

## **Thesis Guidelines - Development Studies and Foresight**

### **1. Topic of the Thesis**

Students may choose the topic of their thesis in two ways:

- (i) by proposing their own topic, or
- (ii) by selecting a topic from the list announced by the department.

The first option allows the student to propose their own topic and, after consultation with the future supervisor, submit the specified topic in STAG.

The second option assumes that the student selects an area/topic from the list published on the [department's website](#) and, after consultation with the future supervisor, specifies the topic and submits it in STAG.

The topic must be consulted with the supervisor sufficiently in advance in order to formulate the thesis assignment.

### **2. Thesis Supervisor**

The thesis supervisor may be an internal staff member or doctoral student of the Department of Development and Environmental Studies (or the Department of Geography or other closely related departments), as well as an external collaborator of the department.

A list of potential supervisors (both internal and external), including indicative topics and/or areas of expertise, are published on the [department's website](#).

Alternatively, the student may choose an external supervisor not listed; in such cases, the choice must be approved by the Head of Department.

### **3. Deadlines**

#### ***Submission of the Thesis Assignment***

The thesis assignment must be uploaded to STAG by the end of March of the year preceding submission of a master's thesis.

After uploading the required details to STAG (see sections: MY STUDY – FINAL THESIS), print out the "DOCUMENT FOR REGISTRATION DIPLOMA STUDENT THESIS" by clicking on the hyperlink at the top of the table and have the materials undersigned by your supervisor. At the same time, in the line Internal Data – Approval status should be ticked Thesis registration finalized by the student

Use the following file name:

- *studentname\_assignment\_MT\_year* (i.e. Mr. Novak, who assigns in 2026, names the PDF as follows: „novak\_assignment\_MT\_2026“)

The document must then be sent by email to [eva.zwakova@upol.cz](mailto:eva.zwakova@upol.cz) with the supervisor in copy.

### ***Submission of the Thesis***

The thesis must be submitted to the department office in one printed copy in hard binding.

The latest submission deadlines are:

- Second Thursday in April – for May defenses (regular date)
- Monday of the last teaching week of the winter semester – for February defenses (students who are in third year of studies)
- First Monday in June – for August defenses

The electronic version of the thesis must also be uploaded to STAG. The student must also print the document "Information on the Student's Thesis" from STAG and submit it together with the printed thesis.

The student must also register for the thesis defense in STAG within the announced deadline (in the same way as registering for an exam).

**Further instructions regarding thesis submission are published on the department's website as the deadline approaches.**

#### **4. Change of Topic, Annotation, or Supervisor**

If the student wishes to change the thesis title, annotation, or supervisor during their studies, they must handle written request to the supervisor.

The change must be approved by the supervisor and subsequently by the Head of Department. Such changes are allowed only in exceptional and justified cases.

The student must then upload the revised thesis assignment to STAG and generate new "Thesis Assignment Documentation" to be signed by the supervisor.

Any change must be made no later than four months before the thesis submission deadline.

#### **5. Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis should contain:

- Title page
- Abstract and keywords (in English)
- Author's declaration confirming independent work and proper citation of sources
- Thesis assignment (and possible amendments)
- Table of contents
- Lists of tables, figures, abbreviations
- Introduction presenting the broader context, importance of the topic, and objectives of the thesis.

- Depending on the type of thesis, the introduction may either be brief and followed by a chapter presenting the theoretical framework and state of knowledge, or it may already include a discussion of the current state of research.
- Main sections typically include:
  - theoretical framework and current state of knowledge (if not already included in the introduction)
  - description and justification of the methods used
  - presentation and interpretation of results
  - discussion of results in relation to previously published research and limitations of the study
- Conclusion:
  - The author summarizes the results in relation to the research objectives and explains the significance of the work. The conclusion may also include recommendations for further research and practical applications.
- References (all cited sources)
- Appendices – optional

## 6. Types of Academic Theses

### ***Literature Review***

A literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the state of knowledge in a given field. It is based on collecting, analysing, and synthesizing existing academic literature and data in order to identify key findings, trends, and gaps in the research. A literature review does not merely describe existing studies but critically evaluates and connects them.

Literature reviews may be systematic or narrative. A systematic review is based on a clearly defined research question and a reproducible methodology. A narrative review allows exploration of broader research areas but places greater emphasis on analytical and synthetic skills.

### ***Empirical Thesis***

An empirical thesis aims to produce new knowledge through data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It may use quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. The thesis typically begins with a research question or hypothesis derived from the literature review. This is followed by a description of the methods used and presentation of the results, with emphasis on interpretation and linking findings to existing research.

### ***Practical Thesis***

A practical thesis focuses on solving a clearly defined practical problem. It begins with a thorough understanding of the problem supported by relevant literature. The thesis then presents the methodological approach and tools used to address the problem and proposes concrete solutions, recommendations, or strategies, including their expected benefits and possible limitations.

### ***Academic Essay***

An academic essay is an original study addressing a clearly defined problem and presenting a specific argument or thesis on how the issue should be approached. It may have a more flexible structure and literary style but must be based on strong academic knowledge and relevant sources.

## ***Theoretical Thesis***

A theoretical thesis develops and critically evaluates theoretical knowledge in a given field. It may propose new theoretical approaches, concepts, or models, or adapt existing theories to address a specific problem. The work is based primarily on critical analysis, comparison, and interpretation of theoretical literature.

The above typology is intended to guide students in thinking about the general character of their thesis but should not be interpreted rigidly. Many theses combine elements of different types. For example, empirical theses usually include a literature review, theoretical theses may draw on empirical evidence, and comparative analysis can be used across different types of work.

## **7. Formal Requirements**

### ***Length***

Recommended length of the main text: 10,000–15,000 words

The main text refers to the core body of the thesis (from introduction to conclusion), including footnotes and text contained in tables.

### Formatting

The formatting of the thesis should follow common standards for academic texts. The visual style should be consistent and restrained (e.g., moderate use of colours and fonts). The format is A4 and the main text should use 11–12 pt font.

### Language

The thesis must comply with current language standards. Serious grammatical, spelling, or stylistic errors may disqualify the thesis regardless of its substantive value. Academic writing style and typographic rules should be respected.

### Notes

Notes may be placed either as footnotes at the bottom of the page (recommended) or collected at the end of the thesis in a separate section.

### Citations

Citations must follow the standard rules and ethics of academic work. A consistent citation style must be used throughout the thesis.

### References

The reference list should include all sources cited in the thesis and should be arranged alphabetically by the authors' surnames.

### Tables, Figures, and Graphs

All tables, graphs, images, and diagrams must be consistently numbered and titled. If they are based on other sources, the source must be indicated and included in the reference list. Graphical elements may appear directly in the text or in an appendix.

## 8. Use of AI

The use of AI tools in theses follows the [recommendations and regulations of Palacký University](#). Generative AI (and other tools using AI elements) may be used as supporting tools to improve the quality of the text, especially in terms of language and style, but not for generating the intellectual content of the thesis (e.g., formulating conclusions or scientific arguments).

If generative AI directly influences the content of the thesis (e.g., diagrams, graphical abstracts, flowcharts, or the structure of the text), this must be explicitly acknowledged.

If AI tools are used only for stylistic or formal improvements, such use does not need to be explicitly acknowledged.

## 9. Thesis Defense

The thesis defense takes place before the final examination committee and is public.

The thesis is evaluated by the supervisor and an external reviewer appointed by the Head of Department.

The defense consists of the following parts:

1. Presentation of the thesis by the student (maximum 10 minutes)
2. Presentation of the supervisor's and reviewer's reports
3. The student's responses to comments and questions
4. Discussion between the committee members and the student
5. Evaluation

The final examination committee decides whether the thesis meets the required standards and determines the final grade based on the supervisor's report, the reviewer's report, the thesis itself, and the defense.

## 11. Publication

Submitted theses, including the supervisor's and reviewer's reports, will be published electronically in PDF format in the STAG information system and at theses.cz website.

### Recommended Citation Style

#### *In-text citations*

Sources are cited in parentheses containing the author's surname and the year of publication. If necessary, page numbers should also be included.

Examples:

According to Bostrom (2024, p. 182) ... or ... (Bostrom, 2024, p. 182).

Direct quotations should be placed in quotation marks. Longer quotations may be formatted as a separate indented paragraph.

### ***Reference list examples***

#### Books and edited volumes

Bostrom, N. 2024. Deep Utopia: Life and Meaning in a Solved World. Ideapress.

Hannah, E., Ravenhill, J. (eds.) 2024. Global Political Economy. 7th ed. Oxford University Press.

Ervine, K. 2024. The global political economy of the environment. In: Hannah, E., Ravenhill, J. (eds.) Global Political Economy. 7th ed. Oxford University Press.

#### Journal articles

van den Bergh, J. C. J. M. 2022. A procedure for globally institutionalizing a 'beyond-GDP' metric. Ecological Economics 192, 107257.

Blanchflower, D. G., Bryson, A. 2024. The gender well-being gap. Social Indicators Research 173, 1–45.

#### Reports and policy papers

Duncombe, R., Elabd, K., Sandefur, J. 2024. Avoiding another lost decade on malaria vaccines. CGD Policy Paper 348. Center for Global Development.

World Bank. 2024. Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024: Pathways out of the Polycrisis. World Bank.

#### Web sources

OECD. 2025. OECD Better Life Index. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Ritchie, H. 2025. Who would have won the Simon–Ehrlich bet over different decades? Our World in Data.

Milanovic, B. 2024. Should poor countries remain poor? Global Inequality and More 3.0.

## **12. Examples of theses from previous years**

At the following [link](#) you can find theses written by students of the department in previous years. These can serve as examples of how a thesis may be structured and written. When using them for inspiration, please focus primarily on theses that received strong evaluations (the supervisor's and reviewer's reports are available). Please also keep in mind that the expectations and requirements for theses may evolve over time; what was considered sufficient in previous years (e.g., in 2023) may no longer meet the current standards.