



MASTER IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

ASSISTANCE ON TOPICS FOR FINAL GRADUATION PROJECTS

The Final Graduation Project (FGP) is a requirement for the student who has completed courses in the curriculum to graduate. Its purpose is that, through correct elaboration, the students can demonstrate that they can develop a project, their own FGP, based on knowledge, skills and abilities which they have developed through their graduate studies in project management. For this reason, the professionalism, applicability, attitude and implementation that they show in the process of elaborating the FGP are highly relevant.

The topics for developing an FGP can be varied; because of this, there are some that, due to their size and complexity, are not really convenient to be considered as FGP, in some cases because they are too lengthy and complex for the limited timeline available (three months). In other cases, however, they are also not suitable for their simplicity and brevity, since they do not meet the minimum requirements to constitute the final requirement for graduating from a postgraduate program. The Professors of the Graduation Seminar will be responsible for approving or rejecting the topics proposed by the students. However, if during the tutoring period, the need to make modifications to the subject that was approved during the Graduation Seminar (contained in the charter document with all its components) arises, such changes must be approved by the Tutor. At the same time, what should be avoided is approving changes to the charter to accommodate it to what has been already done, this would be a very bad practice in graduation projects.

In all cases, the students must take into consideration that the FGPs are public documents. Therefore, when choosing a topic they must be absolutely sure that all the information, proposals and research that is conducted has the necessary authorizations for their publication and can be used by anyone who requests them.

Following is a list of some of the most common topics.

1. Management Plans

Given that the FGP has limited execution times – three months or less – there is often no time to include the elements related to the control, implementation or closure elements of the project or of its phases (unless it's the case for procedures and templates that should be used during these phases of the project).

When management plans are drafted, the ten knowledge areas should be included and also, include at least the corresponding initiation and planning processes. Within the development of the FGP, if any of the knowledge areas does not apply, then it should be analyzed and justified, and an explanation for its non-inclusion in the management plan should be provided.

2. Proposal of a Methodology

For students working in organizations that implement projects that have certain similarities to each other, it may be of interest to develop a methodology to manage these projects. The methodology should include a justification and description of the typical projects which will be managed with it, in addition to templates, processes, procedures, definitions and recommendations to be applied with the defined methodology. This should include the ten knowledge areas and processes of the five process groups (but not necessarily all those proposed in the PMBOK Guide) and, at least, one example of methodology application to a typical project case.

3. PMO Proposal (Project Management Office)

This is a valuable topic that should include: maturity analysis and organizational needs, a proposal of the characteristics and functions that a PMO should have, its position within the organizational structure, level of authority, and its implementation plan, which must include the policies on training, improvement of the organizational maturity, recruitment of ideal personnel and other relevant topics.

4. Action Plan of a Socially Responsible Organization (Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR)

Based on the organizational structure, its resources and its activities, an internal assessment can be carried out on the policies, actions and projects that the CSR activities generate, both within the organization as well as the projects being implemented. Analysis and proposal should include senior management surveys and a strong line of communication with relevant sponsors. It should include specific actions, responsibilities, budget, and strategy for each action, dates and development of the ten knowledge areas.

5. Studies related to the Feasibility of a Project

A feasibility study is an issue often related to business administration, as it is commonly linked to the profitability and feasibility studies of the project product, rather than the project management itself. However, a feasibility study can be seen as a project. When an FGP is approved with that

dynamic, the feasibility study should be treated as a project, therefore, it should include a comprehensive management plan, including its planning and implementation following good discipline practices and not as a simple exercise of adding traditional viability components in the analysis. It must include the ten knowledge areas.

6. Specific Studies

Although these studies are more linked to academic research, in some cases FGP proposals can be approved with these types of topics, which carry an approach and particular scheme, which can be developed by students who are skilled on research techniques and with a strong motivation towards this field. In these cases, the proposals must be approved jointly by the Seminar professor and the Dean. The study should be initiated, planned, implemented, controlled and closed as a project

7. Implementing a Project or Proposal

Some students submit topics related to "implementation" of methodologies, processes, policies, etc. Implementation, as defined in Oxford Dictionaries is, the process of putting a decision or plan into effect; execution. Therefore, strictly speaking, if someone is going to "implement" something it should have been previously planned and designed (including approval of proposals). To start something from zero, then an FGP focused towards "implement" should have a comprehensive project plan, to be executed later (as part of the FGP). Implementation as single action, if properly understood, refers to the undertaking of the implementation processes of a project. This is a very ambitious goal which normally exceeds the resources and time available for a FGP, therefore it is not recommended as a topic proposal, unless the student demonstrates its feasibility through a detailed timeline detailing the activities required to achieve the Scope established within the allowable time.

8. Other possible topics not reflected in the above options could be proposed and justified by the students and will be subject to approval by the Graduation Seminar Professor and the Dean.