

## Master's Dissertation (I690015)

**Course size** *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

**Credits** 15.0      **Study time** 450 h      **Contact hrs** 150.0h

**Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2022-2023**

A (Year)      English      Kortrijk      master's dissertation      150.0h

**Lecturers in academic year 2022-2023**

Devlieghere, Frank      LA23      lecturer-in-charge

**Offered in the following programmes in 2022-2023**

[Master of Science in Sustainable Food Packaging](#)      **crdts** 15      **offering** A

**Teaching languages**

English

**Keywords**

Scientific research, scientific reporting, written manuscript, oral presentation, professional organisation

**Position of the course**

The master's dissertation is the capstone of the master's programme where the student is expected to demonstrate the course-specific learning outcomes. The student independently tackles a research problem postulated by an external organisation (company, governmental agency, NPO or NGO) through a systematic approach. Students are submerged in research at an academic level and become familiar with different aspects of professional organisations at the same time. It allows students to put the knowledge and skills acquired during the programme into practice in a professional context. Students, guided by an academic promotor and a professional mentor, have the opportunity to not only enhance their research skills, but also their employability by tackling a real-life research question, gaining workplace experience, exploring potential career paths and building relationships with local companies, governmental agencies, or other organisations.

**Contents**

The master's dissertation is a written report of the scientific research the student has conducted. This manuscript contains the following items:

- o preface
- o table of contents
- o list of abbreviations
- o abstract
- o introduction: definition of the research problem and the formulation of the research questions
- o relevant literature: should contain only what is necessary to understand the work, with a focus on a critical synthesis
- o materials and methods (trivial and well-known methods should not be explained in detail)
- o results (raw data can be delivered in an electronic format)
- o discussion

- o recommendations for further research
- o general conclusions
- o personal reflection of the learning process and embedment of the research into the mission of the external organisation that provided the topic
- o list of references
- o appendices (only in an electronic format)

### **Initial competences**

The competences that can be expected from a Master, supplemented with a thorough scientific basic knowledge and knowledge of research techniques in the field of sustainable food packaging.

### **Final competences**

- 1 To translate knowledge into practical applications through elaborating a practical research problem.
- 2 To participate in developing a packaging strategy within a company or organisation, considering the corporate or organisational culture, its mission and vision, and the broad socio-economic context.
- 3 To develop interpersonal and communication skills to participate and collaborate in multidisciplinary teams.
- 4 To understand how processes to control and develop advanced packaging systems happen in a professional organisation.
- 5 To set up a research project by defining the research problem, formulating clear research questions and setting up an appropriate methodology.
- 6 To make evidence-based decisions based on a critical literature study.
- 7 To characterise a packaging system for a certain food product quantitatively by means of meticulous data collection (using existing data sets or data obtained by lab or field work or surveys), correct data processing and data analysis.
- 8 To integrate requirements from sales, purchase, production, quality, marketing, sustainability and/or supply chain within the food packaging system.
- 9 To make a concise synthesis of research results, considering different perspectives
- 10 To communicate professionally on the research project by means of a written manuscript and an oral presentation and discussion with well-founded arguments
- 11 To show the necessary independence, motivation, dedication and initiative while obtaining final competences 1-9

### **Conditions for credit contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via a credit contract

### **Conditions for exam contract**

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

### **Teaching methods**

Master's dissertation

### **Learning materials and price**

The learning materials from other course units of this study programme can be consulted to perform this master's dissertation. Online literature databases are available via Ghent -University's library platform. The Faculty library and other university library are freely accessible to consult.

### **References**

Practical Research: Planning and Design by Paul D. Leedy & Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, 2009, Prentice Hall. ISBN 9780137152421

### **Course content-related study coaching**

Students are guided by an academic promotor as well as a promotor from the professional organisation that has proposed the topic. Besides the promotors, one or two tutors (one academic and one from the professional organisation) can be assigned as well. At the beginning of the academic year, the promotors, tutor(s) and the students are given up-to-date information regarding mutual expectations, timelines and evaluation of the dissertation. During the academic year, the students get the necessary supervision and guidance, by means of a number of counselling talks with the promotors and tutor(s) during which all aspects of the work can be discussed. These talks can be organised at fixed points in time or after making an appointment. The promotors coach the students actively during these counselling talks, during which both the scientific aspects and the learning process can be discussed. The daily

supervision of the student is performed by the tutor(s) or, if not appointed, by the professional promotor. The student has to present an intermediate progress report (in February) to the promotors, who will provide an interim evaluation in consultation with the tutor(s) if appointed

### **Assessment moments**

end-of-term and continuous assessment

### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period**

Oral examination, Assignment

### **Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period**

Oral examination, Assignment

### **Examination methods in case of permanent assessment**

Participation

### **Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment**

examination during the second examination period is possible

### **Extra information on the examination methods**

Size of the master's dissertation manuscript: aim at 50 pages/ 15.000 words (from introduction up to

personal reflection, excluding references)

Timing of the oral examination:

o oral presentation: maximum 10 min

o interactive discussion with jury members: 15 min (no questions are asked by the promotors)

o deliberation: 10 min

### **Calculation of the examination mark**

The evaluation consists out of three parts:

- 30% can be earned by the work, process and progression of the student during the year and is

evaluated by the promotors. Final competencies 1-5, and 11 are evaluated here. The following aspects are

considered:

o The scientific, organisational and technical approach

o The reached objectives (including respecting deadlines and agreements)

o The independence, perseverance and efforts made by the student

o The critical attitude of the student and the reliability of the results

o The communication skills of the student: during the intermediate reporting and presentation, and the

interaction with the promotors and others involved

- 40% can be earned by the evaluation of the manuscript by the reading committee members

Here, competences 5-10 are evaluated by considering:

§ The theoretical depth of the work

§ The translation of knowledge to practical applications and putting it in a professional context

§ Transferring information clearly, data analysis and drawing conclusions

§ Structure and language

- 30% can be earned by the evaluation by a jury during the thesis defence. The jury is composed out of the

promotors, two members of the reading committee, a secretary and a chairman. Here, competencies 9, 10

and 11 are evaluated.

o 15% presentation skills during the presentation

o 15% on how the questions were answered (content, motivation/dedication and communication skills)