

# **Master in Comparative Social Research**

## **Master thesis**

### *Requirements and Guidelines*

#### **1. General info on the Master thesis**

- 1.1. The Master thesis is a compulsory part of The International Master in Comparative Social Research.
- 1.2. The study plan is designed so that the thesis submission falls on Module 4 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study. The submission and defense of the thesis have a combined value of 24 ECTS.
- 1.3. Students must attend the MA thesis workshop (HIC) during Module 3 and Module 4 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, where they get regular feedback on their progress from the instructor and their peers.

#### **2. Topic and supervisor choice**

- 2.1. The main supervisor of student's MA thesis must be an HSE staff member (from any department). A student can have a second supervisor outside of HSE (for example from the organization where he/she had his/her internship).
- 2.2. The student must be the only one author of the thesis.
- 2.3. The student should attend a consultation with the program director during the Module 1 of the 1<sup>st</sup> year of study, discussing possible research topics and thesis supervisors. The student then will choose his topic and his thesis supervisor and submit a printed and filled in Thesis Topic and Supervisor Application Form (Appendix 2) to the program manager on the last week of Module 4 of the 1<sup>st</sup> year. The form should indicate the thesis title in Russian and English. Both the student and the supervisor should sign the application form. The student can provide a scanned copy of the form to the MA program manager in case he or she is participating in the student mobility at the time the form is to be submitted.
- 2.4. Upon the approval of the chosen topic by the academic council of the Master's program, the program manager issues an order on the topic and supervisor for each student. The Academic council may recommend that the student makes

changes to the topic. The order is prepared by the first day of Module 1 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> academic year. The student may file a claim for topic or supervisor change (Appendix 3 and 4) no later than one week before the end of Module 1 of the second year.

### **3. Thesis supervision and student interaction**

The student and the supervisor agree on the time schedule for thesis completion. According to HSE regulations the main elements are:

- Thesis project proposal (which describes the relevance and structure of the work plan, a list of the main references for this work, expected result), which has to be submitted to the academic council within the first week of module 2 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> academic year. (see Appendix 1)
- Submission of a first draft by the end of Module 3 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> academic year and feedback on it by the supervisor in 2 weeks after submission.
- Final text submission of the thesis to the supervisor and the external reviewer by May 15
- “Anti-plagiat” (or relevant English-language anti-plagiarism software) text check-up by May 15 and attached to the thesis
- Feedback and grading from the thesis supervisor by May 25
- thesis defense in 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June

### **4. Thesis content and structure**

The thesis for the CSR Master’s program must meet the following characteristics:

#### **4.1. General requirements**

- The coursework is completed in English.

#### **4.2. Thesis contents**

- The thesis must be between 12 and 16 thousand words.
- The thesis must be of the highest scientific standards of ethics and research (adequately and accurately citing all relevant sources).
- The thesis must include substantial original content produced by the student, including an obligatory and profound empirical part as core of the thesis.

- If advised by the thesis supervisor, the thesis should be proof read by the HSE's Academic Writing centre before submission.

#### 4.3. Thesis structure

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. List of Abbreviations (if included)
4. Introduction
5. Main Body (components: chapters, sub-chapters, etc.)
6. Conclusion
7. Bibliography
8. Appendices and Annexes (if included)

- MA Thesis should be submitted in one single file

### **5. Grading, re-examination and appeal**

According to the HSE regulations, the final grade is made up by 1) the grade of the thesis supervisor, 2) the grade by an external reviewer (who must be a professor, but must not hold a position at HSE), and 3) the grade for oral defense of the thesis before the dissertation committee (which consists of no less than 3 professors at HSE).

- 5.1. The student must submit a hard copy and an electronic file of the completed thesis to the thesis supervisor, the external reviewer and the Master's program manager. The report from the "Anti-plagiat" or other relevant anti-plagiarism software should be attached.
- 5.2. The thesis supervisor and the external reviewer assess the final version of the thesis on a ten-point scale and also give more detailed feedback according to a review template (Appendix 5).
- 5.3. The final grade will be given by the dissertation committee, which will base its decision on the supervisor's grade, the reviewer's grade and the grade for defending the thesis before the committee.

Special attention will be paid to the following criteria:

- Adequacy of thesis topic and the contents of the research, both of which should lay clearly in the field of comparative sociology
- Fulfillment of goals and objectives of the research project

- Originality and novelty of the thesis
  - Adherence to professional ethics and citation standards
  - Level of student's personal contribution into the topic development
  - Thesis formatting
- 5.5. In the case where the thesis is graded less than 4 on a ten-point scale the student will not get awarded ECTS points. The student is expected to resubmit the thesis in the next module. The student may resubmit the thesis only once free of charge.
- 5.6. The student may contest the grade for the thesis following the general appeal procedures. The student may file an appeal to the academic supervisor of the program within 3 working days upon receiving the grades with detailed grounds for appeal. The appeal committee will make a decision within 3 working days.

## **6. MA thesis storage**

The Study Office of the Master's program stores copies of coursework for 3 years (either in the form of hard copies or electronic files).

## **7. Formatting of the MA thesis**

### *Text format*

- 7.1. Headings of sections
- Table of Contents, List of Abbreviations, Introduction, Conclusion, References, Appendices, and Annexes.
  - Times New Roman 16, bold, aligned left, not numbered.
  - Headings of chapters: Times New Roman 14, bold, aligned left, numbered (1, 2, etc.).
- 7.2. Headings of sub-chapters and sub-sub-chapters
- Times new Roman 12, bold, aligned left, numbered (1.1, 1.1.1, 1.2, etc.).
- 7.3. Paragraphs
- Each paragraph should be from 10 to 15 lines (on average). There should be no spacing between a paragraph and the following one.

7.4. Main text:

- Times new Roman 12, spaced 1.5

7.5. Block quotations

- Times New Roman 11, single-spaced, justified, each line indented left.

7.6. Footnotes

- Times New Roman 11, single-spaced, aligned left, no first line indentation.

7.7. Page numbers

- All the pages of the file should be counted and listed.

7.8. Margins

- Left, right – 3 cm.
- Bottom, top – 2,01cm.

7.9. Bibliography

- Entries should be categorized and alphabetized.
- Times New Roman 14, aligned left, single-spaced with spacing between each entry and the next one.
- No first line indentation, no numbering, no bullet points.

7.10. Page numbering

- Page numbers start from the Table of Contents (page 2) and end with the Bibliography.
- Appear at the bottom of the page, centered.

7.11. Page break between sections

- Page break between sections, e.g. between the Table of Contents and the List of Abbreviations (if included), between the List of Abbreviations, list of tables, list of figures and Introduction, between the Introduction and the Main Body, between the Main body and the Conclusion, between the Conclusion and the Bibliography, between the Bibliography and the Appendixes or Annexes (if included).
- Page break at the end of each chapter (i.e. start each chapter on a new page) is required.

## *Citations/ References*

- 7.12. APA (American Psychological Association) citation regulations apply (<http://www.apastyle.org/manual/index.aspx>).
- 7.13. Citations in Text – one author / two authors
- In-text citations are placed within sentences and paragraphs.
  - All last names occur in the text.
  - Names are connected with “&” (Muller & Smith, 2014).
  - Names of the authors or the date might be part of the statement, in this case only missing information is given in parentheses.
- 7.14. Citations in Text – more than 2 authors
- In-text citations are placed within sentences and paragraphs.
  - All last names occur in the text when reference is made first.
  - Name of the author or the date might be part of the statement, in this case only missing information is given in parentheses.
  - In subsequent citations the first author’s name occurs followed by “et al.”
- 7.15. Internet references
- The same rules apply as for printed references.
  - Online references have to show the correct and full link and to be accompanied by the statement “last accessed” including date of accessing the reference.
- 7.16. Reference List
- Bibliography includes only references cited in the text.
  - All references cited must be included in the bibliography.
  - References should be in alphabetical order by authors' last names.

## *Appendix*

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Typical structure of research proposal (Synopsis)**

- Title page with the topic of research;
- Description of the research problem and formulation of the key research question or hypothesis (related to the topic on the title page), which both must lie in the field of comparative sociology.
- Contribution and relevance of the research problem/question; the need for conducting the master thesis research;
- Literature review on the proposed research problem: should include literature and sources of different types both in Russian and English. The literature review should include not less than 30 sources. The aim of this part is to analyze the scope of existing research of the problem and to outline where the existing research is deficient or inconclusive, so that your research fills a gap in the literature.
- Research tasks which are needed for achieving the aim of research (two or three major tasks, usually);
- Theoretical framework and methodological approaches of the research; do not simply list the approaches, show how they will help to fulfill your research tasks and achieve its aim;
- Research methods and sources of data/information; Outline the analytical techniques and empirical models you will use.
- Roadmap: explain the structure of your work and the analytical steps you will take (brief overview of all parts);
- If applicable, give an overview of the information sources: their limitations, bias, scope;
- If applicable, specify the choice of time period and geographical scope of the research;
- If applicable, outline theoretical and practical value of the work; major conclusions for the thesis defense; specify the choice of cases for analysis.

## Appendix 2 MA Thesis Topic and Supervisor Application Form

Академическому руководителю основной образовательной Программы магистратуры «Сравнительные социальные исследования» по направлению «Социология»/  
To the Academic Supervisor of Master in Comparative Social Research

От студента курса группы/from student, year of study and group number

ФИО/name surname \_\_\_\_\_

### ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ/ APPLICATION

Прошу утвердить мне тему выпускной работы/ I submit for your approval the topic of my MA thesis. Тема на русском языке/ topic in Russian:

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Тема на английском языке/Topic in English:

(все слова в названии темы с большой буквы кроме артиклей и предлогов/capitalize all words except for articles and prepositions)

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и назначить научного руководителя/ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

(уч. степень, звание, Ф.И.О./degree and title, name) департамента/of the department

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Согласие научного руководителя/Signature of the Supervisor

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(подпись/signature)

Date

Подпись студента/Signature of the student

### Appendix 3 MA Thesis supervisor change

Академическому руководителю основной образовательной Программы магистратуры «Сравнительные социальные исследования» по направлению «Социология»/  
To the Academic Supervisor of Master in Comparative Social Research

От студента курса группы/from student, year of study and group number

ФИО/name surname \_\_\_\_\_

#### ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ/ APPLICATION

Прошу изменить ранее назначенного научного руководителя выпускной работы на/ I would like to submit a request for MA thesis supervisor change

\_\_\_\_\_.

Согласие научного руководителя/Signature of the Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

(подпись/signature)

Date

Подпись студента/Signature of the student

Научный руководитель/Supervisor	Научный руководитель/Supervisor
_____	_____
(Подпись/Signature)	(Подпись/Signature)
_____	_____
(ФИО/Name)	(ФИО/Name)
_____	_____
(Дата/Date)	(Дата/Date)

## Appendix 4 MA Thesis topic change

Академическому руководителю основной  
образовательной программы магистратуры  
«Политический анализ и публичная политика»  
To the Academic Supervisor of Master in Political  
Analysis and Public Policy

От студента курса группы/ from student, year of  
study and group number

ФИО/ name surname \_\_\_\_\_

### ЗАЯВЛЕНИЕ/ APPLICATION

Прошу утвердить мне измененную тему выпускной работы/ I submit for your approval the  
updated topic of my coursework

Тема на русском языке/ topic in Russian: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Тема на английском языке/ Topic in English:

(все слова в названии темы с большой буквы кроме артиклей и предлогов/ capitalize all words except for  
articles and prepositions)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Согласие научного руководителя/ Signature of the Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

(подпись/ signature)

Date

Подпись студента/ Signature of the student

## Appendix 5 MA Thesis review template

Review  
of a Master thesis by a student of the  
HSE International Master Program “Comparative Social Research”

Review by ☐ supervisor ☐ external reviewer

Author of MA thesis:

Titel of MA thesis

		Evaluation (out of 10 points)
1.	Existence and validity of the research problem	
2.	Correctness and validity of the methodology (goal, objectives, assumptions, etc.)	
3.	Correct use of methods of data analysis	
4.	Breadth of included scientific literature and depth of its elaboration	
5.	Logic, sequence of presentation, clarity, precision of language	
6.	Meaningful interpretation of the results	
7.	Neatly presented text (including references, quotes, graphs, tables)	
8.	Disclosure of topics, complete collection of materials, the relationship of individual parts	
9.	Novelty and originality of the obtained results	

The absence of violations of academic standards: ☐ Yes ☐ No

<b>In total: Recommended grade for MA thesis</b>	
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## **Additional Comments**

### **Strengths of the thesis**

### **Weaknesses of the thesis**

### **Review prepared by**

(Name, position, date)