MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION & LANGUAGES- MIBAL

UNIVERSIDAD DE ALMERÍA

FINAL MASTER THESIS
Student Guide
2026-2027

1. Introduction

A master´s project enables one to delve into an area of interest and to further apply the concepts covered by coursework. It provides an opportunity to integrate and deepen your knowledge and to develop your mastery of the subject. This guide provides both students and professors with basic guidance in preparing the report, presentation, and defense of the master´s project.

Remember that your master's project should have an international business perspective.

2. Prerequisites for the master´s project

2.1. The student must have passed all the compulsory credits before the defense of the master´s project, except for the internship credits. Thus, a minimum of 45 credits must be completed meeting the structure requirements (See https://www.ual.es/estudios/masteres/presentacion/plandeestudios/estructuradeltitulo/7093).

2.2. The submission and defense of the project require the previous approval of the supervisor.

2.3. The defense of the master's project must be conducted physically in person on the date and time established.

3. Final submission on the online platform

The student must submit the final version of the project to:

Campus virtual, through its online platform. The student must submit a PDF file. The first page of the PDF document must include: author, title, degree (Master in International Business Administration & Languages), and supervisor/s.

(https://www.ual.es/application/files/1916/2072/4513/Instrucciones_para_la_Entrega_de_los_TFG-TFM_11-05-2021.pdf)

The deadline for submission for each call is published on the official website of the master: https://www.ual.es/estudios/masteres/presentacion/plandeestudios/trabajofinestudios/7093.

This is the final submission, where no additional changes can be implemented. Therefore, the student must submit the project to their tutors before those dates for correction on the dates established.

4. Presentation and defense of the master´s project

The defense of the project, in front of an evaluation committee, is held by the student through an oral

presentation, for a maximum of 8 minutes. After their presentations, students will answer the questions and comments raised by the evaluation committee.

The defense of the master's project must be conducted physically in person on the date and time established. Only in very exceptional and justified circumstances (force majeure) may the defense be authorized to take place online. In such cases, the student must formally justify the impossibility of attending in person and obtain the supervisor's approval to defend the project remotely. This option requires the authorization of the master's academic committee, which will review the situation and all the documentation submitted by the student. All documents presented must be official, original, or, if in another language, accompanied by a certified translation ("sworn and apostilled translation by an authorized translator"). This is a very remote and exceptional option.

There will be an ordinary examination call in May and an extraordinary one in July. Additionally, a call could be held in November. This additional call must be requested to ARATIES (CAU) by the student during October and will require a new enrollment fee. The student must also inform the academic coordinator of the master.

The dates of the defense for the academic year 2026-27 are as follows:

- Ordinary call: June 17th, 2027.
- Extraordinary call: July 22nd, 2027.
- November: November 26th, 2026 (First-enrolled students are not eligible for this call)

5. Evaluation Committee

The evaluation committee will consist of three members. The members are likely to teach in the master or be experts in the master field. It will also be possible to include in the committee non-university professional experts in the field and/or professors of other Spanish or foreign universities. The three members of the committee must be knowledgeable about the language in which the project is defended.

6. Language

The MIBAL is taught mostly in the English language. Therefore, students should submit their projects in this language. Since French and German are the other languages included in the curriculum of the master, the project could be presented, exceptionally, in these languages.

In any case, the students must submit and present the project in a different language from their mother tongue.

7. Tasks of the supervisor

The tasks of the supervisor include assisting the student in determining the concrete topic of the TFM and the methodology to follow; offering guidance throughout the process; resolving doubts and, finally, controlling and guaranteeing the quality of the project.

The first and foremost quality filter for presenting the project is undertaken by the supervisor. The approval of the supervisor implies that he/she knows the contents of the project, he/she considers both the objectives and the methodology and conclusions timely, that the project is worthy to be defended in front of the evaluation committee, and complies with the ethical and originality requirements.

If a project is not ready to be presented, the best for the student, the supervisor, and the evaluation committee is that the student reviews the work, improves their weaknesses, and presents it in the next defense call.

The deadline to change supervisor is March, 31st. After that date, no changes of supervisor would be allowed in the present academic year. Students might request that the supervisor change the following academic year after justifying the change. The supervisor change must be authorized by the academic committee, especially when the student has partially developed their work with the previous supervisor. In this case, the student should change the topic, and the new supervisor will receive the previous work done with the former supervisor to ensure that no property rights exist.

8. Planning: tentative intermediate deadlines

This section presents the planning to be accomplished by the students, depending on which defense call they want to present the master´s project. If students do not fulfill the intermediate deadlines, and especially the final project submission deadline for the supervisor, they will not present the project in the planned evaluation call.

Ordinary Call, 2027

- **28/01/2027: Topic and Supervisor selection.**
- **15/02/2027: deadline 1: proposal.** The student will send his/her proposal for the master´s project by email to the supervisor. The proposal must include: 1) Title, 2) Abstract, 3) Index, and a brief explanation of the main sections (3-5 lines), 4) some references, 5) Doubts and questions to be answered by the supervisor, 6) examination Call for the defense (May, July, or November). **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send his/her feedback within 15 days (1 March), specifying the topic and proposing the contents to be developed.
- **24/03/2027: Deadline 2: first draft.** The student will send a first draft of the project, or he/she should inform the supervisor of his/her decision to present the project in July or November. If the student does not submit the draft on time, he/she will not present the project in the May Call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send the feedback within one month, with a revision of the work and suggestions and recommendations that help the student to make progress. If this first draft does not meet the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project will be presented in the next evaluation call (July).
- **21/04/2027: Deadline 3: second draft.** The student will send a second and more complete draft of the project, including the changes and improvements proposed by the supervisor in the previous revision. If the student does not submit the draft on time, he/she could not present the project in the May call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send the feedback within one month, with a revision of the work and suggestions and recommendations that help the student to make progress. If this second draft does not have the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project is presented in the next evaluation call (July).
- **18/05/2027: Deadline 4: final version submission to the supervisor.** The student will send the final version of the master´s project. If the student does not submit the document on time, he/she could not present the project in the May call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** If everything is ok, the supervisor will approve the defense of the project within a week, including, in case, the last suggestions and recommendations. If this final version does not have the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project is presented in the next evaluation call (July).
- **01/06/2027-08/06/2027: SUBMISSION on the Campus Virtual platform.** The student will submit an electronic copy of the project through the online platform of Campus virtual. This is the final submission of the final project, once the student has obtained approval from the supervisor. No changes can be implemented after the submission through the platform.
- **17/06/2027: PRESENTATION AND DEFENSE**

Extraordinary call, 2027

- **28/01/2027: Topic and Supervisor selection.**
- **15/02/2027: deadline 1: proposal.** The student will send his/her proposal for the master´s project, by email, to the supervisor. The proposal must include: 1) Title, 2) Abstract, 3) Index, and a brief explanation of the main sections (3-5 lines), 4) some references, 5) Doubts and questions to be answered by the supervisor, 6) examination call for the defense (May, July, or November). **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send his/her feedback within 15 days (March, 1st), specifying the topic and proposing the contents to be developed.
- **21/04/2027: Deadline 2: first draft.** The student will send a first draft of the project, or he/she should inform the supervisor of his/her decision to present the project in November if the student does not submit the draft on time, he/she could not present the project in the July Call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send the feedback within one month, with a revision of the work and suggestions and recommendations that help the student to make progress. If this first draft has not meet the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project is presented in the next evaluation call (November).
- **19/05/2027: Deadline 3: second draft.** The student will send a second and more complete draft of the project, including the changes and improvements proposed by the supervisor in the previous revision. If the student does not submit the draft on time, he/she could not present the project in the July call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send the feedback within one month, with a revision of the work and suggestions and recommendations that help the student to make progress. If this second draft does not have the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project is presented in the next evaluation call (November).
- **20/06/2027: Deadline 4: final version submission to the supervisor.** The student will send the final version of the master´s project. If the student does not submit the document on time, he/she could not present the project in the July call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** If everything is ok, the supervisor will approve the defense of the project within a week, including, in case, the last suggestions and recommendations. If this final version does not have the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project be presented in the next evaluation call (November).
- **04/07/2027- 11/07/2027: SUBMISSION on the Campus Virtual platform.** The student will submit an electronic copy of the project through the online platform of Campus virtual. This is the final submission of the final project, once the student has obtained the approval from the supervisor. No changes can be implemented after the submission through the platform.
- **22/07/2027: PRESENTATION AND DEFENSE**

Exam Retaking Extraordinary call (November)*

- **28/01/2027: Topic and Supervisor selection.**
- **15/02/2027: deadline 1: proposal.** The student will send his/her proposal for the master´s project, by email, to the supervisor. The proposal must include: 1) Title, 2) Abstract, 3) Index, and a brief explanation of the main sections (3-5 lines), 4) some references, 5) Doubts and questions to be answered by the supervisor, 6) examination call for the defense (May, July, or November). **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send his/her feedback within 15 days (March, 1st), specifying the topic and proposing the contents to be developed.
- **01/07/2027: Deadline 2: first draft.** The student will send a first draft of the project. If the student does not submit the draft on time, he/she could not present the project in the November call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send the feedback within one month, with a revision of the work and suggestions and recommendations that help the student to make progress. If this first draft does not have the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project is presented in the next evaluation call.
- **15/09/2027: Deadline 3: second draft.** The student will send a second and more complete draft of the project, including the changes and improvements proposed by the supervisor in the previous revision. If the student does not submit the draft on time, he/she could not present the project in the November call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** The supervisor will send the feedback within one month, with a revision of the work and suggestions and recommendations that help the student to make progress. If this second draft has not meet the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project be presented in the next evaluation call.
- **24/10/2027: Deadline 4: final version submission to the supervisor.** The student will send the final version of the master´s project. If the student does not submit the document on time, he/she could not present the project in the November call. **Feedback from the supervisor.** If everything is ok, the supervisor will approve the presentation of the project within a week, including, in case, the last suggestions and recommendations. If this final version does not have the minimum level of required quality, the supervisor could decide that the project is presented in the next evaluation call.
- **05/11/2027 - 15/11/2027: SUBMISSION on the Campus Virtual platform.** The student will submit an electronic copy of the project through the online platform of Campus virtual. This is the final submission of the final project, once the student has obtained the approval from the supervisor. No changes can be implemented after the submission through the platform.
- **26/11/2027: PRESENTATION AND DEFENSE (*Tentative date)**

** Defense in this call requires an additional enrollment fee payment, since it correspond to another academic course and has to be formally requested.*

9. Quality of the master´s project

Students must take into account that a master´s project requires the acquisition of skills related to the integration, analysis, and application of knowledge in a single project, in which they should specifically demonstrate their ability to analyze information, evaluate alternatives, critical thinking and assessment, and, present and defend their results and conclusions in a reasoned and coherent way.

Only if the supervisor considers that the project has reached a sufficient level of maturity and quality, and he/she gives his/her approval, the student could present the project.

10. Defense, Evaluation and Final grade

The student must prepare an oral presentation of the project. A maximum presentation time of 8 minutes is established to ensure sufficient time for both the oral presentation and the subsequent discussion.

The evaluation committee will focus on two aspects that determine the final grade:

- Final written project report submitted via the platform (30%)
- Oral presentation and subsequent discussion with the evaluation committee, with particular emphasis on the student's ability to respond to questions, engage in academic discussion, and support and defend their arguments (70%).

The discussion will take the form of an open and collaborative dialogue between the student and the members of the evaluation committee, during which questions will be raised concerning the substantive aspects of the work. The purpose of this dialogue is to enable the student to demonstrate both their understanding and ownership of the ideas presented in the project, as well as their mastery of the subject matter.

11. Ethics, originality, and plagiarism

The project must be entirely original and self-developed. Any violation of this principle, attempted cheating, copying (plagiarism from a physical or virtual author) or unethical behavior by the student will result in a failing grade (a numerical grade of zero) for the evaluation call in which the project has been presented, and this information will be reported to the academic Committee of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration at the University of Almeria with potential sanctions.

11. Style guidelines

Length of the master´s project: 25 pages minimum; 50 pages maximum, including references and tables. A maximum of 10 pages of Annexes is allowed.

Font type and size: Times New Roman, 12 point

Spacing and margins: 1.5-spaced. The left, right, top, and bottom margins will be 2.5 cm each.

The different sections will follow a hierarchical numbering, for example:

1. Introduction.
2. Theoretical framework
    2.1. General aspects of the theory of resources and capabilities.
3. ……

Required sections for regular projects:

There is no fix or pre-defined structure for the project to give students flexibility to develop the structure that better adapts to the project objective, since there are different types of projects accepted in this master, from more academic to more professional projects. However, some sections should be part of a master project:

- Cover: The first page of the document must include: author, title, degree (Master in International Business Administration & Languages), and supervisor/s.
- Abstract: The project will include, at the beginning, an abstract with 8 lines (around 200 words) at the most, in both English and Spanish languages.
- Introduction. It must include the master's project objective, justification, and relevance, and how the project is designed and organized to achieve the objective. It is not a theoretical or introductory section to the topic; instead, it should be oriented to present the project.
- Theoretical framework or context: This section is more theoretical and addresses the topic using academic articles or reports of reputed organizations. This section might not be required for some types of projects, such as a business plan.
- Methods: This section explains the methodology followed to achieve the research objective of the project. It might include information about the type of information analyzed, how this information has been gathered, the types of analysis conducted, the sample, and the statistical method.

- Conclusions and recommendations
- References

**This structure might be different for particular types of professional projects, such as a business plan.*

References:

References should be integrated within the text in the main body of the project, and at the end, in a final references section.

In the references section, the references should be listed and ordered alphabetically. All these references should have been cited in the text. For example:

- Barney, J. B. (1986). Organizational Culture: Can It be a Source of Sustained Competitive Advantage?, *Academy of Management Review, 11* (3), 656-665

Within the text, the references should be inserted in the correct place, including in brackets the author's surname and year of publication, for example:

... Organizational culture is an element that may be key to gaining competitive advantage (Barney, 1986) ...

All the references should be formatted following the **APA 7th edition** guide for references format both within the text and in the references list.