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# RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

## THESIS & GRADUATION THESIS DEFENSE

BA Double Degree Programme “Economics and Politics in Asia”

RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

A thesis and graduation thesis require an oral defense and a written paper evaluated by an academic committee convened for that purpose. The word thesis here refers to a formal research investigation on an approved topic in the form of a written paper based on the Research Paper Guidelines (2023).

In a broad sense, the oral defense is an academic discussion where students present their research and defend the key arguments. The oral defense provides students with an opportunity to share their research results directly with the recognized experts who have been appointed as their examiners and also helps them establish stronger ties and networks across their field of study.

The main objectives of holding an oral defense are to:

- provide the student with an opportunity to defend their thesis and reply to criticism or challenges to their arguments while enabling examiners to clarify issues in the thesis;
- facilitate the examiners reaching agreement on an examination result;
- facilitate the examiners providing to the student an agreed, single, set of corrections or revisions required to be made before the award of the qualification can be made.

It is not the purpose of an oral defense to test the student's command of spoken English. However, the tone of the presentation must be professional and suitable for an academic discussion, the key points must be worded well, and word choices must be precise.

During the oral defense, the student demonstrates the following competencies:

- Collecting, analyzing, documenting, and reporting research concisely, logically, and ethically;
- Understanding the standards for legitimate interpretations of research data within the academic community;
- Using primary and secondary sources to discover information;
- Practicing the unique qualities of academic writing style (e.g., sentence conciseness, readability, clarity, accuracy, using direct order organization, objectivity);

- Planning a presentation with the audience in mind;
- Developing clear objectives for their presentation;
- Considering ways of grabbing the listener's attention, holding their interest, and concluding firmly;
- Using slides and other visual aids effectively;
- Delivering an enthusiastic and well-practiced presentation.

## COMMITTEE

The Committee evaluates the oral defense. The Committee consists of at least three scholars with strong expertise in the topics presented by the student(s). The Committee members provide a professional assessment of both the written paper and its oral defense. The Head of the Committee acts as the moderator at the oral defense or can designate a member of the Committee as moderator. The Head of the Committee has the following duties:

- Preside and see to it that all participants treat each other with respect and follow the highest standards of academic ethics;
- Clarify the procedure to all participants at the beginning of the oral defense;
- Determine an order of presentations, when students defend in a group;
- Determine an order of questions by the Committee members;
- Controlling the timing of presentations;
- Fill out the Oral defense evaluation sheet (see Appendix 1) at the end of the oral defense and the Committee deliberations.

## PROCEDURE

The oral defense is open to the HSE university community.

**The oral defense should be scheduled to allow a minimum of a week for all members of the Committee to review the papers, supervisor's reviews, and, if applicable, external reviews.**

**Thesis Defense:** The student will open the oral defense with a **presentation** of their findings (about 10 minutes), after which the members of the Committee will **question** them in an order determined by the Head of the Committee (up to 10 minutes).

**Graduation Thesis Defense:** The student will open the oral defense with a **presentation** of their findings (about 15 minutes), after which the members of the Committee will **question** them in an order determined by the Head of the Committee (up to 15 minutes).

When the questioning is complete, the Committee starts **voting deliberation**. Individuals who are not members of the official Committee will be excluded from the pre-discussion and voting deliberation portions of the thesis defense.

The Committee members deliberate and cast their decision on the final grade based on the criteria outlined in Appendix 3. In committees of odd number of members, a

unanimous vote should be achieved. In committees of even number of members, there can be one dissenting vote. In all disputable cases, the final decision is made by the Head of the Committee.

## PART 1 — ORAL PRESENTATION

In a presentation, the student should cover the following aspects of their research:

- Provide general information about the research project on the first slide, including the title of the paper, author's name, and academic supervisor's name;
- Explain why the key research question is relevant to the field of study and/or society more broadly;
- Present the key research question(s) and argument(s);
- Present a summary of literature with the emphasis on the novelty of the research project;
- Identify the research design and explain major methodological and theoretical choices;
- Present the structure of the paper with summaries of all chapters;
- Present the main findings and conclusions.

The oral presentation should be engaging, concise, and logical. The purpose and argument should be clear and well defined. Ideas should be logically arranged throughout the presentation. The key points should be worded well. The text on the slides must be error-free. It is highly recommended to prepare no more than ten slides and present no more than 4 or 5 points on each slide. Students are encouraged to use illustrations, charts, tables, graphs, and other visual aids to present their findings. The tone is professional and suitable for an academic presentation (see the Guidelines for more information about appropriate language).

## PART 2 — QUESTIONING

After the oral presentation, each member of the Committee has an opportunity to ask questions. All questions are recorded in the Oral defense evaluation sheet (Appendix 1, 2) by the Head of the Committee or the Secretary of the Committee. Within three days after the defense, all evaluation sheets should be submitted to the Study office.

Questions serve to verify whether the paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the topic and help to evaluate the communication skills and competences of the student.

Questions dealing with the substance, meaning, and usefulness of the research in the research paper are of the highest priority. Questions may also focus on the comments of the supervisor. Questions can also cover related topics (e.g., students could be asked to provide policy recommendations for Russia) or consider some current events that are relevant to the context of the research field (e.g., the current status of a territorial issue mentioned in the oral presentation or the written paper). Finally, questions can focus on the avenues for future research.

The questions will be based mainly on the thesis and presentation, but the student's grasp of related subjects may also be tested.

**Students should have a copy of their research paper with them during the defense and may refer to any particular page or information, if they need to do so to answer a question.**

## EVALUATION

The final grade consists of the evaluation of the written thesis and oral defense and is based on the following grading criteria:

Mark	Criteria
<b>10 (exceptional)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Extremely clear, focused, and well-developed argumentation. Impressive depth and scope of knowledge of the subject matter. Student demonstrated the ability to operate relevant concepts and theories. Student showed some degree of originality or creative and independent thinking. Extremely thorough and effective research effort. Excellent presentation.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Extremely thorough answers that make impressively thoughtful use of theoretical frames and information from specific cases and examples. Very insightful, clear, and convincing answers.</p>
<b>9 (excellent)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> The question is obvious but the argument is creative and original. Some minor errors and shortcomings. Other than that, an excellent work.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Extremely thorough answers that make impressively thoughtful use of theoretical frames and information from specific cases and examples. Very insightful, clear, and convincing answers.</p>
<b>8 (excellent)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> An excellent work with a "but." The question is obvious but the argument is somewhat creative. Relatively frequent minor errors and shortcomings.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Thorough answers that make impressively thoughtful use of theoretical frames and information from specific cases and examples. Insightful, clear, and convincing answers.</p>
<b>7 (very good)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Very clear, focused &amp; well-developed argument. Impressively thorough knowledge of the subject matter. Student demonstrated solid understanding of relevant concepts and theories. The thoroughness and effectiveness of the research effort are beyond standard expectations. Clearly better than average argumentation and writing.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Presentation done well beyond providing the essentials by, for example, being extremely thorough, making direct reference to literature or providing good examples. Thoughtful, clear and convincing answers. Solidly above average.</p>
<b>6 (good)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Clear, focused &amp; well-developed argument. Thorough knowledge of the subject matter. Student demonstrated solid understanding of relevant concepts theories. Average to better than average argumentation, research and writing.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Gone beyond providing the essentials by making good use of references to literature or examples. Clear and convincing answers.</p>



<b>5 (satisfactory)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Clear but underdeveloped argument. Competent level of knowledge of the subject matter. Student demonstrated satisfactory grasp of relevant concepts. Requirements of assignment fully satisfied. Satisfactory argumentation, research, and writing.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Expectations are met in that the essential components of competent answers to the questions are all there. The depth of understanding and quality of analysis is entirely acceptable but not impressive. Reasonably clear and convincing answers.</p>
<b>4 (satisfactory)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Signs of weakness in argumentation. Competent level of knowledge of the subject matter. Student demonstrated satisfactory grasp of relevant concepts. Requirements of research paper are satisfied on a basic level. While the argumentation, research, and presentation are satisfactory, they are of below average quality.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Only the most obvious of expectations are met, the essential components of answers to the questions are all there but the depth of understanding and quality of analysis is below average.</p>
<b>3 (unsatisfactory)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Lack of clarity or consistency in argumentation. Student demonstrated slightly better than minimal knowledge of subject matter and relevant concepts. Limited ability to use course material or research techniques to satisfy standard expectations. Requirements of assignment not fully satisfied. Less than satisfactory argumentation, research, and presentation.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Fails to provide the essential components of a satisfactory answer, but manages to demonstrate a limited understanding of relevant course material.</p>
<b>2 (unsatisfactory)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Unclear or missing argument. Student failed to demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter or use of research techniques. Fails to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. Unacceptable argumentation, research and/or presentation.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Fails to provide the essential components of a satisfactory answer, but manages to demonstrate a limited understanding of relevant course material.</p>
<b>1 (unsatisfactory)</b>	<p><b>Paper &amp; presentation:</b> Unclear or missing argument. Student failed to demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter or use of research techniques. Fails to fulfill the requirements of the assignment. Unacceptable argumentation, research and/or presentation.</p> <p><b>Questioning:</b> Fails to provide the components of a minimally satisfactory answer.</p>
<b>0 (unsatisfactory)</b>	Plagiarism or other intentional or unintentional violations of academic ethics.

## ACADEMIC ETHICS — APPEALING PROCEDURE

The Committee must follow the conform to ethical standards of HSE. The Committee must inform the Faculty about cases of plagiarism according to Annex 2 of [Student Internal Regulations at National Research University Higher School of Economics](#), including the cases when the academic supervisor approved the oral defense. If the fact of plagiarism is confirmed, the student receives an unsatisfactory mark and is a subject to disciplinary sanctions.

The appealing procedure follows the general regulations and standards of HSE.

**APPENDIX 1 — THESIS DEFENSE EVALUATION SHEET**

<b>Student</b>	
<b>Thesis Title</b>	
<b>Comments (optional)</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	
<b>Academic supervisor's mark</b>	
<b>Oral defense mark</b>	
<b>Final mark</b>	

**Head of the Committee**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name, signature, date)

**Members of the Committee**

\_\_\_\_\_ (name, signature, date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (name, signature, date)

\_\_\_\_\_ (name, signature, date)

**APPENDIX 2 — GRADUATION THESIS DEFENSE EVALUATION SHEET**

**Национальный исследовательский университет  
«Высшая школа экономики»**

**Протокол заседания локальной ГЭК  
по защите выпускной квалификационной работы  
№ \_\_\_\_\_**

« \_\_\_\_\_ » \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ г.  
с \_\_\_\_\_ час. \_\_\_\_\_ мин. до \_\_\_\_\_ час. \_\_\_\_\_ мин.

Студента \_\_\_\_\_ - го курса  
образовательной программы \_\_\_\_\_  
*(наименование образовательной программы)*

уровня \_\_\_\_\_  
по направлению/ специальности \_\_\_\_\_  
*(код и название направления/ специальности)*

факультета \_\_\_\_\_  
*(фамилия, имя, отчество при наличии)*

Системы (средства) проведения ГЭК \_\_\_\_\_

**Состав комиссии:**

	Ученая степень	Должность	Подразделение	Фамилия, имя, отчество при наличии	Рекомендуемая оценка по 10-балльной шкале (число/текст)	Присутствовали (отметить)
Председатель						
Члены						
Секретарь						

**Тема ВКР:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Руководитель ВКР**

\_\_\_\_\_ (ученая степень)

\_\_\_\_\_ (должность)

\_\_\_\_\_ (подразделение)

\_\_\_\_\_ (фамилия, имя, отчество)

**В комиссию представлены**

*(если в электронном виде, отметить каким образом получено и где хранится):*

ВКР на \_\_\_\_\_ листах  
 Отзыв руководителя на \_\_\_\_\_ листах  
 Рецензия на \_\_\_\_\_ листах  
 Рецензия *(при наличии)* на \_\_\_\_\_ листах

**Вывод руководителя:**

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

**Рекомендуемая оценка руководителя**

\_\_\_\_\_ *оценка по 10-балльной шкале (число)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *оценка по 5-балльной шкале (текст)*

**Вывод рецензента(-ов) *(при наличии)*:**

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

**Рекомендуемая оценка рецензента(-ов) *(при наличии)*:**

\_\_\_\_\_ *оценка по 10-балльной шкале (число)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *оценка по 5-балльной шкале (текст)*

**После сообщения о выполненной ВКР студенту заданы следующие вопросы:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Характеристика ответов студента:**

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

**Мнение председателя и членов комиссии о выявленном в ходе защиты ВКР уровне подготовленности обучающегося к решению профессиональных задач, а также о выявленных недостатках в теоретической и практической подготовке обучающегося:**

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**Решение комиссии:**

Признать, что студент

\_\_\_\_\_ *(фамилия, имя, отчество при наличии)*

выполнил и защитил ВКР с оценкой:

\_\_\_\_\_ *оценка по 10-балльной шкале (число)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *оценка по 5-балльной шкале (текст)*

Председатель

\_\_\_\_\_ *(подпись)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *(фамилия, инициалы)*

Секретарь

\_\_\_\_\_ *(подпись)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *(фамилия, инициалы)*