



Advanced Development Economics

Master of Economics, 2nd year

Final assessment instructions

You are asked to write a **policy brief** on one of the issues covered in class.

You can either **propose your own topic** or **ask the teacher** in charge of an issue you are interested in to suggest a topic. In both cases, the topic must be approved by the teacher.

In order to ensure a balance between teachers, you are asked to consider **two topics**. In case of imbalance, **a random draw may be made**.

Your policy brief should not exceed **2,000 words (3 pages)**.

You can write in **French or English**.

Please find below more detailed **guidelines**.

Policy brief – Guidelines

What is a policy brief?

A policy brief presents a **concise summary of information that help the reader understand a complex topic**, and likely make decisions about government policies. Policy briefs may give objective **summaries of relevant research and suggest possible policy options** or go even further and argue for particular courses of action.

Most of the time, policy briefs are asked by an official serving on a committee who wants to make an informed decision but don't have time to research all the issue. Policy briefs are therefore usually created for a **more general audience than your peers or members of your academic field**. While written by experts of the field, they are aimed at a reader or policy maker who has a stake in the issue.

Content

A policy brief is a **short document exploring an issue and distilling lessons learned from research to a non-specialized audience**. It focuses on communicating research findings and (possibly) recommendations. It can also provide policy advice. It synthesizes research findings with **an emphasis on applying the research outcomes, and possibly assessing the research challenges** if relevant for future action.

However, keep in mind to use **clear and direct language** that a non-specialist reader would be more likely to understand: **use evidence, be concise, and organize your information effectively**. Your policy brief should not exceed **2,000 words**, corresponding to around 3 pages (depending on size and font).

Please use the course material and references, and your lectures' notes. You are not expected to make a comprehensive literature review. However, feel free to add additional contents, papers or elements from your own experience/knowledge, if relevant.

Format

Please find below an **indicative outline** for your policy brief:

- 1. Introduction and background:** it should include an overview of the issue, communicate its importance and describe the objective of the brief. It gives an overview of findings and prompts curiosity for the topic.
- 2. Approach, research and results:** it should provide a comprehensive summary of research on the issue, describe research and analysis and highlight the most important findings. It should not be overly technical and move from a general picture to more specific and relevant results.
- 3. Conclusion:** it should be based on research results, be concrete and ensure ideas are balanced.
- 4. Implications and recommendations:** they are derived from the conclusion and supported by evidence. Implications are softer and less direct than recommendations, they describe what the researcher thinks could happen. Recommendations (if any) take the form of an advice, they are what should happen and should be credible and feasible.

You might **combine sections or break them down** into more specific ones. You might also use **visual aids**, such as titles, sections, bullet points, etc. to make it easier to read and understand.