



## **GUIDELINES FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMMODITY TRADING THESIS**

A final dissertation will allow you to demonstrate your newly acquired skills. Applying the knowledge acquired during the program, you will choose a topic and submit to a professor of your choice who has to agree to supervise your work (he can refuse). This project must allow you to incorporate the various dimensions studied throughout the program. Your final paper will be evaluated by the professor you have chosen as supervisor (and who has taught a module in the Master of Science in Commodity Trading, guest speakers are not eligible). Your grade will then be validated by the Director of the program.

The project represents 15 ECTS credits and you need to obtain 4.00/6.00 to succeed and obtain the credits.

### **CONTENT**

The Master accepts two types of thesis: Traineeship-based thesis and academic thesis. The main differences between the academic and the traineeship-based thesis are:

- the academic thesis will lead to a formal definition of hypotheses and some form of hypothesis 'testing' (through a process of data collection and analysis)  
It can also be theory driven for example apply a theory to a specific phenomenon
- the traineeship-based thesis will typically not define formal hypotheses, but will explore existing theories/concepts and derive some general ideas from these theories. These ideas will then be used to explore the situation/challenge/question the company or organization is facing.

The traineeship-based thesis is a result of the traineeship experience. However, the traineeship-based thesis is not merely a day-to-day report on the traineeship. The traineeship-based thesis will draw upon the student's capability to contribute within a practical setting, by applying a substantial portion of the theoretical and methodological background obtained throughout the Master's program.

### **PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENT**

#### **Phase 1: addressing the project**

You choose the topic with your work supervisor, if related to your work, and define together the objective of your paper. You then submit a proposal by email to the professor you have chosen as supervisor.



The selected topic should allow for a real application of tools and theories studied throughout the Master of Science in Commodity Trading.

It should meet the dual objective of the project:

- To produce concrete and applicable recommendations for your company or key actors
- To demonstrate the capacity to rigorously apply theories and tools learnt during the program.

In your final paper, you cannot afford to develop only one of the above. A project that makes recommendations without relying on a theoretically based methodology cannot be validated. In your paper, you will need to go beyond the course content. Likewise, a project whose methodology is satisfactory but whose conclusions are not applicable cannot be admitted.

### **Phase 2: planning the project**

You have to plan the project by defining the following:

- the nature of the project
- the objectives sought after
- the selected methodology
- the proposed work plan

You then submit your proposed work plan and structure to your work supervisor (if related to your work); once it is accepted, you must then submit it to the professor you have chosen as your university supervisor.

### **Phase 3: data collection, analysis, recommendations and actions**

As to the methodological aspect of your work, you must refer to data collected in the course, references suggested by the professors and the University library.

Candidates should:

- interview key players involved in the topic in order to identify the problem together;
- collect all the data required by the assignment according to the methods set out in the work plan;
- analyze the given data;
- identify recommendations to solve the problem, that is the subject of the project; giving special attention to conditions for implementing these recommendations;
- propose recommendations.



## **DEADLINES**

### **Topics and supervising Professors need be confirmed by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024**

Please contact the professor with whom you would like to do your thesis, explain to him your project and confirm to the Executive Director of the program your topic and the name of your supervising professor by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

**Please note that you need to upload the final copy of your thesis on your Intranet, once your supervisor has informed you that your thesis does not need any improvement. Please follow the procedure and enter the name of your supervisor who will evaluate and grade your thesis. You will be able to see your grade on your portal with your other grades.**

### **1st case - success of the Master June or September session 2024 (2 semesters)**

Students who will validate their Master thesis by **10 June or 30 August 2024**, as well as obtained all their grades, will be graduated on July or September 2024 and do not have to pay the fees for the next Autumn semester.

*(Thesis needs to be sent to the supervising professor latest 10 August 2024)*

### **2nd case - success of the Master on January 2025 (3 semesters)**

Students who will validate their Master thesis by **15 January 2025**, as well as obtained all their grades, will be graduated on February 2025. (It is necessary to pay the fees for the Autumn semester).

*(Thesis needs to be sent to the supervising professor latest 10 January 2025)*

### **3rd case of success of the Master on June or September 2025 (4 semesters)**

Students will have to validate their Master thesis by **15 August**, as well as obtained all their grades, in order to graduate in September 2025. The June or September session will be indicated on the top and at the end of the transcript. It is necessary to pay the fees for the Spring semester.

*(Thesis needs to be sent to the supervising professor latest by 15 May or 10 August 2025)*

### **4<sup>th</sup> case and last case of success of the Master on January 2026 (5<sup>th</sup> semesters)**

Students who will validate their Master thesis by **15 January 2026**, as well as obtained all their grades, will be graduated on February 2026. (It is necessary to pay the fees for the Autumn semester).

As long as you have not validated your thesis, you must pay your University taxes each semester. The Diploma will be sent to the postal address you have indicated in your GSEM portal. The diploma will be sent only once, please ensure that your details are always accurate.



If your thesis is not submitted within the deadlines, you will not be graduated and will not get your Master degree.

## **STRUCTURE**

The paper must be carried out in a professional manner and must include the following points:

- title page (including name of the student, name of academic supervisor grading the paper, title of master, Faculty logo)
- table of contents
- introduction/ executive summary (including purpose of the study)
- the topic of the project: statement of the problem (what the researcher wants to know or prove)
- theoretical framework and review of existing literature
- methodology (describes the methods used to collect and analyse data)
- analysis and data collected for the project and discussion of results
- conclusions, recommendations, and actions proposed
- a bibliography
- appendices (references, documents, surveys, raw data, etc.)

A standard report comprises **50 to 70 pages** ("Times" or other standard type face, 12 font, 1.5 line spacing), excluding appendices. Pages must be numbered. You will not be penalized if you write a few more pages but you will be if you do not have a minimum of 50 pages. The thesis must be done **individually**.

## **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION (For indication)**

- *Methodology 20%*
- *Use of theories 20%*
- *Recommendations for their implementation 20%*
- *Feasibility 20%*
- *Consistency of the overall argument 10%*
- *Quality of the presentation 10%*

## **NUMBER OF ECTS CREDITS**

The master's thesis is worth 15 credits in that it represents a work equivalent to 5 modules. When planning your thesis, you have to calculate that you will need roughly 200 hours of work. You need a passing grade (i.e. a minimum of 4.00).

## **ETHICAL CONDUCT AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Bear in mind that your project should be the result of work that is independently conducted, and that represents original research and critical analysis. Your work should:

- Provide a full and complete representation of any scholarly findings
- Credit the contributions of colleagues and co-workers.



## HOW TO QUOTE AND HOW TO WRITE A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Citing your sources gives authority to what you have to say.

You need to give credit in two ways: in the text, through the use of footnotes, and at the end, in the bibliography.

Example of a footnote:

The Bank of England reported that “in the credit bubble period, major banks securitized or syndicated 70 percent of their commercial loans within 120 days of origination”.<sup>1</sup>

When you paraphrase (i.e. when you say the same concept with your own words), you still need to quote your sources, but you won't use the inverted commas (“...”).

Example of bibliography:

Allen, L., J. Boudoukh, and A. Saunders. *Value at Risk in Theory and Practice*. Malden, ME: Blackwell Publishing, 2002. (for a book)

Allen, L. and A. Saunders. “Incorporating Systemic Influences Into Risk Measurements,” *Journal of Financial Services Research* 26, no. 2 (2204): pp161-191 (for an article in a journal)

WTO, Trade in Energy

[http://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/publications\\_e/wtr10\\_11june10\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/wtr10_11june10_e.htm) Retrieved

November 29th ,2010 (from the web)

There are different norms of citation such as the classical and the Anglo-Saxon; please ask the professor grading your paper which style s/he would like you to use.

### Every student has to consult the official directive on plagiarism

(<http://www.unige.ch/ses/telecharger/unige/plagiarism-directive-19092011.pdf>)

## ROLE OF THE HOST COMPANY SUPERVISOR

Your work supervisor should have enough expertise in the topic you have selected. S/he should make sure that the topic is of interest to your company and validate your proposal before you present it to the professor of your choice. Your work supervisor may ask you to present your final paper to other members of your company.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Students of the following intakes can see the thesis in the Master of Science in Commodity Trading office (by appointment only). No copies can be made.

Should a student wish to prevent any other students to see his/her dissertation, s/he should write “CONFIDENTIAL” on the first page.

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<sup>1</sup> Bank of England, Financial Stability Report no. 22, October 2007, p.32



## **PUBLICATION**

If you got a minimum of 5.5 for your thesis, you are entitled to download your thesis on the “archive-ouverte” website. To do so, you will need to click on the below link and follow the procedure. This is entirely up to you and it is not an obligation. If your thesis is confidential, then you will of course not disclose your final paper.

<https://archive-ouverte.unige.ch/home>

## **COPIES**

An electronic pdf version of the original thesis has to be sent to the supervising professor and a word version to the Senior Program Officer for review and acceptance.

## **TAXES/FEES**

You have to pay your fees until your success. No reduction will be granted even if you have completed your courses and only need to submit your thesis.

## **GSEM Graduation Ceremony**

The Faculty Graduation Ceremony is scheduled once a year in November. Once you have successfully completed your degree you will be invited to attend the Faculty Ceremony.



**UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE**

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GENEVA SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
AND MANAGEMENT