



GUIDE  
to writing  
**The Final Paper**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAMS



## GUIDE TO WRITING THE FINAL PAPER FOR BACHELOR OF SCIENCE PROGRAMS

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## 1. Aims of This Guide

The aim of this guide is to support Bocconi University students in all matters relating to the writing of their final paper for Bachelor of Science Programs. However, for each specific Program there may be additional suggestions linked to the peculiarity of the subjects. If so, these will be provided by the responsible professors and will arise through the interaction between students and supervisors (tutor professors) during the drafting of the final paper.

## 2. The Supervisor (Tutor Professor)

It is your responsibility to find a suitable Supervisor (Tutor Professor) for your final paper. Implementing and writing the final paper may take longer than you first planned, so it is always advisable to find a supervisor early. The supervisor can be a professor with whom you did an exam or another professor from any Department who is carrying out research on topics related to the subject area of your final paper.

In order to find a suitable professor, you should start by viewing the research profile (and their publication record), which is available on the Bocconi website. Having figured out a possible theme for your final paper, and having identified professors who have the right experience, you need to make an appointment so that you can present your idea. Explain your interest to the professor to then obtain further advice and ideas. Avoid statements like "I haven't got any ideas so I am coming to you for some suggestions...."

You might need several meetings before you agree on the topic of the final work. Once you have agreed, it is useful to write down a description of the dissertation so that the idea is clear and well defined.

The supervisor-student relationship is one between adults. You as the student are the one who is responsible for the final work, and hence you are the one who must keep track of time and the work program. Consequently, you should avoid handing in your draft for corrections just a few days (if not a few hours) before the final deadline. Frequent interaction with the supervisor is important to check on the progress of the work and for additional advice. Avoid contacting the professor only once at the beginning and once at the end of the work.

## 3. Contents of the Final Paper

The final paper is the concluding activity in a Bachelor of Science Program and it is the means by which students demonstrate their maturity and ability to co-ordinate the concepts and ideas they have assimilated during their three years of study. Writing the final paper requires a great deal of effort. Therefore, adequate time must be dedicated to it. The resulting work must constitute a personal contribution and particular attention should be paid to citing references and quotations. Nothing must be copied from other sources. For this reason, the University has been equipped with a software to recognize any "copying" or improper use of source material. Should copying of the work be discovered, the student will be reported to the Disciplinary Board and appropriate measures will be taken.

Final papers are classified in two ways:

- **Theoretical / Review:** relating to a specific phenomenon or issue, one or more theories, or indeed a current topic with wider implications for the business, economic or financial sectors, etc. In such cases it is appropriate to describe the subject from more than one point of view and include comparisons of different approaches. A review is a critical assessment of the topic and not merely a description of it. The paper should of course be enhanced by references that supplement matters studied during the Bachelor of Science Program.
- **Empirical:** in this case, the paper is intended to analyze and verify the foundations of a hypothesis through statistical analysis and the examination of one or more business cases.



#### 4. Pinpointing the Topic

After choosing the subject area, you must pinpoint the specific topic, and often you do this with the supervisor. Always be aware that the problem is not finding a topic to write about ("what do I want to talk about in my Final Paper?"). With very few exceptions, every topic addressed in your program can be used to write an interesting final paper. The topic can be pinpointed by taking advantage of your internship experience, studies abroad, participating in events organized by the Bachelor of Science Program or by the University in general (seminars, congresses, etc.), by observing the world around you, by reading newspapers. The key problem is preparing one or more interesting research questions in order to answer and to understand the reasons underlying the work. By specifying the research question you also give the final work a clear focus – which is essential. It is always useful to ask these two questions:

1. Why is it important to study what I am proposing? (if the topic is not relevant, then it is not worth the Final Paper)
2. What do I want to demonstrate with my work? Keeping this in mind, even a topic which at first may appear "traditional" can prove to be innovative. Formulating one or more research questions related to the chosen topic means:
  - accurately defining the limits of the chosen topic;
  - pinpointing those aspects of the topic on which you wish to concentrate;
  - asking yourself the significance, in theoretical and applicative terms, of the chosen topic.

It is generally advisable to avoid topics that are too generic. For example:

- NO: "Private equity" YES: "The choice of subsidiary companies in the area of private equity"
- NO: "The MIFID directive"; YES: "The impact of the MIFID directive on the segmentation process of the clientele"
- NO: "Consumer behavior"; YES: "Consumer behavior in financial services or consumer behavior: the case of the Y generation".

But you should also avoid being too specific (often in this case data or supporting documents which can help us develop our idea are missing).

#### 5. Collecting Material

Once you have selected one or more relevant topics for a possible final paper you must structure a "work plan". In particular, you must concentrate on the following aspects:

- What information is available to answer my research question? Books? Articles? Data?
- What sort of analysis has been carried out on the topic I have chosen? What data was used? What sources do they come from?

There are several ways of searching for material. Clearly the library is the first step. In addition to books, journals and other documents, both hardcopy and online, it offers many specialized databases that could be very useful for empirical analyses. Appendix 1 illustrates some of the resources and services available at the Library for your bibliographic research for the final paper.

Another useful way is to use Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>). Here you can search keywords and Google Scholar will provide you with a list of academic publications (books, articles, working papers, etc.) relating to those keywords.

An important feature of Google Scholar is that for every published work, it also tells you how many times it has been cited. As a general rule, a large number of citations will reflect that the publications had an important impact on the field you are looking into. Few citations means that the work has had less impact (keep in mind however, that the older the publication, the larger the number of citations).

A careful and detailed list of bibliographical references related to the sources used for the final paper is always essential.

Appendix 2 illustrates the guidelines for citing sources in the text and how to correctly write a bibliography.

#### 6. Planning the Outline



After gathering the data it is advisable to prepare a 2-3 page outline including also the reference bibliography.

In particular, the outline must include:

- Aim of the final paper: you must clarify why it would be interesting to develop a specific research question. Its importance may be due to its topical interest, its importance, its national or global scale, its novelty (no one has ever researched the topic)
- Research Question: what do you wish to prove with your work?
- Method: descriptive analysis? Descriptive analysis and company case? What does the case wish to prove? How and with which reference sources? Empirical analysis? With which database? With which variables? What results are expected?
- Results of the work: what are the conclusions? How do I show the results I wish to achieve?

Once this is done, it is again useful to meet the supervisor to get a confirmation that you are on the right track.

## 7. Final Draft

A possible outline of the final paper – which should be adapted to the specific needs of your Final Paper and to the instructions of the Supervisor (Tutor Professor) – might be the following:

*Introduction* (paragraph including the final paper topic, the criteria for gathering of material, the aim, the “research questions”).

*Method.*

- Theory / Review: Review of the relevant literature and reference theories
- Empirical: Sample, representativeness, geographic area, time horizon, data collection criteria, data analysis criteria, and so on.

*Development:*

- Theory / Review: comments and reasoning on the existing theory with links and comparisons with other situations
- Empirical: analysis of the data collected and the information that has emerged

*Conclusions* (giving the answers to the “research question”, the limits of the work carried out, the implications for the theory and, if necessary, for putting it into practice).

*Bibliography.*

Students are urged to use appropriate, professional language even in acknowledgements to friends and family.

Format specifications of the final paper, further details on assignment procedures, submission and assessment of the final paper are available on the “Guide to the University” section Bachelor of Science Programs > “Final Paper and Graduation” published on the website at [www.unibocconi.eu/studentguide](http://www.unibocconi.eu/studentguide)

## APPENDIX 1: BOCCONI LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR WRITING THE FINAL PAPER

The Bocconi Library provides numerous resources that can be searched and accessed via its own website (<http://lib.unibocconi.it/>). In addition to more traditional hard copy resources (books and magazines), there are also a number of online resources for various fields of the economic, legal, and social sciences (databases, e-journals, e-books, Master or Doctorate theses, statistics, etc.). Detailed information can be found on the Library web pages.

The Library also offers services to support research and study projects, e.g. book and magazine loans (including inter-library loans of material not present in the Library's own collection), orientation and consultation for research projects, specialized assistance for databases, support and information on copyrights, group study rooms that can be booked in advance.

Furthermore, the Library organizes workshops to develop skills and knowledge of resources and research strategies needed for effectively working in groups, writing reports and preparing final papers. During the course of the academic year, specialized meetings



are offered to learn how to use databases, how to prepare bibliographic references and a bibliography, and how to use RefWorks. Information and program dates are available on the Library website.

## APPENDIX 2: GUIDELINES FOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC CITATION AND WRITING A BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Introduction

Bibliographic citations and bibliographies are the first requirements of every academic project. In addition to declaring the origins of the sources used, documenting the research carried out, and safeguarding intellectual property and copyright, bibliographic citation (or bibliographic reference) also allows the reader to identify and easily find the sources (books, articles, chapters, web documents, statistical data, etc.) to which the author refers. It is therefore crucial that each bibliographic reference contains the essential bibliographic data (author, title, year of publication, etc.) to ensure correct identification of the source.

The organization and the format with which the bibliographic references are presented constitute the style of the bibliographic citation. This is a standard model that must be strictly followed, as it indicates how to cite the sources both within the text and in the final bibliography.

There are different bibliographic citation styles, some of which are commonly used internationally (e.g. the Chicago Manual of Style, the Harvard System, the APA Citation Style) and they are essentially based on one of the following standards:

- ✓ author-date: bibliographic reference inserted in a brief form directly in the main text (in-text citations) + complete references in the final bibliography.
- ✓ classic: bibliographic references inserted in a brief form in a footnote + complete references in the final bibliography.

Once you have chosen a system and the relative style, it is important to use it uniformly and consistently throughout the document.

In this guide, reference is made to the author-date system, the most commonly used in scientific disciplines and in social, managerial, and economic-financial sciences. The classic system is more common in the humanities.

### A) THE IN-TEXT CITATION

Give just the surname of the author/s and the year the work was published, separated by a comma, are inserted directly into the text:

The concept of the 'grounded theory building' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) provides a detailed comparative method to develop theories, beginning with the inductive study of cases.

If the name of the author is already in the text (e.g. as the subject or object of a sentence), only the year of publication is required.

Famous examples of research based on case studies include the description proposed by Selznick (1949) of the TVA, or the study of the Cuban Missile Crisis by Allison (1971).



If the concept expressed refers to a document by more than one author, all the references are inserted in parentheses in alphabetical order, separated by a semi-colon. If there are various authors to which the concept can be linked, and if, for the sake of simplicity, only some examples are cited, their names will be preceded by "e.g.":

Case studies may concern one or more cases and numerous levels of analysis (e.g. Eisenhardt, 1989a; Yin, 1984).

If the author wishes to include an original excerpt from a source, copying it verbatim, the exact phrase must be presented in quotation marks. If the citation in quotation marks is a part of the cited text, the number or numbers of the page/s where the cited text can be found must be added, together with the indication of the author/date:

As noted by Bettenhausen e Murnighan (1986, p.352-3): "we observed the results of an experiment on group decision-making processes and the formation of coalitions..."

If there are more than 3 authors, it is sufficient to include the surname of the first author followed by "et al.", in italics (et al. is the abbreviation of "et alii" - "and others"):

(Bickman et al., 1998)

As sustained by Bickman et al. (1998)

## B) THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography is the list of all the sources cited in the text and used to prepare the project, each of which is given with all the bibliographic data necessary to identify and locate it. All documents correspond to a specific set of bibliographic data. All bibliographic references are then organized by author (or by title, if the authors' names are not included).

To save time and optimize the preparation of the bibliography, it is advisable to take note of the various sources as they are used, recording all the bibliographic data that will be required. Specific tools (citation managers) available online can collect information and bibliographic data on the documents found and automatically create a bibliography based on the different bibliographic citation styles. One of these tools, RefWorks, can be accessed online on the library website by all Bocconi/SDA staff and students.

### Author and year of publication

The indication of the author (or authors) and of the year of publication is the same for all source types (articles, books, chapters, web documents, etc.):

- surname and initial of the author/s' name;
- if there are 2 or 3 authors, the last one is separated by "and" or "&";
- if there are more than 3 authors, it is sufficient to include the surname of the first author followed by "et al.", in italics (et al. is the abbreviation of "et alii" - "and others");
- if the publication has an editor (or editors), indicate the surname and initials of the editor(s) followed by "(Edited by)". In there are 2, 3 or more authors, the same rules apply as for the single author;
- if the author is an organization (e.g. a public sector body, agency, company), include the name of the organization;
- the year of publication is given after the author/editor, between parentheses, followed by "a", "b" etc. if there are multiple documents by the same author published in the same year.



Examples:

Peacock, A. (2000)  
Antonietti, R. and Loi, M. (2014)  
Caprara, G. V. et al. (2001)  
Barbaranelli, C. and Vecchione, M. (2003a)  
Barbaranelli, C. and Vecchione, M. (2003b)  
Tooley, J. (edited by) (2001)  
European Environment Agency (2005)  
ISTAT (2010)  
Nikon Corp. (2016)

Examples by type of document

The examples given here refer to the most common types of document.

Articles published in scientific journals

Bibliographic data to be cited:

- Author/s
- Year of publication
- Title of the article
- Title of the journal
- Volume
- Issue number
- First and last page numbers of the article

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989a). "Building theories from case study research". *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 532-550.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989b). "Making fast strategic decisions in high-velocity environments". *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(3): 543-576.

Bloch, P.H, Sherrell, D.L.and Ridgway, N.M. (1986). "Consumer search: an extended framework". *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(1): 119-126.

Books

Bibliographic data to be cited:

- Author/s
- Year of publication
- Title of the book
- Edition (only if the 2nd or successive edition)
- If necessary, the title of the work in its original language (optional; between parentheses)
- Place of publication
- Publisher





Bailey, K.D. (1995). *Metodi della ricerca sociale*. 2. Italian edition. (Original edition: *Methods of social research*, New York: The Free Press, 1982). Bologna: Il Mulino.

Iraldo, F. and Melis, M. (2012). *Green marketing: come evitare il greenwashing comunicando al mercato il valore della sostenibilità*. Milan: Gruppo24Ore

European Environment Agency. (2005). *The European environment: state and outlook 2005*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

#### Chapters in books edited by other authors

Bibliographic data to be cited:

- Author/s of the chapter
- Year of publication
- Title of the chapter
- Editor/s of the book containing the chapter, with the indication "(Edited by)"
- Title of the book containing the chapter
- Edition (only if the 2nd or successive edition)
- Place of publication
- Publisher
- First and last page numbers of the chapter

Bickman, L., Rog, D.J., and Hedrick, T.E. (1998). "Applied research design: A practical approach". In: L. Bickman, e D.J. Rog (Edited by) *Handbook of applied social research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 5-37

#### Working Papers

Bibliographic data to be cited:

- Author/s
- Year of publication
- Title and subtitle of the WP
- Title of the series of the WP and number of the WP (if applicable)
- Editor/Place of publication

Easton, G. (2004). *One case study is enough*. Working Paper. Lancaster University.

Han, S-K., and Moen, P. (1998). *Clocking out: Multiplex time in retirement*. BLCC Working Paper, n.98-3, Cornell University.

#### Documents available online or in electronic/digital formats

Information and documents found and consulted online (articles, data, website pages, blogs, audio files, video files, slides, etc.) must also be cited. In addition to the same bibliographic data (author, title, ...) required for printed documents, sufficient information must be provided to allow online consultation even with specific devices (e.g. an e-reader to read e-books):

- link/URL
- data of last access



- if necessary, the format/type of resource (e.g. audio, video, EPUB file, etc.)

1. Article in an online scientific journal

Naik, P.A. and Peters, K. (2015). "True Synergy for Real Effects: How to Control Integrated Marketing Successfully". *GfK Marketing Intelligence Review*, 7(1): 34-41. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/gfkmir-2015-0005>> [last access: 10/09/18]

2. E-book available online

Viesti, G. and Prota, F. (2009). *Le nuove politiche regionali dell'Unione Europea*. Bologna, Il Mulino. <<http://www.darwinbooks.it/doi/10.978.8815/142856>> [last access: 10/09/18]

3. E-books that can be consulted with e-readers

Ravazzoni, R. (2011). *Liberare la concorrenza: lo stato dell'arte delle liberalizzazioni nel terziario in Italia*, Milan, Egea. EPUB File

NB – Here the URL is not indicated because this is a publication that can be consulted off-line using a mobile device (e.g. an e-reader).

4. Video

Ferroni, G. (1950). *Incontro con la Olivetti*. Archivio Nazionale Cinema d'Impresa. Video. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iobjKjjiJy4>> [last access: 10/09/18]

5. Single web page

Scarpetta, S. and Hijzen, A. (2014). "Articolo 18, l'effetto è sul contratto". *Lavoce.info*, 30 December. <<http://www.lavoce.info/archives/32176/articolo-18-leffetto-contratto>> [last access: 10/09/18]

6. Website

When the citation does not refer to a specific web page (see example No. 5, above) but the website as a whole, (e.g. a company website.):

FIAT. <<http://www.fiat.it>> [last access: 10/09/18]

