

# Thesis Project Application

Deadline for submission is by the end of the drop/add period

**Part I**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Credits for this project: \_\_\_\_\_ Semester: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade submission due date: \_\_\_\_\_

Total credits carried for the semester excluding this project: \_\_\_\_\_ GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

MA/MSc Program: \_\_\_\_\_ (Thesis #5095)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**Title can be of 50 characters maximum, including spaces. This is the title that will appear on your official transcript.**

**Part II**

Please attach a **document** with:

- a one-sentence description of your topic
- 2-3 key questions you intend to answer through your research
- a 1000-1500-word abstract of your project
- a working bibliography
- a copy of your graduate program thesis guidelines.

**Project Timeline:** Outline below your detailed project timeline to show the dates for specific submissions and feedback which has been established with and approved by your Project Advisor.

Date due:	Submission of what specifically:

**I have read and fully understood the Thesis registration policy outlined below.**

Student’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Part III** (required signatures: Project Advisor, Academic Advisor and Graduate Program Director)

Project Advisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Advisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Advisor: Do you approve the detailed project timeline stated by the student above?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list the methods of evaluation you will employ (tests, papers, critiques, etc.), and any other comments.

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**Academic Advisor's Name/Signature** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Graduate Program Director's Name/Signature** **Date**

*Once this form is completed and all above signatures are obtained, it must be submitted to the Graduate Programs office LM-203, or [graduateprograms@aup.edu](mailto:graduateprograms@aup.edu) for the Provost's approval.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies Name/Signature Date

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## Thesis Project Policy

### PURPOSE

This purpose of this policy is to instruct students, faculty, and staff of the administrative steps required to successfully register and complete the thesis component of any graduate degree. Additionally, this policy clearly defines the rules and restrictions concerning thesis supervisors and second readers, as well as all information concerning conflicts of interest.

### WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

This policy applies to graduate students who are completing a thesis in the pursuit of their degree. It is also applicable to all faculty, staff, and external members who are involved in the thesis process.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### I. ARTICLE I - REGISTRATION & SUBMISSION POLICY

- a. Students register themselves into the generic 5095 thesis course during the registration period.
- b. Students must submit the fully completed and approved thesis project application form to the graduate programs office by the first Friday of classes.
  - i. **Thesis Project Application:** This document must have the abstract attached, a detailed timeline shown, along with signatures of the thesis project advisor, academic advisor and program director. The graduate programs office will present it to the Provost for approval.
- c. Before the student submits his or her final thesis project, he or she must turn in a signed [Ready to Submit form](#) to the graduate programs office. It is at this point that the student declares his or her second reader. *The Provost reserves the right to deny any second reader request.*
- d. Dates by which the student must submit their final Thesis in the relevant registered semester:
  - o *Fall semester on 1 December*
  - o *Spring semester on 15 April*
  - o *Summer semester on 5 July*
- e. Students must follow the [AUP Thesis Presentation Standards](#) when submitting their final thesis.

#### II. ARTICLE II – THESIS PROJECT ADVISOR AND SECOND READER POLICY

- a. Thesis project advisors must be AUP faculty members who are on a permanent contract. They must have the status of *enseignant chercheur*. For more information about what constitutes an *enseignant chercheur*, please refer to the *definitions* section at the end of this policy.
- b. Second readers should also meet the same criteria as first readers. To declare the second reader, the student is required to submit the [Ready to Submit form](#). If the student feels very strongly that an external reader is needed, he or she must note this in the form and send a request to the graduate programs office. The Provost reserves the right to deny any petition for an external second reader.
  - i. The written proposal must be 500 words minimum and must be accompanied by the CV of the external second reader.
  - ii. If the proposal is not accepted, the student must be prepared and have chosen another internal reader that meets the guidelines of this policy.
- c. Most module instructors are on fixed-term contracts and are considered external readers. They *cannot* be thesis project advisors. Any specific queries about the eligibility of a potential thesis project advisor and/or second reader should be sent to [graduateprograms@aup.edu](mailto:graduateprograms@aup.edu)

#### III. ARTICLE III – CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

##### a. Conflict of Interest Definition

- i. A conflict of interest between a student and a thesis project advisor is defined as any personal or professional situation that would influence a advisor's ability to make a non-biased decision towards the student's work. This bias can either be in or against the student's interest. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

##### 1. Personal Relationship

- a. The advisor or second reader is a relative of the student.
- b. The advisor or second reader is the spouse of or has a close personal relationship with the student.

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2. **Professional Relationship**
  - a. The advisor or second reader has ever employed or been employed by the student.
  - b. The advisor or second reader is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the student.
3. **Research/Publication**
  - a. The advisor or second reader has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research.
  - b. The advisor or second reader has published work critical to the student's research (specifically naming student).
- b. **When to Declare a Conflict of Interest**
  - i. Any member of the school should promote the values that are represented at AUP and should therefore declare any potential or perceived conflict of interest. In the interest of transparency, all perceived conflicts of interest should be declared.
- c. **How to Declare a Conflict of Interest**
  - i. By signing this document, it is the primary duty of the individual involved to declare any potential conflict of interest as soon as the conflict arises. If the individual does not make the declaration of the conflict of interest, others, such as a colleague or manager, may become aware of the conflict of interest and should make a declaration.
  - ii. **To declare a conflict of interest:**
    1. An individual should declare any potential conflict of interest in writing to the program director, before the thesis application deadline.
    2. If an individual recognizes a conflict of interest after having signed the thesis application or ready to submit form, said individual should immediately contact his or her program director, who will then notify the Provost.
  - iii. When in doubt, please declare the conflict of interest. If the conflict is discovered and was not declared, all individuals involved are subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Student Handbook and Faculty Manual [page 25].
- d. **Procedure for Reviewing and Resolving Potential Conflicts of Interest**
  - i. All cases involving a potential conflict of interest will be brought before the Graduate Program Review Board.
  - ii. If the conflict of interest involves a member of the Graduate Program Review Board, he or she will recuse his or herself from the review and resolution process
    1. **NO CONFLICT EXISTS** - Where it is determined that there is no conflict of interest, this will be officially recorded by the Graduate Program Review Board. An explanation and any supporting documentation should be included as to why it was concluded that no conflict arose.
    2. **CONFLICT DOES EXIST** - Once a conflict of interest is declared, the school will determine the course of action. This may include requesting that the advisor/second reader:
      - a. be permitted to continue, where the conflict is considered to be insignificant
      - b. request the consent from all impacted parties that they can continue with their involvement
      - c. withdraw from any discussions in relation to the thesis project
      - d. withdraw from making any decisions in relation to the thesis project
      - e. stand aside from any involvement in the thesis project
  - iii. If any conflict of interest between the thesis advisor/second reader and the student is found, the advisor/second reader will not be remunerated for his or her work on the project. They will also be subject to any necessary action as detailed in the Faculty Manual. In appropriate cases, disciplinary action will be taken against the student as stated in the academic integrity section of the Student Handbook.

## IV. ARTICLE IV – THESIS EXTENSION POLICY

### a. Thesis Extensions A & B

- i. From the start of the semester in which any thesis project is registered, all graduate students may have up to three semesters (fall, spring, and summer) in which to research, write, submit, defend, and submit a bound final copy of the project to the AUP library in order to be awarded their Master's degree. Within the administrative envelope of this year, the actual dates of submission are 1 December in a Fall semester, 15 April in a Spring semester, 5 July in a Summer semester. The timeframes for marking and thesis defense are set by the thesis advisor in consultation with the graduate program director.

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- ii. After the original thesis registered semester, until the thesis grade is submitted, up to two thesis extension semesters may be requested (known as extension A - first extension semester and extension B - second extension semester) and the student will need to submit a [MA/MSc Thesis Extension Request Webform - Formstack](#). This form will require the student to submit the work that has been completed so far and which has been seen by their thesis project advisor as well as a re-adjusted timeline to the new thesis submission date. There will be no administrative charge for the thesis extension though any student who is living in France must pay the minimum required health insurance fees through AUP.
  - iii. The graduate programs office will oversee this request and the approvals by all parties concerned.
  - iv. The official graduation date will be at the end of the semester of the last registration - all 0-credit extensions included.
- b. Thesis Registration C**
- i. After this period of administrative thesis extension is over, if no final grade has been awarded by the grade submission date, as published in the Academic Calendar, the student may exceptionally request a fee-paying extension of one final semester for late completion by submitting a [MA/MSc Thesis Extension Request Webform - Formstack](#). The student must be able to document satisfactory academic progress on the thesis project and provide a detailed timeline for completion of the thesis - before the end of the extension semester. Adequate progress at this stage is defined as completing a 10,000-word draft of the thesis to the satisfaction of the thesis advisor and program director.
  - ii. The prefecture de police can request to see this form at any moment, including when the student requests a renewal of his or her titre de séjour. Extension for late completion incurs an administrative fee of 1000€.
  - iii. Any student who is living in France must pay the minimum required health insurance fees through AUP.
- c. Administrative Withdrawal**
- i. A student is administratively withdrawn from their thesis project registration and a grade of W is entered for the thesis if the thesis extension registration request form is not submitted, or if the extension request is denied, or if no final grade has been awarded by the grade submission date, as published in the Academic Calendar.
  - ii. Any student who has been administratively withdrawn and wishes to return and finish their master's degree will be obliged to apply to re-register for the thesis and for any outstanding course work. The application to re-register must be submitted to the program director and [graduateprograms@aup.edu](mailto:graduateprograms@aup.edu).
  - iii. Students who are permitted to re-register pay the current per-credit hour tuition rate for all outstanding requirements.
- d. Leave of Absence**
- i. Students occasionally have serious personal or health reasons for being unable to complete their thesis in a timely fashion. At any stage of the work on the thesis or research project, a student may request a leave of absence, and defer the completion of their thesis or research project.
  - ii. A student may request a leave of absence for a maximum of 6 months by submitting this form [Master Thesis Leave of Absence - Formstack](#) request details of the period of leave requested and stating the reasons for the request. He or she encloses a copy of the work they have completed on their thesis, approved by the thesis advisor.
  - iii. When the student is ready to return and to complete the thesis, he or she must contact the director of the graduate program and [graduateprograms@aup.edu](mailto:graduateprograms@aup.edu) There is a fee of €1000 for this re-registration and it is valid for one semester only.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

- I. Student:** The student must respect the rules as defined in this policy and finish his or her thesis to the standards of the program, within the given timeline. He or she must also declare any conflict of interest.
- II. Thesis Advisor:** The thesis advisor is responsible for the overall academic supervision of the thesis. This includes (in collaboration with the student) the timeline for thesis completion. He or she also must thoroughly check the thesis application before approval, as well as declare any conflict of interest with the student.
- III. Second Reader:** The second reader is responsible for evaluating the work of the student, and following the appropriate administrative steps for any conflict of interest
- IV. Program Director:** The program director is responsible for verifying that the thesis advisor is eligible, as defined in *Article II.a* of this policy. He or she will confirm this when approving the student's thesis project application. The program director also must approve the thesis project and timeline as presented in the thesis application. He or she must approve or deny any thesis extension A, B or C request (*Article III.a&b*), administrative withdrawal (*Article III.c*) or leave of absence request (*Article III.d*) submitted by the student. Finally, he or she is responsible for vetting all readers, and verifying that there is no conflict or interest.

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- V. Provost:** The provost approves or denies the thesis project application. He or she is also makes the final decision on any academic or administrative issue concerning the thesis. This includes exceptional cases, and any matter of academic integrity. The provost is also responsible for handling any case where there is a conflict of interest.
- VI. Graduate Programs Office:** The graduate programs office ensures that all administrative elements of this policy are properly completed. It is their responsibility to verify all thesis project applications, thesis advisors, second readers, thesis extensions, as well as any extenuating circumstances.
- VII. Registrar's office:** The registrar's office approves leave of absences and finalizes any administrative withdrawal.

## DEFINITIONS

- I. **Enseignant Chercheur:** An enseignant chercheur is a professor who teaches, does service, and research for the university.
- II. **Internal Thesis Project Advisor and Second Reader:** By the standards defined in this policy, an internal thesis project advisor or second reader must be on a permanent contract at the American University of Paris and have the status of *enseignant chercheur*.
- III. **External Second Reader:** An external reader is considered to be anyone who does not work at the American University of Paris. Anyone who works at AUP on fixed term contract (such as most module instructors) are also considered to be external readers.
- IV. **Conflict of Interest - Close Personal Relationship between a student and thesis advisor/second reader:** A close personal relationship between the student and thesis advisor or second reader is defined as any relationship that inhibits the advisor or second reader from having a non-bias view towards the project and grade. Examples include but are not limited to: spouse, immediate family member, close family friend, significant other, etc.
- V. **Conflict of Interest- Stand aside from any involvement in the thesis project:** *Any involvement in the thesis* is defined as any interaction concerning the project. This ranges from the slightest involvement, to being the thesis project advisor.

## APPROVALS & HISTORY

This policy was presented to the Graduate Program Review Board on Thursday, 6 May 2021 for edits. Its final version was approved on Monday, 17 May 2021.

## ISSUING OFFICE AND CONTACT

The policy was issued by the Office of Academic Affairs. Any questions should be sent to [graduateprograms@aup.edu](mailto:graduateprograms@aup.edu)

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Please refer to the [Health Office](#) for more details concerning health insurance costs and coverage.