

National Research University Higher School of Economics

**Regulations for Term Papers and Theses Written by Students in Master'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

Approved by Graduate School of Business Academic Council  
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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. GENERAL PROVISIONS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TERM PAPERS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THESIS WORKS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. SUPERVISION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESIS WORKS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. REQUIREMENTS FOR STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND SIZE OF TERM PAPERS AND THESIS WORKS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. STORAGE AND PUBLICATION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESIS WORKS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>18</b>

## 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 term paper/thesis preparation)** refer to standards and recommendations for preparation and evaluation of term papers/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 Master'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 programme<sup>1</sup>.

**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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 the preparation, assessment, defence and publication of term papers and thesis of students enrolled in Master's degree programmes (hereinafter "Programmes") under 38.04.02 "Management" and 38.04.05 "Business Informatics" fields of studies of the Graduate School of Business at National Research University Higher School of Economics (hereinafter the "Regulations") have been drafted 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 the HSE University Academic Council, Minutes No. 6, dated June 17, 2021).

1.2 The Regulations establish recommended procedures for the preparation of term papers and theses, specify requirements for their structure, content, volume, design, implementation formats, assessment criteria, as well as the general rules for the defence of term papers and theses for students of Master's Programmes under 38.04.02 "Management" and 38.04.05 "Business Informatics" fields of studies of the Graduate School of Business of HSE University.

1.3 Application of these Regulations is mandatory for students pursuing degree programmes under fields 38.04.02 "Management" and 38.04.05 "Business Informatics" (hereinafter "DP") in terms of the preparation, defence and publication of thesis works.

1.4 Term papers and theses shall be written and presented in Russian or English.

1.5 Term papers and theses are elements of practical training (PTE) of learners.

1.6 Term papers and theses may feature words and phrases in English in Russian-language wording of topics, if such words and phrases are well-known and commonly used terms. A footnote translation of the English term(s) in the title of the work is not required in such cases.

1.7 In instances when an instance of plagiarism has been identified, appropriate disciplinary measures shall be imposed in accordance with the Procedures for Application of Disciplinary Measures for Violating Academic Standards for Student Papers at HSE University (Annex 3 to the Student Internal Regulations at HSE University).

1.8 Students who have received unsatisfactory marks for a thesis defence shall be dismissed from HSE University for having failed to fulfill the obligations of mastering their DP in good faith and completing the curriculum 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 TERM PAPERS**

2.1 A term paper is an independent research project carried out by students as an individual part of their training/instruction.

2.2 Term papers are aimed at consolidating students' knowledge and competencies acquired from theoretical and practical classes, while also fostering skills in independent research on a selected topic, as well as developing their capabilities for analysis, research, project activities and data processing.

2.3 Term papers are composed as a form of a research work, built upon analysis and consolidation of theoretical and empirical materials for the purpose of strengthening learners' knowledge in management, developing independent theoretical models, and formulating research questions, hypotheses and research methods.

2.4. Term papers may be formatted as follows:

2.4.1. individual work performed by a single student;

2.4.2. group work carried out on a single topic by a group of students, comprising from 2 (two) to 5 (five) people, each of whom is charged with developing a certain part of the work independently.

2.5. The type of term paper shall be determined under the Internship Programme.

### **3. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THESIS WORKS**

3.1 A thesis is an independent research or project work carried out by students. A thesis is a mandatory component of each degree programme, and the thesis defence process is a mandatory part of the FSC. A thesis work is written in the form of a Master's dissertation.

3.2 A Master's thesis must demonstrate graduates' necessary professional qualifications in research, administrative, entrepreneurial and/or consulting activities in accordance with the DP's key characteristics, the aspects of the given field of study and the HSE ES.

3.2.1 Thesis works should be based on a thorough analysis of academic or professional literature on a problem under consideration. A thesis paper should demonstrate a critical approach to the study of scholarly literature. Material drawn from scholarly literature must be subject to in-depth analysis, as well as organically linked to the topic chosen by the student.

3.2.2 Theses should be written based on analyzed empirical material on the given problem. In turn, they should demonstrate students' ability to use research methods learned from their studies under courses included in respective curricula. Collected empirical material and data should be recorded, depending on their type, in such formats as in-depth interview guides, scripts, tables of data sets and frequency distributions, graphs, fragments of programme code, calculations, videos<sup>2</sup>, etc., and may be presented in the main body or an annex to a given thesis.

3.2.3 The totality of the results obtained from thesis work should indicate that its author has sufficient competencies and skills in analytical, research or practical work in their professional field chosen by the learners in order to pass the FSC. The criteria for results obtained through thesis work shall be determined as per the Internship Programme.

3.3 The main formats for theses are as follows:

3.3.1 *Research format* - research is carried out in order to obtain new knowledge about the structure, properties and patterns of an analyzed object's (phenomenon's) functions, carried out on the basis of the accumulated body of relevant theoretical knowledge and thus contributing to its further development, as well as having practical significance for business organizations.

3.3.2 *Project format* - identification and analysis of a specific problem faced by a business organization, searching for ways of improving certain functional areas of management or business processes, whereby a solution/product/method/application is developed, which can be applied and potentially tested through business practice.

3.4. Thesis work can be based on a generalization of the results of the previous term papers composed by a given author and feature materials collected personally by him/her in the course of their work placement. Citing term paper materials in the thesis work should be formatted according to the academic referencing rules. Should the links to a given work be omitted, the use of term paper materials shall be deemed as an incorrect citation and taken into account when checking the work for plagiarism.

3.5. Theses shall be written up on an individual basis.

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<sup>2</sup> Recorded and presented separately on a CD-ROM or flash drive

## **4. STAGES OF TERM PAPER AND THESIS PREPARATION**

### **4.1 Proposals for Term Paper and Thesis Topics<sup>3</sup>**

4.1.1 Topics of term papers and theses for students under a degree programme may be proposed by schools/departments and research subdivisions, as well as entities that are external organizations in relation to the GSB. The Programme's Academic Supervisor/Advisory Board (if any) shall be charged with approving topics.

4.1.2 Topic proposals must be structured as follows:

- provisional topic in Russian and English<sup>4</sup>;
- proposed work format;
- proposed academic supervisor (full name, position, academic degree, place of employment).

4.1.3 Topic proposals of students of a given degree programme shall be submitted to a programme office of said degree programme, either through a special VLIS module or by e-mail, from September 10 to October 1 of each academic year.

4.1.4 Academic supervisors must approve the received proposals within 5 (five) working days and return them to the programme office. However, programme's academic supervisors have the right to remove proposed topics from the list if they are not relevant to the degree level or field of study of learners pursuing a given programme.

4.1.5 The programme office must publish the following information on the programme website no later than October 15:

- provisional topics,
- proposed supervisors (with links to their personal websites, if they are HSE University staff members),
- language in which the paper is to be written,
- deadline for topic selection (no later than November 20 of the ongoing academic year),
- procedures for topic selection, including links to sample requests, unless a special VLIS module is in use,
- links to the Regulations for Master's Term Papers and Theses and the Regulations on Practical Training of Degree Students at HSE University.

4.1.6 Information about proposed topics may be published through a designated VLIS module for term papers and theses. In such instances, a notification for students must be posted on the programme webpage on HSE University corporate portal (website).

### **4.2. Students' Selection of Term Paper and Thesis Topics and Agreeing Thereupon with Academic Supervisors**

4.2.1 Students may choose topics of their term papers and theses following the procedures and deadlines prescribed by the Regulations on Practical Training of Students under Core Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Programmes at HSE University.

4.2.2 Prior to choosing or specifying a given topic, students must discuss it with their

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<sup>3</sup> Annex 1 hereto specifies recommended list of and deadlines for selecting and agreeing on topics for term papers and theses.

<sup>4</sup> The topic may be provisional, to be specified later jointly by the student and supervisor in the course of the paper composition.

potential thesis supervisor. Such discussions may be organized via e-mail or VLIS.

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

4.2.4 If students are not interested in 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.

4.2.5 Upon the review of a term paper or thesis topic proposed by a student, the academic supervisor may approve or decline the topic (followed by a justification thereof), or modify it together with the student.

4.2.6 A directive on assigning topics and submission deadlines for term papers' and theses' final drafts must be issued by December 15. The directive shall be drawn up by the programme office and signed off by the GSB Dean / the programme academic supervisor.

4.2.7 Once a directive is issued, the relevant programme office provides supervisors with a list of students assigned to them, along with topics selected by them. The list may be sent via corporate e-mail or a special VLIS module.

4.2.8 Term paper/thesis topics may be changed or updated no later than 1 (one) calendar month before the official deadline for the submission of the term paper's/thesis' final draft following procedures established as per the degree programme. Changes of the term paper/thesis topic shall be enacted by the GSB Dean's or the programme academic supervisor's directive.

4.2.9 If students fail to choose a term paper/thesis topic by the deadline, this shall mean that they are facing academic failure, which must be rectified as per the procedures and deadlines stipulated in the Russian legislation and HSE University's internal bylaws.

### **4.3. Stages of Term Paper and Thesis Preparation**

4.3.1 The schedule for writing term papers and theses under a given DP shall be established by the internship programme.

4.3.2 Students and their supervisors, as assigned as per the relevant directive, shall agree on the individual schedule for composing a term paper or a thesis, which should stipulate the following deadlines:

- signing the assignment for the PTE; after the approval of the topic and the thesis supervisor, the student receives from the supervisor an assignment for the PTE implementation with the schedule and conditions for performing the work; a template for the assignment for the PTE implementation is specified in Annex 6 to the Regulations on Practical Training of Students under Core Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Programmes at HSE University;
- preparing the outline; at this stage, the student must formulate the question, define the working hypothesis/conceptual framework of the thesis, pinpoint the problem, which the thesis is to address, and devise the core structure of the thesis; as a rule, the outline should reflect the relevance, main sources, expected outcomes and the work's structure;
- submission of a first draft of the work to the supervisor for review; the text may then be amended, if needed;
- submission of a final thesis draft to the programme office;
- uploading the thesis to VLIS for subsequent check for plagiarism by the Antiplagiat system; all students must upload electronic copies (not scans) of their theses to the special VLIS

module for term papers and theses which will then automatically forward them to the Antiplagiat system;

- term paper/thesis shall be graded and reviewed by the supervisor in accordance with the template provided in Annex 3 to these Regulations; the supervisor must provide the programme office with feedback on the paper within 1 (one) calendar week after receiving the final version of the work (the templates for the supervisor's feedback can be found in Annexes 3 and 4 to these Regulations); the feedback should specify the recommended grade for the student's thesis on a 10-point scale;

- submission of a final thesis draft to the relevant programme office; a paper or electronic copy of the final thesis version (as per the decision of the academic supervisor), its abstract, the supervisor's feedback and a report or registration form from the Antiplagiat system must be submitted to the respective programme office by the deadline stated in the relevant directive. Annex 6 and 7 provide sample thesis/term paper title pages.

4.3.3 Defence of the work; the defence process usually includes a presentation of the results of the work and answers to the questions of the respective board members; for term papers, presentations usually take up to 10 minutes; for theses – 15 minutes; the timeframe, sequence and procedure for defence are established by the internship programme.

4.3.4 Decisions as to the necessity to defend term papers shall be made by the programme academic supervisor and specified in the internship programme.

4.3.5 An obligatory element for thesis development is its peer-review in accordance with the form provided in Annex No. 3 to these Regulations. The reviewer is appointed from among the persons who were not involved in the instruction process under the student's DP. Reviewers can be selected from among staff of the Graduate School of Business, representatives of other academic institutions, employees of other organizations from the professional sector whose focus is in line with the thesis topic.

A reviewer's appointment shall be enacted by the GSB dean / the programme academic supervisor's directive no later than 1 (one) month before the scheduled thesis 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).

A reviewer must offer a qualified analysis of the main body and the main provisions of the thesis under review, as well as assess if a selected topic is relevant, a personal standpoint/project solution is presented, thus offering an independent approach to the subject's analysis, how well modern data collection and processing methods are used, how well-grounded conclusions and recommendations are, if the findings are valid, original and applicable. Along with the positive aspects, the weak points of the work shall be identified as well. In conclusion, the reviewer shall characterize the general level of the thesis and grade it (on a 10-point scale). The volume of the review should be from 1 (one) to 3 (three) A4 pages of printed text. The reviewer must evaluate how well the thesis author has mastered the competencies prescribed by the HSE ES. A sample review form to be filled in by reviewers can be found in Annex 5 hereto.

The programme office must forward each thesis for a review within 3 (three) calendar days from its receipt. The reviewer shall prepare a review and submit it to the programme office at least 5 (five) days before the defence process.

The programme office must communicate the review's contents to the student at least 3 (three) calendar days before the defence process, so that the latter has the opportunity to prepare answers to the reviewer's comments.



4.3.6 Term papers are not subject to mandatory reviewing.

4.3.7 The supervisor has the right to set additional deadlines for the thesis writing process. The schedule for the implementation of the thesis shall be set in the individual assignment for the completion of the thesis. In case of a failure to meet deadlines determined by the thesis writing schedule, the programme academic supervisor bears the right to demand a written explanation from the student.

4.3.8 Upon completion of the thesis, the pre-defence shall be held (if this process is prescribed by the internship programme). The preliminary thesis version to be presented at the pre-defence means that working versions of all substantial elements of the paper are prepared: topic, relevance of the topic, problem, goal, objectives, object, and subject of given research activities, bibliography overview, research methods, empirical analysis, academic novelty or practical relevance, and conclusions.

4.3.9 The defence procedure shall be governed by the Regulations for Final State Certification of HSE University Graduates.

4.3.10 The thesis defence process shall be recorded in the minutes. The meeting minutes shall be signed by the local SEB's members and approved by the SEB chairperson, then put together in individual files (bound in books) and transferred to programme offices, which, in turn, shall keep them on file for 5 (five) years. Upon the expiry of the five-year period, the minutes shall be transferred for archival storage at the Administration and General Services Office.

4.3.11 The thesis supervisor shall not participate in the votes taken by the examination board to grade the thesis (if he/she is a member of the SEB). The presence of a supervisor (if he/she is not a member of the SEB) is optional.

#### **4.4. Grading Term Papers and Thesis Works**

4.4.1 Term papers shall be evaluated on a 10-point scale in accordance with the following general criteria:

- quality of statement on the research problem at hand;
- structure (coherence) of the work;
- clarity of definitions and terms (definitions, description of the main provisions, terminological clarity);
- operationalization of concepts (establishing a connection between the conceptual framework of research activities and respective methodological tools);
- research design, including information on sampling and data collection (for research projects);
- quality of analysis of the data used in the work;
- quality of conclusions and recommendations (practical application and options for further research);
- quality of the work's text (readability, clarity of exposition, grammatical correctness);
- academic novelty;
- quality of formatting.

4.4.2 The DP may specify the criteria for grading term papers. In such instances, the grading criteria are determined by the respective internship programme.

4.4.3 If a term paper is written by a group of students, the group should provide a single

text of the work. However, the grade will be awarded individually, giving due consideration of the assessment of the entire paper and individual answers to questions during the defence process.

4.4.4 When submitting a group term paper, the contribution of each group member to the development of the term paper must be specified. The procedure for assessing individual contribution to work is defined in the Internship Programme.

4.4.5 Students who receive an unsatisfactory grade for their term paper are considered as having an academic failure. As such, such a student is obliged to remedy this academic failure in the manner prescribed by the University's inner regulations, making required corrections and, if necessary, modifying the text of the term paper. In such instances, the topic (and/or the supervisor) of the term paper can be changed. The change in the topic shall be enacted as per a directive of the Dean of the HSE University Graduate School of Business / the programme's academic supervisor.

4.4.6 For students with an academic failure for their term paper, the procedure for retaking shall be covered by the Regulations for Interim and Ongoing Assessment of Students.

4.4.7 A research-based thesis work shall be graded on a 10-point scale in accordance with the criteria specified in p. 4.1.

4.4.8 A project-based thesis work, in turn, shall be graded on a 10-point scale as per the following criteria:

- quality of the description of the business environment at the focus organization;
- quality of problem statement at the focus organization;
- structure (coherence) of the work;
- clarity of terms and definitions (definitions, description of the main provisions, terminological clarity);
- compliance of theoretical overview and research design with the specific business problem;
- methods used to solve a specific business problem;
- quality of data analysis;
- quality of practical conclusions and recommendations (implementation and possible effects thereof);
- text quality (readability, clarity of presentation, grammatical correctness);
- presence and quality of economic rationale;
- quality of formatting.

4.4.9 The DP may specify the criteria for assessing thesis works. In such instances, the assessment criteria shall be determined by the Internship Programme.

4.4.10 A final grade for the thesis defence shall be awarded taking into account the grade for the text, presentation and answers to the questions of the board.

4.4.11 The final grade for the term paper shall be assigned either based on the results of the work's defence or, if term papers' defence is not planned, by the paper's supervisor.

4.4.12 The final grade for the defence of a student's thesis as per a five-point and a 10-point grading scale shall be recorded in the minutes, which should be signed by the chairperson and members of the examination board. If a student receives an unsatisfactory mark during the defence of his/her thesis, a repeat defence will be carried out in accordance with the Regulations on State Final Certification of HSE University's Graduates.

4.4.13 The grade for the work shall be communicated to students via corporate e-mail or

posting it in the VLIS module.

4.4.14 Appeals against grades for thesis works shall be considered in accordance with the provisions on appeals in the Regulations for Interim and Ongoing Assessment of Students at HSE University.

## **5. SUPERVISION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESIS WORKS**

### **Term paper supervision**

5.1. Term paper supervisors shall be appointed by the directive of the Dean of the HSE University Graduate School of Business / programme's academic supervisor and bear responsibility for direct supervision of students' term papers.

5.2. Term paper supervisors bear the following duties:

- advising students on shaping the final topic of their term paper, drafting term paper outlines and developing schedules for its completion timeframes, as well as selecting bibliography and resources;
- helping students choose appropriate research or project methods;
- monitoring the progress of term paper composition against the established outline and schedule;
- notifying the programme's academic supervisor and programme office whenever students are behind schedule in their term paper development;
- providing students with informed recommendations on the content of their term papers;
- assessing the quality of term papers as per established requirements (e.g., feedback);
- drafting feedback and grading term papers; feedback shall be drawn up as per the established template (Annex 3 hereto).

Term paper supervisors are entitled to:

- select a suitable mode of interaction with students, e.g., agree on the term paper completion schedule and the frequency of face-to-face meetings or other communication;
- request that students pay close attention to the received recommendations and come to meetings well-prepared;
- take into account learners' meeting set deadlines when grading term papers.

5.3. With respect to term papers that are real-life research projects, a co-supervisor may also be appointed. A co-supervisor may be an employee of an external organization selected from among the key employers for a given degree programme.

5.4. HSE University's teachers or researchers, either in-house staff or employees of external organizations whose professional activities and/or academic interests are connected to term paper topics, may be appointed as advisors to students engaged in term paper preparation.

5.5. Appointment of a co-supervisor or advisor shall be initiated by recommendation of a term paper supervisor and approved by the programme's academic supervisor, and enacted by the directive of the Dean of the HSE University Graduate School of Business or the programme academic supervisor.

5.6. Change of term paper supervisors or appointment of co-supervisors and advisors shall be enacted by the directive of the Dean of the HSE University Graduate School of Business or the programme academic supervisor no later than 1 (one) month before the deadline for the submission of the term paper's final draft, as set out in the curriculum.

## **Thesis supervision**

5.7. Thesis supervisors appointed by the directive of the Dean of the HSE University Graduate School of Business or the programme academic supervisor shall be responsible for direct supervision of thesis development.

5.8. Thesis supervisors shall be appointed from among HSE University staff members with an academic degree (Doctor of Sciences, PhD, or Candidate of Sciences), or professionals with at least 3 (three) years of experience in the field relevant to the thesis' topic, including part-time staff of HSE University.

5.9. Thesis supervisors may 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 to certify their professional competencies in the industry or field of study on which a specific thesis is focused, provided that the main body of the thesis is composed by a student predominantly at the supervisor's place of employment.

5.10. For students whose supervisors are not employed at HSE University, advisors must be appointed from among the University's staff engaged in the provision of the relevant degree programmes. Advisors shall oversee the progress with the thesis preparation and check if the contents and the format of the thesis meets established requirements.

5.11. HSE University's academic staff or employees of external organizations whose professional activities and/or academic interests are aligned with the thesis topic may be appointed as advisors to students preparing their theses. Advisors must provide consultations to students; they hold an advisory vote on thesis development.

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

5.13. Advisors must:

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

5.14. Appointment of the advisor(s) shall be initiated by the recommendation of the thesis supervisor and subject to the consent of the Dean of the HSE University Graduate School of Business and authorized by the programme's academic supervisor, following a written request drawn up by a student and signed off by the thesis supervisor.

5.15. Change of thesis supervisors or appointment of mentors and advisors shall be initiated by the recommendation of the programme's academic supervisor and enacted by the directive of the Dean of the HSE University Graduate School of Business.

5.16. Monitoring the progress and quality of thesis preparation for defence processes shall be assumed by a thesis supervisor, as well as by the programme office with respect to meeting deadlines for the submission of all necessary documents and completion of all stages of thesis preparation.

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

5.18. Thesis supervisors shall carry out the following duties:

- advising students on shaping the final topic of their thesis, preparing a schedule, developing a thesis draft, drawing up the first draft, and selecting scholarly literature and resources;
- helping students select an appropriate research or project methodology; collaborating with students in order to determine provisional stages of topic exploration;
- monitoring the systematic progress and quality of thesis preparation against the outline and the preparation schedule;

- notifying the programme office if students are behind the schedule in terms of the thesis composition;
- advising students on the content of their theses;
- assessing the quality of a thesis work against established requirements (e.g., as feedback);
- agreeing upon thesis information that a student intends to publish on HSE University's corporate portal (website) and other public online platforms.

5.19. Thesis supervisors are entitled to:

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

5.20. In their feedback, supervisors, as per the criteria for assessing term papers and thesis works, shall assess the logical integrity of the work, quality of research, degree of compliance with thesis requirements in place for the corresponding degree level, and extent to which the thesis author has formed universal and professional competencies as specified in the HSE University ES<sup>5</sup>.

## **6. REQUIREMENTS FOR STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND SIZE OF TERM PAPERS AND THESIS WORKS**

### **6.1. Requirements for the structure, content and size of term papers**

6.1.1. The requirements for term papers shall be determined in the Internship Programme of the DP.

6.1.2. The structure of a term paper should depend on its content, but in general, it is recommended to keep to the following structure: title page, table of contents, statement of author's contribution, attestation to the work's originality, introduction, chapters of the main body, closing remarks, conclusion, bibliography/reference list, and annexes. The content of the chapters in the main body must correspond to the work's topic and render it entirely.

6.1.3. The recommended term paper size, prepared by a single student, comes to 40-60 pages of printed text (excluding the reference list and annexes), drawn up in accordance with the criteria stated in these Regulations.

6.1.4. The recommended term paper size, prepared by a group of students, shall come to 15-30 pages of printed text (excluding the reference list and annexes), drawn up in accordance with the criteria stated in these Regulations.

6.1.5. Minimal size of term paper can be determined as per the Internship programme.

6.1.6. A term paper's title page and table of contents should be placed on the 2 (two) first pages of the work; the title page template can be found in Annex No. 6 to these Regulations.

6.1.7. The reference list should include foreign and domestic academic articles, books,

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<sup>5</sup> Annex 2 to these Regulations

statistics, corporate and research reports on the subject of the term paper. To search for additional literature, library catalogues, electronic resources of the HSE University Library, Internet resources, etc. are recommended. It is also advised to cite academic sources published over the last 5 (five) years.

## **6.2. Requirements for the structure, content and size of theses**

6.2.1. Requirements for thesis works are determined in the internship programme of the DP.

6.2.2. The recommended number of pages for a Master's thesis (excluding annexes) comes to at least 60 pages. Furthermore, the list of cited works must feature at least 50 titles, including at least 50-60% of academic articles, including at least 33% of articles from foreign (English-written) academic journals.

6.2.3. The minimal wordage of a thesis may be determined in the Internship programme.

6.2.4. The general structure of a Master's thesis depends on its format (research- or project-based), but always includes a title page, attestation of originality, table of contents, a brief introduction, the main body (divided into chapters), a conclusion, a list of references and annexes.

6.2.5. For Master's thesis submitted in a research format, in the main part of the work it is preferable to stick to a standard structure of an article in an academic publication, which usually includes:

- introduction;
- academic literature review;
- methodology statement;
- results;
- discussion and further research fields.

This structure is known by its abbreviation IMRD (or "IMRAD").

An introduction is usually followed by a bibliography overview, which is included in a separate section.

The most important functions of the introduction and bibliography overview are to state the research problem and research question(s), as well as provide rationale for the relevance of the proposed research. This relevance, in turn, shall be proved by the existence of the actual gaps in today's publications on the given topic, as well as the insufficiency of existing theories in explaining the phenomena as observed in practice.

Furthermore, it is necessary to pay attention to the statement of the research question/issue. If this is not clearly formulated, it would be impossible to evaluate both the methods used by the author and the results generated thereof.

The methodology section describes and substantiates the design of the research process and the methodological framework to be used in the future.

It should be borne in mind that both research questions and research methods can vary vastly: not every research project, for example, involves testing hypotheses. In fact, a possible research result can include the formulation of hypotheses. The research can be both quantitative and qualitative, massive and based on individual corporate cases. However, it is important that the research design is consistent with its objectives and research questions.

6.2.6. For project-based Master's theses, the structure of the main body usually includes:

- a description of a managerial problem or an issue concerning the organizational development of a firm - the basis for practices, formulation and justification of the relevance of the project for the development of administrative processes within the organization and the definition of

its main tasks;

- a systematic review of relevant corporate practice in terms of finding solutions to a formulated problem in regards to administrative development in the organization and related academic publications;
- a description of a diagnostic analysis of the organization;
- a description of the selection and justification of the project design, as well as the methods used to solve the organization's challenges/issues;
- a description of the proposed solution to the formulated managerial problem, along with the formation of strategies, management structures, policies, regulations and procedures.

Furthermore, the rationale regarding the relevance of project work may differ significantly in its logic from that for the research work. If, in regards to research work, particular relevance is driven by the inadequacy of the existing theoretical base, the project's relevance, in turn, will be directly related to the successful resolution of the managerial problem under consideration or the implementation of a planned project on improving the given organization's operations, and/or the achievement of certain economic, financial, and market indicators. However, the availability of effective methodological developments and relevant publications does not reduce but, on the contrary, increases the relevance, since it indicates that the problem not only meets the requirements of practice, but can also be solved.

The organizational and managerial documents developed by a thesis author, describing strategies, management structures, policies, regulations and procedures, should be included in the work's annexes.

6.2.7. Regardless of the type of a Master's thesis, special attention should be paid to the systemic nature and quality of the bibliography overview: it is important not to state an arbitrary list of articles for analysis. Moreover, do not limit yourself to retelling works, but rather identify trends, as well as take into account the temporal and geographical distribution of previous research in order to ensure the relevance of a thesis work's conclusions and proposals.

### **6.3. Technical requirements for the design of term papers and thesis works**

6.3.1. 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.

6.3.2. 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.

6.3.3. 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.

6.3.4. 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.

6.3.5. 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.

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

6.3.7. 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.

6.3.8. Hard copies of term papers and thesis works should be bound.

6.3.9. In addition to commonly used abbreviations, a term paper's 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).

6.3.10. 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.

6.3.11. 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.

6.3.12. 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.

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

6.3.14. 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).

6.3.15. 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.

## **7. STORAGE AND PUBLICATION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESIS WORKS**

7.1. The relevant programme office keeps term papers for 2 (two) years after students leave the University. The storage medium (electronically or in paper copies) is determined by the degree programme.

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

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

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1

to Regulations for Term Papers and Theses

#### Stages and Deadlines for Selection and Approval of Term Paper and Thesis Topics

No	Stage	Responsible party	Deadlines
1.	<b>Input of proposed topics</b> for term papers/theses into HSE University VLIS	Instructors and researchers with the help of administrative staff of schools/departments and research subdivision	<b>From September 1 to October 10 of the ongoing academic year.</b>
2.	<b>Approval of proposed topics for term papers/theses by the programme management</b>	Academic supervisor and Advisory Board of the programme	Technical verification: <b>Within 72 hours</b> after receiving the data for reviewing. Compliance verification by the DP Academic Supervisor: <b>Within 96 hours</b> after receiving the data for reviewing.
3.	<b>Selection of term paper/thesis topics by students / topic proposals put forward by students</b>	Students /DP academic supervisor	<b>From October 10 to November 1</b> of the ongoing academic year.
4.	<b>Review and selection of the received proposals for topics for term papers and theses</b>	Instructors and researchers with the help of administrative staff of schools/departments and research subdivisions, faculty project managers	<b>From November 1 to November 10</b> of the ongoing academic year.
5.	<b>Second stage of selection of term paper and theses topics or topic proposals by students whose applications for topics were rejected</b>	Students/ academic supervisor/ instructors and researchers with the help of schools/departments and research subdivisions, faculty project managers	<b>From November 01 to November 20</b> of the ongoing academic year.
6.	<b>Checking the presence of term paper and thesis topics approved by the supervisors for students</b>	Degree programme office	<b>From November 20 to December 15</b> of the ongoing academic year.
7.	<b>Assigning term paper/thesis topics in</b>	Degree programme office	<b>No later than December 15 of the ongoing academic</b>

	<p><b>the students' individual curriculum.</b></p> <p><b>Assigning term paper/thesis topics and supervisors through a directive.</b></p>		<b>year.</b>
8.	<p><b>Changing or revising term paper/thesis topics (and their assignment by the dean's or the academic supervisor's directive)</b></p>	<p>Students/ programme office / academic supervisor / Dean of the Graduate School of Business</p>	<p>No later than 1 (one) calendar month before the official deadline for the submission of the final version of the term paper/thesis to the programme office</p>

**Annex 2**

to Regulations for Term Papers and Theses  
**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

Supervisor's report on term paper  
 Composed by the student  
 Group\_\_\_\_\_, Year 1, level of study \_\_\_\_\_  
 "\_\_\_\_\_" on the topic: "\_\_\_\_\_."

No	Grading Criterion	Grade (10-point scale)
1.	Quality of research problem statement	
2.	Structure (coherence) of the work	
3.	Clarity of the definition of the conceptual framework (definitions, description of the main provisions, terminological clarity)	
4.	Operationalization of concepts (establishing connection between the conceptual framework of the research and its methodological tools)	
5.	Research plan, including information on sampling and data collection (for research projects)	
6.	Level of analysis for the data used in the work	
7.	Quality of conclusions and recommendations (practical application and possibilities for further research)	
8.	Text quality (readability, clarity of presentation, grammatical correctness)	
9.	Academic novelty of work	
10.	Correct typesetting of references, sections, equations, figures, tables, and bibliography/reference list	
	<b>FINAL GRADE**</b>	

**General conclusion:** Term paper of the student\_\_\_\_entirely/partially/does not satisfy the requirements for Master's term papers in the "Management" / "Business Informatics" field of study.  
 Supervisor  
 Professor....  
 School/Department\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/Signature/\_\_\_\_Last name and initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* The final grade is the arithmetic average according to the decimal criteria of the term paper / term project

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**  
*Graduate School of Business*

***Supervisor's Feedback of the Master's Thesis***

Student \_\_\_\_\_  
Last name and initials

2<sup>nd</sup>-year student of the Master's Programme in \_\_\_\_\_

HSE University Graduate School of Business

On the topic: "\_\_\_\_\_"

No	Criterion	Comments
	<to be determined by the work's type>	
	<b>FINAL RECOMMENDED GRADE</b>	

**Special comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**General conclusion:** Master's thesis of the student\_ meets the requirements for Master's theses in the Management / Business Informatics field of study. The author of the thesis deserves the conferral of a Master's degree in Management / Business Informatics.

Supervisor

Professor....

School/Department\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_/Signature/\_\_\_\_\_Last name and initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**  
*Graduate School of Business*

Referee's report on Master's thesis

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Last name and initials

2<sup>nd</sup>-year student of the Master's Programme in \_\_\_\_\_

HSE University Graduate School of Business

On the topic: "\_\_\_\_\_"

*Please, specify*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Grade (10-point scale)</b>
Correlation of the work's contents to the topic	
Justification of the relevance of the topic chosen	
Implementation of the work's main aims and objectives, correctness of the research results and their correlation to the overarching aim and specific objectives stated in the introduction of the work	
Originality of research, independence of student's work	
Correctness of the applied methodology and methods in the problem-solving	
Practical value of the research	
Grammaticality, consistency in presentation of the research	
Correct typesetting of references, sections, equations, pictures, and tables	

**Comments:** *Comment on the awarded grades, noting the strengths and weaknesses of the work (500 symbols maximum)*

**Conclusion:** Master's thesis written by student\_\_\_\_\_meets the requirements for Master's theses in the Management / Business Informatics field and, in the opinion of the referee, the thesis author deserves the conferral of a Master's degree in Management / Business Informatics. The final recommended grade is \_\_\_\_ (1-10).

Referee

Professor....

School/Department\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_/Signature/ \_\_\_\_\_Last name and initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
*Graduate School of Business*

Student's full name<sup>6</sup>

**TERM PAPER**

Field of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Programme: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor  
Professor...

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last name and initials  
Advisor  
Professor...

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last name and initials

Moscow, 201\_

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<sup>6</sup> If the thesis was composed by a group, a list of all students involved

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
*Graduate School of Business*

Student's full name

**THESIS TOPIC**

MASTER'S THESIS

Field of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Programme: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor  
Professor...

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last name and initials

Advisor  
Professor...

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last name and initials

Moscow, 201\_