

National Research University Higher School of Economics

Regulations for Theses Written by Students in Bachelor's Programmes
under 38.04.02 "Management" and 38.04.05 "Business Informatics" fields of studies
at the Graduate School of Business
of National Research University Higher School of Economics

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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

Academic supervisor of a degree programme is an HSE University academic staff member who has been appointed to perform said role as per the Rector's directive and who shall be responsible for the development, implementation and quality of the respective degree programme.

Advisory board of a degree programme is the collegiate administrative body responsible for making decisions with respect to a given degree programme's terms of implementation and contents.

Thesis – final graduation work.

FSC – final state certification.

SEB – State Examination Board.

A degree programme is a set of core educational characteristics (e.g., study load, contents, and expected outcomes), organizational and teaching settings and assessment formats presented in the form of a curriculum, the academic calendar, working syllabi and other components, as well as assessment and teaching materials.

HSE ES – educational standards for degree programmes set by HSE University.

Guidelines (for thesis preparation) refer to standards and recommendations for preparation and evaluation of theses.

An Employer is a party to the educational process, an individual or a legal entity engaged in the training of learners under a given degree programme with a view to the subsequent employment of its alumni.

Students are individuals pursuing Bachelor's programmes.

The University or HSE University refers to National Research University Higher School of Economics.

A programme office is the curriculum support unit or programme coordinator charged with administrative support for processes related to studies under a given degree programme¹.

A faculty is any University subdivision implementing Bachelor's, Master's and Specialist programmes (faculty, school, or institute).

HE FSES – federal state educational standards of higher education.

VLIS (Virtual Learning Information System) is an electronic support system for educational processes at HSE University.

PTE – practical training element.

¹ The e-mail addresses of the heads of programme offices (programme coordinators) are posted on programme webpages on HSE University corporate portal (website).

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. These Regulations for theses prepared by students of degree programmes in fields 38.03.02 “Management” and 38.03.05 “Business Informatics” (hereinafter “Regulations”) have been drawn up on the basis of and in accordance with the Regulations on Practical Training of Students under Core Bachelor’s, Specialist and Master’s Programmes at HSE University (Annex to HSE University Directive No. 6.18.1-01/130721-7, dated July 13, 2021, approved by HSE University Academic Council Minutes No. 6, dated July 17, 2021), and the Conceptual Framework for Developing HSE University Degree Students’ Foreign Language Competencies (Annex to HSE University Directive No. 6.18.1-01/2306-02, dated June 23, 2017, approved by HSE University Academic Council Minutes No. 6, dated May 26, 2017).

1.2. These Regulations hereby specify the recommended procedure for thesis preparation, include recommendations for the structure, content, size, implementation formats for thesis composition, deadlines for different stages of thesis preparation, assessment criteria, requirements for supervisors’ feedback on thesis works and the general requirements for defence procedures.

1.3. Adherence to these Regulations is mandatory for degree students in fields 38.03.02 “Management” and 38.03.05 “Business Informatics” (hereinafter “Degree Programmes” or “DP”) with respect to the preparation, defence and publication of thesis works.

1.4. A thesis is a mandatory element of the Degree Programmes; furthermore, it is also an element of a student’s practical training.

1.5. Students shall select their thesis topics in their fourth year of Bachelor’s studies.

1.6. Theses can only be written by one author.

1.7. Theses are written and presented in Russian, or in English, if the Degree Programme is fully taught in English.

1.8. Theses may have English words and phrases in the Russian-language wording of respective topics, if these words and phrases are well-known and commonly used terms. In such instances, a footnote translation of the English term(s) used in the title of the work is not required.

1.9. A change in a work’s topic or change of supervisor is made on the basis of the student’s written request to the programme’s academic supervisor (hereinafter “AS”), accompanied by a justification for the request. The AS is entitled to decline the student’s request for a topic/supervisor change, by providing justifications for their decision. If approved, the signed request will be transferred to the programme office of the DP. A change in the topic/supervisors shall be then made by directive of the Dean of the Graduate School of Business of HSE University.

1.10. Theses are not subject to mandatory peer reviews.

1.11. A thesis’ final grade is awarded by the state examination board (hereinafter “SEB”) based on the results of the thesis defence and shall be recorded in the respective minutes; a thesis’ defence is a mandatory component of final state certification of HSE University graduates; the defence is carried out in accordance with the DP’s academic calendar.

1.12. In cases when plagiarism has been identified, appropriate disciplinary sanctions shall be imposed in accordance with the Procedure for Taking Disciplinary Actions for Violations of Academic Standards in Student Papers at HSE University, which is an annex to the Student Internal Regulations at HSE University.

1.13. A student who has received an unsatisfactory grade for thesis defence shall be dismissed from HSE University for their failure to master a part of the given Degree Programme, as well as failure to comply with its curriculum (hereinafter “unsatisfactory academic performance”) in accordance with the Regulations on Final State Certification of Students of Bachelor’s, Specialist and Master’s Programmes at HSE University.

2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THESIS WORKS

2.1. A thesis work should be aimed at consolidating knowledge and competencies acquired by students during theoretical and practical classes, fostering their skills for independent research on a selected topic, while also developing their capabilities for analysis, research, project activities and information processing.

2.2. A thesis should represent a completed research work on a given topic, written individually by its author under the guidance of a supervisor. It must include elements of scientific research and/or solution of an applied problem, demonstrating the author’s skills in working with academic and professional literature, generalizing empirical data, and using theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired while mastering their given DP.

2.3. A thesis can be based on a generalization of the results of an author’s term papers and include materials gathered by him/her while taking part in a pre-graduation internship or work placement.

2.4. The general aims of thesis implementation and defence are:

- fostering, systematization and integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in a relevant field of study;
- development of critical evaluation and generalization of theoretical frameworks;
- application of the knowledge gained in the applied problem-solving in the relevant field of study;
- promotion of skills in independent analysis;
- acquiring contemporary methods of scientific research;
- pinpointing the student’s preparedness for professional activities under job market conditions;
- presentation of skills in public speaking and defence of scientific ideas, proposals and recommendations.

2.5. Thesis works should be written on the basis of well-developed scientific, educational or professional literature concerning the problem under study. In turn, an individual thesis work should feature a critical approach to a study of scholarly literature. Material drawn from literature sources must be properly processed and re-interpreted, while also being organically linked to the student’s selected topic.

2.6. Thesis works should be written on the basis of processed empirical material regarding the problem under study. An individual thesis should demonstrate a student’s ability to harness research methods used in the course of study. The involved empirical material should be documented (e.g., interview guides, scripts, videos, etc.) and presented in the Annex to a given thesis.

2.7. The results obtained for a thesis should be of practical importance. The totality of the results obtained in this work should demonstrate that its author possesses analytical, research or practical skills in one’s chosen field of professional activity. The results obtained in a thesis may feature elements of scientific novelty.

2.8. In a thesis, it is necessary to adhere to the proper academic language, terminology, notation, abbreviations and symbols adopted in this particular area. In the text of a thesis, the substitution of scientific and professional special terminology with everyday clichés and professional jargon is not allowed. The use of emotional constructs and rhetorical questions is also not permitted. Instead, the draft should focus on the essence of the research problem considered, while the argumentation should be clear and precise, without the use of conditionals.

2.9. The main thesis formats include:

2.9.1. *An academic thesis* is a research work conducted in order to obtain new knowledge about the structure, properties and pattern of the studied object (phenomenon). The results of an academic thesis should include an identification of the pattern/factors/effects/impact mechanisms/specifics/major differences regarding the theoretical structures or phenomena from actual business practice.

2.9.2. *A consulting thesis* is a research work conducted in order to develop recommendations for improving the performance indicators of an existing entity or recommendations for launching a new product for a previously non-existent organization with a short history of operations (hereinafter a “startup”). The main result of a consulting thesis shall include recommendations for the creation / improvement / implementation of a strategy / plan / business model / product prototype / financial model / program / or recommendations for the development / presentation / promotion / optimization / efficiency improvement for a specific organization / group of organizations / startup, product / brand / categories of organizations / industries / products / processes / functions.

2.9.3. *An applied thesis* is a research work conducted in order to reveal/devise/improve tools for developing solutions to applied problems that should be proven to be economically effective. The result of an applied thesis includes the identification, development or improvement of a measurement / assessment / selection / decision-making tool.

3. THESIS ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

3.1. Thesis works shall be assessed as per the following criteria:

3.1.1. *Logical integrity*, which is defined as:

- compliance of the thesis work’s content to its topic;
- consistency and validity of the exposition, clarity of the structure and logical transitions between the thesis work’s sections;
- achievement of the goals and objectives specified in the work; completeness and integrity of the work; inclusion of conclusions based on actual research results.

3.1.2. *Practical and/or academic value*, which is defined as:

- relevance of the research in accordance with the DP focus;
- validity in terms of the efficiency of the proposed recommendations and the options for their practical implementation;
- the author’s contribution to the thesis work; in-depth description of the author’s method to solving the research problem.

3.1.3. *Research quality*, which is defined as:

- extent of problem analysis and quality of research problem specification;
- relevance of the selection of methods and instruments for researching the problem in question;
- description of the data utilized and its reliability; justification for the methods of data collection and processing;

- use of high-quality bibliography - minimum of 20 (including sources in English).
- 3.1.4. *Quality of text and presentation*, which is defined as:
- conformity to the requirements regarding the thesis's wordage, typeface usage, inline intervals, pages numbering, formatting of table of content, list of reference, titles, etc.;
 - indication of links in the text to all sources cited;
 - absence of orthographic and stylistic errors;
 - clarity of the material, including the usage of statistical data, schemes, tables and graphs, thus facilitating a better perception and understanding of important information;
 - quality of the project's slide presentation and the verbal defence, as well as the clarity and structure of the proposed presentation, time keeping, quality of the responses and presentation skills;
- 3.1.5. *Conformity to the given field of study*, which is defined as:
- application of theoretical knowledge and acquired professional competencies in the respective field of study;
 - exposition of relevant social and ethical aspects, with respect to the introduction of a particular managerial or technical solution, or a strategy's implementation and its effect on stakeholders.
- 3.2. The grade for the thesis work shall consist of:
- 3.2.1. evaluation of its text, conducted by SEB and taking into account the supervisor's feedback;
- 3.2.2. thesis presentation before SEB members;
- 3.2.3. evaluation of the author's responses to the SEB members' questions.
- 3.3. The evaluation of the thesis text, presentation of thesis results and the author's responses to the SEB members' questions are three equal and complementary components of the SEB's assessment of students' knowledge, skills and competencies, as approved by the DP for thesis preparation and defence. All three components are mandatory. A student or any other participant in the assessment procedure shall not be entitled to decide on annulation or exclusion of any of the components in the thesis' final grade.
- 3.4. A thesis supervisor shall carry out an assessment in accordance with the same criteria as SEB. This grade will be taken into account when deciding on the final grade for the thesis as an additional recommendation.
- 3.5. A thesis work should be graded on a 10-point (rating) system based on the results of the thesis defence with respect to each of the criteria, which, in turn, should be graded on a five-year scale, and subsequent division of the final result by 2.5. In turn, the final grade shall be rounded up for values $\geq$ "score, 5" and down for values $\leq$ "score,4".
- 3.6. Assessment results shall be either announced to students on the examination day by the SEB chairperson, or communicated via corporate e-mail/EIOS within the timeframe in place for announcing results to students.

4. STAGES FOR THESIS PREPARATION

- 4.1. A thesis preparation outline provided in Annex 1 to these Regulations, and it must specify the following milestones:
- 4.1.1. *Topic selection* (refer to p. 5).
- 4.1.2. *Signing the assignment for thesis implementation*. After the assignment of a topic and supervisor, a student shall receive an assignment for implementation of the PTE, along with an outline

and terms for the work's implementation. A template for the assignment is provided in the Annexes to these Regulations. Students must sign off on the assignment.

4.1.3. *Thesis project preparation.* At this stage, students should formulate the relevance and the hypothesis of their work, state its core problem, prepare a list of references for the work's implementation and expected results, and propose a structure for the thesis.

4.1.4. *Submission of a thesis first draft.* The first draft of a thesis should be submitted to a supervisor for review; its text must then be revised accordingly, if needed. In turn, the supervisor must notify the programme office via e-mail or that special EIOS module about any students who have failed to submit their first draft on time.

4.1.5. *Thesis pre-defence.* As per the decision of the academic supervisor of the DP, it is possible to conduct a preliminary defence of the thesis, whereby a student can present and defend their thesis at its preliminary stage of preparation. The preliminary stage of thesis development foresees the inclusions of working versions of all content-semantic elements of the work: topic, the relevance of the topic, the problem, goal, objectives, object, and subject of research, analysis of literature, research methods, empirical analysis, the thesis' scientific novelty or practical significance, and conclusions. The pre-defence process can play the role of blocking element for monitoring thesis development, if it is included and appropriately indicated in curriculum of the "Research Seminar" discipline. In such instances, an unsatisfactory grade for pre-defence process shall be considered an academic failure, which can be remedied through a repeated pre-defence not later than the established deadline as per the timetable for the thesis' preparation (Annex 1).

4.1.6. *Uploading of thesis to HSE University's Antiplagiat system.* All students must upload electronic copies (not scans) of their theses to the special EIOS module for term papers and theses which will forward them to the Antiplagiat system. If confirmed instances of plagiarism are found in the thesis, the student may face disciplinary sanction in accordance with the Procedures for Applying Disciplinary Measures for the Violation of Academic Standards for Student Papers at HSE University (Annex 7 to HSE University Student Internal Regulations).

4.1.7. *Submission of a final thesis draft.* Upon completion of this stage, a student should submit the final version of their thesis along with its abstract to the thesis supervisor for subsequent issue of feedback no later than the date specified in the Regulations (Annex 1). The supervisor of the thesis is responsible for submitting to the relevant programme office their feedback on the thesis within 1 (one) calendar week after receiving the final version (an example of a supervisor's feedback form is provided in Annex 2 to these Regulations). The feedback should include the recommended grade for the student's thesis on a 10-point scale. The final version of the thesis shall be presented by the student to the supervisor in hard copy or electronic form. When submitting their work, the student must provide a report from the "Antiplagiat" system to the supervisor.

4.1.8. *Final submission of a finished thesis to the programme office.* A hard copy of the final thesis draft, its abstract, supervisor's feedback, and a report or certificate from the Antiplagiat system must be submitted to the relevant programme office. Electronic versions of all documents, including the thesis, should be uploaded to the relevant EIOS module.

4.1.9. *Thesis defence.* The relevant procedures and process are governed by the Regulations for Final State Certification of HSE University Students.

5. STUDENTS' SELECTION OF THESIS TOPICS AND THEIR DISCUSSION WITH THE PROGRAMME'S ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR

5.1. The topic of a thesis should be focused on solving an academic or applied problem, meet current academic criteria, be relevant and aligned with the appropriate field of study.

5.2. The scientific problem that shall be solved within the framework of the thesis should help to fill in a gap in the academic literature or offer new ways of analysis of a new area of research at an understudied junction of concepts / theories / subject areas. The relevance of the given scientific problem will mainly be determined by the academic community's overall need to overcome urgent challenges regarding the subject area of the thesis, as presented in leading Russian and foreign academic journals or by direct orders of scientific organizations operating in the field considered under the DP. The results of the research should be the generation of knowledge, which has scientific novelty for the subject area considered by the thesis. The presentation of results can take the form of new knowledge about the relationship of theoretical constructs, recommendations for categories of organizations / industries / products / processes / functions, or a developed or improved analytical tool.

5.3. An applied problem solved within the framework of a thesis should be a response to a gap in practical knowledge or of the option of studying a promising direction for the development of the research object based on information about current trends or best practices. The relevance of solving an applied problem should mainly be determined by direct orders of organizations (industrial organizations, commercial firms, non-profit organizations, etc.) corresponding to the field of the DP, or the prospect of the practical application of the results on the part of employees or management of these organizations in order to solve their operational problems. The results of the analysis of the applied problem should include the development of a solution, which bears practical significance for the thesis object. The presentation of the results of an applied thesis can take form of new knowledge about the relationship of phenomena or the processes of a given business practice, targeted recommendations for organizations, or a developed or improved analysis tool.

5.4 The topic of the thesis work can be provisional and subsequently clarified by its supervisor and student in their joint work on the text.

5.5 Departments and scientific divisions, as well as individual teachers and researchers of HSE University, whose research interests concern the DP's field of study, can offer thesis topics for students.

5.6. In regards to their topic selection or topic refinement, students should consult with a potential supervisor. Consultations can be organized in any form that is suitable for the supervisor and the student, including correspondence via corporate e-mail.

5.7. If a topic discussion goes well, the supervisor must provide the student with a confirmation of their supervision. This confirmation must be submitted to the programme office in writing, stating the topic in Russian and English, the student's name, contact details (email), and the signature of the supervisor. In addition, the confirmation must be registered in the special EIOS module or via e-mail.

5.8. If students do not wish to select any of the topics from the provided list, they can propose a topic of their own to the programme's academic supervisor.

5.9. Upon review of a thesis topic proposed by a student, the academic supervisor may approve or decline the topic (followed by the latter's justification), or modify it together with the student.

5.10. Once the selection procedure is complete, the programme's advisory board must officially assign topics and supervisors to respective students within 5 (five) working days.

5.11. A directive on assigning topics and final submission deadlines for and thesis works must be issued by December 15 of the ongoing academic year. The directive is drawn up by the programme office in accordance with the HSE Collection of Standard Directive Templates for Student Affairs, and signed by the faculty dean.

5.12. Once a directive is issued, the programme office will provide supervisors with a list of students assigned to them, along with their selected topics. The list may be sent via corporate e-mail or through the special EIOS module. At the same time, thesis supervisors must be notified about the preparation schedule and the guidelines adopted for the respective DP.

5.13. Thesis topic may be changed or specified no later than 1 (one) calendar month before the official deadline for final submission of the thesis following procedures established by the degree programme. If a student wants to change the thesis' topic, he/she should submit a written request addressed to the programme's academic supervisor, who should sign the request if they approve the topic. The signed request should be transferred to the programme office. A change of the thesis topic shall be enacted by the dean's directive.

5.14. If a student fails to choose a thesis topic by the set deadline, they shall be subject to academic failure, which, in turn, must be remedied by following the procedures and deadlines stipulated in Russian legislation and the University's own bylaws.

6. PREPARING A THESIS PROJECT

6.1. At this stage, a student must define the working hypothesis/conceptual framework of their thesis, put forth the issue which the thesis must address, and devise the core structure of the thesis.

6.2. Students may prepare a project of their thesis in the course of a research seminar or face-to-face discussions with a supervisor (or potential supervisor).

6.3. The first draft of a thesis shall be assessed by the supervisor as "Approved" or "Declined". The assessment should be entered into the student's performance record or the special EIOS module. Thesis projects that have been declined must be revised and resubmitted to the supervisor (the specific deadline for resubmission and grading is determined by the thesis supervisor, but this cannot be later than December 25, as per Annex 1 hereto). The supervisor must notify the programme office via e-mail or the special EIO module about any students who have failed to submit their first drafts for approval by the stipulated deadline.

6.4. Within the period established according to the schedule for thesis preparation (Annex 1), the defence of a thesis project in English (project proposal) will be implemented. Three weeks before the expected date of defence, the project proposal is uploaded to the information system to check the text for any plagiarism. To defend project proposal, an examination committee shall be formed as per relevant HSE University bylaws. The defence committee for the project proposal should include teachers of foreign languages and professors of specialized DP disciplines/courses.

7. THESIS DEFENCE

General requirements for the thesis defence procedure and assessment criteria:

7.1 A thesis defence shall be conducted in accordance with the approved timetable for state examinations with respect to a respective field of study.

7.2 A thesis defence shall start with a student's presentation on their thesis topic. The length of the presentation shall be up to 15 (fifteen) minutes.

7.3 The student will be expected to explain key aspects of his/her thesis freely, without relying on any notes. During the report on their thesis, students can use computer presentations, prepared

visual graphic (e.g., spreadsheets, diagrams, figures, etc.) or other materials, as well as any other materials illustrating key features.

7.4 After a thesis presentation is finished, members of the local SEB shall pose questions to the student concerning the topic of his/her thesis, or issues closely related thereto. In turn, the student shall be entitled to refer to their thesis when answering questions.

7.5 After the discussion reaches conclusion, the student shall present his/her closing remarks.

7.6 After the closing remarks, the student's thesis defence shall be deemed completed.

7.7 During the defence of the thesis, the SEB shall check the degree of formation in the graduate of the following universal and professional competencies specified in the list of related competencies under the relevant DP.

7.8 Thesis defence is drawn up in the minutes. The minutes are signed by members of the examination board, approved by the chairperson of the SEB or his deputy, put in a separate file and transferred to the programme office of the DP, which shall ensure their storage for 5 (five) years. After 5 (five) years, the minutes will be transferred for archival storage at the Administration and General Services Office.

7.9 Final examination grades on a five-point and 10-point scale should be recorded in SEB minutes and these must be signed by the members and the chairperson of the local SEB meeting. Furthermore, a student's failure to attend an examination shall be recorded in such minutes as well.

7.10 Thesis supervisors shall not participate in the examination board's voting process for the assessment of thesis (if the supervisor is a member of the SEB). The presence of the supervisor (unless he/she is a member of the SEB) is optional.

8. THESIS SUPERVISION

8.1. Thesis supervisors appointed by a dean's directive shall be responsible for direct supervision of students' thesis preparation.

8.2. Thesis supervisors are appointed from among HSE University employees holding an academic degree (Doctor of Sciences, PhD, or Candidate of Sciences), or professionals with at least 3 (three) years of experience, including part-time employees of the University.

8.3. Thesis supervisors may also include employees of external organizations with at least 3 (three) years of professional experience in a given field or executive experience and/or with an academic degree, thereby certifying their professional competencies in a given industry or field of study to which the thesis is devoted, provided that the student plans to work on their thesis predominantly at the supervisor's place of employment.

8.4. For students whose supervisors are not employed at HSE University, mentors must be appointed from among the University's staff. Mentors shall oversee thesis preparation and check if content and formatting meets the established requirements.

8.5. HSE University academic staff or the employees of external organizations, whose professional activities and/or academic interests are connected to a thesis topic, may be appointed as advisors to students working on their theses. In turn, advisors must provide consultations to students; they hold an advisory vote on thesis development.

8.6. For interdisciplinary theses, up to 2 (two) advisors may be appointed.

8.7. An advisor must:

- advise students on selecting an appropriate research or project methodology, scholarly literature and resources;
- advise students on the content of their theses.

8.8. Appointment of an advisor(s) shall be initiated by the thesis supervisor (subject to the dean's consent) and authorized by the programme academic supervisor, following a written request drawn up by the student and signed by their supervisor.

8.9. Change of thesis supervisors or appointment of mentors and advisors shall be initiated by the programme's academic supervisor and enacted by the dean's directive.

8.10. Monitoring of students' progress and quality of thesis preparation for their defence shall be assumed by their thesis supervisor and/or a mentor, as well as by the programme office, on those deadlines set for submission of all necessary documents and completion of all stages of the thesis preparation process.

8.11. A thesis supervisor may be changed no later than 2 (two) months before the defence.

8.12. Thesis supervisors bear the following duties:

- advise students on shaping the final topic of their thesis, drafting the thesis outline, and its preparation schedule, drawing up a first draft, and selecting scholarly literature and relevant resources;
- help students select appropriate research or project methodology; collaborate with students to determine provisional stages of the topic exploration;
- monitor the progress and quality of students' thesis preparation against the outline and the preparation schedule;
- notify the programme office if students are behind the schedule;
- advise students on the content of their theses;
- assess the quality of theses along established requirements (in particular, as feedback);
- review thesis information that students intend to publish on the HSE University corporate portal (website) and other public online platforms.

8.13. Thesis supervisors are entitled to:

- select a suitable mode for their interaction with students,
- in particular, agree on a thesis preparation schedule and the frequency of their face-to-face meetings or other communications;
- request that students prepare and present a brief summary of the received recommendations, along with further steps for their thesis preparation after each face-to-face meeting;
- request that students pay close attention to received recommendations and attend meetings well-prepared;
- consider compliance with the set preparation schedule and deadlines for submission of the first draft and final draft when grading student theses;
- take part in SEB proceedings for a thesis defence.

8.14. If a thesis supervisor is not employed at HSE University, mentors appointed from among the University's own staff must assume the following duties:

- regularly check the progress of thesis preparation against the outline and the preparation schedule (jointly with a thesis supervisor);
- notify the programme office if students are behind the schedule.

8.15. In their feedback, a supervisor, as per the criteria for assessing thesis works, should analyze the logical integrity of the work, its scientific and practical contribution, the quality of the research, extent of the student's compliance with the requirements for a thesis work at the corresponding

degree level, depth of the student's mastery of universal and professional competencies as specified in the HSE University ES (Annex 2).

9. CRITERIA FOR THESIS STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND WORDAGE

9.1. The structure of a thesis depends on its content, however, the following structure is generally recommended: title page, table of contents, introduction, chapters of the main part, conclusion, list of references, and annexes. The content of the chapters of the main body of a thesis should correspond to the topic of the work and offer its full-scale exploration.

9.2. The total pages in a thesis prepared by a single author and formatted in accordance with the requirements stated in these Regulations, is defined by the given internship programme. A thesis' page count cannot be less than 35 pages.

9.3. The title page and table of contents should be presented on the 2 (two) first pages of the work; a title page sample is given in Annex 3 to these Regulations.

9.4. **Introduction.** The introduction to a thesis shall be brief (usually up to 3 (three) pages) and concise. From the introduction the work's main aim and objectives shall be clear, as well as the methods used in order to solve the research problem and which are the results of the solution. The introduction reflects the following main points:

- *General formulation of the thesis topic.* The most convincing foundation, whereby the research topic is determined such as a contradiction in social practice or management practice, reflecting the most acute and socially significant issues that require urgent solutions.

- *A research problem* is an academic or an applied problem that must be studied and resolved. An academic or applied problem statement is a creative act, which requires specific vision and skills, special knowledge, experience, academic and practical qualifications. Problem solving is usually the main aim of the research process.

- *The topic's relevance* concerns the thesis work's theoretical or practical value. The relevance criterion indicates the necessity and opportuneness of the analysis of the stated problem. Actual research should generate an answer to the most pressing questions at present, reflecting social demands, to the business world's need for contemporary science, while also indicating the most important contradictions that may appear in practice. In turn, the relevance criterion is dynamic and flexible, depending on the time and taking into account specific and concrete circumstances. In its most general form, relevance concept is characterized by the degree of discrepancy between the demand for scientific ideas and practical recommendations (to meet a particular need) and the proposals that the academic community can offer at present.

- *Extent of scientific development of a research topic.* Analysis of the depth of elaboration of the problem should demonstrate its academic explanation in relevant scientific currents and practice.

- *The purpose of the research* is a mental anticipation of a result, which shall be obtained through the research process (as the researcher sees it). This objective will be considered achieved if the leading idea reflected in the topic is formulated, substantiated, proven and tested in practice.

- *Object of study.* The object of research can be anything that explicitly or implicitly features a contradiction and, thus, generates a problematic situation. The object is what the cognitive process is focused upon.

- *The subject of research* is a part or a reflected side of a given object. These are the most significant, from a practical or theoretical point of view, properties and features of an object, which are subject to direct study. The subject of research is the specific problem of a topic being investigated. In

accordance with the object, the subject and the purpose of its study, research tasks are specified, which aim at testing a respective hypothesis.

- *Research objectives* are ways of achieving a goal (i.e., what needs to be done to achieve this goal: to analyze, describe, establish, identify, etc.). If a theoretical analysis of literature is needed to solve a problem, one of the tasks may be to identify the theoretical foundations of the given problem, etc. It is necessary to formulate tasks very carefully, since the description of their solution should constitute the content of the chapters and paragraphs of the study, while the assessment of the effectiveness of the study will depend on the description of the generated solution.

- *Research methods* are ways of solving research problems in order to obtain a research outcome. Usually, theoretical methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, modeling, etc.), empirical methods for data collection (observation, study of the products of activity, documentation, questionnaires, sociometry, conversation, the method of independent characteristics, experiment, etc.) and mathematical methods (quantitative data processing, ranking, etc.) are used.

- *Scientific novelty and practical value* refer to new theoretical and practical conclusions, patterns, content, principles and technologies, which have still not been identified or recorded in academic literature. The scientific novelty of the research lies in the author's creation of a concept, description of a method, model, approach, concept, principle, etc. In turn, the practical significance of the research should lie in its readiness for practical implementation.

- *Preview of the work's structure – titles of chapters and their brief description;*
- *Description of key information sources.*

9.5. **The thesis main body** serves as the general content of the research.

- The first chapter can reveal the history of the applied problem under study or the theory of the theoretical problem under study. If the work is presented in a consulting format, the first chapter should include a description of a company/firm that the work is devoted to and the market in which it operates, as well as information about its consumers and competitors that is already available before the start of the main empirical study of the work. The recommended format for presenting this information should include a description of the company's typical consumer profile, consumer segmentation, consumer paths, benchmarking, positioning maps, a SWOT analysis, a PEST analysis, an analysis of Porter's competitive forces, a business model outline, etc. Furthermore, the first chapter is traditionally devoted to the systematization of literature, critical analysis, and substantiation of the author's positions on the problem under study. Materials from reference books, monographs, journal articles, reports and other sources should preferably be presented rather briefly in your own words, as well as illustrated with digital and statistical data, without forgetting to provide appropriate links to used sources. In turn, the information base of the thesis must be comprehensive and sufficient in order to disclose selected issues.

- In the next chapter(s), the essence of the empirical study is usually stipulated, i.e., the entire search for solutions or evidence regarding the correctness of the hypothesis should be carefully prescribed. The main purpose of this part of the work is to answer the main research questions expressed in the topic. Each chapter of the work should end with short conclusions.

9.6. **Conclusion.** In the conclusion section, the results and main conclusions of the thesis work should be clearly formulated. Conclusions must be concise and organically emerge from the content of the work. On the whole, the results should justify the solutions of the research objectives and testify to the correctness of the hypothesis, as well as demonstrate the achievement of the work's aims and the research's practical value.

9.7. **A list of references** shall be drawn up as per a preset order (refer to pp. 10.13 and 10.14). It must include all the sources cited in the work, as well as sources that were used one way or another by the author while developing the work, even if they were absent in the references. Usually, the list of references includes between 20 and 50 sources.

9.8. **Annexes** are not a mandatory part of a thesis' structure. Nevertheless, it is advisable to introduce appendices when the author uses a relatively large number of cumbersome tables, statistical material, source codes, etc. Such materials, if included in the main part, would complicate the work's comprehensiveness. It is generally enough to cite such information, which is included in the appendices.

9.9. When writing a thesis, it is necessary to adhere to an academic style of presentation, terminology, notation, abbreviations and symbols, as adopted in the given field of study. The presentation of materials should be consistent and logical, while also being conducted in a competent, literary language, without any stylistic and logical errors. Particular attention should be paid to the inclusion of logical connections when proceeding through the chapters and sections of the thesis work.

9.10. The percentage of borrowed materials in a thesis work should not exceed 20% according to the "Antiplagiat" system's analysis of the work's originality. Citing of used sources shall not be considered in the percentage of borrowed materials.

10. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DESIGN OF THESIS WORKS

10.1. The text of the work shall be prepared using computer tools for preparing documents. It is preferable to apply Microsoft Word text editor standards. The work, in the case of an in-person defence, shall be submitted to the programme office in 1 (one) copy in a printed form on A4 white paper (210x297 mm), one-sided printing. The paper must be bound.

10.2. Document margins: top - 2 cm, bottom - 2 cm, left - 3 cm, right - 1.5 cm, the approximate number of characters on a page comes to 2,000.

10.3. The typeface should be Times New Roman. A limited use of various typefaces (bold, italic, and underlined) is permissible so as to emphasize certain terms, concepts, and statements.

10.4. Main text and bibliography/reference list. Font size - 14 pt. Line spacing - 1.5. Paragraph indent - 1.5 cm. Justified alignment. Spacing between paragraphs is 0.

10.5. Section titles are in capital letters without a period at the end of a phrase/sentence. Font size - 14 pt. Line spacing - 1.5. Paragraph indent - 0 cm. Centre alignment. The distance between chapter headings and the main text should be 1 (one) blank line.

10.6. Each chapter starts on a new page; the same rule applies to other major components (introduction, conclusion, list of references, annexes, etc.).

10.7. The work's pages (including annexes) should be consecutively numbered. The first page should be the title page, which should not feature a page number. For numbering, Arabic numerals should be used, which should be placed in the centre of the bottom of the page without a period.

10.8. Hard copies of thesis works should be bound.

10.9. In addition to commonly used abbreviations, a thesis' text may also contain abbreviations of specialist terms, which the author has drawn from relevant areas of knowledge. Upon first mention, an abbreviation shall be given in parentheses after a full form; further in the text, only the abbreviation should be given (without the full form).

10.10. Tables and figures should have names and sequential numbering with the addition of the words "Picture" or "Table", respectively, and its numbers in Arabic numerals before the name of the given object. Font size - 12 pt. Either end-to-end Table 1, Table 2, etc.) or by-chapter numbering of

figures and tables is allowed. In such instances, the number consists of the chapter number and the ordinal number of the object, separated by a dot (Figure 1.1, Figure 2.3, etc.). The names of the figures are located under the figures in the centre of the page, the names of the tables are above the tables, aligned to the right. All figures (tables) should be indicated in the text of the work. Figures (tables) must be placed in the work immediately after the text in which they are mentioned for the first time, or on the following page. If the figure (table) is taken from any source, a link to the source should be provided under the title.

10.11. Formulas are usually located on a separate line in the centre of the page or inside text lines. As a rule, the text should contain only short, simple formulas, which have no independent meaning and are not numbered. The most important formulas, as well as long and cumbersome formulas containing summation, product, derivation and integration symbols, should be located on separate lines. It is allowed to keep formulas' numbering by-chapter; in such instances, a formulas's number shall consist of the chapter number and the ordinal number of the formula, separated by a dot. Each formula or equation should have a blank space left above and beneath it. A formula's parameters shall be explained directly under the formula in the same order in which they appear in the formula. Furthermore, references in the text to the ordinal numbers of formulas and equations are given in parenthesis.

10.12. A work's reference list may include references to scholarly literature (monographs and educational literature), periodicals (articles from magazines and newspapers), legislative and instructive materials, statistical data and other reporting and accounting materials, website pages and other sources, which were used to write the paper or a thesis. It shall be compiled in the same language as the work itself, and if the author used scientific publications or literature in foreign languages in his/her work, they shall be included in the reference list in the original language.

10.13. Information about resources should be provided in accordance with the requirements of GOST P 7.0.7-2021.

10.14. When referring to scholarly literature, authors should be guided by the provisions of GOST 7.0.5–2008. A link to a literature source can be provided either in the form of an ordinal number in the list of used literature in square brackets (in addition, the page number on which the cited text is placed in this source can be indicated), e.g., [10-12, 15, p. 237-239,17]; or, if the ordering of the sources is alphabetical, the author's surname and the year of publication shall be indicated in parentheses, e.g., (Ivanov, 1999), (Smith, 2002a, 2002b).

10.15. An annex is an additional section of a work, which usually serves as a reference, but is necessary for a more comprehensive overview of the subject matter. The content of annexes may vary. They may include: copies of documents, excerpts from records, provisions from instructions and rules, etc. Annexes may also include text, tables, graphs, and maps. Furthermore, each annex begins on a new page with "Annex" indicated in the top right corner and has a title. If there are 2 (two) or more annexes, they should be numbered. The pages of annexes should be numbered continuously after the main text. The main text is linked to the annexes via references with the word "see", usually with a reference number indicated in parentheses. Each annex usually is self-contained and can be used independently of the main text. Furthermore, each annex is usually listed in the table of contents as a separate section with its full title.

11. STORAGE AND PUBLICATION OF THESIS WORKS

11.1. Defended theses must be submitted to the respective programme office, which, in turn, shall store them for 5 (five) years.

11.2. Abstracts and full texts of theses may be published on the portal for public access as stipulated in the relevant HSE University internal bylaws.

12. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Key Stages of Thesis Preparation

No	Stages	Deadlines
1	Entry of data on proposed topics for theses into EIOS	From September 1 to October 10 of the ongoing academic year
2	Topic selection by students from a proposed list or topic proposal initiated by students to their potential supervisor	From October 10 to November 20 of the ongoing academic year
3	Assignment of a topic and supervisor	No later than December 15 of the ongoing academic year
4	Thesis preparation and its assessment by a supervisor	No later than December 20 of the ongoing academic year
5	Second submission of the thesis project (in case of non-approval by the supervisor)	No later than December 25 of the ongoing academic year
6	Uploading the project proposal in English in the Antiplagiat system (in the special EIOS module).	Three weeks prior to the expected defence date of the thesis project in English
7	Project proposal's defence (in English)	No later than March 31 of the ongoing academic year
8	Submission of a draft version of the thesis to the supervisor	No later than April 20 of the ongoing academic year
9	Thesis pre-defence and second pre-defence procedures	From April 20 to May 19 of the ongoing academic year
10	Uploading the thesis to the Antiplagiat system (via a special EIOS module).	No later than May 20 of the ongoing academic year
11	Final submission of the finished thesis and abstract to the supervisor	No later than May 15 of the ongoing academic year
12	Supervisor's submission of their thesis feedback	Within a calendar week after receiving the final version of the thesis
13	Final submission of the finished thesis to the programme office	Within the period established by the directive for the assignment of the thesis topic
14	Defence	The deadlines are specified in the curriculum and the FSC schedule as per the Regulations on Final State Certification of HSE Graduates

Annex 2 Template for Thesis Supervisor's Feedback

Federal State Autonomous Institution of Higher Education
National Research University Higher School of Economics
Graduate School of Business

Department _____

Supervisor's Thesis Feedback

Student _____,

Full name

Fourth year Student of the Bachelor's Programme in the field 38.03.0_ “ ”
HSE University Graduate School of Business
on the topic: “ ”

No.	Criteria	Completely disagree	Partially disagree	Completely agree	Partially agree
Logical integrity	The content of the thesis is fully relevant to the topic; the presentation of the materials is logical and reasoned; there is a clear structure of presentation and logical transitions between the parts of the work; the goals and objectives of the work have been fully achieved; the work is complete and finished; the conclusions based on the results of the study are presented in full.				
Academic or practical contribution	The research is highly relevant to the field of study; the effectiveness of the proposed recommendations and the possibilities of their practical implementation are sufficiently justified; the author has made significant contributions to the work, including the formulation of their own approach to solving particular research problems.				
Quality of research	A deep analysis of the problem situation has been implemented and the qualitative characteristics of the research object are provided; the selection of tools and research methods of the problem under consideration is sufficiently substantiated; all sources are referenced in the text; completeness of the description of the data used, its reliability, substantiation of the methodology for collecting and processing data; high-quality literature sources with the use of at least 20 sources, including English-language sources.				
Text formatting quality	The work fully meets the requirements in term of wordage, the use of fonts, spacing, pagination, table of contents, list of references, titles, appendices, etc. .; there are no spelling and stylistic errors; high visibility of the material, including active use of statistical materials, charts, tables, and graphs, thus contributing to a better perception and understanding of key information.				
Conformity to the field of study	Theoretical knowledge and acquired professional competencies in the field of study were applied; the socio-ethical aspects relating to the implementation of a managerial or technical solution or the implementation of a strategy, and the planned impact on stakeholders were disclosed in full.				

Comments on the grades awarded, including the assessment of the author's contribution to the thesis' preparation:

< Comment on awarded grades, noting the strengths and weaknesses of the work >

Recommended grade:

Supervisor
Professor...
Department

_____ Last name and initials _____ Date
(signature)

National Research University Higher School of Economics
Graduate School of Business

Author's full name

THESIS TOPIC

Bachelor's Thesis
in the field 38.03.05/2 Business Informatics/Management
Degree Programme "_____"

Supervisor
Professor...

(last name and initials)

Advisor (if any)
Professor...

(last name and initials)

Moscow, 202_

Annex 4. Template for thesis assignment

National Research University Higher School of Economics
Graduate School of Business

ASSIGNMENT FOR PTE IMPLEMENTATION of a Fourth Year Student under a Full-Time Degree Programme

(full name)			
Bachelor's Programme		Name of Programme	
Field of study		38.03.05/2 Business Informatics/Management	
Faculty	Graduate School of Business		
Practice format	project / research		
Practice type	Thesis		
PTE implementation outline ²	from	15.12.202__	
	to	30.06.202	

PTE topic	<i>Thesis' topic in Russian and English</i>
PTE workload (in credits)	<i>Total number of credits allocated to the thesis' preparation</i>
PTE aim	<i>Indicate the thesis' aim</i>
PTE objectives	<i>Abstract of the thesis' content</i>
Requirements for PTE results	<i>Precisely describe the result to be graded</i>
Reporting format	Final text and presentation
Necessity / possibility of a public presentation of the results	Defence process
Requirements for PTE implementer	Knowledge and competencies, acquired while mastering the degree programme

PTE outline³

PTE implementation stages	Document	Deadlines
Signing the PTE assignment	Signed assignment	15.12.202__
Thesis project preparation	Thesis project	28.12.202__
Interim result	Draft thesis version	20.04.202__
Final report	Final thesis version	15.05.202__

Practical Training Supervisor on behalf of HSE University:

² PTE – practical training element in accordance with the DP's curriculum.

³ Four milestones are indicated. The PTE supervisor is entitled indicate additional milestones (implementation stages) of the PTE at their own discretion.

_____	_____	_____
<i>(position)</i>	<i>(signature)</i>	<i>(last name and initials)</i>

Assignment is accepted for
implementation

____.____.202__

Student

_____	_____
<i>(signature)</i>	<i>(last name and initials)</i>