

Thesis proposal guidelines

Externally funded research projects (all disciplines)

The thesis proposal needs to align closely with the description of the overall project with which the thesis is associated, and any specific focus and objectives of the doctoral research as outlined in the project announcement. The word limit of the proposal is 1,000 words.

PhD in Anthropology and Sociology

Your application must include a research proposal that describes:

1. The topic of your research and its relevance
2. A brief outline of the academic and conceptual debate(s) that inform your project
3. A research question, problem or puzzle
4. Proposed methodology: how you intend to carry your research
5. A justification of why the Geneva Graduate Institute and the PhD programme in Anthropology and Sociology are a good fit for pursuing your research. We encourage you to look carefully at the profiles of our faculty members before submitting your application to ensure that your proposed topic resonates with the intellectual orientations of the department.

The proposal should have a maximum of 2,500 words, excluding the bibliography. The bibliography should be no more than two pages long, and demonstrate your knowledge of current discussions in the field.

PhD in International Economics or Development Economics

Your thesis proposal should identify the specific topic you intend to pursue and demonstrate familiarity with recent developments in the discipline. The proposal should include

1. A brief description and motivation of the issue and why we should care about it
2. A summary of the academic literature, which demonstrates how the proposed research would add to existing knowledge
3. An outline of the specific steps of the research project

The outline should include a sketch of the underlying theoretical arguments, the specifics of the proposed identification strategy, as well as the data sources you plan to use.

The proposal should not exceed three pages (the references are not included in three pages).

PhD in International History and Politics

The doctoral proposal should set out clearly the candidate's topic and delineate a specific research question. The proposal should indicate why the issue matters intellectually, and its relevance to international history. The proposal should further discuss the issue's historical context, existing literature on the question, what the proposed research envisions as a contribution, the nature of the sources to be used and the methodology adopted. The proposal should be maximum 2,500 words in length.

PhD in International Law

The thesis proposal should be maximum 5,000-7,000 words and include an executive summary of maximum 400 words. It should include the following elements:

1. Identification of the research question, its justification and relevance
2. A literature review on the subject with an evaluation of the added value of your proposed research
3. An outline of the main elements and/or steps of the research plan
4. Relevant legal sources and instruments, including case law, if applicable
5. An outline of the research methodology: how you intend to carry out the research, according to what criteria, and how it is relevant and necessary to answer your research question
6. A succinct bibliography, ordered alphabetically, that demonstrates your knowledge of the field

Please indicate the total word count at the end of your proposal. The 5,000-7,000 word limit for the proposal includes the executive summary and footnotes, but not the bibliography.

PhD in International Relations/Political Science

The thesis proposal should cover the following areas in 3,000 words (maximum, excluding references and tables):

1. Your research interests
2. The specific question or topic you would like to pursue
3. A brief explanation of how this research topic pertains to a specific field of International Relations/Political Science and its literature, as well as the expected contribution it will make

4. Why the Geneva Graduate Institute and the PhD programme in International Relations/Political Science are a good fit for pursuing your research