

Appendix
to HSE Directive
No. 6.18.1-01/2903-13 dated March 29,
2016

APPROVED
by HSE Academic Council
Minutes No. 03 dated February 2, 2016

Regulations
for Final State Certification of Students of Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Level
Programmes at National Research University Higher School of Economics

DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1. "HSE/the University" refers to National Research University Higher School of Economics;
2. The "FSC" is final state certification;
3. State examination is a form of the FSC;
4. The State Certification Board ("SCB") is established for holding FSC;
5. The Local State Certification Board ("Local SCB") is established for holding specific state examinations;
6. The presidium of the state examination board ("SCB Presidium") is established for summarizing the results of FSC examinations;
7. "AC" refers to the appeals committee;
8. Thesis is the final graduation paper;
9. LMS ("learning management system") is a platform for providing online support to HSE's educational processes;
10. "ASAV" is a comprehensive academic information system designed for perspective students, current students, doctoral students and alumni;
11. "Degree programme" refers to programmes at the Bachelor's, specialist and Master's level in all areas of study at HSE, including part-time and extramural undergraduate programmes offered by the University and its affiliated campuses to students who have completed vocational education;
12. A "student" is an individual studying on a degree programme.
13. A "graduate" is an individual who has been admitted to a degree based on their FSC results and a higher education degree certificate with a respective qualification;
14. The "programme office" is a curriculum support unit responsible for providing administrative support to processes related to studies within a given programme, including part-time and extramural undergraduate programmes offered to students

- who have completed vocational education;
15. A “programme coordinator” is the head of the programme office of a given degree programme, or an officer responsible for providing administrative support to processes related to study within a given programme;
 16. “Regulations for Term Papers and Theses” are regulations for term papers and theses prepared by students at the Bachelor’s, specialist and Master’s level at HSE;
 17. “Guidelines for Term Papers and Theses Preparation” are standards and recommendations for the preparation and evaluation of term papers and theses developed by degree programmes/groups of degree programmes pursuant to Regulations for Terms Papers and Theses;
 18. “Campus” may refer to HSE’s main campus in Moscow or any HSE-affiliated branch/campus;
 19. A “faculty” is a subdivision of the University (including HSE’s affiliated campuses) which is engaged in the implementation of degree programmes;
 20. “Faculty dean” refers to the head of a subdivision involved in the implementation of degree programmes, including those of HSE’s affiliated campuses;
 21. HE FSES refers to federal state educational standards of higher education and/or educational standards for higher education set forth by HSE;
 22. A “department/school” is a unit inside a HSE faculty or other subdivision (e.g., department, school, institute, etc.) responsible for the faculty’s planning, teaching and research activities, as well as the provision of administrative support for such activities.
 23. “Academic staff” refers to HSE faculty members and researchers;
 24. “Designated vice rector” is the vice rector for academic affairs in charge of HSE’s degree programmes.

1. General Provisions

1.1. These regulations set forth the rules and procedures for holding FSC for students enrolled in degree programmes of all modes of study, implemented at HSE and its affiliated campuses.

1.2. FSC is mandatory for all students at the end of their degree programmes.

1.3. FSC of HSE students must be held for all accredited degree programmes.

1.4. Students, who have complied with their curriculum or individual curriculum in a given degree programme without academic failures, are admitted to the FSC process.

1.5. FSC may comprise one or several state examinations of the following types:

1.5.1. state examination:

- final examination in a given course¹;
- final interdisciplinary examination in a given field of study (concentration)

(hereinafter, referred to as the “final interdisciplinary examination”)².

¹ The final examination is aimed at evaluating the student’s academic progress in the given course of the degree programme and covers the entire course content, as stipulated by respective the HE FSES.

² The final interdisciplinary examination is aimed at evaluating students’ progress achieved in the course of general professional and special training. Along with requirements to the contents of individual courses, it should also cover general requirements for final year students, stipulated by HE FSES for this field of study (concentration). The final interdisciplinary examination helps to reveal and evaluate the graduating student’s theoretical base necessary for solving professional tasks and competency for career development in principal focus areas of their chosen profession.

1.5.2. thesis defense.

1.6. The list of mandatory state examinations, incorporated the FSC process for students of a given degree programme, is defined in the HE FSES, which, in turn, serves as the basis for delivering such a programme in the “Programme Structure Requirements” section,

1.7. Defense of theses is a mandatory part of the FSC process.

1.8. Online tools or remote access technologies can be used for state examinations. Faculty deans shall decide whether online means of communication or remote access technologies may be appropriate in any particular case based on the recommendations of an academic council / academic supervisor (in the absence of an academic council) of a given degree programme. Such decisions must be fixed in a directive for state examination. Personal identification of students or SCB members taking part in the FSC process will be remotely ensured by the secretary of the SCB.

1.9. Annotations to theses in Russian³ and English, as well as the texts of term papers and theses, shall be published on the HSE corporate website (portal) (pursuant to HSE bylaws).

2. Establishment of the State Certification Board (SCB)

2.1. The State Certification Board (SCB) is responsible for holding Final State Certification (FSC).

2.2. The SCB may be established for each degree programme implemented by a faculty or for a group of degree programmes within the same level of education and/or field of study. The composition of the SCB shall be determined by a decision of the faculty’s academic council / dean (in the absence of an academic council). The SCB may be established for a group of degree programmes within the same level of education and fields of study, implemented within different faculties. In such cases, the decision is made by mutual agreement of academic councils/deans (in the absence of an academic council) of faculties involved in the implementation of degree programmes for the same group.

2.3. The SCB is responsible for:

2.3.1. defining whether the level of students’ training corresponds to HE FSES requirements;

2.3.2. making a decision on awarding a degree and a degree certificate of higher education with a respective qualification based on a student’s FSC results;

2.3.3. developing recommendations based on the results of the SCB’s work in order to improve student training and instruction.

2.4. A SCB chairperson must be appointed no later than December 31 in the year preceding the FSC process. He/she must be nominated from persons other than HSE staff. Furthermore, they must hold a doctorate degree (Doctor of Sciences), PhD and (or) an academic title of professor, or be recognized as a leading expert/representative of employers/professional associations in respective fields (hereinafter, referred to as “employers”). SCB chairpersons are approved by the HSE Academic Council upon the recommendation of the designated vice rector on the basis of decisions made by respective academic councils /deans of faculties (in the absence of an academic council). The Studies Administration Office of the Office of Degree Programmes (hereinafter, the

³ If theses are produced in a foreign language, its annotation shall be prepared and published in a foreign language and English. If theses are produced in English, the annotation and text shall be prepared and published in English.

“Studies Administration Office”) is responsible for preparing a consolidated proposal with a list of potential SCB chairpersons.

2.5. In order to replace an already approved SCB chairperson, the academic council/dean of a given faculty (in the absence of an academic council) must propose another candidate and thusly send a proposal to the Studies Administration Office. The Studies Administration Office then approaches the HSE Academic Council with a proposal to make changes to the approved list of SCB chairpersons for the current calendar year.

2.6. The SCB shall include at least two representatives of employers. Other SCB members shall be appointed from among the academic staff of HSE and/or other educational/research organisations. They must hold an academic title and /or an academic degree, including a PhD.

2.7. The SCB’s authority shall be valid up until the end of the calendar year when its composition is finally approved.

2.8. Several local SCBs may be organized from SCB members for the purpose of holding FSC for a particular degree programme, in accordance with the list of state examinations included in the FSC for students of the programme in question:

- 2.8.1. a local SCB for holding a final exam in an individual course;
- 2.8.2. a local SCB for holding a final inter-disciplinary exam in a field of study;
- 2.8.3. a local SCB for the defense of thesis;

2.9. Upon the decision of a faculty’s academic council, several local SCBs may be organised for a single state examination.

2.10. A local SCB must include at least four members, including the chairperson.

2.11. The deputy chairperson of the local SCB shall be appointed from among members of the local SCB upon the decision of the chairperson of the local SCB. Decisions for the appointment of local SCB deputy chairpersons shall be recorded in the minutes for meetings of the local SCB.

2.12. Chairpersons of local SCBs are also deputy chairpersons of the SCB.

2.13. In order to ensure support for local SCBs during the FSC period, chairpersons of local SCBs shall appoint secretaries from the staff of a given faculty. Decisions on the appointment of local SCB secretaries shall be recorded in the minutes for meetings of the local SCB. This meeting shall be scheduled prior to the state examination, which the local SCB has been authorized to hold.

2.14. Secretaries of local SCBs are not members of such boards. Secretaries of local SCBs record the minutes of meetings, provide organisational support to members of the local SCB, and furnish the SCB chairperson, Presidium of the SCB and academic council with necessary materials (at their request).

2.15. Individual degree programmes are not entitled to set up local SCBs, if less than 30 final-year students are enrolled therein. In this case, all functions of the local SCB and SCB Presidium, described herein, shall be performed by the SCB.

2.16. The SCB Presidium is established for summarizing FSC outcomes based on the results of all state examinations.

2.17. The SCB Presidium performs the following functions:

- 2.17.1. makes decisions on closing state examinations based on reports provided by local SCB chairpersons;
- 2.17.2. based on the positive results of state examinations, makes decisions on assigning qualifications and issuing degrees (the Bachelor’s, specialist’s or Master’s degrees) to graduates of a given programme;

2.17.3. records the final minutes⁴ of the SCB meeting at the final session of the SCB Presidium⁵.

2.18. The Presidium shall consist of chairpersons and/or deputy chairpersons, as well as members of local SCBs. The SCB Presidium must include at least five members.

2.19. The SCB Presidium shall be chaired by the SCB chairperson, whose duty it is to coordinate and monitor the work of all local SCBs so as to ensure uniform standards with respect to graduation requirements. SCB chairpersons may also head one of local SCBs or take part in the work of any local SCB as a member.

2.20. The secretary of a meeting shall be appointed from among faculty staff in order to provide organisational support to SCB Presidium meetings. A local SCB secretary may also serve as the secretary of the SCB Presidium. However, the Presidium's secretary cannot be a member of the SCB Presidium.

2.21. The SCB's composition, including chairpersons and local SCB members, the SCB Presidium and secretary of Presidium, shall be approved by the designated vice rector's directive⁶ upon the approval of the SCB chairperson, no later than one month before the date of the FSC process' commencement⁷. The draft directive shall be prepared by the programme office, if the FSC is organised for an individual degree programme, or by the deputy dean for academic affairs, if the FSC is organised for a group of degree programmes.

2.22. If the local SCB / SCB Presidium include staff from another campus, business travel expenses for these employees shall be covered by the host party.

2.23. The current work of HSE academic staff in the SCB shall be considered when planning their workload. Payment for their work and compensation for other travel expenses, incurred by SCB members/ representatives of third parties while attending the FSC, including the expenses of the SCB chairperson, shall be covered at the expense of individual faculties.

3. FSC Procedures

3.1. FSC shall be held according to the curriculum of the degree programme in question and the academic calendar. The final state examination included in the FSC for all students of a particular degree programme may not be scheduled later than 15 calendar days before the programme's end.

3.2. State examinations are preceded by student consultations with respect to the questions included in the examination programme (hereafter, "pre-examination consultations").

3.3. No later than 30 calendar days before the first state examination date:

3.3.1. the timeline of the FSC for degree programme students must be approved by a dean's directive, specifying the dates, time and place of state examinations and pre-examination consultations, as well as the distribution of students into groups for examinations. Each student is entitled to at least seven (7) calendar days' recess between state examinations;

3.3.2. the programme office notifies students, members and secretaries of local

⁴ The final meeting of the SCB Presidium should be held after all local SCBs finish their work.

⁵ The final minutes shall serve as the basis for issuing a directive on the termination of students' enrollment upon completion of their studies.

⁶ Pursuant to the Template Directives Manual on working with students in HSE degree programmes at the Bachelor's, specialist and Master's level.

⁷ The FSC's starting date shall be fixed in the directive for its conduction.

SCBs and academic councils, as well as academic supervisors of theses, with respect to the approved FSC timeline through publishing this information on the degree programme's webpage (website) on the HSE corporate website (portal). Other additional means of communication may be used for spreading such information.

3.4. State examination programmes, including lists of questions suggested for state examinations and recommendations for their preparation (e.g., lists of potential sources), shall be made available to students. State examination programmes are made available to students no later than six months before commencement of the relevant FSC. The programme office publishes this information within a specified timeframe on the degree programme's webpage (website) on the HSE corporate website (portal). Other additional means of communication may be used to distribute this information.

3.5. Requirements to theses and procedures related to their preparation are disclosed in the Regulations for Theses Prepared by Students, and are made available to students no later than six months before the FSC commences. The programme office publishes this information within a specified timeframe on the degree programme's webpage (website) on the HSE corporate website (portal). Other additional means of communication may be used for providing this information.

3.6. Programmes for state examinations and Regulations for Theses Prepared by Students are approved by the academic councils of individual degree programmes. Approved programmes are published on the webpages (websites) of degree programmes on the HSE corporate website (portal) within a timeframe specified by these regulations.

3.7. In addition to the documents mentioned in sub-paragraphs 3.3-3.6, the following information shall be published in a special section of the webpages (websites) of degree programmes on the HSE corporate website (portal):

3.7.1. references to these regulations shall be provided no later than six months before the commencement of the FSC for a particular degree programme;

3.7.2. no later than 30 calendar days before the date of the first state examination:

3.7.2.1. distribution of students into groups for state examinations;

3.7.2.2. information on the SCB chairpersons, lists of local SCB members and secretaries of local SCBs;

3.7.2.3. Composition of the academic council and the office of the council's secretary.

3.8. Programme coordinators are responsible for the publication of this information on the websites of degree programmes.

3.9. Meetings of local SCBs with respect to oral state examinations and defenses of theses are held at meetings of local SCBs with the attendance of at least two-thirds of their total members⁸.

3.10. At least two members of the local SCB must be present in the classroom during a student's written state examination. The time schedule may be set for members of the local board to attend the examination in the classroom. Written assignments of each student taking the state examination shall be checked by at least two-thirds of the local SCB's members.

3.11. Resolutions of local SCBs and the SCB Presidium are adopted at closed meetings attended by at least two-thirds of all members by a simple majority vote of the members present, in the mandatory presence of the chairperson of the local SCB/SCB

⁸ Hereinafter, two thirds are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Presidium, or the deputy chairperson of the local SCB/SCB Presidium. In the event of a tie vote, the chairperson of the local SCB/SCB Presidium (or deputy chairperson serving on their behalf) shall have the right to cast a vote.

3.12. Outcomes of any types of state examinations included in the FSC shall be assessed following a five-point and 10-point scale (i.e., Excellent (8,9,10), Good (6,7), Satisfactory (4,5) and Unsatisfactory (0,1,2,3)).

3.13. Excellent, Good, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory grades mean that the state examination has been successfully passed.

3.14. Resolution adopted by the local SCB and SCB Presidium are fixed in meeting minutes. Templates for local SCBs' meeting minutes in regards to state examinations are provided in Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 4, hereto.

3.15. Forms for minutes of meetings regarding state examinations are to be printed out from the ASAV by the programme coordinator and delivered to the secretary of the respective examination board no later than one working day before the meeting.

3.16. Minutes of local SCB meetings shall include lists of questions presented to students and the characteristics of the answers provided, as well as the opinions of the local SCB members regarding the level of students' preparedness for solving professional tasks. These positions shall be developed based on state examination results, and should make note of any gaps identified in students' theoretical training and practical skills.

3.17. The minutes of local SCBs' meetings shall be signed by chairpersons and secretaries of local SCBs. Furthermore, the secretaries of local SCBs must record the names of local SCB members attending the meeting.

3.18. Minutes of meetings of the SCB Presidium shall include the list of students who have successfully passed the FSC, along with their grades in accordance with minutes of local SCBs. Templates for SCB Presidium meeting minutes are provided in Annex 5 hereto. In turn, the Presidium's meeting minutes shall be signed by the chairperson and secretary of the SCB Presidium.

3.19. The minutes of local SCBs and SCB Presidium meetings shall be prepared by the secretaries of local SCBs/SCB Presidium and delivered to programme offices, which shall keep them on file for five (5) years. Upon expiry of the five-year period, the minutes shall be stored in the archives of the HSE Administration and General Services Office.

3.20. The results of state examinations held in the form of oral exams shall be announced to students by the chairperson or secretary of the local SCB on the examination day. The results of state examinations held as written exams shall be announced to students by the secretary of the local SCB no later than the next working day after the examination. The outcomes of examinations may be communicated to students by corporate HSE e-mail or via LMS. The secretary of the local SCB shall send the results of state examinations to programme coordinators via corporate e-mail at the same time when the results are announced to students. Programme coordinators must also send information on results to students, who took examinations, via LMS or other electronic means of communication clearly ensuring students' identification.

3.21. Any student who has missed a state examination for no valid reason or received an unsatisfactory grade shall not be admitted to the next state examination. They shall be duly dismissed for failing to fulfill their obligations to master the degree programme and complete the curriculum.

3.22. Students, who have successfully passed all state examinations and

submitted their theses accompanied by their academic supervisor's opinion in due time⁹, shall be admitted to take part in a thesis defense. Students who have failed to meet deadlines and were not admitted to the thesis defense process, including cases owing to violations identified during mandatory checks for plagiarism¹⁰, shall be dismissed from HSE for failing to fulfill their obligations to duly master the degree programme and complete the curriculum.

3.23. During state examinations, students cannot carry and use any devices for transmission of information (i.e., electronic means of communication), except in cases when examinations are conducted with the use of electronic means of communication and/or remote education technologies, or if the use of electronic means of communication is required by the state examination programme or guidelines for thesis preparation¹¹.

3.24. In case any unauthorized academic and teaching materials or electronic means of communication are found with a student during a state examination, said student shall receive an unsatisfactory grade (0 on the 10-point scale), regardless whether such materials (means) were used by the student for preparing the answer.

3.25. If academic norms are violated by a student during a state examination / in the course of an examination assessment, said student shall face disciplinary action pursuant to HSE Internal Regulations.

3.26. Based on a decision of the faculty dean, a video/audio recording may be conducted during state examinations to ensure the transparency of the FSC procedure. Whether a video/audio recording is needed should be taken into consideration when planning the FSC, with due attention to the scheduling of state examinations in classrooms that are properly equipped (or potentially can be equipped) with video/audio recording systems. If a decision is made to organise a video/audio recording, it shall be communicated to chairperson, members of local SCBs and the students taking part in the FSC. The secretary of the local SCB shall be responsible for organising the video/audio recording.

3.27. Video and/or audio recordings may be used at the meetings of SCB Presidium and the AC for decision-making purposes.

3.28. State examination procedure:

3.28.1. Pre-examination consultations on courses included in the state examination programme shall be provided to students prior to the examination process.

3.28.2. State examinations may be held orally or in writing. The precise format for examinations, including combinations thereof, as well as the possibility of holding an examination over the course of several days, shall be defined in the state examination's programme.

3.28.3. When a state examination is held orally, students receive examination cards with assignments prepared in accordance with the approved state examination programme. When a state examination is held in writing, students receive examination cards with written assignments. While preparing their answers, students may make necessary notes on sheets of paper that are handed out by the local SCB secretary and stamped with the relevant faculty's seal.

3.28.4. State examinations may be held in writing with the use of LMS and other

⁹ Deadlines for submission of the final version of theses are specified in the directive for state examination, but no later than seven (7) working days before the date of the thesis defense.

¹⁰ The procedure for checking student academic papers for plagiarism is defined in the Regulations on Checking Student Papers for Plagiarism, which have been published on the HSE corporate website (portal).

¹¹ Guidelines for thesis preparation, as developed by respective degree programmes, as well as the directive on state examination, shall determine whether or not means of communication may be used.

electronic systems.

3.28.5. Formats for assessments used at state examinations are to be developed and approved by the academic councils of respective programmes. If a hard copy is used at a state examination, it shall be verified by the signature of the academic supervisor of the degree programme along with the faculty's stamp.

3.28.6. If LMS or other electronic systems are used at state examinations, the academic supervisor of the relevant degree programme shall be responsible for checking the working capacity of the tests and other electronic assessment forms. This should be checked prior to the start of a state examination. In cases when over 100 students take the exam simultaneously in LMS, programme coordinators are required to inform the IT Office and the Office of Degree Programmes of the date, time, place and number of students taking the examination.

3.28.7. If an examination is held orally, each student shall be entitled to at least 45 minutes to prepare their answer. If a specific start time¹² has been given to a student in advance, 45 minutes shall be counted from this time, unless special circumstances prevented the student from commencing the examination in due time. At the same time, the chairperson of the local SCB may appoint another time for the student immediately at the examination.

3.28.8. While a student answers questions and thereafter, members of the local SCB, with the permission of the chairperson, may ask the student to provide clarifications or answer additional questions within the scope of the state examination programme.

3.28.9. After a student answers all questions, and the chairpersons declares that the examination is finished, members of the local SCB shall put down grades for each answer along with a preliminary grade in their records.

3.28.10. When an examination is held in writing, it shall last for up to four (4) academic hours. Grades given to students are to be based on the results of examination assignments in accordance with the methodology approved in the examination programme.

3.28.11. After the examination is completed, the local SCB discusses the answers or written assignments of each student (after checking it) at a closed meeting and then gives each student an agreed-upon final grade in accordance with the approved assessment criteria.

3.28.12. If members of the local SCB fail to reach a consensus regarding a student's final grade based on the grades given individually by each member, the local SCB then must approve a decision by a simple majority vote of SCB members attending the meeting, which requires the mandatory presence of local SCB chairperson or deputy chairperson. In the event of a tie vote, the chairperson shall be entitled to cast a vote.

3.28.13. Final examination grades on a five-point or 10-point scale shall be recorded in the examination protocol. The examination protocol should also include the list of examination assignments. If LMS or other electronic systems were used during the examination, the report shall include information on the format of assessment tools used. Where applicable, completed assignments (tests) may be provided upon the request of the SCB Presidium/academic council. A student's failure to attend an examination shall be

¹² The secretary of the examination board may prepare a schedule to be distributed to students before the start of the examination. If an examination is arranged in this way, this information should be communicated to students no later than two working days before the examination date and published on the bulletin board or website of the degree programme.

documented in the examination protocol.

3.28.14. Sheets with the results of examination assignments and written examination assignments completed by students are filed in individual dossiers and presented to respective programme offices. These sheets and written examination assignments shall be kept on file until the end of the calendar year and may be provided upon the request of the Academic Council in order to consider a student's appeal of FSC results.

3.29. Thesis Defense Procedures:

- 3.29.1. Forms, requirements, assessment criteria and procedures for selecting topics, deadlines and special details for thesis preparation at HSE are defined in the Regulations for Term Papers/Theses and the Regulations for Theses Prepared by Students.
- 3.29.2. An academic supervisor's opinion and a second reader's review of a thesis shall be made available to the relevant student by the programme office prior to the scheduled date of their thesis defense, as well as within the timeframe defined by the Regulations for Theses Prepared by Students, in order to give the student enough time to come up with answers to notes made by the academic supervisor and second reader during their thesis review.
- 3.29.3. The programme coordinator shall submit the thesis, opinion and review (reviews) to the local SCB secretary no later than two (2) calendar days prior to the proposed defense date. The local SCB secretary is responsible for making these materials available to members of the local SCB. The academic council of the relevant degree programme shall decide as to whether hard copies of the thesis (or other documents) should be provided or regarding any other way that should be used to make these materials available the local SCB's members.
- 3.29.4. A thesis defense starts with a student's presentation. The timing of the presentation depends on the level of the degree programme. A presentation for a Bachelor's thesis should take at least 15 minutes, whereas that of a Master's or a specialist's thesis should come to at least 20 minutes.
- 3.29.5. The student is expected to deliver key aspects of their thesis freely, without referring to notes. Presentation of this work may be displayed on a computer, visual materials (e.g., tables, graphs, etc.), or any other materials illustrating its key features¹³.
- 3.29.6. After the presentation is finished, members of the local SCB ask the student questions concerning the topic of the thesis, or issues closely related thereto. The student is entitled to refer to their work while answering the questions.
- 3.29.7. The presence of the student's academic supervisor and (or) second reader of the thesis at the local SCB meeting is not mandatory.
- 3.29.8. After the discussion is closed, the student gives their closing remarks. In the closing remarks, the student is required to respond to the notes made by the academic supervisor and the reviewer of the thesis, if any notes were given in the academic supervisor's opinion and in the review. After the closing remarks, the thesis defense process is deemed completed.
- 3.29.9. The local SCB makes a decision on the final grade, based on the grades given by the academic supervisor, second reader, members of the local SCB, and criteria of the thesis assessment, stipulated in the Regulations.

¹³ The requirements of a degree programme in regards to the thesis defense procedure are described in the Regulations for Theses Prepared by Students.

3.29.10. The final grade for a student's thesis defense, given on a five-point or 10-point scale, is recorded within the examination protocol of the local SCB. A student's absence at their thesis defense shall also be documented in the examination protocol.

3.30 Completing the FSC:

3.30.1. Based on the SCB Presidium's decision on awarding a degree and qualification to graduating students in their field of study and issuing a degree certificate (diploma), which is recorded in the minutes of the SCB Presidium meeting, a directive on termination of students' enrollment upon completion of their studies shall be issued.

3.30.2. Within ten (10) days after the issue of an enrollment termination directive, the graduating student shall receive a degree certificate (Bachelor's, specialist's or Master's diploma).

3.30.3. A degree certificate with honours shall be issued to graduating students if the following requirements are fulfilled:

3.30.3.1 all grades for courses (modules), internships, projects and term papers (projects), which are specified in the diploma supplement, are either Excellent, Good or Pass;

3.30.3.2 all grades received at FSC are Excellent;

3.30.3.3 the share of Excellent grades specified in the diploma supplement, including grades provided based on FSC results, must come to at least 75% of all grades, except for Pass grades specified in the diploma supplement;

3.30.3.4 after the work of the SCB and SCB Presidium is completed, but no later than December 31 of the ongoing academic year, a report on the SCB's performance shall be presented to the faculty's Academic Council.

4. Structure of appeals committees. Appellation procedure

4.1 Students shall be entitled to appeal the results of state examinations. FSC outcomes may be cancelled by decision of the appeals committee (AC). Students shall acquaint themselves with the procedures for submission and consideration of appeals at least six (6) months before the FSC.

4.2 Appeals committees, which operate throughout the calendar year, shall be established to handle appeals.

4.3 An AC shall be set up for settling matters related to appeals submitted by students of a given faculty. According to a decision of the respective Academic Council of a faculty, committees may be established: for each degree programme/ a group of degree programmes or field of study/ qualification, or several fields of study/ qualifications. The academic supervisor of a degree programme shall propose candidates to the AC, if the committee has been established for each of the faculty's degree programme, or candidates shall be proposed by the deputy dean in charge of academic affairs, if the AC has established for a group of degree programmes.

4.4 The AC must include at least four (4) members from among the academic staff of a given faculty, other than the SCB members of the faculty's degree programmes. One of the AC members shall be appointed as chairperson. By decision of the AC chairperson, a representative of the Students' Council of the given faculty may be included in the AC as a member, provided that this person is not a final year student.

4.5 The AC's composition and secretary¹⁴, who cannot be an AC member, must be approved by the directive of the designated vice rector no later than one month before the FSC starting date. This directive is to be drafted by the programme office if an AC has been established for degree programmes supported by this office, or by the deputy dean in charge of academic affairs if an AC has been established for degree programmes supported by different offices.

4.6 It is the duty of the AC chairperson to organize and supervise the work of the committee, as well as request necessary working materials; if needed. They may also invite experts from among HSE faculty members and/or representatives of other organisations engaged in professional activities related to the field of study within a respective degree programme (other than members of the AC and the SCB, which generated the resulting grades that have been appealed by a student and submitted for the consideration of the committee).

4.7 The deputy chairpersons of a given AC shall be appointed from among persons sitting on the committee and must preside over a meeting if a chairperson is absent.

4.8 Students are entitled to submit appeals to the AC in the form of a motivated application made in writing. An appeal may be submitted based on the following grounds:

4.8.1 if a student believes that the state examination procedure or regulations established for their thesis defense were violated;

4.8.2 if a student disagrees with results of the state examination.

4.9 A student must file an appeal personally to the AC (directly to the AC secretary) no later than the next working day after the announcement of the FSC results.

4.10 In order to consider the appeal, the local SCB secretary, at the request of the chairperson of the AC, shall submit the following materials to the committee:

4.10.1 minutes of the local SCB meeting and the opinion of the local SCB chairperson regarding compliance with state examination procedures, if the appeal has been filed on the grounds of violations committed during the examination procedure;

4.10.2 documentation with the results of examination assignments completed by the student, as well as written examination work (if any), for consideration of the student's appeal regarding the state examination procedure;

4.10.3 a report generated in LMS / another electronic system with respect to test / state examination results generated in any other electronic form (if any).

4.10.4 video and audio recordings of the state examination (if any).

4.11 An appeal shall be considered within two (2) working days after a statement of appeal is filed at the AC meeting where the local SCB chairperson (or deputy chairperson) and the student who filed the appeal are invited.

4.12 AC meetings shall be held in presence of at least two thirds of the total number of committee members.

4.13 The AC's decisions shall be approved by a simple majority vote of members attending the meeting. In the event of a tie vote, the AC chairperson shall be entitled to cast a vote.

4.14 AC meeting minutes should include a list of questions presented to the student and a brief summary of their answers, as well as an opinion expressed by the local SCB chairperson with respect to the grounds for the appeal provided by the student in the statement of appeal. Decisions made by the AC shall be recorded in the minutes

¹⁴ Can act as a secretary of the local SCB and secretary of the SCB Presidium at the same time

and accompanied by substantiated conclusions.

4.15 AC meeting minutes shall be signed by the chairperson and secretary of the AC. Template minutes for the AC are provided in Annex 6 hereto.

4.16 AC meeting minutes shall be bound in books and delivered to programme offices for safe keeping for a period of five (5) years. Thereafter, the minutes shall be stored in the archives of the Administration and General Services Office.

4.17 Students who file appeals shall be advised of the AC's decisions by the AC secretary, including via student corporate e-mail and LMS, within three (3) working days after the date of the committee's meeting. Students must personally familiarise themselves with the AC's minutes. Furthermore, a student's signoff on the AC's minutes must thereby certify their acknowledgement of the AC's decision regarding their appeal. Should a student refuse to acknowledge (sign-off) the minutes, a statement of this fact shall be drawn up (as an appendix to the minutes) and signed by the AC chairperson (or deputy chairperson), who attended the meeting, as well as the AC secretary.

4.18 Upon consideration of an appeal statement, the AC shall make one of the following decisions:

4.18.1 to reject the appeal if the committee does not find confirmation of the details stated therein, and (or) if these facts did not produce any effect on the results of the state examination;

4.18.2 to allow the appeal if the details stated therein are proved to be true and have thus influenced the results of the state examination.

4.19 In those cases specified in p. 4.18.2, the results of a state examination shall be cancelled. In turn, the minutes on the appeal consideration shall be delivered to the local SCB no later than on the next working day so as to properly execute the AC's decision.

4.20 If an appeal was approved, the involved student shall have the opportunity to take the state examination within a period determined by the degree programme, but no later than the final date of studies defined in the academic calendar for the current academic year. A retake of the state examination may be held in presence of an AC member appointed by the chairperson's decision. If a student appeals a written exam, and the nature of the assignments and answers provided in writing allows the AC to give a new grade based on the results of the appeal without a retake of the state examination, the student shall not retake the exam. A new grade shall be stated in the minutes of the new SCB, signed by the authorized representative of the AC. The AC chairperson shall decide on whether or not the student may receive a new grade without retaking the examination.

4.21 AC decisions are final and cannot be revised.

4.22 Students may not appeal repeated state examinations.

5. Procedure for retaking state examinations

5.1 Students, who have failed the FSC due to their absence from a state examination for a valid reason, shall be entitled to pass the FSC over a six-month period after the FSC is completed. They shall not be dismissed from HSE.

5.2 Any student who has failed a state examination for a valid reason shall be admitted to a subsequent exam (if any).

5.3 Valid reasons for absence from a state examination include:

5.3.1 an illness confirmed by a standard medical certificate submitted to the programme office on the date when studies commence;

5.3.2 other extraordinary reasons, which truly prevented the student from attending the state examination confirmed by documentary evidence within

three (3) working days; these reasons may be related to:

5.3.2.1 the individual curriculum of a student involved in international academic mobility, thus allowing for their participation in the FSC later than the time established by the given degree programme's curriculum;

5.3.2.2 illness or death of close relatives;

5.3.2.3 fulfillment of public or state duties;

5.3.2.4 summons to appear in law enforcement agencies/court;

5.3.2.5 transport problems (cancelled flights, no tickets available for sale, etc.);

5.3.2.6 force majeure events.

5.4 Any circumstances related to the students' work (e.g., business travel, office hours, except in cases specified in p. 5.3.2.3 hereof) are not regarded as valid reasons for student's absence from a state examination.

5.5 Decisions to consider explanations for absence as a valid reason in the cases listed in p. 5.3.2, shall be up to the dean of the faculty.

5.6 If, while retaking the FSC, a student fails to pass the FSC without a valid reason, they shall be dismissed from HSE for failing to fulfill their obligations to complete the degree programme and master the curriculum properly. Furthermore, such students shall be issued a certificate of study or a certificate for their period of study.

5.7 Upon resuming studies at HSE, such students may retake the FSC in the period when it is scheduled for final year students, but no earlier than within a year. Master's students may retake the FSC no later than within two years, and undergraduate and specialist level students – in four years after the FSC, which the student had earlier failed.

5.8 When a student retakes the FSC, another thesis topic may be chosen and/or another academic supervisor may be appointed if the student so desires.

5.9 One and the same person may not retake state examinations more than twice.

6. Special organisational issues regarding FSC for students with disabilities

6.1 FSC for students with disabilities shall be held with due consideration of the specifics of their psychological and physical development, individual capabilities and medical conditions (hereafter, "individual specifics").

6.2 No later than three (3) months before commencement of the FSC, students with disabilities shall submit an application to the programme office indicating their individual specific needs, as well as stating that special conditions should be provided for during the state examinations. The application must be accompanied with documents, confirming the student's individual specific needs (if such documents are not already available in the student's personal file).

6.3 In their applications, students shall specify (if needed) that:

6.3.1 the presence of an assistant is required at the state examination;

6.3.2 more time should be provided for taking the state examination as compared with the standard time (for each state examination).

6.4 Based on a student's application and the documents provided by them (or those that are already available), the programme coordinator shall decide on whether the student's application may be approved.

6.5 Depending on the individual specific needs of students with disabilities, the academic supervisor of a given degree programme shall decide on whether a student may take the state examination in a suitable form (orally or in writing). Furthermore, the

supervisor shall ensure the use of appropriate teaching means (including technical teaching means and special software), which would be sufficient for holding the state examination for students with due consideration of their individual specific needs (e.g., for blind and visually impaired students, deaf or hard-of-hearing students, students with speech and musculoskeletal system disorders, and other conditions).

6.6 The academic supervisor of a given degree programme shall make sure that the following general requirements are fulfilled at the state examination, which is being held for students with a disability, including:

6.6.1 holding the state examination in the same room with students without individual specific needs, if it presents no difficulties for them during the exam process;

6.6.2 an assistant (assistants), who shall be present in the room to render required technical aid to students with disabilities taking into account their individual needs (e.g., helping them to take a workplace, move around, read and handle assignments, communicate with the SCB members, etc.); technical facilities made available to students with disabilities for taking the state examination, with due regard to their individual specific needs;

6.6.3 holding the state examination in HSE rooms and buildings ensuring free access for students with disabilities to classrooms, restrooms and other premises, as well as ensuring the availability of all necessary facilities (e.g., ramps, hand-rails, wide doorways, elevators; in the absence of elevators, the classroom shall be situated on the first floor; special armchairs and other appliances shall be provided).

6.7 Upon the written request of a student with disability, more time may be allocated for taking a state examination:

6.7.1 a written state examination may be prolonged for up to 90 minutes;

6.7.2 the time allocated for the student's answer preparation at an oral state examination may be prolonged for up to 20 minutes;

6.7.3 the period of the student's thesis presentation may be prolonged for up to 15 minutes.