



GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION

OF THE BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S THESIS

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This document is aimed at all students preparing a thesis: those in bachelor's degree programs choosing research and in-depth study as their final exam, and those in master's degree programs.

Before reading these guidelines for choosing the topic and the supervisor, writing and submitting the thesis, bachelor's degree students are advised to carefully read the bachelor's degree Final Exam Regulations (*Regolamento laurea triennale*), and



master's degree students should read the master's degree Final Exam Regulations (Regolamento laurea magistrale), both of which can be downloaded from the page:

<https://dipsa.unibg.it/it/studiare/calendari/prove-finali-tesi-laurea>

1. What is a thesis

While exam preparation mainly involves studying the material explained in class by a professor, when writing a thesis, the student takes on the central role: attention and effort converge on a topic selected either independently or with the help of the supervisor—an interesting subject that the student wants to explore by posing research questions to which they will attempt to provide original answers.

The preparation of a thesis generally involves the following steps:

1. choosing a topic,
2. searching for/reading available literature and taking notes to gather information and form an idea; regarding the state of the art, pose yourself questions,
3. expressing this idea clearly and fluently,
4. developing a structure for the idea, deciding how to answer the questions (preparing an outline/index of the topics to address and their logical and/or temporal sequence),
5. searching for/collecting data, if necessary, to answer the research question(s),
6. writing the thesis in a way that meets academic requirements.



2. Choosing the topic and the supervisor

Choosing the topic and the corresponding supervisor¹ is certainly the most delicate phase of the process; when selecting the topic, the student must consider several important factors:

- Personal objectives: The thesis can be a moment to deepen topics that the student has become passionate about during their studies or to develop a research method.
- Area of interests and inclinations: The thesis can reflect the student's inclination toward a descriptive or quantitative approach, historical or contemporary themes.
- Available resources: Knowledge acquired during study, its direction (management, organizational, economic, accounting, quantitative, legal, etc.), proficiency in foreign languages, ability to analyse data quantitatively and/or qualitatively.
- Available data sources: Literature, quantitative and/or qualitative statistical data, and access to business situations. It is essential to verify beforehand the availability of data for potential empirical testing, to avoid constructing a theoretical path for which empirical verification would be impossible.

The choice of topic and thesis title is not a brief or simple step, as it already requires intensive research and reflection, in an iterative and interactive process between the student and supervisor, until a theme is defined that meets the student's objectives, is consistent with their abilities and inclinations, and can be developed with the available knowledge and resources.

¹ Many professors publish a list of topics that can be the subject of a thesis on their personal page.



The choice of a well-defined topic from the outset is an important step for the subsequent collection of material and the development of the thesis, while still allowing the possibility to "fine-tune" the focus as the work progresses.

3. Submission of the application for admission to the final exam

For each graduation session, the Student Office defines the deadlines for the application to the final exam, which the student must strictly adhere to.

Announcements are posted on the page:

<https://dipsa.unibg.it/it/studiare/calendari/prove-finali-tesi-laurea>

The application for admission to the final exam, which can only be submitted online, includes 4 phases:

- Phase 1: The student enters the thesis title through their personal online portal;
- Phase 2: The supervisor approves;
- Phase 3: The student fills out the definitive application for admission to the final exam, after supervisor approval;
- Phase 4: The student uploads the thesis in PDF format to their online portal.

A guide to completing the application is available at the link above.

Note: Before proceeding with Phase 3, the student must complete the online *AlmaLaurea* questionnaire reserved for graduating students.

The student must also comply with additional administrative requirements, including:

- The deadline for taking exams;
- The deadline for submitting the internship booklet to the Internship Office.



4. Thesis Writing

4.1 Characteristics

The characteristics of a thesis primarily depend on the topic being addressed; the person most qualified to give advice on this matter is certainly the supervisor.

A possible example of the structure of a thesis could be the following:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction: origin and objectives of the thesis,
- Chapter 2 – Literature review,
-
- Conclusion: summary of the main results obtained and any theoretical and practical implications,
- References.

Every thesis must provide original work. The element of originality depends both on the topic of the thesis and on the discipline that forms the basis for analysis (economics, business sciences, topics approached with a legal, quantitative, etc. perspective). The evaluation of the innovative content is therefore a function of both the discipline and the approach taken in the thesis: institutional, historical, literature systematization, with a strong empirical verification component, or essentially theoretical. Depending on the case, the innovative nature of the thesis could consist of various types of analysis, such as, by way of example: the modelling of an observed phenomenon, empirical testing of a hypothesis, a particularly original systematization of the existing literature, or the description-interpretation of one or more case studies.

The value of a thesis is primarily determined by its content, and especially by its original contribution, not by its length. To provide a rough guideline, a thesis could contain between 10,000 and 20,000 words.



4.2 Bibliographic References and Citations

The bibliography is the list of all publications (books, articles, etc.) read before and during the writing of the thesis, which must be cited in the thesis itself. The list of references is an essential element in a thesis work.

The publications listed in the bibliography must ONLY be those consulted for the preparation of the thesis and must be referenced in the text at the point where they are mentioned. Furthermore, all publications cited in the text must be included in the bibliography.

Bibliographic References

The list of bibliographic references should be arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name, regardless of whether the work is a book, a chapter of a book, an article, or something else. If the work has multiple authors, the reference should be made to the surname of the first author.

Some examples (pay attention to the parts indicated in cursive):

- Book

Author(s) (Year). *Title in italics*, Publisher, Place of Publication.

Kline, P. (1996). *Manual of Psychometrics*, Astrolabio, Rome.

Hambleton, R.K., Swaminathan, H., Rogers, H.J. (1991). *Fundamentals of Item Response Theory*, SAGE, London.

- Chapter in a book

Author(s) of the chapter (Year). Title of the chapter, in Author(s) of the book (Ed.), *Title of the book in italics*, Publisher, Place of Publication, pages of the chapter.



Andersen, E.B. (1995). Polytomous Rasch Models and their Estimation, in G.H. Fischer, I.W. Molenaar (edited by), *Rasch Models – Foundations, Recent Developments and Applications*, Springer-Verlag, New York, pp. 271-291.

• Article in a journal

Author(s) (Year). Title of the article, *Title of the journal in italics*, volume, pages of the article.

Van Eck, N. J., Waltman, L. (2009). How to normalize co-occurrence data? An analysis of some well-known similarity measures, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 60(8), 1635-1651.

Bennett, R. (1998). Using the world wide web for international marketing: Internet use and perceptions of export barriers among German and British businesses, *Journal of Marketing Communication*, (4), 27-43.

• Discussion paper / Working paper

Author(s) (Year). Title of the contribution, *Discussion paper / Working paper in italics*, number.

Athey S., Stern S. (1998). An Empirical Framework for testing Theories about Complementarity in Organizational Design, *NBER Working Paper Series*, n. 6600.

Bauer T. K. (2003). Flexible Workplace Practices and Labour Productivity, *IZA Discussion Paper*, n. 700.

• Consultation of websites and documents/data downloaded from them



Always include the name of the institution to which the website refers, the date, and, if appropriate, the time of consultation.

FAO, Food Security Statistics, Gambia, in FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

http://www.fao.org/es/ess/faostat/foodsecurity/Countries/EN/Gambia_e.pdf

consulted on 20/11/2006, at 17:09.

Citations

Demonstrating knowledge of the literature on the subject by citing it accurately adds value to the work.

A) Some examples of how to reference in the text (Author(s), year)

Example 1:

Each exchange is governed by international trade agreements, negotiated between the parties, which help guide the progress of transactions, and commercial conditions, and provide benefits for those who sign them (Caruso, Varese, 2011). Specifically, this refers to an international sales contract in which the ownership of a good or service is transferred between two parties located in different countries in exchange for payment (Bellante, 2011).

Example 2:

The probability that a person, with a given level of ability, responds correctly to an item with a given level of difficulty, depends on the differences between the individual's abilities and the difficulty of the items (Bond, Fox, 2007).



Example 3:

Many studies on Italian industrial districts have emphasized the importance of the geographical proximity between companies (Bellandi, 1987; Brusco, 1991; Garofoli, 1989).

Example 4:

VOS is a software that, about ten years ago, N. J. van Eck and L. Waltman designed and have constantly updated, and it is available for free download from the website www.vosviewer.com (van Eck, Waltman, 2007; 2010; 2014).

- B) An example of citations in the text. If the exact words of the author are cited, they should be placed in quotation marks "in cursive". (Author(s), year, page)

"To measure means to establish precise rules that allow associating to each element belonging to a set of objects, observations, people, characterized by the presence of a certain attribute, a number that reflects the degree and presence of the attribute or its absence" (Cristante, Mannarini, 2004, p. 4).

It is important to remember that when compiling a thesis:

- citing the exact words of another author,
- summarizing very closely a passage from another author,
- using an idea or material (formulas, graphs, tables, etc.) directly from the work of another author,

requires citing the source of the concept, passage, idea, or material, including the author's name, the publication year, and possibly the pages.

Otherwise, there is a risk of plagiarism.



PLAGIARISM

Below is the text that the graduate student declares to have read during the submission of the graduation application:

"Plagiarism consists of the dishonest and unfair appropriation of someone else's work, or part of it and/or its elaboration, usurping its authorship (or claiming to be the author).

It is improper behaviour used by students who mistakenly think they can speed up/enrich their thesis work.

To avoid plagiarism, the student MUST NOT:

- *Copy the entire work (or part of the work) of others, passing it off as their own. Even copying entire documents (or parts of documents) from the internet without citing the source constitutes plagiarism!*
- *Paraphrase, summarize, or slightly alter the thoughts of other authors without citing the source.*
- *Faithfully translate articles or book chapters from other languages.*

A correct and precise citation of the sources used throughout the writing of the thesis is the only way to prevent a potential accusation of plagiarism."

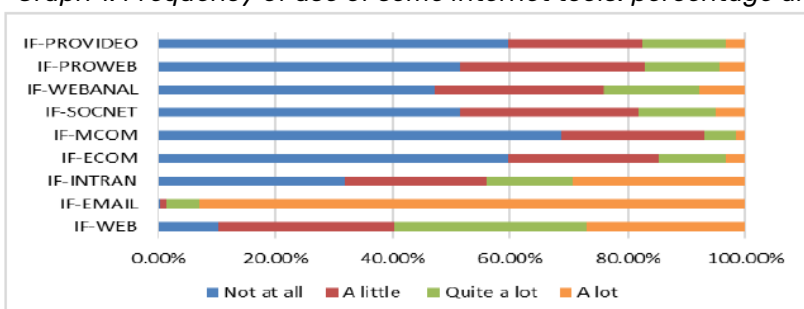
4.3 Figures, Charts, and Tables

Figures and Charts must be numbered in sequential² order, they must have a caption that briefly describes their content (above the figure), and they must include the source (below the figure). In the text, they must be referenced by their number and described appropriately.

² If the thesis contains a high number of Figures and Charts, it is possible to use progressive numbering for each chapter. For example, Figure 1.1 should be understood as Chapter 1, Figure 1

Example 1: The chart was created by the student.

Graph 1: Frequency of use of some internet tools: percentage distribution.

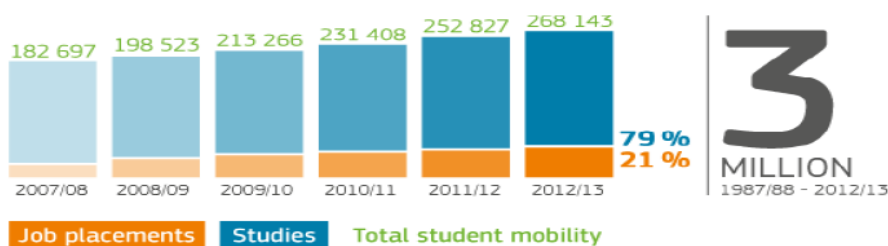


Source: our analysis based on data from the survey "Le barriere all'export e Internet"

Example 2: The graph is taken from a report by the European Commission

Graph 2: University students who went abroad for an abroad experience from 2007/08 to 2012/13

Erasmus: Changing lives, opening minds
2012-2013



Source: European Commission, 2015

The tables must be numbered in progressive order³, must have a caption that briefly describes their content, and must include the source. In the text, they must be referenced by their indicated number and described in the most appropriate way.

³ If the thesis contains a large number of tables, progressive numbering can be applied for each chapter. For example, "Table 1.1" would refer to "Chapter 1, Table 1"

Example 3: The table was created by the student

Table 1: Revenue categories and employee size categories of the 173 companies considered (absolute values and percentages)

Turnover (million of euros)	Number of companies	%	Number of employees	Number of companies	%
< 1	99	57.2	< 15	123	71.1
1 - 5	33	19.1	16 - 50	32	18.5
5 - 10	12	6.9	50 - 249	18	10.4
10 - 50	29	16.8			
	173	100		173	100

Source: our analysis based on data from the survey "Le barriere all'export e Internet"

Example 4: The table is taken from a report by the European Commission

Table 2: Number of students who went abroad for an Erasmus experience from 1987 to 2011.

Sending Country	Outgoing students
Germany	359568
France	359099
Spain	342231
Italy	264701
UK	188810

Source: European Commission, 2013

4.4 Typographic Guidelines

Format: A4

Recommended font: Times, Times New Roman, or Courier. Mostly use the "regular" font, and only use cursive, bold, or underlining where absolutely necessary.

Font size: 12

Preferably, use justified text.

Margins: 3 cm at the top, bottom, and on the sides.

Line spacing: 1.5



Page numbering: Automatically insert page numbers. Preferably place them at the bottom right.

Footnotes: Agree with the supervisor.

Foreign words must always be in cursive.

Figures/Graphs/Tables: Can be inserted freely where necessary, making sure they stay within the text margins and avoiding excessive white space on pages.

5. Upload and Possible Printing of the Thesis

Once the thesis is finished, the student must download the cover page (title page) from the link <https://www.unibg.it/studia-noi/ti-aiutiamo/laurearsi/frontespizi> and complete it in all its parts.

Subsequently, by the deadline indicated by the Student Secretariat for each graduation session, the student must upload the thesis in PDF format to their online portal.

At the end of the thesis work, the student must email the final and complete PDF version of the thesis to the supervisor and, if applicable, the co-supervisor. If the supervisor requests it, the student must also deliver a printed copy of the thesis to the supervisor and, if applicable, the co-supervisor.

Master's degree students are NOT required to print a copy of the thesis for the Commission. On the day of the defense, the student will bring their own copy for the Commission, which will return it to the student at the end of the session.

5.1 Evaluation, awarding of the degree title, and assignment of the grade for the bachelor's thesis

As stated in the bachelor's Thesis Final Exam Regulations (Art. 1.2), "the thesis is not discussed in a public session."



The degree is awarded on the date the Evaluation Commission meets, and this date is published at the link:

<https://dipsa.unibg.it/it/studiare/calendari/prove-finali-tesi-laurea>

On this date, the student DOES NOT need to attend.

It is important to note that, as stated in the bachelor's Thesis Final Exam Regulations (Art. 5.3), the thesis can receive a score between 0 and 7 points, except in cases where the student has a base score of 102/110, in which case the evaluation can go up to 8 points.

The proclamation follows and takes place in a public session. The calendar is published a few days before the proclamation at the link:

<https://dipsa.unibg.it/it/studiare/calendari/prove-finali-tesi-laurea>

5.2 Discussion, awarding of the degree title, and assignment of the grade for the master's thesis

As stated in the master's Thesis Final Exam Regulations (Art. 1.1), "the thesis is discussed in a public session before a Commission, which will provide the final evaluation, award the degree, and assign the final grade."

In the dates specified in the Academic Calendar for each graduation session, the Student Secretariat defines the schedule for the thesis discussions, dividing students into small, homogeneous groups based on the topic of the thesis and the availability of the supervisors.

The calendar is published about two weeks before the discussion at the link:

<https://dipsa.unibg.it/it/studiare/calendari/prove-finali-tesi-laurea>

The thesis discussion is preceded by the supervisor's presentation (and possibly the co-supervisor's observations), briefly introducing the work carried out by the student.



During the discussion, the student may use slides, which are especially useful for presenting graphs, tables, and empirical results. It is crucial to follow the supervisor's advice in this regard.

The duration of the discussion is about 10-15 minutes, including the time for the Commission to ask questions and for the student to respond. Given the limited time, it is important that the student is clear on the key points of the work.

After the discussion of one or a small group of students, the Commission will meet to deliberate on the grade.

Once the deliberation is concluded, the degree is awarded, and the score is announced.

The master's thesis can receive a grade between 0 and 9 points, except in cases where the student has a base score of 100/110, in which case the evaluation can go up to 10 points. A grade higher than 7 requires a letter from the supervisor (Art. 5.2 of the [Regolamento prove finali di laurea magistrale](#)).