

Professor Martin Kubala
Dean of Faculty of Science
Palacký University Olomouc
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Reykjavík, 5 September 2025

Letter of Recommendation for Associate Professor Jiří Pánek

Dear Dean Kubala,

With this letter I want to express my strong support for the promotion of Associate Professor Jiří Pánek to the position of Full Professor at the Department of Development and Environmental Studies at the Faculty of Science.

I have known Jiří Pánek since his visit to the Department of Geography at the University of Iceland in 2015, when he had just submitted his doctoral dissertation. That visit led to our extended collaboration, which is still ongoing. I was immediately impressed by the evident enthusiasm and creative thinking of this young scholar, regarding both teaching and academic research. Jiří has since become a frequent visitor in Iceland, and I have made a couple of trips to Olomouc myself to work with him.

Our first collaboration started in 2015, in research about conditions for bicycling in Reykjavík, Iceland. We made use of his new and innovative *Pocitové Mapy / Emotional Maps* platform to collect data from cyclists. This was a great success and we eventually presented the results in a co-authored article (with dr. Pánek as the first author) published in the highly-rated scholarly journal *Cities*. We are currently collaborating on a similar project, this time with surveys both in Reykjavík and Olomouc, intending to compare the conditions for cycling and experiences of cyclists in these two dissimilar urban contexts. Again, we are using the *Pocitové Mapy* platform for data collection, and I have benefited greatly from the experience of dr. Pánek in analysing the resulting geographical data.

Another project that I want to highlight is a short intensive course, *Geospatial technologies in hazard research and response*, that was taught in Iceland in 2022. Designed for graduate students, the course was a joint effort of the University of Iceland, Palacký University Olomouc, and University of Innsbruck, and supported by the Aurora university consortium. Dr. Pánek took active part in shaping the content of the course and then came to Iceland to teach in it. According to student reviews, his creativity and enthusiasm in teaching was much appreciated. This resulted in an article focused on the teaching aspect of the course, which was published in the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. Dr. Pánek initiated this and was the first author of this article.

Based on my positive experiences of his teaching abilities, I suggested Jiří as a potential teacher in cartography and GIS analysis at the University Centre of the Westfjords, a small but very international college located in Ísafjörður, Iceland, which offers degrees at the Master level. The directors of the Master programmes did recruit him to teach this intensive course for some years now. They have spoken highly of his teaching input.

More examples could be mentioned, but suffice to say that I have nothing but good experiences of dr. Jiří Pánek. Not only is he an exceptionally energetic and gifted scholar, but also a very nice and affable person who gets along well with people around him. I can unreservedly give my highest recommendation for him to be offered a position of Full Professor at Palacký University Olomouc.

Sincerely,

Karl Benediktsson (PhD)
Professor of Geography