Figures are graphics objects, e.g. Excel graph (which should always be in vector format), bitmap drawing or screenshot, vector shape, or photograph.

A figure should be aligned in line with text, so that it forms a paragraph.

Using the *figure* environment you can insert PDF, EPS, PNG and JPEG images (and, with modern engines such as XeLaTeX or LuaLaTeX, most other formats supported by the underlying PDF renderer).