

# Credit Transfer for Open/Online Graduate Programs: Annex 8 Spain

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## 3.8 Spain

Spain has a population of nearly 47 million. It has a semi-federal constitution – many matters including higher education are devolved to the autonomous communities (groups of provinces) but the central government still has considerable power over the education sector, much more so than in Canada, the UK or Germany. There are 17 autonomous communities ranging in population from 8.5 million (Andalusia) down to 300,000 (La Rioja), thus every Canadian province apart from Ontario can find a match – with British Columbia’s analogue being the Valencian Community (south of Catalonia), which even faces some offshore islands even if facing the wrong direction (east).

### Universities in Spain

Wikipedia reports that there are 76 universities in Spain, most of which are supported by state funding. 24 Spanish universities are private, of which 7 are affiliated with the Catholic Church.

It is well known that there are also two public distance teaching universities: UNED<sup>1</sup> (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia) in Madrid and OU Catalonia in Barcelona.<sup>2</sup> It is not so well known that there are other universities in Spain with active distance teaching programmes, in particular UNIR (International University of La Rioja).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://portal.uned.es/portal/page?\\_pageid=93,1&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://portal.uned.es/portal/page?_pageid=93,1&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uoc.edu/portal/en/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unir.net>

## **Master's degrees**

The Master's Portal reports that:<sup>4</sup>

According to the Institute of International Education, Spain ranks in a top position on the list of European countries by number of English-taught Master's programmes. With more than 370 Masters offered in English, and many official bilingual academic programmes (taught in English and Spanish), Spain is a friendly destination for international students.

The Distance Learning Portal reports that there are 198 distance learning degrees in Spain<sup>5</sup> of which 177 are at Master's level.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.8.1 Open University of Catalonia**

Wikipedia notes that:<sup>7</sup>

The Open University of Catalonia (Catalan: Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, UOC) is an Internet-centered open university based in Barcelona.

The UOC offers graduate and postgraduate programs in Catalan, Spanish and English in fields such as Psychology, Computer Science, Sciences of Education, Information and Knowledge Society and Economics. Also, an Information and Knowledge Society Doctoral Program is available that explores research fields such as e-law, e-learning, network society, education, and online communities. It has support centers in a number of cities in Spain, Andorra, Mexico and the traditionally Catalan-speaking city of Alghero in Sardinia.

Postgraduate courses are offered in:

- Business Intelligence
- Societal and Business Conflicts
- Armed conflicts and crisis management
- Conflictology
- Crisis management
- Social and Family Conflicts
- Workplace and Commercial Conflicts
- Armed conflicts
- Food Security Programme Management
- Food Security Management and The Right to Food
- Food, culture and locality
- Food, society and international food governance
- Food, culture and territory
- International agri-food policy

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mastersportal.eu/countries/24/spain.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.distancelearningportal.com/search/#q=ci-24|mh-blended,online&start=0&length=10&order=relevance&direction=desc>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.distancelearningportal.com/search/#q=ci-24|lv-master|mh-blended,online&start=0&length=10&order=relevance&direction=desc>

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_University\\_of\\_Catalonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_University_of_Catalonia)

- Geographic indications
- Food systems analysis
- Food Security: Assessment and Action
- Impact Assessment on Food Security Programs
- Right to food
- Food and Society
- E-Learning Design and Development. UOC-UNM (University of New Mexico, USA)  
– Joint Certificate
- E-learning course design and teaching – European certificate

Two examples should suffice. UOC has well-organised programme pages, thus it is easy to get the information.

### **Masters in Conflictology**

This is offered jointly with UNITAR, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.<sup>8</sup> The UOC programme page states:<sup>9</sup>

This programme trains students in all applications of conflictology (family, trade, social, political, international, armed conflicts), facilitates internships, preparation of research programmes and the development of your own professional projects giving you access to the largest network of people working to promote peace.

It is a 60 ECTS programme, thus on the short side for an EU Master's. The details are below:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Campus</i>
Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis	3	1st semester	Unitar Campus
Conflict Resolution	3	1st semester	Unitar Campus
Introduction to Peace Operations	2	1st semester	Unitar Campus
Milestones of UN Peace Operations	1	1st semester	Unitar Campus
Human Security in Post-Conflicts Interventions	3	1st semester	Unitar Campus
Media and Peace Building	2	2nd semester	UOC Campus
Philosophy of Peace	3	2nd semester	UOC Campus
Crisis Management	2	2nd semester	UOC Campus
Deconstructing War	3	3rd semester	UOC Campus
Economy and Conflict	4	3rd semester	UOC Campus
Project Armed Conflicts and Crisis Management	4	3rd semester	UOC Campus
<b>Total credits</b>	<b>30</b>		

For the avoidance of doubt, note that the credits are given in US credit hours. It appears that 1 US Credit hour = 2 ECTS – this is an approximate equation.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unitar.org>

<sup>9</sup> <http://studies.uoc.edu/en/postgraduate-courses/cooperation/conflictology/presentation>

### Entry

Students must of course be able to read and write in English. (However, no specific competence level is stated.) The site also states:<sup>10</sup>

To be admitted on a master's degree or postgraduate diploma course, you need to be able to accredit an official qualification. *If you cannot accredit this qualification, you will be awarded a university extension diploma.*

To be admitted on a specialization course (specialization certificate), you do not need to be able to accredit an official qualification.

Once the overall assessment process has been completed successfully, the UOC will issue a Master Diploma/ Postgraduate Diploma/Specialization Certificate to those participants with an accredited university qualification that is valid in Spain.

Should you not have such a qualification, a Certificate will be issued.

This is an interesting two-tier approach.

### **Masters in Food, Society and International Food Governance**

This is also a 60 ECTS programme.<sup>11</sup>

This programme is designed for individuals interested in enhancing their understanding and analysis of agriculture and food policy, and increasing their understanding of the social, cultural and economic factors that influence and shape the development and enforcement of agriculture governance. This combination presents an opportunity to explore connections between the historical, political, scientific, strategic and ethical considerations involved in the organization of food policy and agriculture internationally. The programme trains students to identify and generate solutions for just and sustainable food systems. It attracts a diversity of learners from professionals to those just starting their careers. All of our students share an interest in the organization of food systems and in food governance.

The Master's is made up of two mandatory Specialisations, two elected Specialisations and a Final Research Project. A Specialisation is a 4 month, 15 ECTS credit course made up of a series of modules (usually 3 or 4). The Specialisations can be taken independently or as part of the Master's.

#### **Mandatory Specialisations:**

- Food Systems Analysis
- International Agri-Food Policy

#### **Elective Specialisations:**

- Food and Society
- Food Regulation (with MSU's IFLR)
- Food Security: Assessment and Action (with FAO)

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<sup>10</sup> <http://studies.uoc.edu/en/postgraduate-courses/cooperation/conflictology/admission-requirements>

<sup>11</sup> <http://studies.uoc.edu/en/postgraduate-courses/health-sciences/food-society-international-food-governance/presentation>

- Impact Assessment of Food Security Programmes
- Understanding the Right to Food

**Final Research Project:**

The Master's in Food, Society and International Food Governance provides you with an opportunity to pursue a research topic in your area of interest. You may collaborate with your employer to develop a project or you may opt to undertake an independent research project. A UOC advisor must approve your research question and will work with you to carry out the research in an appropriate and timely fashion.

This Final Research Project (6 or 9 ECTS) is required to complete the Master's in Food, Society and International Food Governance and is to be completed over the duration of the Master's programme. In general, research will be multi-disciplinary and will have a practical application.

The Final Research Project will be evaluated by an Academic Committee. The Committee can include a mentor from your company or organization. Agreements with industry on confidentiality are always strictly taken into account. Students must defend their project. This can be done virtually (as long as it is synchronous) or in person.

The ECTS total does not seem correct: each specialisation is 15 ECTS, thus the required four make up 60 ECTS, which is what the total ECTS is supposed to be for the full Master's. The thesis (6 or 9 ECTS) seems additional to this. The two lengths of thesis are not explained.

*Entry*

Once again an open university reminds students that it is not open at master's level.<sup>12</sup>

The Master's in Food, Society and International Food Governance is open to everyone with a good grasp of English.

The UOC is an open university which means that even if you do not have a high school diploma or university degree you can still take our courses.

**However, to be eligible for the Master's Degree you must have a recognised university degree.**

If you do not have a recognised university degree then you will receive an equivalency certificate instead of a degree.

### **3.8.2 International University of La Rioja (UNIR)**

UNIR, *la Universidad en Internet* (the online university), offers Bachelor's and Master's degrees fully accredited by the European Union which feature an innovative e-learning methodology.<sup>13</sup> It offers programmes in Business and Economics; Arts and Humanities;

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<sup>12</sup> <http://studies.uoc.edu/en/postgraduate-courses/health-sciences/food-society-international-food-governance/admission-requirements>

<sup>13</sup> <http://en.unir.net>

Social Work and Labour Studies; Law; Education; Engineering and Technology; and Communication and Marketing.

### General entry requirements

The enrolment process seems well organised, as extracts show:

You will receive a call from a personal advisor, who will verify that you fulfill the requirements and will help you develop your personalized study plan: credit transfer, number of credits to take, time you can devote to study, etc

If you have studied at a university before *or possess professional experience in your field of study*, you may apply to receive course credit by requesting an ECTS credit transfer review. UNIR's Department of Credit Transfer and Award will make a preliminary assessment of your individual case.

### International Master in Business Administration (IMBA)

This is a 60 ECTS programme, taught 100% online in English. It has the following features:<sup>14</sup>

- Official status: An official Master's degree recognized by the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- Case method: You will learn through the case method, by analyzing and making decisions with real cases from companies that operate in different markets.
- Entrepreneurship: You will learn to develop new business projects in different markets.
- International markets: You will learn to manage businesses that operate in different international environments and will become familiar with companies' internalization processes.
- Managerial and negotiation capabilities: You will acquire the skills needed for decision-making and developing projects, as well as for negotiating and for leading work teams.
- Digital world: You will develop your knowledge in a digital environment, an important factor in creating new business models in today's firms and companies.

This official Master's degree qualifies graduates to enter official PhD programs and to earn postgraduate-level points for civil service exams and competitions for employment in Public Administration.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://en.unir.net/imba.php>

The study programme is detailed:<sup>15</sup>

<i>1st trimester</i>	<i>ECTS</i>
Management Accounting	3
Finance Management and International Financial Instruments	3
Marketing Management and Strategic Marketing	3
Sales Management	3
Digital Marketing	3
International Business and Marketing	3
Functional and Process Management	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>2nd trimester</i>	<i>ECTS</i>
Strategic Planning, General Management and Operations Management	3
Situation Analysis	3
Strategic Management of Information	3
Information Systems for Project Management	3
Management in Technological Environments	3
Cost Analysis for Decision Making	3
Management of Human Resources	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>3rd trimester</i>	<i>ECTS</i>
Leadership and Negotiation Skills	3
Corporate Quality	2
Project Management	2
Internship*	5
Final Project	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>

### *Entry requirements*

The admissions process is equally thoroughly described though without giving specific information on PLAR. There is a scheme of prioritising admissions by non-credit criteria.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [http://en.unir.net/imba.php#-planestudios\\_grados](http://en.unir.net/imba.php#-planestudios_grados)

<sup>16</sup> [http://en.unir.net/imba.php#-acceso\\_grados](http://en.unir.net/imba.php#-acceso_grados)

### **Prerequisites**

To be accepted into the University Master's program in Business Administration, **you must hold a University Degree**, as specified in Article 7 of RD 39/1997. This requirement follows the admissions criteria established in Article 16 of RD 1393/2007, according to which applicants must:

- Hold an official Spanish university degree or a degree from another higher education institution in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that grants access to a Master degree
- Hold a qualification obtained outside the EHEA in accordance with foreign educational systems without the need for official recognition of their degrees, having previously confirmed with the University that this qualification accredits a level of training equivalent to the corresponding official Spanish university degree and that it would serve as a means of access to postgraduate study in the country in which it was awarded. Admission through this channel in no case signifies either official recognition of the candidate's prior qualification or any other recognition than permission to enrol in online Master's study.
- To study this master in English, students must demonstrate and certify that they have at least a B2 English level.

### **Admissions Criteria**

UNIR has established the following admissions criteria for the Master in Business Administration (MBA).

- Primary admissions criterion: **GPA on academic transcript**
- Education: **priority to holders of higher education degrees in Economics, Business, and Engineering**; as well as other areas such as Physics, Mathematics, etc.; followed by Industrial Engineering, Computer Science and Telecommunications
- Among applicants with equal qualifications, **priority will be given to knowledge of foreign languages**
- Among applicants with equal qualifications, **applications will be accepted in order of receipt**

If there are more qualified applicants than places, special weight will be given to:

- Professional experience in terms of years of experience certified by an official "Working Life Report"
- Candidates who have authored and presented or published research at a conference or in a scholarly journal on a topic related to the Master program.

### **Recommended profile**

In addition to the legal requirements listed above, we recommend that prospective students for the IMBA have the following profile.

- An open mind and analytical capability
- Mastery of the basic mathematical tools for study of and application to finance and economics
- Good communication and social skills and capability for teamwork
- Self-discipline.

If you have studied at university or possess professional experience in your field of study, you may apply to receive course credit by **requesting an ECTS credit transfer review\***. UNIR's Department of Credit Transfer and Award will make a preliminary assessment of your individual case.

\* For enrolment in official Bachelor's and **graduate degree programs** only

And with that daunting description we conclude our analysis of graduate level providers.