



Protocol: analysis of official university studies in Spain

Protocolo: análisis de los estudios universitarios oficiales en España



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Abstract:

Official studies in the scope of protocol are relatively new compared to other disciplines; however, they are consistent and relevant, given the need for organisations to have such a profile. Nevertheless, the number of official studies is still limited, making it an area of interest

Resumen:

Los estudios oficiales en el ámbito del protocolo son relativamente nuevos, si atendemos a otras disciplinas, pero gozan de solidez y gran proyección, dada la necesidad que tienen las organizaciones de contar con un perfil de estas características. No obstante, el número

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due to its potential growth. This paper proposes an analysis of the official titles of the bachelor's and master's degrees to know their characteristics, contents, competencies, and professional profiles. Among the conclusions, there is little difference between the offer of undergraduate and master's training, and there is a greater focus on the area of events rather than on protocol itself.

Keywords:

Protocol; communication; degree; master's degree; university.

mero de estudios oficiales resulta aún limitado, lo que la convierte en un área de interés por su potencial crecimiento. Se propone en este trabajo un análisis de las titulaciones oficiales de grado y máster para conocer sus características, contenidos, competencias y perfiles profesionales. Se observa entre las conclusiones, poca diferencia entre la oferta formativa de grado y máster y un enfoque mayor en el área de eventos que en el propio protocolo.

Palabras clave:

Protocolo; comunicación; grado; máster; universidad.

1. State of the issue

1.1. Protocol and events in communication degrees

The field of organisational communication addresses the complex framework of directing and managing planning and communication tools. Several authors consider protocol to be a public relations tool since it is one of the most effective forms of communication as interpersonal communication is enhanced through events (Otero, 2009; Marín Calahorro, 2000, Castillo-Esparcia and Fernández-Torres; 2015).

Traditionally, protocol managers were professionals who were trained by their colleagues and learned on the job. In some cases, these experts came from backgrounds such as Advertising and Public Relations, Tourism or Law. In others, the profession was practised without doing any previous official study, and the knowledge was obtained through own degrees, courses, congresses, and the limited but valuable scientific literature from academic experts.

From the field of communication, Protocol was part of the contents of some subjects in the Advertising and Public Relations degree. This can be seen in the *Libro Blanco. Título de Grado en Comunicación*, which was published to establish a framework document to adapt Spanish studies to the Bologna plan. The degree in Advertising and Public Relations includes “Foundations, Structures and the organisation of advertising communication and public relations” the subject includes the “capacity to organise, execute and evaluate events, taking special care over their design, cost control and protocol”.

In 2005, Sierra and Sotelo (2008) identified that 11 of the 41 universities with Information Sciences studies offered core, free electives, area of study electives and general education electives on Protocol and 10 of the centres analysed offered Protocol in postgraduate studies.

Hernández, Losada, and Matilla (2009) examined the postgraduate studies on offer in corporate communication in Spain. They concluded that only two degrees included the terms “public relations” and “corporate communication”, opting for other words such as “protocol” or “event management”. Events was also included in the title of a third of the studies analysed.

Herrero (2013) carries out a more in-depth analysis of her Master's dissertation, which includes the degrees, postgraduate studies, and specialist degrees in Protocol. Of the 81 universities examined, 47 had studies in communication, and 24 offered events management, protocol, and/or institutional relations subjects. The author highlights that between 2005 and 2013 protocol, together with event management and institutional relations, gained greater visibility within the universities that went from offering 8 postgraduate studies to 13. (Herrero, 2013: 25)

At an international level, Herrero y Perelló (2016) compare the curricula of 31 degrees in the area of protocol and event management in 9 countries in the European Union (Germany, Austria, Denmark, Spain, France, Ireland, Iceland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom). Among the most interesting conclusions is that the subjects "Event Management Techniques", "Event Planning", and "Event Industry" are included in almost all curricula. However, the authors indicate that the "more specific subjects of some areas of event management are reflected to a lesser extent" (p.452). This suggests that specialisation is avoided, and degrees tend to have more generic and broad-based subjects. Likewise, languages and new technologies are not offered in most degrees.

Portugal, Becerra, and Victoria (2016) carry out a similar analysis of the degrees in Spain. Part of the curricula is taught in degrees from the same universities. Therefore, it could be inferred that existing teaching staff needs to develop content. The authors also examined the bibliography of the subjects, exploring the teaching guides, and concluded that the contents were based on recent publications. The founders of Protocol were left out of the content.

Saavedra and Perlado (2007) analyse communication studies in Spain, including undergraduate and graduate degrees and own degrees from the perspective of communication management. Protocol and ceremonial appear in most of the studies as a specific skill; the content of the "corporate brand sphere" is given the next most importance in which the direction, structure, and development of events, Protocol, ceremonial and symbolism are included.

1.2. Perspective of protocol professionals

Usually, event management and Protocol have been taken on by professionals coming from information studies that complemented this training with postgraduate courses or were trained by experts in Protocol. According to "The Annual Report of the Journalistic Profession, 2017", among the main activities of the self-employed in communication, event management represents 23.9%. Also in the "State of Communication in Spain" (2018) we find activities directly or indirectly related to Protocol such as events, which represents 2.3% of the communication professionals' tasks, relations with government, public affairs and lobbying (18.6%) or international communication (7.5%).

According to the report "The Events Sector in Spain" written by the Event Managers Association- EMA (2018), "the current event manager profile in Spain is mainly female (76%), senior (between 40 and 40 years old) and highly educated". Concerning university studies, 31.7% of the profiles came from the Tourism Degree and 29.6% from the Advertising and Public Relations degree.

Spain is also a leader in event management. According to the International Association Meetings Market 2017, it is ranked as the fourth country in the world with the highest number of events and the second in estimated participation. The fact that it is well-positioned is also reflected in other sector reports such as "The event as a generator of strategic value" (2018)

written by Grupo Eventoplus, which shows that companies predict a 3.8% growth in the budget dedicated to the sector, which will result in an increase of 10.1% in staff.

In this sense, the Protocol professional must have an in-depth knowledge of the role of communication in organisations as a tool for the company.

2. Objectives and methodology

This work aims to analyse official degree and Master's studies in Protocol in Spain to know their fundamental characteristics. It intends to identify:

- O1: Formal aspects of these studies: name, number of credits, language, and teaching methods.
- O2: The nature of the universities (public and/or private) that offers these degrees
- O3: Prevalent content in the curricula
- O4: Specific competences in the field of Protocol
- O5: The derived professional profiles

Firstly, in-depth research on academic works and articles in indexed journals in the area of Protocol and corporate and institutional communication has been carried out. Given that this work is closely related to the professional field, other valuable sources have also been collected, such as reports and professional studies or interviews with sector representatives. This bibliographic review has allowed us to contextualise the evolution of the university studies in Protocol in Spain and carry out a background study into the published works.

Next, to carry out a content analysis of the official university degrees in Protocol, all the university undergraduate and Master's degrees in the area have been extracted from the Registry of Universities, Centres, and Qualifications (RUCT in Spanish). This consultation was made in March 2019, and from it, primary data was obtained for the analysis sheet, such as the year of verification, the year of implementation, total credits, name of the University, and centre where it is taught and specific competencies. The same classification of degrees and masters used at the Registry of Universities, Centres and Qualifications was followed throughout this work.

It should be noted that only official studies have been taken as a reference; own degrees were excluded from the sample analysis, as well as specialist and other similar degrees offered by universities and business schools. This delimitation considers the University's criteria: as official studies go through a verification process, monitoring and accreditation that guarantees their quality. Therefore, they have higher educational value and require a more elaborate planning process than their own degree, which depends solely on the institution that created them.

Finally, and based on this information, a content analysis was carried out based on the objectives set out for this investigation, which were collected in the table below:

Table 1. Methodology. Analysis sheet

BASIC INFORMATION- DEGREE/MASTER	
NAME OF THE DEGREE	
UNIVERSITY	
FACULTY	
NATURE OF THE UNIVERSITY	
CITY WHERE IT IS TAUGHT	
YEAR OF VERIFICATION	
YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION	
METHOD	
LANGUAGES	
ACADEMIC INFORMATION	
TOTAL CREDITS	
TOTAL SUBJECTS	
TOTAL NUMBER OF SUBJECTS ON PROTOCOL	
TOTAL CREDITS IN THE AREA OF PROTOCOL	
LIST OF SUBJECTS	Total credits for each subject
LIST OF SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES IN WHICH PROTOCOL IS DIRECTLY MENTIONED	
PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	
COMMENTS	

Source: created by the authors

For further academic information (the curriculum), we refer to the website of each degree. Once all the subjects with content in Protocol were extracted, they were categorised according to their specialisation: a history of the ceremonial/ Protocol, institutional Protocol, business and social Protocol, international Protocol and diplomacy, premier and nobiliary law, events management and Protocol and others.

The aim was to find out what contents are most addressed in the official studies with this classification. It should be noted that, in some cases, it was necessary to consult the teaching guides since their descriptions were not clear enough.

The specific competencies have been categorised taking three primary teaching objectives as references to find out the direction of official studies:

1. Linking protocol and the professional/social/business world: competences that offer specific skills on professional or social dynamics specific to the sector. Knowledge related to the workings of the protocol department, media, or other bodies, as well as social responsibility and its application in events.
2. Practical application of protocol/ceremonial/symbology: application of Protocol in different specialisations.
3. Theoretical knowledge of Protocol: knowledge and understanding of the theoretical bases of Protocol.

Finally, an attempt has been made to extract the most frequently cited professional opportunities in Protocol and communication and events.

A link has been made with the current training on offer due to the value of its own degrees. These degrees will not form a part of the sample of analysis but will be considered to establish a possible comparison with minor aspects in official degrees. In this case, several searches were carried out on Google with the keywords “Expert in protocol”, “Master in protocol”, “Own degree in protocol”, limiting the searches to the first 3 pages of Google. The selection has been limited to degrees offered by universities, affiliated centres, and business schools.

Necessary information has been obtained from them, such as the name of the degree, University, number of credits, the city where it is taught, type, and the URL of studies. The aim is to obtain an estimate of the number of own and specialist degrees and unofficial specialisation diplomas which are currently offered.

3. Results: analysis of official studies

3.1. Results of undergraduate degree studies

The Registry of Universities, Centres, and Qualifications (RUCT in Spanish) includes a total of 14 degrees, of which seven are university degrees. Six of these degrees are implemented; however, during this work, the University of the Balearic Islands indicated that their degree is on the verge of extinction. Even so, this degree has been included in the analysis since it is currently being taught. This is not the case with the degree from the European University of Madrid, which applied for extinction last year and no longer appears on its websites.

Table 2. Summary of the official degrees to be analysed in this work

DEGREES	UNIVERSITY
Degree in Corporate Communication, Protocol and Event Managements	University Antonio Nebrija
Degree in Event Management, Protocol, and Institutional Relations	Miguel Hernández University of Elche
Degree in Protocol, Event Management, and Corporate Communication	University Rey Juan Carlos
Degree in Protocol and Event Management	University Camilo José Cela
Degree in Protocol and Event Managements	University del Atlántico Medio
Degree in Protocol and Event Management	University of the Balearic Islands

Source: created by the authors. Information extracted from the Registry of universities, centres, and qualifications

All the degrees have the term “protocol” in their name. However, it is always related to other areas of knowledge, such as communication, institutional relations, and event management. Nevertheless, Protocol is the most relevant field since it appears in the name of the six degrees.

The position of the word in the name, which determines its order of importance, varies according to the University. Five of them, i.e., 91%, position protocol as the most critical field of knowledge, compared to Antonio Nebrija University, which positions corporate communication as the most significant. The Antonio Nebrija University and Rey Juan Carlos University are the only universities that add corporate communication as a related area. Similarly, Miguel Hernández University incorporates institutional relations.

The first University to request the verification of its degree was the Camilo José Cela University, which received it in 2010. It was followed by the Miguel Hernández University (2012), the European University (2013), Rey Juan Carlos University (2015), The Balearic Islands University (2015), Antonio Nebrija University (2017) and the University of the Mid-Atlantic (2017).

Regarding the nature of the institutions, only two of them are public, as opposed to three private universities and one affiliated centre. The faculties in which the degrees appear are quite dispersed: two of the degrees are in communication faculties, two in social sciences faculties, one in an institute specialised in protocol studies, and another in a university school of tourism.

Madrid is the city with the highest number of degrees in Protocol (50%), followed by Las Palmas of Gran Canaria, Alicante, and Palma de Mallorca. All of the degrees are offered in face-to-face classes. The Miguel Hernández University of Elche, the Camilo José Cela University and the University of the Mid-Atlantic also offer the degree through distance learning. All

the degrees are in Spanish; the Rey Juan Carlos University is the only one that provides the option to study the degree in English.

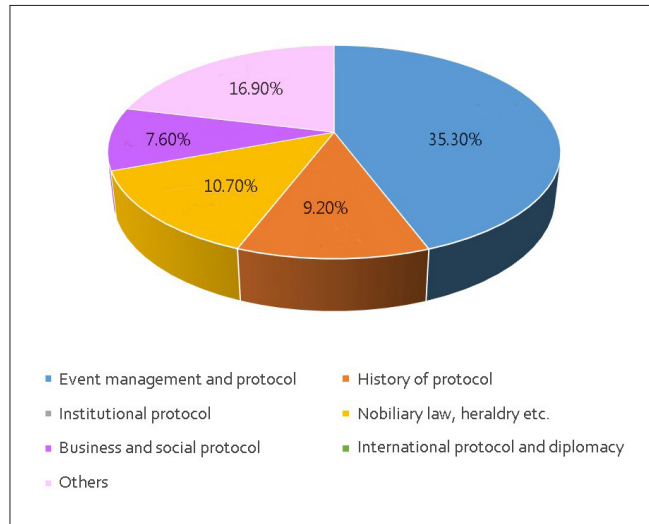
The degrees have 240 credits over 4 years, except for the University of the Mid-Atlantic, whose degree has 180 ECTS over 3 years. The Rey Juan Carlos University offers the possibility to study the International Relations degree simultaneously, as does the University Nebrija, which also adds the Advertising and Public Relations and Journalism degree.

We have found the highest percentage of protocol content in the University Miguel Hernández of Elche's curriculum (30%). The University of the Balearic Islands can have the same percentage of protocol content if the protocol elective options are the only electives chosen. Rey Juan Carlos University has the least amount of protocol content in its curriculum (17.5%).

The subjects have been categorised based on their specialisation as progress has been made in methodology, differentiating between the History of ceremonial/Protocol, institutional Protocol, business and social Protocol, international Protocol and diplomacy, premier and nobiliary law, event management and Protocol and others. This classification considers the 65 subjects containing Protocol offered by the 6 institutions:

- The categorisation with the highest number of subjects in the area of events management and Protocol. 35.3% of the subjects analysed correspond to this field.
- History of ceremonial/Protocol is included in all the curricula, generally worth 6 ECTS (9.2%). Only two universities lower this: Miguel Hernández University offers 4.5% ECTS and the University of Mid-Atlantic 3 ECTS.
- 12.3% of the subjects offered are related to institutional Protocol, a more generalised meaning even though “official protocol” or “State ceremonial” is also included.
- 10.7% of the subjects deal with premier law, nobiliary law, heraldry, and/or vexillology.
- 7.6% of the subjects are related to business and social Protocol. Others have been excluded which will incorporate Protocol but emphasise events such as “Social events” or “Business and marketing events,” this is why they have a greater connection with this field.
- Likewise, 7.6% of the subjects are from the area of international Protocol or diplomacy.
- Finally, “others” have been included as a final categorisation, which includes 11 subjects and represents 16.9% of the subjects analysed. It compiles the protocol subjects specialised in some fields such as academic, religious, military, or sports as well as legislation or languages. The latter field is the most innovative since two universities only offer it: the University of Mid-Atlantic, which offers “English for protocol and Events Management professionals” and the University of the Balearic Islands, which offers “Catalan for protocol and events”.

Illustration 1. Pie Chart: most offered content in official protocol degrees



Source: created by the authors

The specific protocol competencies vary considerably among universities.

Table 3. specific competencies in each official degree in Protocol

University	Degree	Total specific competencies
University of the Balearic Islands	Degree in Protocol and Events Management	13
University Antonio Nebrija	Degree in Corporate Communication, Protocol, and Events Management.	8
University Rey Juan Carlos	Degree in Protocol, Events Management and Corporate Communication	7
University Camilo José Cela	Degree in Protocol and Events Management	5
University Miguel Hernández of Elche	Degree in Events Management, Protocol, and Institutional Relations.	4
Mid-Atlantic University	Degree in Protocol and Events Management.	4

Source: created by the authors

A first analysis shows that the degrees with the least number of specific competencies are the University Miguel Hernández of Elche's, which prioritises event management in its name from the outset, and the Mid-Atlantic University, whose curriculum has a lower number of teaching credits.

A total of 41 specific competencies are included. According to the categorisation and objective, a higher number of skills are included in the practical application of protocol/ceremonial and symbology (19), followed by theoretical knowledge (15) and connecting Protocol to the professional/business and social sphere (7).

The University, with the most significant focus on linking protocol and the professional/business and/or social sphere, is the University Nebrija. In contrast, the University with the most significant practical application of Protocol is the University of the Balearic Islands. This University also has the highest number of competencies in the theoretical area of Protocol.

There are no research-related competencies. Therefore, it is understood that the final dissertation is directly related to practically applying the knowledge. This could also be associated with the level of studies analysed.

Regarding professional opportunities, it should be noted that the most mentions are in the area of communication, followed by events and then Protocol. The professions most mentioned in communication are Head of communication and Public relations, which appears in 4 of the 6 degrees, and Institutional relations director, and communication offices, which appear in 50% of the degrees. Concerning Protocol, the Head or Director of Protocol is mentioned in 5 of the 6 degrees, followed by an external consultant or protocol and events management advisor and a protocol technician and coordinator. The most frequently cited professions in the area of events are Design and Event Manager, Director, coordinator, or technician in event production and Manager in sports and cultural events.

3.2. Results: analysis of master's studies

The analysis of this work shows that in Spain, there are currently seven university masters, five of which are being taught, one degree is set to be discontinued, and another, which has been, discontinued (both from the San Antonio Catholic University). It has not been included in the analysis presented below, given that the San Antonio Catholic University no longer offers this degree on its website:

Table 4. Summary of the official Master's degrees in Protocol

MASTER	UNIVERSITY
University Master in Corporate Communication, Protocol, and Events.	Open University of Catalonia (UOC)
University Master in Protocol, Management, Production, Organisation, and Events Design.	University Camilo José Cela
University Master in Events management, Protocol, and Institutional Relations.	University Miguel Hernández de Elche
University Master in Protocol, Communication, and Integral Event Management.	University Rey Juan Carlos
University Master in Protocol.	National University of Distance Education (UNED)

Source: created by the authors

All of the Master's feature Protocol in their name even though, like the degrees, corporate communication, events, or institutional relations are also included. Only the UNED degree is exclusively limited to the area of Protocol.

The first verified Master is from the University Camilo José Cela (2011), followed by the University Rey Juan Carlos (2012), the University Miguel Hernández of Elche (2013), the UNED (2014) and the Open University of Catalonia (2016). Unlike undergraduate studies, there are more courses available at public universities, and only one of them is private. Two of the degrees are in communication faculties, one in the law faculty and two in higher education centres and institutes.

The University Camilo José Cela is the only one to offer all three modalities (face-to-face, blended, and distance learning), the University Miguel Hernández of Elche, offers face-to-face, and distance learning studies and Rey Juan Carlos University only offers face-to-face studies. Two of the degrees are only taught through distance learning (The Open University of Catalonia and the UNED). Although there is greater flexibility in the teaching methods in the Master's degree, once again, there is the highest offer in Madrid.

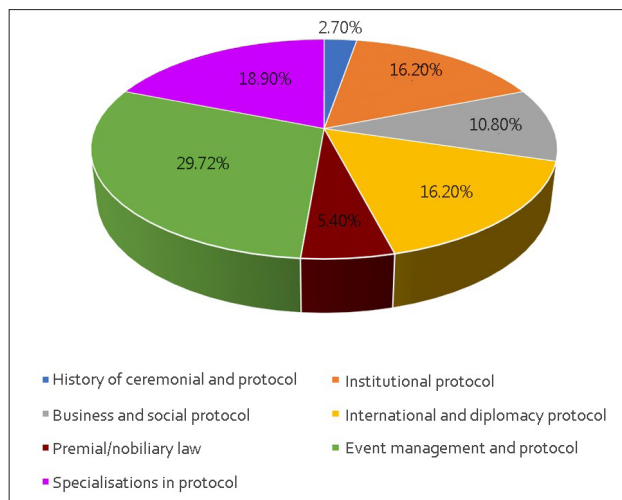
Most of the master courses offer study plans of 60 credits, except for the UNED, which increases this to 90 ECTS, and therefore has the highest percentage of studies directly related to Protocol: 83.3%. It is followed by the Master's degree from the University Camilo José Cela (45%) and the Rey Juan Carlos University (45%), the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) (36.6%), and the University Miguel Hernández of Elche (30%).

Despite being highly specialised programs, the subjects in most of the degrees are similar to those of the degrees analysed. However, they tend to hybridise and concentrate content, which makes it challenging to categorise them. Thus we find subjects like "Institutional and business protocol" worth 6 ECT. However, some curricula, such as the UNED's stand out precisely because they are highly specialised, granting a similar number of credits in differentiated subjects: "Protocol and Institutional Communication" (5 ECTS) and "Protocol and business: Corporate Ceremonial".

Concerning the categorisation of subjects, this has been more complex for undergraduate degrees, since, as mentioned above, some contents merge. There are 36 subjects in total, but the percentages have been calculated out of 37 since the subject "institutional and business protocol" from the Rey Juan Carlos University has been included in two categorisations:

- In the area of History of ceremonial and Protocol, only one of the Master's programs offers this content (2.7%). This suggests that the master's programmes aim to provide a more professional focus and steer away from the contents on History and the bases of ceremonial and Protocol.
- Similarly, institutional/official Protocol has less significance in the master programs, and only appears in three of the masters, two of them as specific content and one hybridised with business protocol (16.2%).
- Four of the five universities with a master's degree in Protocol present subjects on the business protocol in their curricula, representing 10.8% of the contents.
- International Protocol and diplomacy account for 16.2% of the contents of the Master's courses, with the Mediterranean Institute of Protocol Studies being the institution that gives it the most importance.
- Premial/nobiliary law/heraldic/vexillology is the contents with the least importance in these degrees, and only two of the Master's programs have subjects in this area (5.4%).
- The most represented content is related to events management and Protocol, which represent 29.7% of the contents in the curricula analysed.
- The only Master's degree that presents highly specialised content in Protocol is from the National Distance Education University (UNED), which includes military, academic, religious, and sports protocol, among others (18.9%).

Illustration 2: Pie chart: content offered in the official masters in Protocol



Source: created by the authors

The specific skills of Protocol vary considerably among universities.

Table 5. Specific competencies in Protocol in the Master's curriculum

University		Total of specific skills
University Miguel Hernández of Elche	University Master in Events Organisation, Protocol and Institutional Relations	9
University Rey Juan Carlos	University Master in Protocol, Integral Communication, and events	8
University Camilo José Cela	University Master Planning, Protocol + Institutional Relations ⁰ , and Event Production and Direction	6
National Distance Education University (UNED)	University Master in Protocol	6
The Open University of Catalonia.	University Master in Corporate Communication, Protocol and Events	1

Source: created by the authors

According to this categorisation, a higher number of competencies are gathered in the practical application of protocol/ ceremonial and symbology (15), followed by linking Protocol and the professional/business and social sphere (7), theoretical knowledge (6) and research (2).

The degree with the most significant focus on linking Protocol and the professional/business and/or social sphere as well as with the most significant practical application of Protocol is the University Miguel Hernández of Elche. Regarding theoretical knowledge, the UNED programme has the highest number of skills.

Unlike degree programmes, the Master's programme does include research-related skills, although in only two of the five degrees. This is essential since students must always present their final Master's dissertation, which requires applied research.

In the masters, the professional opportunities are more dispersed than in the degree. However, we find that there are more references to the field of communication, followed by events and then Protocol. The most mentioned profession in communication is "Public Relations Director". In the case of Protocol, we find "Technician or coordinator of protocol and institutional relations" and "Head or protocol technician", while in events the most featured is "Professional congress organiser (PCO)" or otherwise "Congress, fair and/or meetings organiser".

4. Summary of own degrees

The object of study of this work has centred on the analysis of official qualifications. However, a sample of its own degrees has also been gathered to make a quantitative comparison. In this case, a Google search was used to limit the searches to the keywords "Expert in Protocol", "Master's Degree in Protocol", "Own degree in Protocol", limiting searches to the first three pages in Google and as these degrees do not have a consultation database similar to the Registry of University, Centres and Qualifications. The selection has been limited to those degrees in universities, affiliated centres, and business schools.

In total, 11 expert degrees and 21 master degrees in Protocol have been included, making up a total of 32 non-official study programmes. This figure is almost three times the total number of official studies. 22 of these studies, that is to say, 70% are taught in private universities. Face-to-face studies are mainly taught in Madrid, followed by Barcelona, Granada, Oviedo, and Murcia.

As with the official degrees, the link to event organisation, communication, and institutional relations appears in almost all the names of the degrees, although we find other different specialisations such as official and diplomatic Protocol, the specialisation in State and International ceremonial, in Business and Tourism, in MICE (Meetings, incentives, conferencing exhibitions) events or online events.

The International School of Protocol (EIP in Spanish) and ISEMCO (International School of Event Management and Communication) are the organisations with the highest number of their own degrees; these are studies that are certified through different universities despite being the same company who organises them in some cases.

5. Conclusions

The present work has analysed the characteristics of the educational offer in official qualifications and masters in the area of Protocol in Spain. The first conclusion is that the offer is still limited compared to other fields of knowledge, which may be related to the “novelty” of the official status of these studies since the first degree was verified in 2010, which means it has only had 9 years of institutional longevity. Although the expansion of new degrees is mainly concentrated between 2012 and 2017.

A total of only 11 official specialised degrees are included, 6 undergraduate degrees and 5 graduate degrees, which is limited in comparison to the offer of own degrees and official qualifications. Protocol is linked to events management and communication in all of them, a minor specialisation in Protocol is offered in most cases.

The degrees on offer are concentrated in private universities while in the Master's degrees it is the contrary as there is a higher offer in public universities. This is common in the university sphere since private universities tend to have greater freedom both when developing new degrees and hiring new teaching staff. The public University aims to offer this specialisation in postgraduate studies, which are studies that require fewer employees.

We could say that the University Camilo José Cela is the driving force for official degrees in Protocol in Spain, which verified and has implemented its undergraduate and graduate degrees since 2010.

These studies are mainly in the communication sciences faculties (4), institutes and affiliated centres (4), and social sciences faculties (3).

In the case of postgraduate studies, it was found that three of the universities seem to continue their degrees through the programmes with the same or similar name. However, these specialisations are very limited and contain events and protocol content, as mentioned above.

Both the undergraduate and the masters programmes centre their content on events, presenting more competencies in the practical application of Protocol and offer more career opportunities in communication. There are practically no

differences between both types of study, although it is assumed that masters should be more specialised. Although the latter is more flexible in the way they are taught, whether they are face-to-face, blended, or distance learning, Madrid is the city with the highest educational offer.

Regarding language, all the studies are geared towards studying exclusively in Spanish. Only one University offers the possibility to study a degree in English. Other universities are trying to solve this by incorporating specific subjects in English in the area. One University also offers Catalan courses for events.

New technologies and the Internet are practically absent from the curricula, or they are not directly linked to Protocol. There is no subject which is called “Netiquette” or events in the digital environment.

The analysis of competencies shows that the studies tend to favour the practical application of Protocol over the theoretical focus, its link to the professional field, or research. Regarding the latter, it should be noted that none of the degrees currently on offer have related skills. Although studies in Protocol are very recent, it is necessary to generate new research and scientific literature that continues to establish both the knowledge and development of the profession.

The volume of own, expert, and postgraduate studies offered in the area is noteworthy. This may be related to how easily the degrees are implemented since they do not require verification, monitoring, or accreditation by ANECA. Likewise, teaching staff does not need to have a Ph.D., nor is a minimum number of accredited doctors required. This large volume of ambiguous offerings of own degrees that should take advantage of this added value in their positioning.

Similarly, public universities should reflect on how these degrees are implemented with a view to the future; some specialisation would be valuable.

After this in-depth analysis, Protocol seems to be positioned in official studies as a tool at the service of events and communication organisation. These studies need to be valued more by including more specialised content in the Master’s degree curricula, broadening the competencies and research related subjects in all of the studies, and attempting to encourage research in the field, demonstrating that official studies have grown alongside the demand for specialised professionals.

6. Bibliographic references

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