

GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATIONS

1. Assignment and choice of topic

When requesting the thesis, it is suggested that you not only be clear about the time frame you want to adhere to (when do you plan your graduation?), but also have an initial idea about the topic.

The research thesis consists of a comprehensive, critical, and original research work, demonstrating independent research skills, methodological maturity and judgment, and interdisciplinary legal knowledge; it has no page limit - indicatively it can be 100-150 pages (Law School) and up to 100 pages (School of International Studies).

Please check the latest regulations when the title is to be deposited (online) and when the thesis is to be submitted before the date set for the convocation of the graduation examination.

2. Research hypothesis, collection of material and start with the thesis

At the outset, the student(s) will formulate a research hypothesis in the form of one or more research questions (e.g.: What is my main interest? What would I like to demonstrate? How?) and discuss it with the lecturer.

Next comes the collection of material, which will be divided into two phases:

A first phase is used to explore how much material will be available and what areas are more or less "covered." For this exploration, the Internet is the most useful tool, but not sufficient on its own; in fact, what is needed above all is a systematic search in the indexes of journals specializing in the chosen subject area.

On the basis of the material found the student will prepare a separate index in chapters, assigning a number of pages to each of the chapters to indicate the weighting of the individual parts, which, together with the list of material found, will be discussed with the lecturer. This tentative index serves as a grid for subsequent research.

In the second phase, the collection of material will be deepened, based on the developed index, in the following ways:

- With regard to legal doctrine, it is advisable to begin by consulting the textbooks, legal encyclopedias, and the Dizionario Bibliografico Napolitano (ed. Giuffrè), which annually lists, according to analytical criteria, the articles of doctrine and monographs that have come out in the various fields. Bibliographical indications are also given in CD databases. Additional material (or indications of material) can be searched on the Internet.
- Regarding legislation, in addition to the indications derived from bibliographic research, it is recommended, for convenience, to conduct a search through CD databases and through the Internet, supplementing it with other traditional tools (paper collections of laws, law journals).
- As for case law, in addition to the indications derived from bibliographic research, it is equally recommended to start with a search through databases through the Internet, and then consult directories, maxims and law journals specialized in the area proper to the thesis.
- Additional material and guidance can be gathered through public administrations, through newspapers and non-legal periodicals, and through the Internet.

Regarding all sources, it is necessary to critically select quality material (WHERE is a certain information published? Reliable? Academic? Prestige? Plausible? ...).

This is particularly important with regard to material collected on the Internet (to be clear and explicit: Wikipedia is a very useful tool for initial orientation, but it will not be used and cited in the thesis as it will be replaced during research and written processing by other, more authoritative sources on which the same brief reconstruction of entries in Wikipedia is usually based).

On the basis of the material collected, the student will continually refine the index by inserting section and paragraph headings within the chapters and will bring the index up to date each time when discussing the progress of the work with the lecturer.

Taking cues from other people's theses or articles does not mean copying. However, the assessment of the thesis refers to the student's own thinking. Copying and plagiarism are prohibited (Art. 5 of the Final Examination Regulations): comply with this prohibition!

When sufficient material has been collected, writing can start.

3. Formal aspects of the thesis drafting

Structure:

The thesis must be divided into chapters and paragraphs, and possibly sub-sections, preceded by the index and followed by the bibliography (in which a list of legislation, a list of case law, and a list of other materials may be added).

It is preceded by an introduction, containing the objectives, method and content of the thesis, and followed by the conclusions, which constitute the synthesis of the work and some critical reflection based on the results (no new arguments may be introduced in the conclusions).

As regards the **formal criteria**, please refer to the Faculty regulations (Art. 4 of the Final Examination Regulations):

- double-sided writing;
- page margins 3, 3, 3, 3;
- Arial font: text body 12 (10 for notes);
- single line spacing;
- justified alignment;
- indent 1 cm of the first line of each paragraph.

It is advisable to avoid excessively long paragraphs, which make reading more difficult. English sentences are short and concise (much more so than in Italian).

Standards

When drafting the thesis, uniformity criteria should be respected, e.g. by using standards in the use of capital letters, abbreviations and acronyms. Foreign or Latin words should be written in italics.

4. Quotations, notes, bibliography

The information given in the quotations, notes and bibliography serves to facilitate the reader's reading or in-depth work; the indications must therefore be brief, but clear and complete!

The frequent use of literal quotations (from doctrine, legislation and case law) in inverted commas is to be avoided. References to doctrine and case law must be footnoted.

Footnotes can have several functions:

- they make the paper more agile by including in them profiles that would not be appropriate to deal with in the text;
- they provide useful indications for those who wish to examine certain topics in greater depth;
- they recognise the merits of those who have given hints, suggestions, useful materials for the thesis
- at certain points;
- help to understand the seriousness of the research carried out.

The final bibliography must include all texts cited in the notes with complete bibliographic indications; therefore, in the footnotes, citations may also be abbreviated (according to a coherent and uniform system, e.g. Last name of author/editor, year, pages); the short version should also appear in the final bibliography (in brackets after the full indications).

Further texts, consulted but not used in the notes, may be included as relevant. If a great deal of case law is cited, it may be useful to list the judgments in a separate part (in chronological order and by organ and/or degree of jurisprudence).

The list of cited websites should contain a brief explanation of the content of the relevant web pages – like a title (and, in brackets, the date of last consultation). A simple list of web addresses is completely useless!

Case law

The citation of case law must be complete, stating the judging body, details of the ruling, journal abbreviation, year of publication, reference page, e.g.: Cons. Stato, sec.V, 12 December 1998, no. 676 in Foro amm. 1999, I, p.234.

Legislation

The first citation in each chapter must be complete (type, date, number and title), e.g.: Presidential Decree No. 752 of 26 July 1976, Norme di attuazione dello statuto speciale della Regione Trentino - Alto Adige in materia di proporzionale negli uffici statali siti nella provincia di Bolzano e di conoscenza delle due lingue nel pubblico impiego). Subsequent citations may be in abbreviated form, e.g.: Presidential Decree no. 752/1976 or DPR 752/1976.

The citation of articles must allow the precise identification of the relative provision (e.g. Article 5(2) of Presidential Decree No. 752/1976).

Other materials

The materials used and cited must be compatible with a legal thesis. There are no predefined criteria, what is important is to enable the correct identification of the cited material.

For web pages, in addition to the full address, it is useful to indicate the date of the last consultation. Example: European Documentation Centre of the Autonomous Province of Trento: <http://www.cde.provincia.tn.it/> (12/04/2012). This can be done also at the beginning of the bibliography for all referenced websites.

5. Evaluation of the thesis

The assessment of the dissertation is the responsibility of the dissertation committee and depends on both the work submitted and the discussion in the dissertation session. The maximum mark for a research thesis is six points at the Law School (eight points at the School of International Studies).

The supervisor's proposal to the committee depends on a number of factors: quality and originality of the content, degree of depth, exhaustiveness of the search for material, completeness of the

bibliography, correctness in the use of notes, systematicity and form of the thesis, commitment in the elaboration, accuracy in the delivery of the individual parts.

6. Further information (last access: 21/09/2023)

Law School:

Laurea ciclo unico: The Regulations for the final exam for the single-cycle Master's degree in Law, issued by R.D. no. 6 of 8 January 2020, are available online. (https://infostudenti.unitn.it/alfresco/download/workspace/SpacesStore/1cd3a772-b437-44fa-9ef8-80e370c57d1c/regolamento-prova-finale_lmcu-giurisprudenza-2020.pdf)

CEILS Regulations:

- Regolamento prova finale CEILS (Italian)
(<https://infostudenti.unitn.it/alfresco/download/workspace/SpacesStore/a0def791-0d59-4eaf-9f14-783a80c9a330/regolamento-prova-finale-laurea-ceils-2021.pdf>)
- English (courtesy translation)
(<https://infostudenti.unitn.it/alfresco/download/workspace/SpacesStore/f200dd4e-2356-46bc-a153-3367fbcd1d8c/courtesy-transl-final-assessment-regulations-ceils-2021.pdf>)

School of International Studies

MEIS, MISS, ...: sedute di laurea (<https://www.sis.unitn.it/it/32/sedute-di-laurea>)