



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA
CAMPUS DI RAVENNA

I-CONTACT GUIDELINES

for the

FINAL EXAM and PREPARATION of the
MASTER'S DEGREE DISSERTATION

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PART I: FINAL EXAMINATION

1. The final examination: brief overview

The final examination consists of writing a dissertation on a subject pertinent to your studies, elaborated in an original way, under the guidance of a supervisor and, if necessary, a co-supervisor. The dissertation will be **discussed publicly during a specific final examination session in front of an Academic Commission** which will assess the students' performance using their academic curriculum as a reference. During the dissertation discussion, students may use slides, and the dedicated Commission may ask in-depth questions on methods, results and other developments of the presented work.

Usually, graduation sessions take place in July, November and March.

2. Roles

2.1 Supervisor

A graduation candidate can apply for their dissertation only after having selected a faculty member as their supervisor. Upon acceptance, this faculty member is acting as the *main supervisor*.

In the Italian academic system, the Supervisor is the Professor charged with the supervision of the draft of a student's final dissertation, carrying also the 'academic responsibility' of the thesis. The student is welcomed to discuss the topic with them and to consider all supervisor's suggestions, bibliography and indications.

The main supervisor must be a faculty member of the I-CONTACT Programme whose research or teaching interests correspond as closely as possible to the subject of the dissertation and who is willing to follow the student. The supervisor can be identified within the group of tenured, non-tenured or contract-based professors who form the teaching staff of I-CONTACT, however, they must be regularly active in the academic year of graduation of the student.

Please take into consideration that students are not required to have done the exam of a certain professor (have their course in one's Study Plan) to ask them to become their supervisor; remember, however, that the topic students are willing to propose should be among the interest/competence of the professor.

2.2 Co-Supervisor

The main supervisor could be assisted by one or more **co-supervisors** (who may be based in institutions in Italy or abroad)¹. The co-supervisors can be **faculty members** affiliated either with the course of study, or with other degree programmes at the University of Bologna, and they may also be chosen **among external experts** (belonging to universities, external bodies, private institutions, public or private companies) and scholars who have specific skills and knowledge in relation to the dissertation project. If the supervisor is an adjunct professor, the identification of a tenured or non-tenured co-supervisor is advised.

In case one or more external co-supervisors are appointed, the candidate should inform them about the necessity to:

- keep in regular contact with the main supervisor during the preparation of the dissertation in order to monitor the student's progress;
- if they cannot attend in person the final discussion (no reimbursement of travel expenses is foreseen), provide a formal and written evaluation regarding the overall opinion on the dissertation work. The document will be considered for the final evaluation and must be addressed to **the main Supervisor** and the dedicated **Commissione** before the date scheduled for the final discussion of the dissertation.

2.3 FAQ: supervisor and co-supervisor

- Do I need both a supervisor and a co-supervisor? No. Students are required to have one supervisor and could have at least one co-supervisor.
- Does the **supervisor** have to be teaching at I-CONTACT during the year I would like to graduate? Yes.
- Does the **co-supervisor** have to be teaching at I-CONTACT during the year I would like to graduate? No, they can also be from another university, or they can be an expert in the field one would like to do their dissertation on.
- Do I have to choose my co-supervisor? Usually, the co-supervisor is chosen together with the supervisor. If the student already has someone in mind from their previous experiences abroad, they can suggest this person, but the supervisor must always accept them.
- How and when do I ask a professor to be my supervisor/co-supervisor? Students can ask a professor both through email or in person. When students ask a professor to guide them for their project, they must (more or less) know which topic they would like to work on. The specific focus of the thesis and the modalities of the research/analysis can and must be discussed together with the supervisor/co-supervisor.

3. Timeline for the preparation and final delivery

- Administrative part: gathering the relevant information.

¹ This rule has changed from the Autumn session of AY 2022/23 (Council Board decision 14.06.2023)

The candidates are responsible for gathering all the relevant information about both the time schedule and the bureaucratic obligations related to the preparation and submission of the final dissertation (information present in the *Graduation Notice*). They can ask for support (if needed) from the *Segreteria* and the Programme Coordinator.

- Practical part: choosing a topic and finding a supervisor and a co-supervisor

A dissertation application should be submitted to the prospective supervisor within a period of **8 to 12 months** before the chosen graduation session.

While applying for a dissertation, the student should:

- specify the field of study in which the dissertation will be carried out;
- make a proposal on a preliminary idea for the dissertation topic.
- Within two weeks after a positive response from the main supervisor, or when agreed with them, the candidate should **send a written proposal**, containing:
 - a working title;
 - an outline of the dissertation topic;
 - the outcome of relevant bibliographic research. This set of references is meant to support the candidate's proposals for a topic and working title;
 - a proposal on the secondary supervisor.

The supervisory faculty members then individually **discuss with the student** the time schedule for deliveries, the steps required for the preparation of the dissertation, and any other issues regarding the application of the regulatory provisions.

NOTE: Besides the deadlines indicated in the *Graduation Notice*, **every other deadline is very flexible**, and it is to be agreed upon with the supervisor. Whenever you have a dissertation proposal and a supervisor in mind, reach out to them and start the process of creating the dissertation together with them. The actual timetable and deadlines for the bibliographic research, for any following proposal and for the submission of the first chapters, will be decided together with the supervisor!

3.1 Terms of delivery of the final document

The dissertation version, approved by the main supervisor, must be uploaded in due time by the candidate on the dedicated website. The dissertation upload can be repeated by the **midnight of the deadline's expiration day** (remember: pays attention to the CET hours indicated); the last uploaded file remains valid. The delivery of the final version of dissertation to the main supervisor should take place for final check **no later than 30 days before the deadline for the file upload**. The candidate is personally in charge of the delivery of the final draft to the administrative bodies of Università di Bologna.

3.2 Example of the delivery timelines for the summer graduation session

To understand the process, please carefully read this example. Suppose a student aims to graduate in **July**, during the summer graduation session:

- The proposal for the dissertation topic should reach the prospective supervisor and be agreed upon by both parties by October of the year before (that is, at least from 12 to 9 months before);
- By May, the delivery of the dissertation to the main supervisor should take place in order to perform the originality/anti plagiarism check (see paragraph 12);
- The upload of the dissertation on lauree.unibo.it has to be completed by June;

On July, the candidate defends the dissertation.

4. Admission requirements

In order to graduate, students must have:

- completed all the **exams** in their Study Plan, and their final outcomes properly registered (if you are preparing your thesis abroad, make sure to have the 12 CFUs verbalized before the deadline indicated in the Graduation Notice);
- paid the tuition **fees**;
- uploaded the dissertation in a section on Studenti Online. The dissertation can be uploaded multiple times until the expiration of the required deadline. When uploading the dissertation, it's necessary to enter some keywords and a brief abstract;
- completed the **Alma Laurea Questionnaire** on Studenti Online.

NOTE: The Student Administration Office will verify that all the requirements are met and will contact students in case of an issue, which allows for regularizations before the final examination: the verification of the requirements is carried out after the deadline.

5. Graduation sessions and application

For each academic year there are three graduation sessions available to the student after having completed the second year of the programme:

- Summer Session, usually July
- Autumn Session, usually November
- Spring Session, usually March (of the year after)

To submit the graduation application online, one must access [Studenti Online](#) within the deadlines set for the Graduation notice, and respect the specific requirements as stated in the "[graduation notice](#)", published on the Final Examination section of the website. In the Notice, students can find the following deadlines

(1a) the request for graduation admission and the payment of the graduation fee (€32);

(1b) Late submission graduation request: if you miss the previous deadline, you can still ask to be admitted to the graduation session. The delayed request bears an additional cost of €100;

(2) Expiring date dissertation upload, by this deadline students must:

- Have uploaded the dissertation in PDF format on the application
- Have paid the taxes due

- Have taken all the exams required by your study plan. Exams' grades have to be already recorded.
- Have completed the Alma Laurea Questionnaire (you find it online, on the application)

(3) Deadline dissertation approval of the Supervisor: after uploading the dissertation, the Supervisor must approve it.

NOTE: Deadlines are peremptory, there is no possibility to ask for a derogation.

If a student is not able to graduate within the three given sessions, students will become '**fuori corso**' (overtime student) and will have to pay taxes for the subsequent year of the Master's degree programme. This will also be considered by ER.GO, leading to a possible reduction in the scholarship amount after the standard two-year study period.

NOTE: Remember that the **last opportunity to modify the Study Plan** before the graduation is during the second time window (usually from January until March) of the second year "**in corso**".

PART II: PREPARATION OF MASTER'S DEGREE DISSERTATION

6. Scope of a master's dissertation

A Master's dissertation **identifies** and studies a proposition – a '**dissertation**' – about observed phenomena and relevant theories that fall within the domain of subjects available in the Study Plan. A dissertation is based on the definition of a driving question. The student provides an answer to this question by using appropriate empirical or theoretical methods of analysis, attempting to provide an answer in a way that is both rational and properly structured. The proposition that emerges from the dissertation represents the outcome of the study efforts carried out by the candidate.

6.1 Choosing a topic and a discipline

To choose a topic for the dissertation, it is recommended to start from those fields of interest that students have been learning about or those that students would like to pursue in the future. In any case, the topic is always decided and discussed together with the supervisor, who will be available to guide students throughout the whole process.

When choosing a topic, it is really important to also choose the discipline/methodological approach based on which the topic is to be investigated (it could be anthropological, historical or political for instance): this is related to the choice of supervisor because, when choosing a supervisor, you are also choosing the methodology that the professor tends to use most.

The candidate is expected to make proposals about the overall organization and structure of the dissertation project, while the supervisors should provide appropriate comments and suggestions until an agreement is reached about the dissertation structure.

6.2 Principles of analysis

The following principles of analysis should be followed during the preparation of a dissertation. In this way, a dissertation would be clear and consistent, supporting the propositions presented by the candidate:

- **LOGIC.** The application of consequential and logical thinking should drive all the stages of the dissertation work. At the same time, it should provide the ground for identifying the basic question, outlining the dissertations' proposition and for choosing the methods of analysis used by the candidate.
- **CONSISTENCY.** A dissertation falls within the domain of one or more disciplines available in the Study Plan. Each discipline is based on its own specific methods of analysis and scientific investigation: a master's dissertation should reflect the use of methods of enquiry already followed by the study subjects to which the candidate refers. The methods of analysis should be relevant within the field of study on which the dissertation focuses. This principle should inform both the identification of the literature, and the discussion of the theories included in the dissertation.
- **TRANSPARENCY.** A dissertation should identify and discuss the following content in a clear way that is as clear as possible:

- a. the hypotheses on which the candidate's proposition is based, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the analysis carried out;
- b. the parts of analysis elaborated entirely by the candidate;
- c. the theories, methods, or materials borrowed from the literature.

6.3 Preliminary insights into the methodology

Once the student has agreed on the thesis' topic with the supervisor, they may start carrying out the research in order to understand the "status quaestionis", the overall state of research on the topic.

Possible elements of the Table of Contents:

- Presentation of the topic
- Presentation of the methodology: inform the reader on the methodology adopted
- Previous research and methodologies adopted by the authors of the topic of your research
- Introduction: inform the reader on the reasons behind your research, explanation of a hypothesis
- Explanation of the data: depending on the subject-matter
- Analysis of data: the body of the dissertation. In case of a compilatory thesis, other authors' opinion might be presented in a critical way.
- Demonstration of the hypothesis
- Conclusion: a recap of the research and the conclusive remarks, reference to the initial hypothesis.

6.4 Ethical rules

The relationship between the candidate and the supervisor should be based on principles of **professionalism, transparency, and mutual respect** in compliance with the general regulatory framework of the University of Bologna. Both the candidate and the supervisory faculty are expected to **exchange timely communications** during the preparation of a dissertation, and to comply with the duties arising from their **commitments and respective roles**. The candidate should provide the supervisors with bi-weekly updates about the progress of the dissertation work.

7. Preparing the Final Dissertation: in Italy, abroad, or during an internship

When deciding on how to organize the preparation for the Final Dissertation, one should take into consideration the different options that are available:

- **Option 1:** select '**Final examination**' of **16 CFU** (code 60750). This is considered to be the standard preparation of the final dissertation.
 - Remember that you can still use all the materials and information that you gathered during your various experiences (for instance Erasmus, internships, etc.) to write the dissertation. It simply will not be mentioned in your Study Plan.
- **Option 2:** select '**Final examination**' of **4 CFU** (code 86333) from the Study Plan, and **combine** this with one of the following options:
 - **Preparation for the final examination abroad (86266)** (12 CFU): doing research for your thesis abroad, either at a University or Research Institute;

- **Internship for the preparation for the Final Examination (86267)** (12 CFU): doing a practical internship, during which students can gather material and gain useful knowledge for their dissertation.

7.1 Preparation for the Final Examination abroad (86266)

The activities (at least 300 hours) can be done at universities, research institutions, NGOs, companies, local authorities, etc.. You can find all the information on the Final Examination abroad, [here](#).

Students can apply for funding via **Erasmus+** or **Overseas** programs, or for scholarships issued by the **Department of Cultural Heritage of Ravenna** (calls are published in the dedicated sections of the UniBo website and on the notice board of the I-CONTACT program) or similar UniBo opportunities. In these cases, the selection of the destination, the supervisor, and the time frame for the preparation of the thesis is managed through the **AlmaRm portal**. If applicable, a successful candidate will receive reimbursement of expenses and insurance cover.

Remember that for the Erasmus+ studying call, carrying out the research activities for the dissertation is only possible in certain destinations. It is therefore student's responsibility to check all the regulations and get in touch with the host university for more clarifications. Moreover, it is advisable to already have a dissertation topic as well as a supervisor during the application process.

7.2 Internship for the preparation for the Final Examination (86267)

The activities (at least 300 hours) can be carried out at universities, research institutions, NGOs, companies, local authorities, etc. Students need to apply to either the **Erasmus+ traineeship** or **Fieldwork** calls for application.

The calls will be published in the dedicated section of the University website and on the notice board of the I-CONTACT program. In these cases, the selection of the destination, the supervisor and the time frame for the thesis preparation is managed entirely through the **AlmaRm portal**.

If applicable, a successful candidate will receive **reimbursement of expenses** and **insurance cover**.

Remember that credits for the 'internship for the preparation for the final dissertation' will be registered **ONLY if the student has the added activity in their study plan**.

SUGGESTION: Since many calls for these projects come out after the closure of the Study Plan modification period, we recommend students to plan ahead and select one of these options before the Study Plan modification window closes! In the case in which the student should not get selected for any of these calls and/or should not find an autonomous research project, the administration will be able to change the Study Plan into 'Final Examination' (60750).

8. Types of dissertation projects

Regardless of the field of study, a final thesis work can be classified in the following types:

1. “Experimental/Innovative²” dissertation: the candidate conducts a thoroughly original research work by conducting substantial field-work activities or producing innovative outcomes and comes to personal critical conclusions. The candidate:

- a. carries out a study that extends the knowledge currently available from the literature;
- b. uses the tools and knowledge from the available literature to account for the field of study within which the candidate’s dissertation work falls;
- c. uses relevant analytical methods, pre-existing theories, empirical data, sources of scientific information or study materials in ways that are different from those prevailing in the literature;
- d. develops a driving question that extends beyond what is available in the current literature, proposes an answer by offering perspectives and points of discussion that is different from what the literature makes available.

2. “Critical Review” dissertation: the candidate conducts a review of existing literature and studies on a specific topic and formulates personal conclusions. The candidate:

- a. provides a survey of the available literature;
- b. uses analytical methods, pre-existing theories, empirical data, sources of scientific information or study materials that are fully consistent with those, already considered by the relevant bibliographic references;
- c. studies a driving question that has already been considered in the literature;
- d. proposes a personal answer to the driving question without providing perspectives or elements of discussion that are substantially different from what emerges in the literature.

3. Dissertation “on Practice”: the candidate conducts a guided work/training experience at institutions, NGOs, associations active in fields associated with the educational fields of the program, redacts an analytical-critical report, and formulates personal conclusions. The candidate:

- a. provides an analytical report about the completed work/training experience;
- b. identifies a driving question relevant to the general disciplinary debate that addresses aspects of their guided work/training experience;
- c. elaborates personal critical considerations and conclusions.

The development of experimental and innovative works is encouraged, however, specific circumstances may lead candidates to choose critical-review thesis works and thesis works on practical experiences. The efforts expected for the completion of critical review works and works on practical activities is limited in comparison with experimental or innovative thesis works. The grading policies assigning different maximum scores to different types are defined on that basis.

² For dissertations aiming to be classified as "Experimental/Innovative", the inclusion of fieldwork annexes (where appropriate) and/or a dedicated section explicitly arguing the actual innovativeness of the research work is strongly recommended. These elements should provide evidence of the originality of the research results, the experimental fieldwork undertaken, and the work’s contribution beyond the existing literature on the topic.

How do I choose between the available types? The decision must be made, as for all the main decisions concerning your dissertation, together with the supervisor (and co-supervisor), but also depending on the topic and subject you choose.

9. Bibliographic research

Bibliographic research means the complex of activities aimed at accessing the information content of a set of public documents useful for the thesis preparation and then writing.

To conduct an effective literature search, the University of Bologna has made available a series of catalogues and lending systems through which students can be aided in their bibliographic research. Below, we have listed the most important ones.

Alma Start Unibo (<https://almastart.unibo.it/>)

After logging onto the site with your institutional credentials, you can use AlmaStart for integrated searching of books, articles, other documents in the library or accessible online.

It comes with a single search box where you can enter keywords, title, and author. Advanced search is also available as well as an extensive set of limiters, which help you filter the results you get.

University library system (<https://sba.unibo.it/it>)

The Library System is the structure of the University in charge of coordinating libraries, library collections, and bibliographic and document services. Inside of the website, you can find different webpages that will help you find what you need: it can help you in physical and online research.

One of the most important tool that you can use is [AlmaRE](#): is the Electronic Resources Library of the University of Bologna and is the result of the cooperation of all the Libraries of the University of Bologna in the coordinated and shared activities of selecting, acquiring, making available and enhancing documentary collections in electronic format to support research and education.

SBN/UBO (<https://sbn-ubo.sba.unibo.it/>)

In the SNB/UBO catalogue you can find: books (ancient and modern), journals, films, sound and music materials, documentary materials and manuscripts, dissertations, audio-visuals, graphic and cartographic materials, e-books, and electronic journals among more than 250 libraries that are part of the network. This can help you to find a particular book or article, expanding your search considerably. This can help you because you can broaden your search considerably by sourcing from a larger amount of catalogues.

REMEMBER: in order to correctly use these websites, you have first to logging onto the sites with your institutional credentials. If you if you are not in Ravenna (or Bologna), to be able to access the University network we recommend using the follows site: <https://sba.unibo.it/it/almare/servizi-e-strumenti-almare/ezproxy/connessione-da-remoto>.

Proxy is a remote access service and allows you to access restricted electronic resources (databases, periodicals, and electronic books, etc.) from home, or from anywhere outside the University network.

9.1 NILDE (Network Inter-Library Document Exchange)

Nilde is a software for the exchange of documents among libraries. Single users can create an account on the platform and request a bibliographic resource.

All students carrying out research can benefit from this network and request documents not available online.

Find out about the platform here: [Nilde World](#)

How to register on NILDE

- Open the following link <https://nilde.bo.cnr.it/index.php> and find on bottom right the dedicated section for users.
- Select “Register to the NILDE service of your library”.
- User registration: if you select “yes” to the question whether you have an IDEM-GARR institutional account, you will be able to use your @studio-unibo.it credentials to register to the service.
- Select the University of Bologna as your institution and Palazzo Corradini – Campus Ravenna as your library.
- Fill in the Identification Form.
- The subscription has to be validated by a librarian. Students will be notified via email following the validation of their account.
- You can start using the web form!
- Remember that it is possible to send up to 5 requests at a time. The state of requests can be monitored on the web form.

How to use the web form

- Access your account through the institutional Log In (Idem-Garr)
- Select “Enter a new reference” and choose if it is an Article or a Section of a Book
- Fill in the form with all data on the publication you have to be as precise as possible
- On the bottom left you will be asked if you want to bear possible costs for the delivery of the document.
- On the section “My NILDE” it will be possible to monitor the state of requests.
 - Yellow light: processing
 - Red light: not delivered. In this case you may find some notes
 - Green light: the document is available. You may find indications on where to withdraw it on the delivery section referred to the document.

10. Text formatting

The title page of the dissertation is prepared according to the format attached. It is then adapted to the course of study, the graduation session, and to the relevant academic year

The following stylistic instructions represent just an example. Remember that you have to choose other formats upon approval of the supervisor.

Text font	Times New Roman
Size of the character used in the body	12-point size
Size of the character used in the footnotes , placed at the bottom of a page within the body of the dissertation	10-point size
Line spacing	1.5 points
Right, left, and bottom margins of each page	Set to 2 cm
Upper margin	Set to 2.5 cm
The title of a paragraph	12-point size, bold small capital letters
The indentation of the first line of each paragraph	1.25 cm
	Exceptions 1. the starting paragraph of either a chapter or a section; 2. the initial paragraph of a quotation; 3. the paragraphs included a list or similar texts.
The title numbering of the chapters	starting at 1
The <u>title of a paragraph</u>	12-point size, bold small capital letters
The titles of the <u>sub-paragraphs</u>	12-point size, italics letters
Paragraphs and subparagraphs	Numbered progressively by a system of indices
Acknowledgements	Included in a paragraph without numbering, at the end of the text and before the bibliography

11. References and quotation system

Whenever the words of other authors are quoted in the text, they should be duly reported with the use of double quotes and the indication of the source. Plain copy-pasting without proper quoting represents a form of plagiarism.

There are two types of quotations:

Types of quotation	Formatting	Example
Short quotations	Two-line long, at most – that are reported in the main body of the text with double quotation marks	The nature of archaeology is summarised by the following: “archaeology is personal, political and all about the present” (Hutchings and LaSalle, April 2014, pp. 27).
Long quotations	Reported within double quotation marks, with the following characteristics: • A double line break before and after the quotation to separate it from the main text. • An indentation larger than that of the main text should be applied. • A character size that is <u>one point smaller</u> than the one that is applied to the main text.	The literature suggests that: change in the total cultural system must be viewed in an adaptive context both social and environmental, not whimsically viewed as the result of “influences,” “stimuli,” or even “migrations” between and among geographically defined units. (Binford, 20 January 2017, pp. 217)

For both quotations: the last line of quotation should always report the name and surname of the author, the date of publication and the page number where the original text can be found. This information should be included within round brackets.

Other types of quotations: figures and tables, numerical index, etc.

Footnotes	10-point characters , at the end of each page, numbered progressively
Figures and tables	Placed at the centre of the body of the main text, numbered progressively

Caption	<i>in italics font</i> , cantered under the corresponding figure or table.
Numerical index	10-point size, in <i>italics font</i>

11.1 Reference system and Bibliography

Harvard Reference System	Used for citations to literature ³ Examples: citations inside the main text of the dissertation. When writing for a professional publication, it is a good practice to refer to another relevant published work._ • This view has been supported by Cormack (1994). • White and Brown (2004) in their recent research paper found that...
List of bibliographic source	Organised according to the alphabetical order of each author's surname. Example: the list of references should look as follows. Bibliography • Boughton, J.M., 2002. The Bretton Woods proposal: a brief look. Political Science Quarterly, 42(6), p.564. • Dahl, R. (2004). Charlie and the chocolate factory. 6th ed. New York: Knopf. Online Resources When consulted and quoted, it is necessary to create a separate section that reports the list of the relevant websites. These should appear in alphabetical order. The date on which the candidate has accessed the information should be reported as well.

³Detailed information on the Harvard System may be found at: [https://libweb\(anglia.ac.uk\)/referencing/harvard.htm](https://libweb(anglia.ac.uk)/referencing/harvard.htm)

	The use of visual material, (i.e., a pictures), quantitative (i.e., a table with numerical data) and qualitative data (i.e., the outcome of a survey) produced by third parties should always come with a clear indication of both the original sources, and the last date when the source has been consulted.
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11.2 Zotero

For effortless use of all bibliographic resources you have found, Zotero is the right tool. It is a free and open-source software for managing bibliographic references and related materials (e.g., PDF files). It can connect to the web browser and online libraries.

Finally, it helps with the automatic generation of citations, notes, and bibliographies, and helps keep track of what has been found so far.

You can download it here: <https://www.zotero.org/>

12. Additional notes

12.1 Numbering of the pages

The number of pages that the candidate is expected to produce varies according to the discipline on which the dissertation focuses. A decision about the specific dissertation length arises from an agreement between the candidate and the supervising faculty. The permissible range should fall within **a minimum length of 50 pages, and a maximum of 150 pages** (the maximum amount is often indicative), excluding the indices, the bibliography, and the additional appendices.

12.2 Language standards

The dissertation must be written in (academic) English. The public exam of the master's dissertation takes place also in **English**. Any request to change the language of the dissertation represents a derogation from the Programme regulation and is subject to a formal approval by the Study Plan Committee and the Board of the Programme.

During all the phases of the preparation of a dissertation, the candidate should:

- **apply linguistic and stylistic standards** that guarantee a clear understanding and immediate readability of the text. The supervising faculty is not required to suggest specific improvements to the stylistic construction when major linguistic deficiencies are present. The candidate is responsible for ensuring that language standards consistent with those of the scientific community are followed;
- make sure that an **appropriate control of the quality** of the text has been carried out before submitting any dissertation draft to the supervisors.

- may use appropriate software tools for checking and improving the stylistic quality of the dissertation drafts.

12.3 Originality of the dissertation project and Plagiarism check

The faculty considers as inadmissible the submission of documents which:

- are not the result of original work by the candidate;
- are not the product of the individual and personal study efforts by the candidate;
- are the outcome of 'copy-and-paste' practices;
- do not carry appropriate bibliographic references;
- do not report the original source of the materials produced by third parties;
- do not provide enough support for the authenticity and uniqueness of the dissertation document.

The University does not permit any form of plagiarism or intellectual dishonesty, whether intentional or deriving from negligent behaviour or the abuse of hierarchical positions or academic influence. (From code of ethics and conduct http://www.normateneo.unibo.it/codice_etico.html).

The university takes **plagiarism** very seriously and has legal implications: concepts and statements taken from the literature should be appropriately reworded and referenced. (<https://corsi.unibo.it/2cycle/OrganizationalPsychology/writing-your-thesis>).

Please be informed that the International Cooperation on Human Rights and Intercultural Heritage Master's Degree (Curriculum A and B) joins the "Guarantee of originality" service provided by the University of Bologna in order to verify the originality of the documents produced for the final examination. **A special software is used to automate the analysis process (carried out by the professor), providing a computerized support which compares the produced texts with a wide database, comprising all the documents published on the web and various scientific databases.** The main objective of the service is to provide students with indications for the correct application of the source citation system. For this reason, the analysis is carried out right from the first versions of the dissertation chapters to guide the students and help them in the correct preparation and production of their dissertation work.

- The University acknowledges that **generative artificial intelligence (GenAI)** tools may be used as support instruments in academic work, provided that their use complies with the principles of transparency, academic integrity, critical supervision, and proper source attribution established by the University policies. Students remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, and proper referencing of their work.

According to the University Policy on the Ethical and Responsible Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence, "substantial use" of GenAI occurs when AI-generated output contributes in a significant way to the intellectual content, structure, argumentation, analysis, or written drafting of the dissertation. This includes, for example, using GenAI to generate substantial portions of text, develop original arguments or research perspectives, conduct analytical interpretation, or extensively draft chapters or sections of the dissertation. By contrast, limited support uses — such as language editing, translation, brainstorming, formatting assistance, or preliminary information gathering — are generally considered non-substantial uses. **Any substantial use of GenAI must be explicitly declared by the student**

Students must be able to critically discuss and justify any content produced with the support of GenAI tools. They must ensure that the use of GenAI does not result in plagiarism.

13. Final remarks

The provisions contained in this document are complementary to those laid out in the Student Regulations pursuant to Law 240/2010, in the University Statute⁴ and in the Code of Ethics⁵ of Università di Bologna.

Both the candidate and the faculty members undertake to comply with all the relevant sets of rules during the different stages of the degree dissertation work.

The teaching faculty is in charge of informing the candidate about the relevant regulatory provisions in due course. The graduation candidate reviews the guidelines before applying for a dissertation.

The faculty and the candidate also agree to interact with each other in order to dispel any doubts that may arise regarding the application of the rules.

Key information about the Preparation of the Master Dissertation can be found:

- On the I-CONTACT website at the [Final Examination Modalities Page](#);
- On the I-CONTACT website at the [Preparation for the Thesis abroad page](#);
- On the [UniBo website](#);
- On Virtuale, [Thesis Prep Seminars Materials](#);
- On the [‘AMSLaurea- Institutional Thesis Repository’](#) you can consult the dissertations of students of previous years on the [Enter with UNIBO](#) dedicated portal.

NOTE: Not all the dissertations are published. This usually depends on the choice made by the student and supervisor in the moment of the submission of the graduation application.

⁴ The University Statute can be found at: http://www.normateneo.unibo.it/Regolamento_studenti.html

⁵ The Code of Ethics can be downloaded from: http://www.normateneo.unibo.it/codice_etico.html

PART III: DISCUSSION

14. Dissertation and final grade criteria

The candidate presents their dissertation work at a **final oral examination**. The discussion of the dissertation takes place in a public venue in front of the Examination Board. It should be stressed that the presentation and discussion of a master's dissertation represents a public, formal examination on the subject on which the candidate's dissertation work is focused on.

The dedicated *Commissione* proposes and makes a formal decision on the preliminary admission of the candidate to the dissertation exam, considering the written dissertation work and the public discussion.

The Board will assess the candidate's overall performance – dissertation, public discussion, academic curriculum, the period of time taken to complete their studies.

The regulations of the University of Bologna have introduced the principle of autonomy of the individual dedicated *Commissione* in the formation of grading policies. Correspondingly, the Board expresses its assessment with a grade out of one hundred and ten. **The exam is deemed to be passed with a minimum grade of 66/110 and a maximum grade of 110/110.** In case of granting the maximum grade, the Board may also grant Honours (lode) by unanimous decision.

14.1 Final Dissertation Work Scoring

The formation of the final grade is obtained from the sum of the following scoring elements:

A. The [weighted average](#) achieved by the candidate in the exams from the Study Plan, expressed on a **110-point scale**. This weighted average is computed in the following way:

- each grade is multiplied by the number of credits obtained in the corresponding exam;
- the sum of the values obtained for all the exams is calculated;
- the result of the sum is divided by the total number of credits gained from the Study Plan.
- **resulting weighted average x 110 : 30 (to convert the 30-point into 110-point scale)**

B. The average expressed in one hundred and ten points, 0.25 (1/4 of a point) is to be added for each distinction grade up to a maximum of 2 points.

C. The **final dissertation** contributes **additional points** to the student's weighted average grade, expressed out of 110.

Following the final exam, the following scores are assigned:

- for a dissertation of any type that is sufficient, being admissible and formally correct: 1 point.
- for a "Critical Review dissertation or dissertation "on Practice": from 2 points to a maximum of 3 points for final exams at satisfactory or good level;

- for an “Experimental/Innovative” dissertation: from 2 to a maximum of 5 points for final exams at satisfactory, good, excellent, or exceptional level.

The candidates achieving the maximum score (110/110) may be awarded “lode” (honors) by the *Commissione* following a unanimous deliberation.

NOTES:

- The three cases for the attribution of point/s after dissertation defence, described in box C above, are alternative to one another, and the relative points (1; 2-3; 2-5) cannot be cumulated.
- The final grade assigned after dissertation defence is determined by taking all the above-mentioned criteria into consideration, and this determination is the sole responsibility of the dedicated *Commissione*.

Key information about the Final Examination and its modalities can be found:

- in the [I-CONTACT Vademecum](#);
- on the [Final Examination Modalities Page](#) of the website;
- on the [Unibo website](#).

15. Preliminary activities

Taking into account the graduation notice, remember to upload the PDF of the Thesis on SOL by the deadline (14 days before the discussion). Following the upload:

- a. Supervisors have 7 days to approve the thesis → this is mandatory to allow students to graduate
- b. The PDF of the Thesis must be sent to the Co-examiner
- c. keywords must provide an immediate understanding of the topic (e.g. mussels, endocrine, disruptors, transcriptomics, ..) and allow readers to find your Thesis in the data repository

The agenda for the Dissertation day is set by the Degree Programme Office, usually 7 days before.

NOTE: students do not need to submit a hard copy of the thesis to Segreteria, BUT a hard copy must be delivered by hand to the *Commissione* on the day of the Discussion. This will be given back to the graduate student at the end of the session.

16. Dissertation defence

The defence of your dissertation implies an oral presentation, which can be supported by slides, followed by questions from the *Commissione*.

The session is divided in 2 moments:

- Presentation of the thesis by the graduate student: slots of about 10-15 minutes
 - PPT presentation (not compulsory): bearing info from the thesis document. Graphs, tables, images must be readable on the screen, do not exceed 10/12 slides (unless you have simple images with few comments). Use the last slide for conclusions and future perspectives in the presented topics. Avoid animations and long texts. Avoid reading during the presentation.
- Discussion with the *Commissione* (questions and answers: the Commissione may ask in-depth questions on methods, results and any aspects and developments of your work.)

SUGGESTIONS: do not switch off the brain at the end of the presentation: answering the questions by the *Commissione* is very important.

After the defence, the *Commissione* attributes a final score and awards the student the Master's Degree.

17. Final certificates

After the end of the session, the President of the *Commissione* proceed to register the final grade in the SOL platform. Graduate students can download a self-declaration from SOL (ie graduation certificate, Diploma Supplement) few days after the graduation. If a student needs a signed hard copy, they have to ask the Segreteria Studenti via mail, specifying which certificate they need.

After some months, the UNIBO sends all graduate students the diploma (signed by the Rector) via mail at their home address.

About the DEGREE CERTIFICATE, please remember:

- Graduates will receive their **certificate/parchment** (*pergamena*) directly at the **correspondence address** (domicile or residence) registered on StudentiOnline. All the students are invited to carefully check the address used in the graduation application and if necessary, amend it. Any errors could cause serious delays in delivery.
- The certificates will be sent **at the expense of the University**, following a notice to your UNIBO e-mail address, **within four months** from the final date of the graduation session in which the degree was obtained. In any case, it is possible to obtain a degree certificate **whenever you need it on Studenti Online as soon as you graduate**.
- It is also possible to pick up the certificate at the Administration Office [Segreteria] **in person**. If you are not in Ravenna, you can also send a proxy: this person will have to bring an identity document and a signed authorization from you.