

BACHELOR IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

TIPS FOR WRITING THE FINAL PAPER

WHAT IT IS

Your work for the final examination is a written paper on a topic of your choice, that is interesting for you and that covers one of the subjects of CLaBE. It is not a “thesis” such as those that are written at a graduate level and require months of work. Rather, in this paper, you should try to give evidence of having acquired the theoretical and practical tools taught during the Bachelor’s programme.

You will be asked to present this paper at your graduation and the graduation committee can award from 0 to 3 points for the presentation of your paper.

HOW TO SELECT THE TITLE OF YOUR PAPER:

- 1) **Contact** the professor of the subject that fits your interests and propose him/her a title for your paper
- 2) The professor must **agree** with the title
- 3) Once agreed, **communicate** to Professor Orsingher the choice of the title by email, reporting the informal supervisor in CC.
- 4) Include in the mail the references of your paper which **must contain** at least two scientific/academic sources. **IF YOU DO NOT COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS FROM 1 TO 3, YOUR TITLE WILL NOT BE APPROVED BY THE COORDINATOR. THE 4TH REQUIREMENT COMPLIANCE WILL AFFECT THE FINAL SCORE.**

TIP # 1: SELECT A SPECIFIC SUBJECT

The dissertation should have a main point, idea, or central message. It is essential to choose a defined concept related to a specific subject, identified among the ones included in the CLaBE study plan.

The selected topic needs to be tackled with a critical approach. To this end, the thesis should not be the mere presentation of a case study, but rather the result of the student’s ability to find and reflect upon the common threads between empirical and theoretical findings.

EXAMPLE:

The launch of the Volkswagen Beetle: this is too general a topic for the development of a thesis and, in itself, too specific, since it concerns just one company in particular.

TIP #2: CONNECT THE TOPIC TO A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OR A THEORY

Students should shape their critical perspective on the chosen topic, by reconnecting any case study, they might decide to discuss, to its relevant theoretical framework.

EXAMPLE:

The launch of a new product in the market

It is essential to ponder over the conceptual framework supporting the case study: which are

the most important/characterizing factors? (in the given example: distribution and strategy)

A potential title that fits these requirements could be:

“THE CASE OF RETRO DESIGN: REENGINEERING AN ICON OF THE CAR INDUSTRY”

TIP# 3: WORK ON MORE CASES (if you use case studies)

To strengthen your paper, you should consider comparing more similar and/or contrasting cases and theories, in order to highlight the main issues of the identified topic.

EXAMPLE: Why was the launch of the Beetle not that successful? It would be fruitful for the student to compare this case to another one involving Volkswagen, e.g. the Mini launch. What are the main differences between the two cases? What made the Mini launch effective that lacked in the Beetle case?

THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL RELEVANCE

Students should demonstrate their ability to connect the practical and managerial relevance of their paper, while giving their own imprinting in the exposition of the topic.

Any comparison of cases must be appropriately contextualized, by moving from an empirical analysis of the subject, to a grounding of the findings on a theoretical basis.

The conceptual framework must be solid, and it should cover the main questions of the topic. Students should make sure they stay consistent with the identity of the topic.

Depending on the subject chosen, each dissertation will develop with a specific flow, but the underlying general scheme to follow is:

ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT

CONCLUSION

TEXT STRUCTURE

The paper should be divided into chapters, subchapters and/or paragraphs. In Chapter 1 you should introduce the topic and outline the questions that the work wants to address. The following chapter, depending on the chosen topic, could be an in-depth analysis of the theoretical literature, an institutional analysis (should the topic concern economic policies), or an evaluation of the empirical literature.

Whichever the topic chosen, it is important to remember that:

- 1) You should always make clear what the sources are, not just by citing them in the bibliography, but rather through in-text cross-references, discussion in the text, or footnotes.
- 2) Arguments must be effectively supported. The writing style should not be journalistic, but academic, so that the reader can follow the discussion in a sequential and logical way.
- 3) You should be able, in your report, to make a clear summary of your readings. The aim of the paper is to acquire a solid base of the topic analyzed and to grasp the complexities around it. If such goal is met, you can be satisfied with your work, even though you are de facto making no contribution to the topic.

INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction and conclusions (1 or 2 pages each) should give a clear overview of the work to a reader,

even without reading the main text. The introduction establishes the context, states the purpose of the work, briefly explains the methodological approach and/or the structure of the work and highlights the potential outcomes. A conclusion is a synthesis of key points and, if applicable, where you recommend new areas for future research. The introduction should give an outline of the single chapters. On the other hand, conclusions should link what is written in the single chapters to the results found. It is important that both introduction and conclusion do not include any additional information with respect to the other chapters. Ideally, the conclusion of the thesis should open the discussion to other ideas for research or an educated personal point of view on the topic.

TEXT FORMATTING

Roughly, we advise to use the following guidelines when writing your report:

- Arrange pages of 32-35 lines, with lines of 65-70 characters each;
- Fonts: Times, Courier or Helvetica
- Margins: 2,5 cm; spacing: 1,5
- Justified text, also for notes

USE OF GRAPHS AND TABLES

Tables and graphs can be very useful depending on the topic chosen, as they provide a clear view of empirical evidence. **Tables and graphs should always have a header and the indication of the source.** However, the discussion should be clear to the reader also without the use of the tables or of the graphs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND QUOTATIONS

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the availability of academic publications (journals, papers, books) offered by the libraries of the Departments associated to the School of Economics. Online sources also offer a great deal of useful works (e.g. <http://www.ssrn.com/en/>).

It is important that the collected bibliography is proportionate to the length of the paper: quality over quantity.

Only bibliographies containing at least **TWO** academic/scientific papers, will be accepted.

Students must be careful in quoting sources correctly with APA referencing option. Plagiarism will render the final paper unacceptable.

HOW TO USE APA REFERENCING STYLE

APA Style is a tool of Microsoft Word and it will be useful to implement your bibliography. Here are the steps to properly quote with APA:

- 1) Go on "**References**" on the tools bar
- 2) Select "**APA**" on "**Style**" option
- 3) Click on **Insert Citation – Add New Source**
- 4) Depending on the source you are exploiting, select "**Type of source**" among the options.
- 5) Fill all the fields you find with the right data
- 6) Notice that if you are quoting a document whose author is a corporate author (e.g., European Commission), you may tick the "**Corporate author**" option and fill the blank space.
- 7) Once you finish adding all the sources (which we suggest you do it every time you use a new one), click on "**Bibliography**" and select the style you prefer, and it will automatically order all the sources.
- 8) If you decide to add other sources after your bibliography is over, you may still do it. Then, click on

the title “**Bibliography**” and click on “**Update Citations and Bibliography**”: it will add it in the right place.

SLIDES

Students can opt for a slideshow presentation, aimed at supporting the defense of their thesis. The slides should not be too complex and wordy, but rather to-the-point and functional: the key points of the topic should be featured to guide the presentation and allow the audience to follow the speech with ease. Any picture included must be explanatory of the presented topic. **Graphs and tables should also present the cited sources.**

It should be noted that passively reading the prepared slides does not lead to a successful presentation, nor spending too much time giving basic notions on general and well-known issues.