

## **Guidelines on writing the thesis for Financial and Business Management**

### **Premise**

This document is intended to guide undergraduate students in the preparation of their final thesis. A thorough reading of the entire document is recommended.

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### **1. Procedural Aspects**

Students must comply with the instructions published on the dedicated webpage:

<https://corsi.unibo.it/1cycle/FinancialBusinessManagement/final-examination>

In particular, they must:

- Agree on the title and the relevant course with the supervising professor.
- Upload the final paper within the specified deadlines (see the relevant website page).

Once the approval process of the final report is completed via the online application, the committee will meet to determine the final grade, which will be communicated to the student during the graduation ceremony. The student must attend the graduation ceremony in presence.

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### **2. The Final Examination**

The final examination consists of writing a paper on a specific topic agreed upon with the supervising professor.

This final assignment marks the conclusion of the three-year degree and must be approached with particular care. It is the moment when the student must demonstrate the ability to handle and argue a subject relevant to their academic path, with scientific rigor and professional competence. The evaluation will be carried out by a committee of university professors. If the supervising professor is not part of the committee, they will provide their assessment separately.

After the grade has been assigned, the student will be invited to the graduation ceremony, where relatives and friends may attend (subject to capacity limits that may vary).

Both the choice of the topic and the writing of the paper must be carried out in agreement with the supervising professor. The professor will support the student in defining the title, selecting the topic, providing bibliographic references, and reviewing the final version of the paper before submission.

The student must demonstrate the ability to carry out independent analysis and show familiarity with the technical tools acquired during the degree program. They should be able to investigate a given economic, business, legal, historical, mathematical, or statistical phenomenon in a complete and convincing manner.

Practically, the final exam consists of a written paper, prepared by the student, investigating a topic of theoretical or practical interest.

Although a full-fledged thesis is not required (as in second-cycle degree programs), the final paper must adhere to the same level of analytical rigor. Regardless of the topic, the paper must place the subject in a theoretical framework, drawing on a concise selection of relevant academic literature.

The submitted paper should reflect the student's ability to synthesize. Synthesis does not mean incompleteness; rather, it means conciseness, achieved while preserving clarity of language and logical structure.

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### **3. Choosing the Topic**

To choose a topic, students may consider the following questions as a guide:

- a) Which subjects or topics did I find most interesting during my studies? Do I want to explore them further?
- b) Is there a current issue being discussed in the media or scientific literature that deserves further exploration?
- c) Is there a topic of practical relevance linked to my past, current, or future professional experience that I consider important to study?
- d) Is there a topic that could be useful in preparing for a specific second-cycle degree or professional master's program?

In any case, after identifying a topic, the student should aim to answer a clear research question.

For courses focused on data usage or tools, the professor may suggest applying a specific tool to an analysis context as the topic of the final paper.

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### **4. Literature Review**

Since the topic must always be placed within a theoretical framework, the paper should begin by introducing the relevant theory. Students should consult their professor to confirm the validity of the chosen title and to obtain a suggested bibliography. Additionally, students may conduct their own bibliographic research.

Only academic sources or those of established scientific value should be used, including:

- Articles from academic journals
- Working papers (unpublished articles available online)
- Publications from reputable national or international institutions

- Scientific monographs and university textbooks

All sources used to build the theoretical context must be cited in the paper. Citing others' work is legitimate, but must be done carefully. A later section of this document will cover citation guidelines.

#### Types of sources:

- **Academic articles** – Published in national or international academic journals, these papers advance theoretical or empirical knowledge and are often complex. Unibo subscribes to many journals, accessible via university computers or the AlmaWiFi network using institutional credentials. Use [Google Scholar](#) or [Elsevier Scopus](#) for searches (the latter requires AlmaWiFi).

To access resources from outside the university network, students can use the proxy settings described here:

<https://sba.unibo.it/en/almare/almare-tools-and-services/ezproxy/remote-access>

- **Unpublished papers** – Often shared online by researchers before journal publication. The most well-known site for working papers in social sciences is [SSRN](#). Always check if a newer, peer-reviewed version exists.
- **Institutional reports** – Produced by respected research bodies such as national central banks (e.g., Banca d'Italia), stock exchanges (e.g., Borsa Italiana), the World Bank, IMF, BIS, etc. These often have dedicated working paper sections with freely downloadable content.

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## 5. Structure of the Paper

The introduction must frame the chosen topic within a theoretical context. The body of the paper develops the research question, and should be organized around a clearly defined outline of key points.

Depending on the subject, students may use:

- Newspaper articles (for current financial topics)
- Financial statements and accounting documents (for company case studies)
- Reports from national/international institutions (OECD, ISTAT, Eurostat, etc.)

Unibo provides access to certain newspapers, like *Il Sole 24 Ore*, via AlmaWiFi or proxy.

If the paper analyzes a business case, the company should be clearly introduced (legal structure, size, financial performance, etc.), and the source of data (interviews, databases, etc.) must be specified.

The paper should conclude with a final section titled “**Conclusions.**”

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## 6. Charts and Tables

Charts and tables should include brief, self-explanatory captions. Readers should not need to search the text to understand them.

In graphs, label the axes clearly. In tables, ensure that row and column headers are clear.

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## 7. Quotations

All non-original material (e.g., articles, working papers, news articles) must be properly cited. It must be clear when a student is referencing someone else's ideas or content.

Plagiarism—copying text even with minor changes—is a serious offense, even if the source is listed in the bibliography. Quoted text must always be enclosed in quotation marks and italicized. However, quotations should not be overused.

Note: Anti-plagiarism software is increasingly used to verify originality.

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## 8. Text Formatting

The paper must not exceed **50 pages**, each containing 25–30 lines.

Structure the paper using **numbered paragraphs and subparagraphs** for clarity:

- Paragraph titles: **bold**
- Subparagraph titles: *italic*
- Subparagraphs must be numbered relative to their paragraph (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, etc.)

Use a **legible font** (e.g., Times New Roman, size 12), **double line spacing**, and **justified alignment**. Footnotes must be numbered sequentially and used sparingly. Important information should be included in the main text, not in footnotes.

Foreign terms should be italicized unless commonly used in Italian (e.g., *working paper* should be italicized, but *computer* or *website* should not).

**Citations must appear in the main text**, not in footnotes.

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