*APPROVED by the Academic Council of*

*the Faculty of Business and Management*

*National Research University*

*Higher School of Economics*

**Guidelines for writing, evaluating, defending and publishing**

**Term Papers and Theses**

**for students of the HSE and University of London Parallel Degree Programme**

**in Management and Digital Innovation**

1. **GENERAL PROVISIONS**
   1. These Guidelines were developed in accordance with Appendix to Order No.636 “Procedures for Holding Final State Examination for Bachelor’s, Specialist and Master’s programmes”, dated June 29, 2015, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and with p. 1.5 and 1.7 of Regulations for Term Papers and Theses Prepared by Students of the Bachelor’s, Specialist and Master’s Level at the National Research University Higher School of Economics” (approved by the HSE University Academic Council, minutes No. 8, dated November 28, 2014) (hereinafter, Regulations).
   2. These Guidelines specify the recommended procedure for preparing term papers and theses for students of the HSE and University of London Parallel Degree Programme in Management and Digital Innovation (hereinafter, Programme), contain requirements for structure, content, volume, design, execution formats of term papers and theses, timelines for the various stages of work as well as assessment criteria.
   3. Upon admission to the Programme, students are required to familiarize themselves with the “Regulations for Term Papers and Theses Prepared by Students of the Bachelor’s, Specialist and Master’s Level at National Research University Higher School of Economics” and these Guidelines.
2. **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A TERM PAPER**
   1. A term paper is an independent research project prepared by students as a part of their training.
   2. Term papers are aimed at consolidating knowledge and competencies acquired by students during theoretical and practical classes, fostering the skill of independent research on the selected topic, and developing capabilities for analysis, research, project activities and information processing.
   3. Term papers may be of the following types:
      1. Research term paper comprises analysis and consolidation of theoretical and empirical materials aimed at strengthening and showcasing knowledge and skills acquired in the course of the degree programme.
      2. Term project is an informed solution of some practical issue based on systems analysis of the selected conceptual background, narrow focus and circumstances
   4. A term paper is prepared and defended in English.
   5. A term paper is prepared by each student individually.
   6. A term paper cannot be a simple review of literary and other sources on the selected topic, compilation of fragments of works by other authors is not permissible in it, and, moreover, the direct borrowing of fragments of other people's works without indicating source of borrowing (plagiarism).
   7. In a term paper, students need to demonstrate a solid level of knowledge in the selected subject area, the ability to apply them at the required level.
   8. When working on a term paper, students are required to show the following skills:

* Clear problem statement
* Conducting a comprehensive analysis by examining various points of view on the chosen problem, which are reflected in the relevant scientific literature, their comparison and assessment
* Understanding and structuring the information received
* Correct quoting or description of the results of other authors
* Presentation of their own understanding of the problem
* Description of various ways and methods of analysis and problem solving
* Ability to write correctly, clearly, logically and in accordance with technical requirements
  1. Term papers are not subject to external review.

1. **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A THESIS**
   1. A thesis is an independent research project prepared by students. A thesis is a mandatory component of the Programme, and thesis defence is a mandatory part of the Final State Certification (FCS).
   2. Students of the Programme choose the topic of the theses in the 4th year of study.
   3. Theses may be prepared in the following modes:
      1. Academic mode – research conducted to gain new insights into the structure, properties and patterns of the phenomenon under examination.
      2. Project mode – in-depth examination of a certain practical issue followed by some output (project solution).
   4. A thesis is prepared and defended in English.
   5. A thesis should be an independent completed study on a given topic, written personally by the author of the work under the guidance of a scientific advisor, testifying to the author’s ability to work with literature, summarize and analyze factual material using theoretical knowledge and practical skills gained in mastering the Programme’s training. A BSc thesis can be based on a synthesis of the results acquired by the author of the term paper and contain materials collected during the internships.
   6. The main objectives of the preparation and defense of the thesis are:

* deepening, systematization and integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the direction of training
* development of the ability to critically evaluate and generalize theoretical propositions
* application of acquired knowledge in solving applied problems in the field of training
* stimulation of independent analytical work skills
* mastery of modern methods of scientific research
* preparation for practical activities in a market economy
* presentation of skills of public discussion and protection of scientific ideas, proposals and recommendations

1. **STAGES OF TERM PAPER AND THESIS PREPARATION**
   1. **Proposals for Term Paper and Thesis Topics[[1]](#footnote-1)**
      1. Topics of term papers and theses for students of the Programme may be proposed by departments, research subdivisions and separate members of HSE academic staff whose research interests match the Programme’s field of study.
      2. Topics of term papers and theses may also be proposed by employers.
      3. List of topics from a department or a research subdivision may be discussed and approved at the staff meeting of the respective department or research subdivision.
      4. Topic proposals must be structured as follows:

* Provisional topic in English[[2]](#footnote-2);
* Supervisor (full name, position, academic degree, place of employment);
* Modes;
* Years of study for which this topic is recommended (in case of term papers).

*- Optional information:* prerequisites for successful completion of the paper.

* + 1. The Programme Office collects topic proposals from September 10 to October 01 of each academic year.
    2. Departments, research subdivisions, employer’s representatives and separate members of academic staff may submit their topic proposals via a special LMS module[[3]](#footnote-3) or via email to the head of the Programme Office (Programme Coordinator)[[4]](#footnote-4).
    3. The Programme Office may refuse any proposals submitted after October 1.
    4. The Programme Office must forward the collected information to the Programme Academic Supervisor[[5]](#footnote-5) within two business days after October 1.
    5. The Academic Supervisor and Academic Council (if any) must finalize the received information and return it to the Programme Office within five business days.
    6. The Programme Academic Supervisor can exclude proposed topics from the list if they are not relevant to the level or area of the degree programme. Topics cannot be excluded only because they were proposed by an employee of the department or research subdivision not involved in implementation of this programme.
    7. The Programme Office notifies departments, research subdivisions, separate academic staff members or employers about the approved and declined topics within one business day after the finalization of the list of topics.
    8. Departments, research subdivisions, separate academic staff members and employers whose topics were excluded by the Academic Council may discuss the reasons for such exclusion with the Academic Supervisor within three business days from receiving the notification. Following such discussions, the Academic Supervisor may return some topics on the list.
    9. The Programme Office must publish the following information on the programme website no later than October 15:
* Provisional topics
* Modes,
* Proposed supervisors (with links to their profiles, if they are HSE employees)
* Prerequisites
* Deadline for topic selection (cannot be later than November 20 of the ongoing academic year)
* Procedures for topic selection, including links to template requests, unless a special LMS module or other information systems are in use
* Link to the relevant Guidelines.
  + 1. Information about proposed topics may be published through a special LMS module for term papers and theses. In this case a notification for students must be published on the programme webpage on the HSE corporate portal (website).
  1. **Selection of Term Paper and Thesis Topics by Students and their Discussion with Supervisors**
     1. Students choose topics of their term papers and theses following the procedures and deadlines prescribed by the Programme Regulations and Guidelines.
     2. Before choosing or refining the topic, students must discuss it with their potential supervisor. Such discussions may be organized via email or LMS.
     3. If topic discussion goes well, the supervisor must provide the student with a confirmation of supervision. The confirmation must be submitted to the Programme Office in writing, stating the topic in English, the student’s name, contact details (email) and signature of the supervisor. The confirmation must be registered in the special LMS module or via email.
     4. If students do not like any of the topics from the list, they can propose to the Programme Academic Supervisor a topic of their own and/or its possible supervisor.
     5. Upon review of a term paper or thesis topic proposed by the student, the Academic Supervisor may approve or decline the topic (followed by a justification), or modify it together with the student.
     6. Once the selection procedure is complete, the Programme Academic Council must officially assign topics and supervisors to the corresponding students within five business days.
     7. A directive on assigning topics and final submission deadlines for term papers and theses must be issued by **December 15.**
     8. Once the directive is issued, the Programme Office provides supervisors with the list of students assigned to them, along with their selected topics. The list may be sent via corporate email or the special LMS module. At the same time, term paper and thesis supervisors must also be notified of the preparation schedule and the Guidelines adopted on the given degree programme.
     9. Term paper/thesis topics may be changed or refined no later than one calendar month before the official deadline for final submission of the term paper/thesis following procedures established on the degree programme. Change of the term paper/thesis topic is enacted by the Approval of Programme Academic Supervisor and Dean’s directive.
     10. If students fail to choose a term paper/thesis topic by the deadline, they are facing academic failure which must be remedied following procedures and deadlines stipulated in the Russian legislation and University bylaws.
  2. **Stages of Term Paper Preparation**
     1. The student and supervisor assigned as per the directive agree on the preparation schedule that may put forth the following milestones[[6]](#footnote-6):

1. **An outline of the term paper is submitted to the supervisor** (as a rule, the outline should reflect the relevance, structure and conceptual framework of the term paper, main sources, and projected outcomes);
2. Term paper is first presented at a research seminar;
3. **Final draft of the term paper is first submitted to the supervisor**, to be subsequently corrected, if necessary;
4. **Finished term paper is submitted to the supervisor;**
5. **Term paper is uploaded to LMS, to go through the Antiplagiat (Антиплагиат) system**;
6. **Term paper is graded by the supervisor**;
   * 1. The Programme Guidelines may change the milestones (except for mandatory items), reduce or increase their number.
     2. Each student must submit the finished term paper to the supervisor and the Programme Office by the deadline, indicated in the Guidelines **(June 7)**
     3. If confirmed instances of plagiarism are found in the term paper, the student may face disciplinary action in accordance with the *Procedures for Applying Disciplinary Measures for the Violation of Academic Standards for Student Papers at HSE* (Appendix 7 to HSE Internal Regulations).
     4. Students are considered to have failed their term paper if they receive a fail grade. To have this academic failure waived as per the University bylaws, they must make appropriate corrections and revise the text of the term paper as may be necessary; the topic[[7]](#footnote-7) of the term paper may also be changed in this case. All changes of term paper topics must be authorised by the Dean’s directive.
     5. Students who have failed their term papers must address failure as prescribed in the *Regulations for Interim and Ongoing Assessment of HSE Students*.
     6. Term papers are evaluated against criteria stipulated in the Guidelines.
   1. **Stages of Thesis Preparation**
      1. **Preparation of the outline.** At this stage, the student must define the working hypothesis/conceptual framework of the thesis, put forth the issue which the thesis is to address, and devise the core structure of the thesis.

Students may prepare an outline of the thesis in the course of a research seminar or face-to-face discussions with the supervisor (or potential supervisor). Appendix 2 contains a preliminary list of key stages of thesis preparation.

The outline of the thesis is graded by the supervisor as “*Approved*” or “*Declined*”. The grade is entered into the student performance record or into the special LMS module. Declined outlines must be revised and resubmitted to the supervisor The supervisor must notify the Programme Office via email or special LMS module of any students who have failed to submit an outline eligible for approval by the stipulated deadline.

* + 1. **Submission of a first draft of the thesis**. The first draft of the thesis is submitted to the supervisor for review; the text must then be revised accordingly, if needed. The first draft of the thesis must be submitted no later than on April 5. The supervisor must notify the Programme Office via email or special LMS module of any students who have failed to submit the first draft on time.
    2. **Revision and finalization of the thesis.** At this stage, student revises the thesis as may be needed and then submits the final text and abstract to the supervisor for review no later than on April 30. The supervisor must write the review and submit it to the Programme Office within one calendar week from receiving the finished thesis.
    3. **Uploading the thesis to the Antiplagiat system.** All students must upload electronic copies (not scans) of their theses to the special LMS module for term papers and theses which will forward them to the Antiplagiat system.[[8]](#footnote-8)

If confirmed instances of plagiarism are found in the thesis, the student may face disciplinary action in accordance with the *Procedures for Applying Disciplinary Measures for the Violation of Academic Standards for Student Papers at HSE* (Appendix 7 to HSE Internal Regulations).

* + 1. **Final submission of the finished thesis to the Programme Office.** Paper copy of the finished thesis (number of copies must be stipulated in the Guidelines), the abstract, supervisor’s review, and report or registration form from the Antiplagiat system must be submitted to the Programme Office no later than on April 30.
    2. **Review of the thesis.**

A reviewer is appointed from among the University’s academic staff. A reviewer may also be an employee of another university or of an organization whose professional focus matches the topic of the thesis.

A reviewer is proposed by the Programme Academic Supervisor and appointed by the Dean’s directive no later than one month before the scheduled defence. The directive must state the student’s full name, thesis topic and information about the reviewer (full name, academic degree, academic title, employer, position).

The reviewer must analyse the main tenets of the thesis under review, and assess if a personal standpoint/project solution is presented, how well research/project methods are applied, how well-grounded conclusions and recommendations are, if means selected to obtain the result are appropriate, if the final output is adequate, and how original and feasible the presented solutions are. The reviewer may also evaluate how well the student has mastered the competencies prescribed in the HSE ES[[9]](#footnote-9). Appendix 5 contains a sample review form to be filled in by the reviewer.

The Programme Office must forward each thesis for a review within 3 calendar days from its receipt. The reviewer must prepare a review and submit it to the Programme Office at least 4 days before the defence.

The Programme Office must communicate the content of the review to the student at least 3 calendar days before the defence, so that the student has an opportunity to prepare answers to the reviewer’s comments.

* + 1. **Defence of a thesis** (organization and process) is governed by the *Regulations for the State Final Certification of HSE Students*.

1. **SUPERVISION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESES** 
   1. **Term Paper Supervision**
      1. Term paper supervisors appointed by the Programme Academic Supervisor directive are responsible for direct supervision of term paper preparation[[10]](#footnote-10).
      2. Term paper supervisors have the following duties:
2. Advise students on shaping the final topic of their term paper, drafting term paper outline and preparation schedule, and selecting scholarly literature and resources;
3. Help students choose appropriate research or project methodology;
4. Monitor the progress of term paper preparation against the established outline and schedule;
5. Notify the Programme Academic Supervisor and Programme Office if students are behind the schedule;
6. Provide students with informed recommendations on the content of their term papers;
7. Assess quality of term papers along established requirements (in particular, as a review);
8. Review and grade term papers; reviews are drawn up as per the established template (Appendix 3 hereto), unless otherwise stipulated in the Guidelines.
   * 1. Term paper supervisors are entitled to
9. Select a suitable mode of interaction with students, in particular, agree on the term paper preparation schedule and the frequency of face-to-face meetings or other communications;
10. Request that students prepare and present a brief summary of the received recommendations and further steps in term paper preparation after each face-to-face meeting;
11. Request that students pay close attention to the received recommendations and come to meetings well-prepared;
12. Take into account compliance with the preparation schedule when grading student term papers.
    1. **Thesis Supervision**
       1. Thesis supervisors appointed by the Dean’s directive are responsible for direct supervision of thesis preparation.
       2. Thesis supervisors are appointed from among the University employees holding an academic degree (Doctor of Sciences, PhD, candidate of sciences[[11]](#footnote-11)), or professionals with at least 3 years of experience, including part-time employees of the University.
       3. Thesis supervisors may also be employees of external organizations with at least 3 years of professional experience in the given field or executive experience and/or with an academic degree to certify their professional competencies in the industry or field of study to which the thesis is devoted, provided that the student works on this thesis predominantly at such supervisor’s place of employment.
       4. For students whose supervisors are not employed at the University, monitors must be appointed from among the University staff. Monitors oversee the thesis preparation and check if the content and formatting of the thesis meets the established requirements.
       5. HSE academic staff or employees of external organizations whose professional activities and/or academic interests are connected to the thesis topic may be appointed as advisors to students preparing their theses. Advisors are supposed to provide consultations to students; they hold an advisory vote on thesis development.
       6. For interdisciplinary theses, up to two advisors may be appointed.
       7. Advisors must

* Advise students on selecting appropriate research or project methodology, scholarly literature and resources;
* Advise students on the content of their theses.
  + 1. Appointment of the advisor(s) is initiated by the thesis supervisor is authorised by the Programme Academic Supervisor, following a written request drawn up by the student and signed by the supervisor.
    2. Change of thesis supervisors or appointment of monitors and advisors is initiated by the Programme Academic Supervisor and enacted by the Dean’s directive.
    3. Control over the progress and quality of thesis preparation for the defence is assumed by the thesis supervisor and/or monitor, and by the Programme Office on deadlines for submission of all the necessary documents and completion of all the stages of thesis preparation.
    4. A thesis supervisor may be changed no later than 2 months before the defence.
    5. Thesis supervisors have the following duties:

1. Advise students on shaping the final topic of their thesis, drafting thesis outline, and preparation schedule, drawing up a first draft, and selecting scholarly literature and resources;
2. Help students choose appropriate research or project methodology; collaborate with students to define provisional stages of the topic exploration;
3. Monitor the progress and quality of thesis preparation against the outline and the preparation schedule;
4. Notify the Programme Office if students are behind the schedule;
5. Advise students on the content of their theses;
6. Assess quality of theses along established requirements (in particular, as a review);
7. Review thesis information that students intend to publish on the HSE corporate portal (website) and other public online platforms.
   * 1. Thesis supervisors are entitled to
8. Select a suitable mode of interaction with students, in particular, agree on the thesis preparation schedule and the frequency of face-to-face meetings or other communications;
9. Request that students prepare and present a brief summary of the received recommendations and further steps in thesis preparation after each face-to-face meeting;
10. Request that students pay close attention to the received recommendations and come to meetings well-prepared;
11. Take into account compliance with the preparation schedule and deadlines for submission of the first draft and final draft when grading student theses;
12. Take part in the SEB proceedings at the defence.
    * 1. If the thesis supervisor is not employed at the University, monitors appointed from among the University staff must assume the following duties:

* Regularly check the progress of thesis preparation against the outline and the preparation schedule (jointly with the thesis supervisor);
* Notify the Programme Office if students are behind the schedule.

1. **STORAGE AND PUBLICATION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESES**
   1. The Programme Office keeps term papers for two years after students leave the University. The storage medium (electronically in LMS, in paper copies) is determined by the degree programme.
   2. Publication of term papers on the University’s portal for public access is governed by the Programme Guidelines.
   3. Defended theses must be submitted to the Programme Office in paper copies or any other physical medium (for instance, projects prepared by students whose field of study is *Design*). The Programme Office stores them for 5 years and then transfers them to the University archives (accompanied by the corresponding certificate) for storage and subsequent destruction.
   4. Abstracts and full texts of theses may be published on the portal for public access as stipulated in the HSE bylaws.

1. Appendix 1 presents recommended stages and deadlines for submission and finalization of topics for term papers and theses. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The topic may be provisional, to be refined jointly by the student and supervisor in the course of text preparation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A special LMS module may be used to upload information using a standard template, automatically assign access to certain programme offices and students and insert hyperlinks to personal profiles of academic supervisors of term papers and theses, if they are HSE employees. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. If the Programme Office receives incomplete information, its head may request missing pieces from the respective department, research subdivision, faculty member, researcher or employer’s representative. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Information may be forwarded to the Programme Academic Supervisor via the special LMS module for term papers and theses. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Items 1), 3), 4), 5), 7) are mandatory, while all others are determined by the Programme Guidelines [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The Guidelines may also allow changing the term paper supervisor in such cases. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. For some fields of study, such as *Design*, full text of the thesis may be published on the programme’s official website (when uploading them to the Antiplagiat system is not possible). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Programme Office must inform the reviewer that the programme’s website contains the HSE ES for the relevant field of study which provides a list of competencies students are expected to develop on this programme. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Doctoral students may be appointed as supervisors of undergraduate term papers, if permitted by the Guidelines. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Doctoral students and faculty members without an academic degree may also be appointed thesis supervisors, if permitted by the Guidelines. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)