

**Guidelines for Preparation and Defense of Term Papers and Theses Written by  
Students of  
'Comparative Politics of Eurasia' Programme of the HSE Saint-Petersburg School of  
Social Sciences and Area Studies**

**APPROVED**

**HSE St. Petersburg School of  
Social Sciences and Area Studies,  
Minutes No. 07/2019-2020  
as of 17.10.2019**

**Chairperson  
A.V. Starodubtsev**

## 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 These Guidelines for Preparation and Defence of Term Papers and Theses (hereafter, the Guidelines) have been prepared in line with the Regulations on Term Papers and Theses Prepared by Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Students of National Research University Higher School of Economics (hereafter, the Regulations), approved by the HSE Academic Council (Minutes No. 08 dated November 28, 2014). As per the Regulations, these Guidelines must be observed by the faculty and students of the 'Comparative Politics of Eurasia' degree programmes (hereafter, degree programme, or the DP), as well as all persons involved in preparation and defence term papers and theses (including the Programme Office staff, adviser, reviewers, etc.).

## 2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS TO TERM PAPERS AND THESES

1. Term papers shall be prepared as research proposal, comprising basic elements of the programme of the student's MA thesis — introduction, statement of a research problem, literature review, research question, theoretical frameworks, hypothesis, research design (research strategy, methods of data collection and analysis).
2. Theses shall be prepared as academic papers, meaning that a study shall be conducted with the aim of gaining new insights into the structure, properties and patterns of the social and political phenomenon under examination. In their theses, students should present the final results of their research efforts and demonstrate their acquired skills and competencies, i.e. students are expected to be able to provide a quality literature review with respect to the current political science and related disciplines, a fundamental theoretical analysis of the problem under consideration as applicable to the student's research project, as well as collect and analyze empirical data for formulating finding bearing theoretical and/or practical value.

3. Both term paper and thesis are independent works, which are prepared by students of the degree programme individually.
4. Term papers and theses are completed in English.

### 3. DEADLINES

1. Deadlines for completing the main stages of the topic selection and approval, as well as the preparation and defense of the term paper, are specified in Annex 1.
2. Deadlines for completing the main stages of the topic selection and approval, as well as the preparation of the thesis, are specified in Tables 1 and 2 of Annex 2.

### 4. SUPERVISION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESES

#### 4.1. Term Paper Supervision

1. The academic supervisor appointed by the directive of the HSE St. Petersburg Director shall oversee the preparation of the student's term paper.
2. The academic supervisor can be replaced, and an adviser of the term paper can be appointed by the directive of the HSE St. Petersburg Director at the student's request upon approval of the current academic supervisor, the new academic supervisor chosen by the student and the degree programme academic supervisor no later than 1 month before the deadline for submission of the final version of the term paper, as per the curriculum.

#### 4.2 Thesis Supervision

1. The academic supervisor appointed by the directive of the HSE St. Petersburg Director shall oversee the preparation of the student's term paper.
2. Thesis supervisors are appointed from among the University's faculty, or professionals with at least 3 years of experience in the given field, including part-time employees of the University.
3. Thesis supervisors can be selected from the academic staff of the NRU HSE (any campus), or any other Russian or foreign universities upon the agreement with a student. Alternatively, any expert from the respective research area with at least three years of professional experience can act as an academic supervisor upon the agreement with a student and confirmation with a MA programme director.
4. Thesis supervisors may also be employees of external organizations with at least 3 years of professional experience in the given field or executive experience and/or holding an academic degree to certify their professional competencies in a relevant industry or field of study, provided that the student works on their thesis predominantly at such supervisor's place of employment.
5. The academic supervisor can be replaced, and an adviser of the thesis can be appointed by the directive of the HSE St. Petersburg Director at the student's request upon approval of the current academic supervisor, the new academic supervisor and

the degree programme academic supervisor no later than 1 month before the deadline for submission of the final version of the thesis, as per the curriculum.

## 5. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS TO TERM PAPERS AND THESES: SIZE AND CONTENT

1. Normally, the research projects should be carried out within two academic years: in the first year the student prepares the research proposal and in the second year she or he completes the entire research project.
2. The structure of term papers and theses includes the front page, an abstract, the contents, the introduction, the main part, the conclusion, bibliography and related annexes (if any).
3. Annex 3 contains a sample front page of a thesis.
4. The contents should be automatically generated in a text editing software (e.g. MS Word, Latex) .
5. The introduction should briefly describe the main idea, research gap and research puzzle, and the design of the completed study.
6. The main part of a thesis includes literature overview and several chapters with empirical data analysis
7. Literature overview should present a research gap and logically lead to the research question of the study
8. The outcomes of the theoretical analysis and empirical research, as well as the above-mentioned elements of research project, should be presented in the main part of the thesis. Each chapter and paragraph should include fundamental ideas, followed by brief findings and a summary in conclusion. Key theoretical statements underlying each conclusion should be confirmed by references to the opinions put forward by scholars and experts, as well as statistical data and outcomes of sociological surveys, formatted in line with applicable standards.
9. Research outcomes of the thesis should be summarized in the conclusion. It is essential that such research outcomes should represent an answer to a research question stipulated in the first beginning of the thesis and represent confirmation or disproof of research hypotheses, offer solutions to the key research issue and thereby attain the research goal. The conclusion can also include proposals in regards to how the topic of the thesis can be further elaborated.
10. The bibliography includes all major scientific publications, books and academic articles, regulatory acts, research papers, specialized publications and other sources used in the course of preparing and writing term papers and theses.
11. Annexes should be used, if the author would like to include large materials which can support the contents of the main body of the paper. Source information, the author's tables and calculations, diagrams, figures and other materials can be presented as annexes.
12. The length of term papers and theses is as follows:
  - 1st year of study: 6,000 up to 8,000 words (including all term paper elements, mentioned above, except annexes);
  - 2nd year of study (thesis): 15,000 up to 20,000 words (including all term paper elements, mentioned above, except annexes);

11. Narrative style. A term paper and thesis must be compiled with due regard to the terminology accepted in the relevant field, as well as notations, applicable abbreviations and symbols. The author of the term paper/thesis should stick to the academic style of presentation and focus the reader's attention on the issue under consideration. Journalistic clichés, slang words, terms and expressions, which are typically not used in scientific literature, as well as words with diminutive suffixes, should be avoided. Research papers should be free of excessive enthusiasm, as well as ideologically loaded expressions political slogans, accusations and emotional evaluations.

## 6. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FORMATTING OF TERM PAPERS AND THESES

1. The term papers and theses shall be prepared on computer and typewritten using Times New Roman 12 font size (footnotes should be provided using 10 font size), 1.5 spacing. Margins: left – 2.5 cm, right – 1 cm, upper and bottom – 2 cm. The front page should be prepared as per the template form provided in these Guidelines. Abstracts, up to 1.5 page in length should follow the front page.
2. All pages should be consecutively numbered in the top margin in the center of the page, starting from the second page (the front page is left unnumbered). Page numbers shall be provided for all elements of the Contents (chapters, paragraphs). The consecutive numbering shall be used for all tables and diagrams with related titled provided.
3. New chapters begin on a new page; the same rule applies to other main parts of the paper (i.e. the introduction, the conclusion, the bibliography and annexes). Furthermore, chapters shall be subdivided into paragraphs which are numbered as follows – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, ..., 2.1, 2.2 etc. The word "Chapter" shall not be inserted before the title, and a full stop sign should not be used. Arabic numerals shall be used for chapter numbering; a dot should be placed after the figure with a space before the chapter title. Titles of all main parts of the paper and page numbering in the text shall correlate with the contents. Titles shall be highlighted in semi-bold font.
4. Width alignment shall be applied throughout the paper, including footnotes. References to the source of information shall be provided as footnotes placed in the bottom margin.
5. If there is a reference to personal names (of scholars, researchers, experts), their initials usually precede the last name (i.e. V.M. Petrov, rather than Petrov V.M., as it is customary for bibliographies compiled in Russian).
6. Reference style should follow standards of the Chicago Manual of Style, 17<sup>th</sup> Editions
7. Each annex should start from a new page with the word "Annex" given in the upper right corner, above the title. The main body of the text should correlate with annexes via links. Annexes should retain continuous numbering of pages originating from the main text.
8. If the author uses quotations, extracts from documents, research monographs, reference books or statistical data in the paper with the aim of supporting their own ideas and conclusions, relevant footnotes to sources shall be given. If the source is quoted word-for-word, the author shall provide the material 'as is', with quotation marks and a reference to the source of information. References shall also be provided if somebody's opinion is rephrased (with a reference to the author's name), or some

lesser known information is provided, etc. No references are required for commonly known events and facts. Continuous numbering shall be applied to footnotes on all pages (starting from the first to the last footnote).

9. If the paper is based on a wide range of sources and scientific materials, the bibliography can be divided into several parts, including: regulatory acts and official documents; specialized literature: monographs, research articles, publications in periodicals, etc. Russian sources are given first to be followed by materials in foreign languages. All papers included in the list are given in alphabetical order (by the author's name) with full details of the publication provided. If no author's name is available (in case the article was published in a collection of research papers or in a collective monograph), the paper shall be put on the list by the first letter in its title. The list of regulatory documents can be compiled in the chronological order with due regard to the legal effect of documents (international enactments are given first, to be followed by federal constitutional and federal laws, legislation of constituent bodies, and bylaws). If electronic resources are used, the author shall indicate the title of relevant materials, the source, and the access code with the application date. The bibliography shall be comprised of only those papers and sources to which the author has made references in the footnotes.
  
10. Here is the transliteration rules which are recommended to use when you write Russian titles, names, etc. — <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsa/romanization/russian.pdf>.

## 7. CRITERIA FOR THE TERM PAPERS' AND THESES' ASSESSMENT

1. Term papers are assessed in accordance with criteria indicated in Annex 4.1
2. These are assessed in accordance with criteria indicated in Annex 4.2

## 8. RULES FOR TERM PAPERS AND THESES DEFENCE

1. The grade for term papers and theses shall be given after the public defence.
2. Dates for the public defence shall be appointed by the degree programme academic supervisor upon approval of the Programme Office head.
3. The term paper defence shall be held not earlier than within 7 days after the term paper submission.
4. Examination boards shall be set up on the basis of the degree programme academic director's resolution for holding the defence of term papers and assigning relevant grades. The examination board shall be comprised of no less than three lecturers of the degree programme, and one of them shall be appointed as the chairperson.
5. The academic supervisor's feedback shall be submitted to the Programme Office no later than 24 hours before the term paper defence. In case the academic supervisor's feedback has not been provided, the term paper defence shall be postponed. The Programme Office informs the chairperson of the examination board, the degree programme academic supervisor, as well as the head of the academic supervisor's department, thereof, and disciplinary measures may be applied, if the feedback has not been submitted without a valid reason.

6. In order to maintain high quality of student term papers, the academic director initiates and coordinates the preparation of reviews on term papers written by first-year students. To this end, the academic supervisor shall appoint reviewers from among the faculty of the degree programme.
7. **Review of the master's thesis.** The reviewer of the master's thesis is a representative of an external organisation of higher education or an employee of an organisation from a professional sphere that corresponds to the theme of the master's thesis. Student's thesis supervisor must suggest the reviewer's candidacy. Programme academic council considers and approve the list of master theses reviewers.
8. The term paper and theses defence includes the following stages:
  1. The student describes their research puzzle, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, prospective methods of data collection and analysis.
  2. The student provides answers to the questions of the examination board's members and the audience to further clarify certain points and arguments that have been presented;
    3. Presentation of the review;
    4. Presentation of the academic supervisor's feedback;
    5. Student's comments in regards to the critical comments mentioned in the review and in the academic supervisor's feedback;
    6. General discussion of the term paper contents and presentation.
8. The defence procedure shall be established by the examination board, and its chairperson shall inform the students thereof no later than 24 hours before the defence. The examination board can omit certain stage of the term paper defence, specified in p. 8.7 hereof, at their own discretion, with a notification provided to all interested parties (including students, the degree programme academic supervisor, academic supervisors, reviewers, etc.).
9. Reviews to term papers shall be provided by the reviewer to the student and the examination board in writing no later than 24 hours before the defence. In case the review has not been provided, the term paper defence shall be postponed. The Programme Office informs the chairperson of the examination board, the degree programme academic supervisor, as well as the head of the reviewer's department, thereof, and disciplinary measures may be applied, if the feedback has not been submitted without a valid reason.
10. The final grade for the term paper shall be assigned by the examination board with due regard to the opinions of the academic supervisor and the reviewer and calculated as per the following formula:  $(G_{\text{supervisor}} + G_{\text{reviewer}} + G_{\text{board}}) / 3$ . The applicable rounding method: arithmetical. If the academic supervisor sits on the examination board, he/she shall not be involved in assigning the grade by the committee ( $G_{\text{board}}$ ). Final grades shall be announced by the examination board's chairperson based on the defence outcomes.
11. The final grade for the thesis shall be assigned by the examination board. If the academic supervisor sits on the examination board, he/she shall not be involved in assigning the grade

by the board. Final grades shall be announced by the examination board's chairperson based on the defence outcomes.

**STAGES OF THE TERM PAPER TOPIC SELECTION, APPROVAL, AND  
PREPARATION AND DEFENCE OF THE TERM PAPER**

DEADLINES	STAGES OF TERM PAPER PREPARATION
September 10 – October 1	The Academic Director and Programme Office collect topics of term papers proposed by the faculty members of the 'Comparative Politics of Eurasia' degree programmes.
November 4 - November 15	Students are entitled to propose a topic and an academic supervisor at their own initiative, upon the proposed academic supervisor's approval via LMS.
November 20	Approval of a topic by supervisor in LMS system
November 25 — November 28	Programme discussions of the proposed topics
Till November 27	Approval the proposed topics by Programme academic counsel
Till December 13	The Programme Office prepares and issues a directive on assigning term paper topics.
Up to April 1, inclusively	A term paper topic can be revised, requests for topics change accepted by the Programme Office
November 11 - May 10	The student's work on the term paper and communication with the academic supervisor
May 11 , 23.59	Deadline for online submission of the final version of the term paper to the Programme Office via LMS
May 15	The Programme Office forwards term papers to reviewers who prepare their reviews. Academic supervisors write up their feedback. Reviews and feedback shall be sent to members of the examination board and



	uploaded to LMS by study office no later than 24 hours before the defense.
May 18 - May 22	Term papers' public defense at the programme meeting

Table 1

**STAGES OF SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF THE THESIS TOPIC**

<b>Deadlines</b>	<b>Stage of preparation</b>	<b>Subdivision/person responsible for the given stage</b>
<b>From September 10 to October 1</b>	The Academic Director and Programme Office collects topics of these proposed by the faculty members of the 'Comparative Politics of Eurasia' degree programmes.	Departments and research subdivisions/ Programme Office
<b>November 4 — 15</b>	Students are entitled to propose a topic and an academic supervisor at their own initiative, upon the proposed academic supervisor's approval via LMS.	Students
<b>November 15 – November 20</b>	Approval of proposed topics in LMS by supervisors	Supervisors
<b>November 25 — November 27</b>	Programme discussions of the proposed topics	Academic director
<b>Till November 27</b>	Approval of the proposed topics by the Programme academic counsel	Academic director
<b>Till December 13</b>	The Programme Office prepares and issues a directive on assigning term paper topics.	Academic director

<p><b>No later than April 16</b> of the ongoing academic year</p>	<p><b>Revising/rephrasing the thesis topic</b> (on the basis of the student's request approved by the academic supervisor and the degree programme's Academic Supervisor)</p>	<p>Student/ Programme Office / DP Academic Supervisor</p>
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Table 2

### STAGES OF THESIS PREPARATION

Deadlines	Stage	Parties involved in the thesis preparation
November 17	<b>Preparing a draft thesis and its submission to the academic supervisor and the Research Seminar lecturer via LMS</b>	Students / Academic supervisor / RS lecturer
November 25 - 27	<b>Holding draft thesis defence</b> at the meeting of the board comprised of the academic supervisor, the RS lecturer and members of the degree programme's Academic Council)	Students / Academic supervisor / RS lecturer / Member of the degree programme's Academic Council
Till November 27	Approval of the proposed topics by the Programme academic council	Academic director
Before April 5	<b>Submitting the first draft of the thesis</b>	Student/ Supervisor / Programme Office
April 13-15	<b>Pre-defense of theses</b>	Student/ Academic supervisor/ Academic director
April 16	<b>Submission</b> of requests for rephrasing the thesis topic	Student/ Supervisor / Programme Office
April 16	<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> Submission of information about reviewers to programme office	Academic supervisor of the degree programme/ Programme Office/ Reviewer
May 8	<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> The reviewer's appointment on the basis of a relevant directive	Academic supervisor of the degree programme/ Programme Office/ Reviewer
Before May 21	<b>Revising and finalizing the thesis.</b>	Student/ Supervisor

<b>May 22, 23.59</b>	<b>Submission by uploading the final version to the LMS special module</b>	Student/ Programme Office
<b>May 23-24</b>	Antiplagiarism check	Programme Office/Academic Director
The Programme Office forwards the thesis for review <b>no later than three calendar days</b> after its receipt	<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> The thesis is sent to the reviewer and supervisor	Programme Office/ Reviewer
June 2	<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> Submission of reviews from supervisors and reviewers to programme office	Reviewers/ Academic Director /Supervisors/ Programme Office
<b>June 3</b>	<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> Upload of reviews to LMS system by study office	Programme Office / Supervisors/ Reviewers
<b>June 5</b>	<b>Submission</b> a printed version of the thesis to the Programme Office	Programme Office / Student
<b>June 08-11</b>	<b>Thesis defence</b>	Student/ Academic supervisor/ Academic director

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
HSE Saint-Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies

The author's full name

**TERM PAPER/THESIS TITLE**

Term paper / Thesis  
in the field of study 41.04.04 'Political Science'  
Student of Group No. 1234 ('Comparative Politics of Eurasia' degree programme)

Reviewer  
Doctor of .... Sciences, Professor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials and Last name

Academic supervisor  
Doctor of .... Sciences, Professor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials and Last name  
Adviser  
Doctor of .... Sciences, Professor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials and Last name

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**  
**HSE St Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
 'Comparative Politics of Eurasia' programme

**Academic supervisor's review on term paper**

1st year student Full name

Topic:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Academic supervisor's / Reviewer's comments
1.	Relevance of the research problem, the project's theoretical value	
2.	Correlation between the research paper topic, goal, objectives, contents and findings/research outcomes	
3.	Quality of the literary overview: the number of studied papers, the balance between the classical and the most recent materials on research problem.	
4.	Ability to use theoretical concepts for building theoretical and methodological research framework, as well as formulating related hypotheses	
5.	Suitability of employed research methodology for stated goals and objectives	
6.	The paper structure, logical reasoning, reliability and accuracy	
7.	Conformity with requirements for the formatting, quotation rules, as well as bibliographical references and lists.	
8.	<b>Recommended grade for the term paper/thesis</b>	

Other comments:

Academic Supervisor/Reviewer academic degree, academic title  
department/subdivision (Place of employment)\_\_\_\_\_ /signature/\_\_\_\_\_

Initials and Last name

Date



**National Research University Higher School of Economics**  
**HSE Saint-Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
 'Political Science and World Politics' programme

**Academic supervisor's feedback/review on/thesis**

2-nd year student of 'Political Science and World Politics' programme  
 of HSE Saint-Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies

Full name

Topic:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Academic supervisor's / Reviewer's comments
1.	Relevance of the research problem, the paper's theoretical and practical value	
2.	Correlation between the research paper topic, goal, objectives, contents and findings/research outcomes	
3.	Quality of the literary overview: the number of studied papers, the balance between the classical and the most recent materials on research problem.	
4.	Ability to use theoretical concepts for building theoretical and methodological research framework, as well as formulating related hypotheses	
5.	Ability to use methods of data collection and analysis	
6.	The paper structure, logical reasoning, reliability and accuracy of outcomes and conclusions;	
7.	Conformity with requirements for the formatting, quotation rules,	

	as well as bibliographical references and lists.	
8.	<b>Recommended grade for the term paper/thesis</b>	

Other comments:

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Academic Supervisor/Reviewer

academic degree, academic title

department/subdivision

(Place of employment)\_\_\_\_\_ /signature/\_\_\_\_\_ Initials and Last name

Date