**Rules for the oral exam (defense) of fourth-year students’ project proposal**

**General rules**

All fourth-year students in the program International Business and Management are required to prepare a detailed outline (henceforth, “project proposal”) for their bachelor’s thesis (henceforth, “thesis”). The theme of this project proposal has to correspond to the theme of the thesis. To evaluate the progress of students in preparing their thesis, the project proposal will be evaluated in an oral exam (henceforth, “defense”). This defense will be held in English.

The project proposal may be completed either individually or in groups of 2 or 3 students. The structure of the project proposal is the same for individual and group project proposals. However, the required length is larger for group project proposals, as specified below.

To be admitted to the oral defense for the project proposal, students must first prepare a written version of their project proposal (henceforth, “written version of the project proposal”). The written version of the project proposal must be in English. The written version of the project proposal must be submitted as a Word file to the specified module in LMS. For project proposals completed in groups, each group member must upload a file to the specified module in LMS. Upon submission, the written version of the project proposal will be inspected by the antiplagiarism program Antiplagiat (Антиплагиат). The deadline for uploading the written version of the project proposal to LMS is March 1, 2019, at 16:59 Saint Petersburg time. Students who do not upload the written version of their project proposal before this deadline will incur an academic debt. This academic debt must be satisfied in a supplementary session in accordance with the rules of the NRU HSE. Students who have not satisfied this academic debt are not allowed to participate in the oral defense of their thesis.

The written version of the project proposal will be evaluated by both one member of the Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) and the student’s academic supervisor. If the student’s academic supervisor does not possess the level of English necessary to evaluate the written version of the project proposal, the academic director of the program International Business and Management will designate a faculty member from the Department of Management or another relevant department of the St. Petersburg campus of the National Research University Higher School of Economics to evaluate the written version of the project proposal. The written version of the project proposal will be evaluated using this formula, where E denotes evaluation:

For project proposals completed in groups, each member of the group will receive the same evaluation.

**Structure of the written text of the project proposal**

The written version of the project proposal must include these components:

1. Cover page
2. Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Literature review
5. Research design

* Sample
* Data sources
* Methods
* Other relevant aspects of the research design (e.g., hypotheses that will be tested)

1. Expected/achieved results
2. Conclusion
3. References
4. Appendices (if relevant)

The written version of the project proposal is required to include all of these parts, except for the appendices – appendices may be included if relevant, but are not mandatory. For project proposals written alone, the written version of the project proposal should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words, excluding the sections References and Appendices. For project proposals written in groups, the written version of the project proposal should be between 4,000 and 5,000 words.

Thecover page must be completed according to the rules defined in this document. The cover page is the first page of the thesis; however, the cover page is not numbered. The cover page includes the following:

* the name of the university and the department
* the first name, last name, and group of the author of the thesis
* the position, degree, last name, and initials of the supervisor of the thesis
* the place and year of the thesis

See appendix 1, “Structure of the cover page,” for an example.

Theabstract is a short synopsis of the thesis. The abstract should include the following:

* the objective of the thesis
* the methods used and the sample
* the expected results of the thesis

The abstract consists of one paragraph and is placed on the page before the main text of the thesis. The abstract should be separated from the main text of the thesis by two blank lines. The total number of words in the abstract should not exceed 10% of the total number of words in the primary parts of the thesis – points (3) through (7) in the list above. The word “Abstract” is not written.

The headings for the introduction, literature review, research design, and conclusion should be written on a separate line, with no period at the end of the line.

The chapter **Introduction** should consist of the following subchapters:

* **Background** – discusses the relevance of the theme of the thesis
* **Problem statement** – defines the objectives and tasks of the thesis
* **Scope of the thesis** – defines the issues that the thesis will focus on
* **Professional significance** – discusses the practical significance or the scientific contribution of the thesis
* **Definitions of key terms** – if necessary, defines the key terms used in the thesis

The headings for these subchapters are followed on the same line by the relevant text. In addition, these headings should be written in bold font and separated from the following text by a period. The recommended length of the introduction for individual project proposals (i.e., project proposals completed by one student) is 500 words (group project proposals – 1,000 words).

The chapter **Literature review** should contain a discussion of prior research that focuses on the same topic as the thesis. References should be cited in the APA format (last name of the author, year). The recommended length of the literature review for individual project proposals is 1,200 words (group project proposals – 2,400 words).

The chapter **Research design** should consist of the following subchapters:

* **Hypotheses** – if relevant, specifies the hypotheses that will be tested in the thesis
* **Sample** – describes the observations the empirical analyses in the thesis are based on
* **Data sources** – describes the data sources used in the thesis
* **Methods** – contains a description of the methods used in the thesis and a justification of why these methods are used.

The headings for these subchapters are followed on the same line by the relevant text. In addition, these headings should be written in bold font and separated from the following text by a period. The recommended length of the section Research design for individual project proposals is 400 words (group project proposals – 800 words).

The section **Results** (or **Expected results**) should contain a discussion of the results or expected results of the thesis. This discussion should be consistent with the stated objectives of the thesis and with the methods used in the thesis. The recommended length of the section **Results** for individual project proposals is 200 words (group project proposals – 400 words).

The section **Conclusion** should contain a synopsis of the main results of the thesis. In addition, this section should contain a discussion of how these results relate to the objectives and tasks and practical significance of the thesis, as specified in the introduction. The recommended length of the conclusion for individual project proposals is 200 words (group project proposals – 400 words).

The section **References** should contain a list of the sources cited in the thesis. This section may include journal articles, monographs, books, etc. as well as information given in academic electronic resources. The use of Wikipedia as a source is not allowed.

The list of references should be in alphabetical order based on the last name of the author. References should be cited in the format APA. The recommended number of sources is no less than 4. If necessary, Russian-language sources may be cited (no more than 2). These sources should be cited in Russian and should be included in at the end of the list of references. All references included in the reference list should be included in the text of the project proposal.

The section **Appendices** should contain supplemental information that is related to the main text of the project proposal but that is not essential to understanding how the objectives and tasks of the project proposal were achieved or carried out. The appendix may contain tables, graphs, equations, and other items that clarify different aspects of the project proposal. The appendix should not include information that is essential to understanding the main text of the written version of the project proposal.

Students may write their thesis in the form of a research article. Students who choose this option will write their thesis in the format of a journal chosen by the student. Students who choose this option may use this same format for the project proposal, as well. Students who choose this option must submit together with their project proposal a copy of the formatting guidelines for the relevant journal. Please see the document on the bachelor’s thesis for information regarding which journals may be used.

**The evaluation of the project proposal**

The evaluations of the written version of the project proposal and the oral defense of the project proposal are based on the evaluation criteria given in Appendices 2 and 3. The oral defense will be held in a session after the third module.

The final evaluation, E, of the project proposal is based on this formula:

For project proposals completed in groups, each member of the group will receive the same evaluation.

The commission for the defense of the project proposal consists of two professors from the Department of Management and one professor from the Department of Foreign Languages. Instead of professors from the Department of Management, the academic director of the program has the right to appoint to the commission members of other departments from the NRU HSE St. Petersburg.

**Appendix 1**

**The structure of the cover page**

**NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,**

**ST. PETERSBURG**

**DEPARTMENT**

**CHAIR**

**PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**TOPIC**

Name Surname, group

Advisor:

Name Surname, Title

CITY

Date

**Appendix 2**

**Evaluation criteria for the written text of the project proposal. Maximum number of points – 10**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **3** | **2** | **1** | **0** |
| **The satisfaction of the objectives of the project proposal (content and formulation)** | The work satisfies in full the requirements of the project proposal. The relevance and focus of the thesis is clear, as are the methods that will be used and the results that will obtained. In addition, the project proposal is presented in a scientific manner. | In general, the work satisfies the requirements of the project proposal. For the most part, the relevance and focus of the thesis are clear, as are the methods that will be used and the results that will be obtained. In addition, to a large extent, the project proposal is presented in a scientific manner. | The work in part satisfies the requirements of the project proposal., The relevance and focus of the thesis are not always clear, nor are the methods that will be used and the results that will be obtained. In addition, at points, the project proposal is not presented in a scientific manner. | The work does not satisfy the requirements of the project proposal., The relevance and focus of the thesis are not clear, nor are the methods that will be used and the results that will be obtained. In addition, the project proposal is not presented in a scientific manner. |
| **Organization of the text (logic and structure)** |  | The text is structured in a logical way, where each section is related to and builds on the other sections. The work’s objectives and tasks, methods, and results are consistent with each other. The reasoning in the text is logical and, where relevant, supported by references to prior research. | In a moderate number of cases, the text is not structured in a logical way, where each section is related to and builds on the other sections. To a moderate extent, the work’s objectives and tasks, methods, and results are not consistent with each other. To a moderate extent, the reasoning in the text is not logical and is not supported by references to prior research. | The text is not structured in a logical way, where each section is related to and builds on the other sections. The work’s objectives and tasks, methods, and results are not consistent with each other. The reasoning in the text not is logical and is not supported by references to prior research. |
| **Scientific formulation and grammar** | In all cases, the work uses scientific terminology consistent with the objectives and tasks of the project proposal. The work contains only a small number of spelling and punctuation errors, and these errors do not have a negative impact on the coherence of the text or make the text difficult to understand. Terminology is used in an appropriate way. | In a small number of cases, the work uses scientific terminology inconsistent with the objectives and tasks of the project proposal. The work contains a moderate number of spelling and punctuation errors that have a negative impact on the coherence of the text or make the text difficult to understand. In a small number of cases, terminology is used in an inappropriate way. | In a large number of cases, the work uses scientific terminology inconsistent with the objectives and tasks of the project proposal. The work contains a large number of spelling and punctuation errors that have a negative impact on the coherence of the text or make the text difficult to understand. In a large number of cases, terminology is used in an inappropriate way. | The work uses scientific terminology inconsistent with the objectives and tasks of the project proposal. The work contains a substantial number of spelling and punctuation errors that have a negative impact on the coherence of the text or make the text difficult to understand. Terminology is used in an inappropriate way. |
| **The technical formulation of the text of the document** |  | The structure and length (word count) of the work corresponds in full to the requirements specified in this document. | The structure and length (word count) of the work has a small number of deviations (not more than 3) from the requirements specified in this document. | The structure and length (word count) of the work has a large number of deviations (3 or more) from the requirements specified in this document. |

**Appendix d**

**The evaluation of the oral defense**

**The requirements of the oral presentation**

Length of the defense – for individual project proposals, 6 to 10 minutes; for group project proposals, 12 to 12 minutes

For group project proposals, each member of the group should speak for a similar amount of time.

Content – the content of the presentation should correspond to the theme of the project proposal

Structure – the structure of the presentation should be as follows:

* short introduction
* the relevance of the research question
* the objectives and tasks of the project proposal
* if relevant, the hypotheses of the project proposal
* the sample and data sources
* the methods used in the project proposal
* the results or expected results

Style of the presentation – the presentation should be conducted in a scientific manner, with the appropriate use of slides, graphs, presentation of data, etc.

Manner of speaking – the student should speak in a scientific manner, with the appropriate use of scientific terminology relevant for the project proposal.

During the presentation, the student should demonstrate an understanding of the topic of the project proposal, an understanding of relevant terms, and the ability to discuss the topic of the project proposal

Reading the presentation from written text (e.g., from note cards, or from text on the computer) is not allowed. Upon beginning to read the presentation, the student will receive an immediate warning. Upon a second attempt to read the presentation, the student will receive an evaluation of “Unsatisfactory.”

After the presentation, the student will respond to questions from the audience. For group project proposals, each member of the group should participate in responding to these questions.

**Evaluation criteria for the prepared part of the oral defense. Maximum points – 10**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Points | Clarity | Logic | Language | Expression |
| 3 | The content, structure, and style of the presentation provide a clear description of the project proposal. The student displays a strong understanding of the topic of the project proposal.  The student uses slides, graphs, etc. to communicate information in an effective way. The slides are logical and easy to understand. |  | The student uses scientific terminology consistent with the topic, objectives, and tasks of the project proposal. Words are pronounced in a clear way that is easy for the audience to understand. Terminology is used in an accurate way. The student commits only a small number of language mistakes, and these mistakes do not have a negative impact on the coherence of the presentation or make the presentation difficult to understand. |  |
| 2 | In a small number of cases, the content, structure, and style of the presentation do not provide a clear description of the project proposal. For the most part, the student displays a good understanding of the topic of the project proposal.  In most cases, the student uses slides, graphs, etc. to communicate information in an effective way. In a small number of cases, the slides are not logical or are difficult to understand. | Each part of the presentation is connected with the other parts in a clear, logical way. The student’s oral remarks are consistent in full with the material on the slides. The student presents the project proposal in a logical way that is easy for the audience to understand. | For the most part, the student uses scientific terminology consistent with the topic, objectives, and tasks of the project proposal. In most cases, words are pronounced in a clear way that is easy for the audience to understand. In most cases, terminology is used in an accurate way. The student commits a moderate number of language mistakes, and some of these mistakes have a negative impact on the coherence of the presentation or make the presentation difficult to understand. | The student speaks at an appropriate pace (neither too quickly nor too slowly) and uses in an effective manner different methods of expression and communication – e.g., pauses, changes in tone, gestures, visual contact with the audience, etc. |
| 1 | In a large number of cases, the content, structure, and style of the presentation do not provide a clear description of the project proposal. In many respects, the student does not display a good understanding of the topic of the project proposal.  In most cases, the slides, graphs, etc. do not communicate information in an effective way. In most cases, the slides are not logical or are difficult to understand. | Some parts of the presentation are not connected with the other parts in a clear, logical way. In some cases, the student’s oral remarks are not consistent with the material on the slides. In some cases, the student presents the project proposal in a way that is difficult for the audience to understand. | In many cases, the student uses scientific terminology that is not consistent with the topic, objectives, and tasks of the project proposal. In a large number of cases, words are pronounced in a way that is difficult for the audience to understand. Terminology often is used in an inaccurate way. The student commits a large number of language mistakes, and some of these mistakes have a negative impact on the coherence of the presentation or make the presentation difficult to understand. | At points, the student speaks at an inappropriate pace (either too quickly or too slowly). In some cases, the student uses in an effective manner different methods of expression and communication – e.g., pauses, changes in tone, gestures, visual contact with the audience, etc. |
| 0 | The content, structure, and style of the presentation do not at all provide a clear description of the project proposal. The student displays no understanding of the topic of the project proposal.  The slides, graphs, etc. do not at all communicate information in an effective way. The slides are not logical or are difficult to understand. | Most of the parts of the presentation are not connected with the other parts in a clear, logical way. In most cases, the student’s oral remarks are not consistent with the material on the slides. The student presents the project proposal in a way that is difficult for the audience to understand. | The student uses scientific terminology that is not consistent with the topic, objectives, and tasks of the project proposal. Words are pronounced in a way that is difficult for the audience to understand. Terminology is used in an inaccurate way. The student commits a substantial number of language mistakes, and some of these mistakes have a negative impact on the coherence of the presentation or make the presentation difficult to understand. | Throughout the presentation, the student speaks at an inappropriate pace. The student does not use in an effective manner different methods of expression and communication – e.g., pauses, changes in tone, gestures, visual contact with the audience, etc. |

**Evaluation criteria for the response to questions during the oral defense. Maximum points – 10**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Points | Clarity | Language | Expression |
| 4 | The student understands the questions from the audience and responds with relevant and persuasive responses that demonstrate an excellent understanding of the topic of the project proposal. | The student uses scientific terminology consistent with the questions from the audience. Words are pronounced in a clear way that is easy for the audience to understand. Terminology is used in an accurate way. The student commits only a small number of language mistakes, and these mistakes do not have a negative impact on the coherence of the response or make the response difficult to understand. |  |
| 3 | The student understands the questions from the audience and responds with mostly relevant and persuasive responses that demonstrate a good understanding of the topic of the project proposal. | For the most part, the student uses scientific terminology consistent with the questions from the audience. In most cases, words are pronounced in a clear way that is easy for the audience to understand. In most cases, terminology is used in an accurate way. The student commits a moderate number of language mistakes, and some of these mistakes have a negative impact on the coherence of the response or make the response difficult to understand. |  |
| 2 | At times, the student does not understand the questions from the audience. The student responds to questions with somewhat relevant and persuasive responses that demonstrate an adequate understanding of the topic of the project proposal. | In many cases, the student uses scientific terminology that is not consistent with questions. In a moderate number of cases, words are pronounced in a way that is difficult for the audience to understand. Terminology often is used in an inaccurate way. The student commits a moderate number of language mistakes, and some of these mistakes have a negative impact on the coherence of the response or make the response difficult to understand. | The student speaks at an appropriate pace (neither too quickly nor too slowly) and uses in an effective manner different methods of expression and communication – e.g., pauses, changes in tone, gestures, visual contact with the audience, etc. |
| 1 | The student has difficulty understanding the questions from the audience. For the most part, the responses to questions are irrelevant or unpersuasive and demonstrate a limited understanding of the topic of the project proposal. | In most cases, the student uses scientific terminology that is not consistent with questions. In a large number of cases, words are pronounced in a way that is difficult for the audience to understand. Terminology often is used in an inaccurate way. The student commits a large number of language mistakes, and some of these mistakes have a negative impact on the coherence of the response or make the response difficult to understand. | At points, the student speaks at an inappropriate pace (either too quickly or too slowly). In some cases, the student uses in an effective manner different methods of expression and communication – e.g., pauses, changes in tone, gestures, visual contact with the audience, etc. |
| 0 | The student does not understand the questions from the audience. The responses to questions are irrelevant or unpersuasive and demonstrate a lack of understanding of the topic of the project proposal. | The student uses scientific terminology that is not consistent with the question. Words are pronounced in a way that is difficult for the audience to understand. Terminology is used in an inaccurate way. The student commits a substantial number of language mistakes, and some of these mistakes have a negative impact on the coherence of the response or make the response difficult to understand. | The student speaks at an inappropriate pace. The student does not use in an effective manner different methods of expression and communication – e.g., pauses, changes in tone, gestures, visual contact with the audience, etc. |