2019 academic year and those who first enrolled prior to this date.

ADDITIONAL PROVISION

The University's Postgraduate Commission is hereby authorised to develop these rules, as well as to interpret and resolve any issues which may arise during their enforcement.

FINAL PROVISION. ENTRY INTO EFFECT

These rules will come into effect during the 2019-2020 academic year, following their approval by the UPV/EHU Governing Board and their publication in the BCOG.