



**Dr. Nicola Carta**

## **GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING AND WRITING THE THESIS**

Students must carefully follow the instructions below. Both the process and outcome will impact the evaluation. If I find myself having to intervene repeatedly to correct mistakes that could have been avoided by carefully reading this document, I may apply a penalty to the final grade.

Key stages for the thesis completion:

*Stage 1 – Request for supervision by e-mail*

*Stage 2 – Formal request via the student-restricted area*

*Stage 3 – Table of contents preparation*

*Stage 4 – Thesis writing*

*Stage 5 – Graduation application via the student-restricted area*

*Stage 6 – Final upload via the student-restricted area*

*Stage 7 – Work assessment by the professor*

Please note: While the process for completing a thesis is the same for both Bachelor's and Master's students, the content and expectations for the thesis itself differ. Specific details are provided below.

## STAGE 1 – REQUEST FOR SUPERVISION BY E-MAIL

The student should request supervision by e-mail, including the following information and documents:

- *personal information*: degree program, what remains to complete their degree program (exams and internship), planned graduation session
- *documents*: CV, exam transcripts<sup>1</sup>, short research proposal

The research proposal should be no more than two pages, including references. It should be structured as follows:

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|---|
| <b>1. Main Goal</b><br>Briefly summarize the primary objective of your research in a few lines.   |
| <b>2. Project Description</b><br>Provide a concise summary of your research project, outlining its key focus and scope.   |
| <b>3. Methodology</b><br>Describe how you plan to achieve your objective, specifically outlining your approach to empirical analysis. You may consider:<br>- <i>horizontal analysis</i> : examining various characteristics across multiple observed units.<br>- <i>vertical analysis</i> : conducting an in-depth case study within a specific business, institutional, or market context. |
| <b>4. Motivation</b><br>Explain why this research is relevant and who would benefit from it (e.g., investors, managers, policymakers, entrepreneurs). Clearly articulate why your work is of interest to them.  |
| <b>5. References</b>  |

<sup>1</sup> For master's students, it is also necessary to send the transcript of the bachelor's exams, including the graduation grade.

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A strong research proposal requires engagement with academic and non-academic sources. While extensive reading is not expected at this stage, your references should go beyond general news articles or websites.

Follow the APA guidelines (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>) to report references.

**Important notes:**

- I may accept supervision of the thesis by substantially changing your proposed topic.
- Students should exercise great caution when using artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT) or seeking help from experienced individuals when drafting their research proposal. The proposal is assessed based on its alignment with the student's skills and abilities. A proposal that may seem somewhat naive or limited—but one the student fully understands and can confidently discuss—is far better than a Nobel Prize-worthy topic that the student cannot master or realistically complete.

I cannot accept all thesis requests. Rejection does not reflect a lack of appreciation for the proposal, but is often due to the need to prioritize students closer to graduation requirements.

**STAGE 2 – FORMAL REQUEST VIA THE STUDENT-RESTRICTED AREA**

After the supervision request has been agreed upon, the student must submit a formal request via their restricted area on [www.unive.it](http://www.unive.it), following the Venice School of Management procedure. Kindly be aware that the formal application can only be submitted within the designated time windows set by the university.

01/02 – 28/02

15/05 – 15/06

15/09 – 15/10

### STAGE 3 – TABLE OF CONTENTS PREPARATION

After the supervision request has been agreed upon, the student must prepare a structured table of contents. This step may take some time as it requires a comprehensive search for relevant references and a careful review of articles and books.

The table of contents should outline the chapters and sub-sections, briefly describing each section. Each section must also include appropriate bibliographical references. A typical thesis consists of three chapters.

Recommended databases for sourcing bibliographic materials (using relevant keywords) include:

- *Google Scholar*: Free access
- *ResearchGate*: Free access
- *Scopus*: VPN access via the University library resources
- *Web of Science*: VPN access via the University library resources
- *SSRN*: Free access (beneficial for working papers not yet published)

Be aware that academic journals in each scientific field are ranked based on quality and scholarly authority. In business schools, the ABS (Association of Business Schools) ranking is commonly used, with journals categorized on a scale from 1 to 4\*, where 4\* represents the highest level of prestige. When selecting reference articles, prioritize those published in journals with higher ABS rankings to ensure the credibility and impact of your sources. You can download the ABS ranking here.

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1x5UZiebM42e4dYYnQNH7-IdCkktoiQqZ/edit?gid=201909867#gid=201909867>

Follow the APA guidelines (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>) to report references.

#### **Specific guidelines for bachelor's theses**

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A Bachelor's thesis is a comprehensive analysis of a specific topic. It requires students to engage critically with existing research and present well-supported arguments in a clear and organized manner. The primary emphasis of the thesis should be on critical thinking, demonstrating a profound understanding of the selected topic while engaging with relevant literature. The final chapter typically presents the empirical analysis (vertical or horizontal analysis).

### **Specific guidelines for master's theses**

A Master's thesis can consist of two forms, each affecting the highest possible final grade.

#### *1. Review/Non-research thesis* (evaluatable with a score of 1 to 4 points)

It focuses on reviewing the literature surrounding the topic in a structured and systematic manner. The student will propose a general framework, critically analyze existing sources, and synthesize the information to offer a meaningful interpretation of the topic. The literature review and research questions are generally accompanied by a presentation of empirical evidence that is analyzed thoroughly, albeit without any particularly original contributions.

#### *2. Research thesis* (evaluatable with a score of 5 to 8 points)

A research thesis begins with an in-depth review of the relevant literature, essential for understanding the current state of knowledge on the topic. This review should critically systematize existing sources and highlight gaps deserving further exploration.

Following this, the student proceeds to collect data—either primary or secondary—through various methods.

*Primary data* refers to data collected directly by the student through surveys, laboratory experiments, or interviews.

*Secondary data* refers to data obtained from external sources, such as financial market data, company balance sheets, or publicly available statistics from platforms like Istat, Eurostat, Bloomberg, Aida, Orbis, and World Bank, as well as social media and press data.

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Once the data is collected, the student analyzes it or develops original theoretical or analytical models. This analysis aims to contribute new insights to the field and advance understanding. The last chapter of the thesis typically presents the empirical analysis (vertical or horizontal analysis).

## STAGE 4 – THESIS WRITING

The student may begin writing the thesis only after I have approved the table of contents. Of course, the table of contents can be revised with my consent throughout the process.

The guiding principle for the entire thesis writing process should be encapsulated in the words of philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal: “*I would have written a shorter letter, but I did not have the time.*” In essence, brevity is the ultimate goal, as writing concisely demands more significant effort, thought, and refinement.

### Text formatting

Throughout the thesis, use 1.5 line spacing

Number the pages

Set page margins (upper, lower, right, and left) to 2.5 cm

Begin paragraphs with a horizontal indent, except when the paragraph follows a section heading

For more details on formatting figures and tables, follow the APA referencing style:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/>

### References

Whenever you report theories, empirical results, or comments found in references, it is essential to include proper citations within the text. Follow the APA guidelines (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>) to report references in the text and at the end of the thesis.

### Examples

#### *Journal article*

Carta, N., Carta, M., Rigoni, U., (2024). The countdown to carbon neutrality: Implications for passive investors. *Economics Letters*, 244. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2024.112024>

#### *Book chapter*



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Capizzi V., Carta N., Cavezzali E. (2025). Navigating the interplays between different investor types: a map of the entrepreneurial finance literature for future research. In D. Cumming, H. Hoque, & E. Kashefi-Pour (Eds.), “Raising finance: From traditional to new forms of entrepreneurial finance”, World Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1142/q0502>

### **Anti-plagiarism**

Plagiarism is when you use someone else's words, ideas, research, or discoveries without proper citation. As stated in its Code of Ethics, Ca' Foscari strictly condemns plagiarism.

The university provides a tool for professors to check proper source use. All graduating students must upload their final theses through their restricted area, and they will be checked for appropriate source use.

I recommend running a plagiarism check before uploading your final thesis. Your plagiarism score should be below 10%. If it is higher, you will have to revise your draft to remove any potential plagiarism.<sup>2</sup>

I will carefully review the anti-plagiarism report, and if the score exceeds 10%, I may reduce your final grade. In the most severe cases, I may ask to delay your graduation if the Ca' Foscari Code of Ethics is not followed.

### **Specific guidelines for bachelor's theses**

The student will agree on a proper timeline for sending each thesis chapter to the professor.

The VSM guidelines establish that the Bachelor's Thesis is a work carried out with substantial autonomy. The professor verifies that the contents and form of each chapter meet the standards required for final approval but does not provide analytical review and feedback on interim drafts.

When submitting interim drafts for approval, the student must always include an updated table of contents at the beginning of the document and a complete list of references at the end.

### **Specific guidelines for master's theses**

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<sup>2</sup> In some cases, a high plagiarism score may result from software errors, like when an appendix includes a regulation or a research paper excerpt that is correctly cited in the references.

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The student will agree on a proper timeline for sending each thesis chapter to the professor.

Approval of interim drafts typically takes at least two weeks from the delivery date because the professor will provide feedback on the submitted chapter draft. A section or chapter submitted, for example, on 25 March, will not, unless otherwise agreed, be considered for approval of applications from 1 to 10 April.

When submitting interim drafts for approval, the student must always include an updated table of contents at the beginning of the document and a complete list of references at the end.

**STAGE 5 – GRADUATION APPLICATION VIA THE STUDENT-RESTRICTED  
AREA**

I will approve graduation applications on the established dates (1 – 10 April, 1 – 10 September, 1 – 10 December) only for students who have already received the approval of a significant part of the work.

There is no general definition of “a significant part of the work”. I will agree with each graduating student on what I expect to receive before applying for graduation.

Approval of interim drafts takes time: a section or chapter submitted, for example, on 1 April, will not, unless otherwise agreed, be considered for approval of applications from 1 – 10 April.

**STAGE 6 – FINAL UPLOAD VIA THE STUDENT-RESTRICTED AREA**

Before making the final upload, the student must receive my approval according to the deadlines agreed upon from time to time.

Approval of the work does not mean that the evaluation will be good or excellent, but only that the final exam will be approved (if the thesis successfully passes the subsequent plagiarism check).

## STAGE 7 – WORK ASSESSMENT BY THE PROFESSOR

### **Bachelor's theses (from 0 to 6 points)**

The evaluation of the bachelor's thesis follows the criteria established by VSM and is graded according to the following scale:

- 5 points – Exceptional thesis
- 4 points – Excellent thesis
- 3 points – Good thesis
- 2 points – Decent thesis
- 1 point – Sufficient thesis
- 0 points – Barely sufficient thesis

An additional point will be awarded if the student achieves a weighted average grade of 26 or higher.

### **Master's thesis (from 1 to 8 points)**

Two scoring scales are used depending on the type of thesis.

#### *Review/Non-research thesis (1-4 points)*

Score 1-2: sufficient thesis. The thesis collects the reference literature in a partial/sufficient way. The student demonstrates sufficient/fair critical ability in framing the chosen theme and interpreting the sources collected.

Score 3-4: fair thesis. The thesis collects the reference literature in an extensive/complete way. The student demonstrates good/excellent critical ability in interpreting the sources collected, including empirical evidence.

#### *Research thesis (5-8 points):*

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Score 5-6: good thesis. The thesis reviews the literature extensively/comprehensively. The student demonstrates reasonable/good critical ability in the systematization of sources. The thesis presents a partial/satisfactory collection of primary or secondary data or the development of theoretical/analytical models of an acceptable level. The student demonstrates sufficient/fair ability to critically and proactively analyze the materials collected and the relevant theory.

Score 7-8: excellent thesis. The thesis reviews the literature extensively/comprehensively. The student demonstrates good/excellent critical ability in the systematization of sources. The thesis presents a good/excellent collection of primary or secondary data or the development of good/excellent theoretical/analytical models. The graduating student demonstrates good/excellent ability for critical and proactive analysis of the materials collected and the relevant theory.