

Final Dissertation TEaM: FAQ's

1. Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide students further clarifications about the final dissertation in TEaM.

- For a general introduction to the final dissertation, please refer first to:

<http://corsi.unibo.it/2cycle/Team/Pages/graduation-guidelines.aspx>

- administrative procedures are described here:

<http://corsi.unibo.it/2cycle/Team/Pages/deadline-and-schedule.aspx>

2. How to define a research question and identify a supervisor

The identification of a research question is not easy task. This is the bad news. However, professors are here to help you, and this the good news.

A natural starting point to define a research question is **start from an (even vague) idea that you have about a topic you are interested in**. Some students have specific ideas from the start, some others do not (e.g. they just know they want to do a thesis on “sustainability” or “revenue management”). Good ideas often come when one is not looking for them, i.e. surfing the Web, or reading a newspaper. However, for suggestions you can also look at:

- Past theses supervised by each professor. The list is available on each professor website, e.g.

<https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/mletizia.guerra/teachings?tab=tesi>

<https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/paolo.figini/teachings?tab=tesi>

<https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/manuela.presutti/teachings?tab=tesi>

- Suggested topics by professors, available here as pdf attachment:

<http://corsi.unibo.it/2cycle/Team/Pages/graduation-guidelines.aspx>

However, please considered past and suggested topics do not limit in any sense the possible subject for theses.

Together with a vague idea on the topic, it is often useful to think about methodology, as a matter of fact, most topics, if not all, may be tackled using a variety of methods, so the question for students is really:

what is a method that I like? Do I like math and formal models? Am I inclined to statistics? Do I prefer to make interviews?

All methods used in social sciences and exposed to students during courses are admissible. A thesis may imply an econometric analysis on existing data, a case study on a company or a destination, questionnaires, experimental research, the development of business plans, a mathematical model, etc, or any combination of

these methods (and consider also that a thesis may be connected to internship). As a matter of fact, the only true requirement for a good Master thesis is that it should provide an original contribution with expands knowledge on a specific topic, and shows reflection on this. Please notice that in TEaM there is a single type of thesis, i.e. no *formal* distinction between theoretical/empirical/research theses, which could affect the thesis evaluation.

Once you have a topic and a method (ideally), **you should try to connect those to a supervisor**, which must be a professor of the School of Economics, Management and Statistics (usually, she/he will be one of your professor). For a good match, please consider the topics in each professor course (and the methods used) and possibly her/his research areas as shown by her/his webpage. If you need suggestions, you can contact the Director. Then, go and talk with the professor. If, for some reason, your candidate supervisor is not available, think of alternatives. If you have problems in finding any supervisor, please contact the Director.

Once you “hooked” your supervisor, she/he will help you to define your research question in a more specific way, she/he will give you readings and guide you in writing and re-writing process, according to your specific needs.

3. Structure of the thesis

There is no single way of organizing a thesis, and also on this aspect the supervisor is crucial to give suggestions. Broadly speaking, however, all dissertations have:

- 1) an introduction;
- 2) a section on literature review and/or theory development, based on the existing knowledge of the topic; please notice that what theory is depends on the subject you choose;
- 3) a section on the empirical/novel contribution;
- 4) conclusions;
- 5) references.

The suggestion on the length of dissertation (50-100) is just, as said, a suggestion. Quality is important, not length. It only means that 20-page long thesis is not acceptable, unless you provide a Nobel-deserving contribution; and you do not need to write a 200-page long book.

4. Plagiarism and References

Your dissertation must be your work. That is, be aware of plagiarism! Plagiarism is considered a serious offence and, for this reason, dissertations are checked via a specialized software (Turnitin) before approval. The identification of plagiarism is not always an easy task (see http://thevisualcommunicationguy.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Infographic_Did-I-Plagiarize.jpg for an attempt to be systematic). As a rule of thumb, consider the following: do not copy and paste and, when you do, use quotation marks and mention the source.

Suppose that your source says:

Tourism is generally considered one of the most dynamic sectors in the economy, and one of the few that were able to grow even during the recent crisis.

What is unacceptable in your thesis (i.e. it is plagiarism), is:

Tourism is considered one of the most dynamic sectors in the economy, and one of the few among those that were able to grow even during the recent crisis.

What is acceptable, instead is:

According to Source (2014, p. 109), «Tourism is generally considered one of the most dynamic sectors in the economy, (...) able to grow even during the recent crisis».

If you stick to the rule of thumb, you can be confident that you will pass the Turnitin check.

Even if do not copy and paste, you need to cite the source of your ideas in the text whenever is appropriate. It is difficult to say more than that in general. Your supervisor will help you. Usually, in economics and management dissertation, in-text references have to be reported in round brackets by indicating the author's surname, followed by the year and, after a comma, by the page number if necessary, i.e. (Rossi 2006, 233-237).

The full references list, in alphabetic order by author's name, must be put at the end of the thesis. In the reference list at the end of the thesis, information about sources (which include articles, books, websites, etc) must be complete. All references quoted in the text must be listed at the end, and vice versa. There are several styles for writing references, such as MLA (<https://www.mla.org/>), APA (<http://www.apastyle.org/>), Chicago Manual of Style/Turabian (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html), and Harvard referencing style (<http://www.harvardgenerator.com/>). Please choose one and be consistent!

5. Sources of information

Sources of information will in general depend on the subject, but broadly speaking they are

- 1) books;
- 2) scientific articles;
- 3) other sources.

You can expect your supervisor to give you most the suggestion on sources, but here are a few hints.

For books, the Rimini Campus library is the main place to look at. The catalogue is available online at: http://sol.unibo.it/SebinaOpac/Opac?locale=en_GB.

For articles, <https://scholar.google.it/> is a natural starting point. Specific on economics (and management) is RePEc (<http://www.repec.org/>).

Although books and articles should be the main sources of information for your dissertation, other sources can be useful as well, especially at the beginning of your work and for topics, which are really new, such as websites and blogs. It is impossible here to give a full list of sources, but two that can be of interest (in English) are:

- <http://www2.unwto.org/en>, the website of UNWTO, rich of data and reports on destination and markets.
- <https://skift.com/>, which is rich of news and stories on tourism markets.

6. Deadlines

Deadlines and requirements are detailed here (please read carefully!):

<http://corsi.unibo.it/2Cycle/team/Pages/deadline-and-schedule.aspx>

In a nutshell, there are two relevant deadlines. The first administrative deadline is for the graduation application («domanda di laurea») at the beginning of graduation session. For this deadline, what you need to know is 1) the name of your supervisor; 2) a provisional title. Nothing more than that. The second deadline is for the (online) upload of your thesis. This second deadline (with the dissertation completed) is usually about a month before the discussion (e.g. for December 2017 will *November 28*); the first deadline is at the beginning of the graduation session, and it can be the same for than one discussion date (e.g. if you want to graduate both in October or December, deadline is September 15). Please consider that for this deadline only the supervisor and a *provisional* title is needed.