

University of Padova
Master's degree in Computational Finance

Master's Thesis Guidelines

(this version: 14 September 2026)

The Master's Thesis is the concluding academic work of the Master's Degree in Computational Finance. It must demonstrate the student's ability to address a relevant problem independently, using appropriate theoretical, quantitative, empirical or computational methods. These guidelines are intended to provide students with the guidelines for the preparation and academic standards expected of a Master's Thesis in Computational Finance. These guidelines complement the official University of Padova regulations: in case of conflict, the official regulations shall prevail.

1. Topic and supervision

The topic, objectives and scope of the Thesis must be agreed with the supervisor before the beginning of the Thesis work. The Thesis may be theoretical, methodological, empirical, computational or applied. It may also originate from an internship at a company, financial institution, research centre or other organisation. In that case, an external co-supervisor will be appointed at the hosting organisation. An internship-based Thesis must have the scientific and methodological content of a Master's Thesis: a descriptive internship report is not sufficient.

2. Language and length

The Thesis must be written in English. As a general rule, its length should be approximately 80-100 pages, including figures, tables and bibliography and excluding appendices. Please note that this is an indicative range rather than a formal minimum or maximum: departures may be appropriate depending on the nature of the work and should be agreed with the supervisor. Concision and scientific relevance are preferable to unnecessary length.

3. Formatting

The manuscript must be prepared on A4 pages and follow a professional and consistent layout. The standard format is:

- font: Times New Roman, 12 pt (standard LaTeX serif fonts at 11-12 pt are also acceptable);
- 1.5 line spacing;
- margins: 2 cm top and bottom, 3 cm left and right;
- continuous page numbering throughout the main text;
- figures and tables numbered progressively, with informative captions and source attribution when applicable;
- equations referred to in the text numbered consistently in the format (x.y), where x is the number of the chapter and y is the number of the equation within chapter x;
- one recognised bibliographic style used consistently throughout the Thesis.

The title page should report the University, the Master's Degree programme, the thesis title, the student's name, the supervisor and any co-supervisor, the academic year.

4. Structure and academic standards

There is no mandatory chapter structure. As a general rule, however, the Thesis should include an abstract; an introduction stating the problem, motivation, objectives and main contribution; the relevant literature or background; the methodology; the main theoretical, empirical or computational results; and a conclusion discussing results, limitations and possible further

developments. A complete, up-to-date and careful bibliography is required. Supplementary technical material may be placed in appendices.

The Thesis must contain an independent contribution by the student. The contribution may be theoretical, methodological, empirical, computational or applied. The Thesis is not expected to constitute publishable original research, but it must go beyond a simple summary of the literature or a mechanical application of established methods.

5. Empirical and computational work

Empirical or computational analyses must be documented in sufficient detail for the methodology and results to be understood and, whenever reasonably possible, reproduced. Data sources, data-processing procedures, model specifications, calibration or estimation methods, numerical choices and relevant software must therefore be clearly described.

External datasets, software libraries and code must be properly acknowledged. Code listings should normally be excluded from the main text and may instead be placed in an appendix or an appropriate repository. Subject to confidentiality, legal and intellectual property restrictions, the student must retain the data and code used to produce the results and make them available to the supervisor or referees upon request.

6. Academic integrity and Generative AI

All sources and materials used in preparing the Thesis must be properly acknowledged. Plagiarism, fabrication or manipulation of data or results, and the presentation of work produced by others as one's own are incompatible with the requirements of a Master's Thesis.

Any use of Generative Artificial Intelligence must comply with the current University rules and guidance. AI tools may support the student's work but may not replace independent reasoning, analysis and scientific contribution. The student remains fully responsible for the accuracy, originality and integrity of the entire Thesis and must disclose the use of such tools.

7. Final version

The student must allow sufficient time for the supervisor to review the manuscript before the official submission deadline. The definitive version must be complete, carefully proofread and professionally presented, and must be submitted in accordance with the procedures and deadlines established by the University and the Degree Programme.