

**National Research University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg**

St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences

Approved by  
academic supervisor of the  
educational program  
“Data Analytics for Politics and Society”  
26.11.2024

**GUIDELINE**  
**on Master Thesis Preparation**  
Field of study 41.04.04 Political Science  
Educational Programme “Data Analytics for Politics and Society”

Approved by  
Academic Supervisor of Educational Programme ‘Data Analytics for Politics and Society’

Academic Supervisor:

Aleksei B. Sorbale \_\_\_\_\_

St. Petersburg, 2024

# 1. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER THESIS

The Guidelines are developed in accordance with the local regulations of the HSE University.

A student is obliged to work on a thesis based on the requirements stated in this Guidelines and the Regulations for Term Papers and Theses Prepared by Students of the Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Level at the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

The Guidelines are intended for students of the Educational Programme 'Data Analytics for Politics and Society' (hereafter the Program) (41.04.04 Political Science) and academic supervisors. The Guidelines provide instructions for thesis reviewers and State Certification Board (SCB) members.

## *1.1 General Requirements for Writing a Master Thesis*

A Master thesis should be a complete, independent, English-written piece of research performed by the student under the guidance of the academic supervisor. A Master thesis may be conducted in the form of either a regular Master thesis or a research paper (a scientific article, a published conference proceeding paper, or a published conference extended abstract). The thesis may be the result of the author's work accomplished under the framework of a research group (as part of scientific projects, laboratory research, study groups, or funded projects). Irrespective of the thesis submission form (regular or research paper), the research environment or the topic of research, the work should allow the readers and reviewers to evaluate the personal contribution of the author to the paper and to what extent this contribution adheres to the study program and The Standard's requirements.

The thesis should reflect the author's skills in working with scientific literature, summarizing, and analyzing the empirical material with the help of the theoretical knowledge and practical competencies obtained during the education process. The thesis may develop and extend the author's prior research work conducted in a term paper, provided that there is a significant improvement (e.g., a broader scope, new and more rigorous analyses), leading to substantially new results. The general recommendation is that at least 2/3 of the work should be new, compared to the author's term paper.

Plagiarism in the Master thesis is prohibited. In case of revealing the case of plagiarism, the thesis receives a negative review (fail); at a further stage, the thesis receives an unsatisfactory grade, according to the "Procedures for Taking Disciplinary Action for Violations of Academic Standards for Student Papers at National Research University Higher School of Economics" and the "Regulations on Checking Student Papers for Plagiarism and the Publication of Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Theses on the HSE Corporate Website". One can find these documents via the link: <http://www.hse.ru/studyspravka/loc>

A thesis should match the following qualification requirements:

- clearly articulates a research question,
- reviews and analyzes critically scientific monographs, articles and other materials related to the research topic,
- analyzes and characterizes the research history of the studied question, as well as its current state,
- uses a well-reasoned research methodology that is suitable for the stated research tasks,
- summarizes the results, their reasoning, formulates detailed conclusions and possible practical recommendations, and
- it is formatted in accordance with the standards provided by the Guidelines.

The thesis should be written in accordance with academic style conventions, using appropriate terminology and abbreviations. Using the media and newspaper clichés or jargon words instead of scientific terminology is strongly discouraged. Using informal emotional constructs or rhetorical questions is strongly discouraged. The thesis text should focus on the substance of the stated research problem; the argumentation should be clear and rigorous.

In all cases, the student should consult the grading criteria listed in Appendices in deciding how they communicate to the readers and reviewers all the information necessary to assess their work. For example, if a student uses quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis in their thesis, they should demonstrate and motivate that their sampling design allows for representative conclusions and they can critically reflect on the limitations of the study design and the results.

### ***1.2 The length, structure, and formatting of a thesis***

The recommended length of the thesis is 45 000 – 80 000 characters, excluding appendices.

The thesis should be printed on the A4 paper. Minimal page margins are as follows: 30mm left, 10mm right, 20mm top, and bottom. The main text of the thesis should be typed in 12pt or 14pt standard serif font (e.g., Times New Roman), 1.5-line spacing.

All new chapters should begin on a new page. Main sections (Introduction, Conclusion, References, Appendices, etc.) should begin on a new page.

All pages, figures, tables, and appendices should be numbered sequentially. The first page is a title page formatted according to the template in the Appendix; the title page is not numbered. The thesis should be bound before submission.

The main goal of the formatting guidelines is to ensure quick and convenient reading and examination of the thesis, findability of the key concepts, research decisions, and results. Formatting decisions should be approved by the thesis academic supervisor.

The References should be formatted in accordance with the APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition standard.

In case of submitting a thesis as a research paper:

- The academic supervisor indicates in the review on the student's work a link to the requirements of the journal (should be included into the recommended list of journals approved by the HSE University) or the conference proceeding (Scopus- or WoS-indexed) which contains the structure, formatting and text length.
- The student includes a Preface into their paper that should be placed after the title page and before the table of contents. In the preface, the student indicates the title of the journal for which the paper was prepared and the related requirements to the structure and formatting; the student describes the personal contribution to the published paper.
- In case the work was published as conference proceedings paper (up to 20 000 characters), the student additionally provides an Extended Description formatted according to the conference guidelines. The Extended Description should focus on the theoretical review, methodology, discussion of the results, and personal contribution (to sum up to at least 30 000 characters). If the paper was written in a co-authorship, each co-authoring student submits their own Extended Description, emphasizing their personal contribution. The original paper should be submitted as an appendix to the Extended Description text.

### ***1.3 Preparation and Defense of the Thesis***

Students should decide on the topic no later than the key dates require and submit the topic to the study office.

Students can propose their own topics if approved by the academic supervisor. The proposed topics are considered and either approved or declined by the Academic Council of the Program.

The Program makes a decision on topic applications by December 15.

The work is conducted under the guidance of an academic supervisor, who should provide the guidance, support to and evaluation of the student's work.

While writing the Master thesis, the student can address the academic supervisor for guidance on setting the research goal, literature recommendations, and methodological comments on the research design. The student has a right to decide on these independently as well.

The academic supervisor has a right to demand the student to work independently on thesis problematics, the literature, methodology development at the initial stages of work. However, they are required to help when the student does not manage to do that properly on their own and turns to them for help.

A student is obliged to provide their academic supervisor with the data collection files (data sets, interview transcripts, etc.) in line with the key dates.

The work is conducted in accordance with the key dates annually announced by the Program's Academic Council and in accordance with the Guidelines.

Only those students who have no failed courses are allowed to proceed with the thesis defense.

The submission of a Master thesis in the form of a research paper should be approved by the academic supervisor no later than the day of Project Proposal defense. If there is already a positive external review from the journal from the HSE University's recommended list or an acceptance notification from a Scopus/WoS-indexed conference proceedings manager (i.e., the submitted paper is not rejected), a reviewer appointed by the Program prepares a meta-review based on summarizing the received journal/conference reviews and providing their mapping to the thesis criteria.

The student hands in the final version of the Master thesis text, formatted in a proper way, to the study office in accordance with the key dates but no later than three weeks before the defense date. After this date, the paper receives the review of the academic supervisor and of a reviewer based on the criteria provided in The Guidelines' Appendices. The academic supervisor decides on the grade of the thesis on their own; the final grade may be different from the arithmetic average calculated based on the assessment bands; the criteria listed below provide an indicative assessment for the grading.

The detailed guidelines for the Master thesis preparation and defense are outlined in:

- Regulations on Final State Certification of Students of Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Programmes at National Research University Higher School of Economics: <https://www.hse.ru/docs/205311900.html>;
- Regulations for Term Papers and Theses Prepared by Students of the Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Level at the National Research University Higher School of Economics. Access via the link: <https://www.hse.ru/docs/153240957.html>

The Program develops recommendations on the thesis structure and content, based on the Guidelines and other requirements to the thesis, suggesting the students and academic supervisors the best practices in demonstrating their adherence to the criteria.

### ***1.4 Research Environment and Preparation of the Thesis in Group Research Projects***

In cases when the data or the research input of a research group (developed within the Research Seminars, HSE University laboratories' projects, funded projects, etc.) have been used in a thesis, as well as in the case of completed or in-progress scientific or media publication of thesis materials or the dataset used in the thesis by the author or by another member of a research group, this must be indicated in the thesis Preface.

This reference should contain the research project's title, the names of the project's leader and other members of the research group, funding references, references to related oral presentations and published papers.

The Preface should also contain a detailed description of the author's personal contribution, including the workload size of performed activities and the other members' responsibility areas.

For instance, the author takes part in a study of the social-economics households' dynamic during the economic crisis. Then he or she should give a brief but comprehensive overview of the project. Next, out of the full research tasks list, the author extracts their topic investigated in the thesis, i.e., the rural-areas households' data or the occupation strategies. The author's task, therefore, should be narrowly formulated in regard to the group project. The contribution of the student into the project work may or may not overlap with the thesis topic; for instance, in the project, the student worked with an urban-area survey, whereas their thesis is dedicated to rural areas.

This allows the Reviewers and the SCB members to assess the level of the author's independence and contribution in their Master thesis preparation, given that the thesis is the product of a research group activity.

### ***1.5. Deadlines***

1. Deadlines for completing the main stages of topic selection and approval, as well as preparation and defense of the MA thesis (checkpoints), are specified in Appendix 1.
2. Failure to complete MA thesis by the fixed deadline constitutes an academic failure that can be remedied following the procedures established at the HSE.

### ***1.6. Supervision of MA thesis***

1. Supervisor appointed by the HSE St. Petersburg Director should oversee the preparation of the student's MA thesis.
2. MA thesis supervisors are appointed from among the University's faculty (from among full-time associate professors, professors, or research fellows who have a PhD/candidate of sciences or equivalent degree).
3. MA thesis supervisor can be replaced and/or an advisor of MA thesis can be appointed by the HSE St. Petersburg Director at the student's request and upon approval of the current supervisor, the prospective supervisor/advisor and the Academic Supervisor of the Programme no later than six weeks before the deadline for submission of the final version of the thesis.

## **2. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTENT, FORMATTING, AND DEFENSE OF PROJECT PROPOSALS**

The preparation and defense of Project Proposals is a mandatory element of the thesis preparation. Project Proposal must be conducted in accordance with the annual thesis preparation Guidelines announced by the Faculty Board.

The Project Proposal (2500 - 3500 words) should reflect the accomplished work on thesis writing and include the topic description, problem statement, and research questions; the relation of the thesis's topic to existing research areas based on the literature review; description and motivation behind the proposed methodology, data, and method. The proposal should not only list what the student plans to do but also convince the readers of the feasibility of the study and the proposed study plan.

Literature review in the Project Proposal should cover the main research areas related to the thesis topic and analyze no less than 15 key English-language references. As a mandatory appendix to the project proposal, the student attaches the full list of references for the literature review. If this appendix is missing, the literature review band is graded "0".

In case of conducting the Master thesis as a scientific paper, the student has a right to provide the Project Proposal formatted in accordance with the publisher's requirements, but it should still communicate the main points required by the Guidelines.

The Project Proposal text is assessed based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
<p><b>Topic, research questions, and methods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>research problem, topic, and questions are clear, well-written and satisfy thesis requirements</li> <li>there is a good match between the research problem, literature and research questions</li> <li>there is a good match between research questions, methods and the quality of existing data or the data to be collected</li> <li>the existing data or the data to be collected will be of sufficient quality and quantity, with an adequate sampling strategy</li> </ul>	0-4
<p><b>Literature and theoretical framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>selected sources are relevant to the topic</li> <li>the literature review covers main research areas and no less than 15 influential works</li> <li>the literature review is well-organized and structured, connecting relevant research areas in a narrative leading to the theoretical framework</li> <li>sources are critically analysed</li> </ul>	0-3
<p><b>Text organization and communication task</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the structure of the work is clear and easy to follow</li> <li>the text is logically connected and organized</li> <li>the text is easy to read, the research problem and ideas are clearly and coherently communicated</li> <li>the Project Proposal is written according to scientific style conventions</li> </ul>	0-2
<p><b>Language use and text formatting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the specialized vocabulary is used appropriately</li> <li>there are no or only minor errors in grammar/spelling</li> <li>the Project Proposal complies with text formatting guidelines for academic papers</li> <li>the citation style is coherent, and citations are complete</li> <li>the graphs and tables, if present, are clear, and their formatting is coherent</li> </ul>	0-1

Oral presentation of the Project Proposal is assessed by the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
<p><b>Topic, research questions, and methods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the research problem, topic, and questions are clear, well-communicated and they satisfy requirements for the thesis</li> <li>there is a good match between the research problem, literature and research questions</li> <li>there is a good match between research questions, methods and the quality of existing data or the data to be collected</li> <li>the existing data or the data to be collected will be of sufficient quality and quantity, harnessing an adequate sampling strategy</li> </ul>	0-4
<p><b>Literature and theoretical framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the sources are relevant to the topic</li> <li>the literature review presentation covers all the main research areas</li> <li>the literature review presentation is well-organized and structured, connecting relevant research areas in a narrative leading to the theoretical framework</li> <li>the sources and main areas are presented with a critical analysis</li> </ul>	0-3
<p><b>Oral communication</b> Assessment based on the Concept Appendix 6's criteria</p>	0-2
<p><b>Slides format</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the slides' style is coherent, informative, it communicates information clearly and adheres to the academic style</li> <li>the slide-show's structure follows the main points of the presentation narrative, adheres to the announced time management limits</li> <li>the graphs and tables, when present, are used appropriately, they are clear, and their formatting is coherent</li> </ul>	0-1

The final grade for the Project Proposal consists of the text grade (0.6) and the presentation grade (0.4).

### 3. ASSESSMENT AND DEFENCE OF MA THESIS

1. MA thesis is assessed in accordance with the criteria indicated in **Appendices 4-5**.
2. Grades for MA theses should be given after public defense.
3. MA thesis defense procedure should be established in line with the Regulations for the Final State Certification of Students of the BA, Specialist and MA Level at National Research University Higher School of Economics.
4. Dates for MA thesis defense should be approved by the Academic Supervisor of the Programme upon prior agreement by the Head of the Programme Office and fixed in the Directive issued by the HSE St. Petersburg Director.
5. State examination committee should be set up by the decision of the Programme Academic Council in line with the Regulations for the Final State Certification of Students of the BA, Specialist and MA Level at National Research University Higher School of Economics.
6. Feedback from the student's supervisor should be submitted to the Programme Office no later than 7 calendar days after the receipt of the final version of MA thesis (date of MA thesis submission).
7. In case the supervisor's feedback has not been provided, the Programme Office informs the chairperson of the State examination committee, the Academic Supervisor of the Programme, as well as the Head of the student's supervisor department, thereof, and disciplinary measures may be applied, if the feedback has not been submitted without a valid reason.
8. In order to maintain high quality of student MA theses, the Programme Academic Supervisor initiates and coordinates the preparation of reviews on MA theses. The reviewer of MA 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 MA thesis. Student's supervisor should propose a potential reviewer to the Programme Office. The Programme Academic Council considers and approves the list of MA thesis reviewers. Reviewers should provide their reviews to the Programme Office no later than 7 days prior to MA thesis defense. The Programme Office should provide students with content of such reviews no later than 6 days prior to MA thesis defence.
9. Each MA thesis should be subject to anti-plagiarism checks by the Programme Office using appropriate software (e.g. TurnItIn) in accordance with the Regulations. Supervisors and reviewers should be notified of the outcome of such checks and should take them into account when preparing their feedback and reviews. If instances of plagiarism are uncovered in MA thesis, student may face disciplinary action in accordance with the Procedures for Applying Disciplinary Measures for the Violation of Academic Standards for Student Papers at HSE (Appendix 7 to HSE Internal Regulations).
10. MA thesis defense includes the following elements:
  - The student describes their research puzzle/research question(s), literature review/theoretical framework, hypothesis (if applicable), methodology and methods of data collection and analysis; major research findings and their interpretation; major research outcomes formulated in the conclusion of MA thesis.
  - The student provides answers to the questions of the State examination committee's members to further clarify certain points and arguments that have been presented;
  - The chairperson presents the feedback of the supervisor and the review;

- The student is given possibility to reply to critical comments mentioned in the review and in the supervisor's feedback;
- The defense is concluded by a general discussion of the term paper and its presentation.

## 4. GRADING OF THE MASTER THESIS

The grade for the Master thesis covers research skills which students are expected to apply while writing the text. The Master thesis is graded by the State certification board with due regard to the opinions given by the academic supervisor and the reviewer of the student's MA thesis. However, the final grade is entirely determined by the State examination committee based on the defense outcomes. If the supervisor sits on the State examination committee, they should not be involved in assigning the grade by the committee. Appealing against the thesis defense procedure is allowed.

The academic supervisors in the assessment of the MA theses should be guided by the criteria put in **Appendix 4** below.

The reviewers in the assessment of the MA theses should be guided by the criteria put in **Appendix 5** below.

The state certification board in the assessment of the MA theses should be guided by the criteria put in **Appendix 6** below.

The final grade becomes known to the student after the defense.

## 5. SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR ORGANIZATION OF LEARNING PROCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The following types of comprehension of learning information (including e-learning and distance learning) can be offered to students with disabilities (by their written request) in accordance with their individual psychophysical characteristics:

1. *for persons with vision disorders*: a printed text in enlarged font; an electronic document; audios (transferring of learning materials into the audio); an individual advising with an assistance of a sign language interpreter; individual assignments and advising.
2. *for persons with hearing disorders*: a printed text; an electronic document; video materials with subtitles; an individual advising with an assistance of a sign language interpreter; individual assignments and advising.
3. *for persons with muscle-skeleton disorders*: a printed text; an electronic document; audios; individual assignments and advising.



### Appendix 1. Timeline of the preparation of the Master Thesis

Module	Deadline	Event
2 <sup>nd</sup> module	November 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	Deadline for the choice of the Master thesis topic
	November 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Approval of the topics by the academic advisors.
	December 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	Approval of Master thesis topics by the academic council
	December 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	Deadline for the submission of the Master Thesis proposal to the scientific supervisor
3 <sup>rd</sup> module	February 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Deadline for the submission of the extended project proposal to the academic supervisor
	February 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Defense of the Project Proposal within research seminar
4 <sup>th</sup> module	April 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2025 18:00	Deadline for the assignment of the external reviewer
	April 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2025, 18:00	Deadline for submission of the text for the pre-defense
	April 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Pre-defense of the Master Thesis
	April 21 <sup>nd</sup> , 18:00	Deadline for the change of the topic/ advisor
	May 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2025	Deadline for the submission of the final version of the Master thesis text to the supervisor
	May 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2025, 18.00	Deadline for the submission of the final thesis paper to the LMS
	May 23 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025	Deadline for the submission of the supervisor's review
	May 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Deadline for the submission of the external reviewer's review
	May 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Deadline for the submission of the printed version of the Master Thesis
	June 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Master thesis defense

## Appendix 2. Application for the Thesis Topic Approval

To Academic Supervisor  
of Master Program  
'Data Analytics for Politics and Society'  
A.B. Sorbale  
from the 2<sup>nd</sup> year student  
of the 'Data Analytics for Politics and  
Society' educational program

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's first and last name

Please, approve/change my Master thesis topic:

‘ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ’  
(topic in English)

and appoint as the supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
(Supervisor's last and first name, degree, position, and department)

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ” \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to supervise student's thesis

“ \_\_\_\_\_ ” \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_ Supervisor's signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 3. Thesis Title Page Template**

FEDERAL STATE AUTONOMOUS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION  
FOR HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION  
NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

**Faculty St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences**

*Student's full name*

***THESIS TOPIC***

MASTER'S PROJECT

Field of study: 41.04.04 Political Science

Degree programme: Data Analytics for Politics and Society

Supervisor:

*Supervisor's degree*

*Supervisor's Full Name*

Saint Petersburg 2025

**Appendix 4. Supervisor Review of the Thesis**  
**Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution for Higher Professional Education**  
**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences**

**Supervisor Review of the Thesis**

Prepared by the student \_\_\_\_\_,   
full name

Year 2. Degree programme: Data Analytics for Politics and Society

Faculty: St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Components	Assessment Criteria	Grade (10-point scale) <b>(indicative)</b> 0,1,2,3 – unsatisfactory 4,5 – satisfactory 6,7 – good 8,9,10 - excellent
<b>Problem Statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The work has clearly communicated relevance and positioning</i></li> <li>• <i>The research problem, topic, goals and questions are clear, correctly formulated and well-communicated</i></li> <li>• <i>Research questions match with the thesis problem statement</i></li> <li>• <i>Thesis problem statement and goals match with the thesis content</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Theoretical Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The review matches with the thesis problem statement, RQs/goals</i></li> <li>• <i>The review covers key research areas related to the problem (including at least 30 key international sources) and provides a critical overview of key research areas</i></li> <li>• <i>The thesis has clearly communicated, correct and grounded in literature theoretical model (e.g., RQs are clearly presented and theoretically motivated, proposed hypotheses are explicitly formulated and theoretically supported)</i></li> <li>• <i>Employed research strategy matches with the theoretical model</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a clear connection with the literature and reviewed theory in the discussion of the results</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Data Collection and Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>RQ match with data and method employed</i></li> <li>• <i>The validity of the methodology, data collection, and research design (including sampling strategy) is motivated based on the critical analysis of relevant studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Data and methodology are critically evaluated, limitations of the study are discussed (including sample bias discussion)</i></li> <li>• <i>Data gathering process (or database search and selection), systematization and preprocessing performed according to quality standards</i></li> <li>• <i>Data is of sufficient quality and quantity to answer RQs</i></li> <li>• <i>The degree of the author's involvement in the data gathering process in case of the primary data use</i></li> </ul>	

<b>Data Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Choice of the tools and methods is reasonable and well-motivated</i></li> <li>• <i>Methods of analysis are applied correctly</i></li> <li>• <i>Data analysis process and limitations are critically analyzed</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Results and Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Research independence is demonstrated</i></li> <li>• <i>The obtained results are credible and of importance to the research or practice</i></li> <li>• <i>Conclusions are theoretically motivated, empirically grounded, independent, reasonable and concise, showing a clear connection with RQs/goals</i></li> </ul> <p><i><u>In the case of research contribution:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The scientific contribution of the study to the research field</i></li> <li>• <i>Completeness and integrity of the study</i></li> <li>• <i>Critical reflection on the results and limitations of the study and its positioning in the research field</i></li> </ul> <p><i><u>In the case of practical contribution:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The practical significance of the study</i></li> <li>• <i>Completeness and integrity of the presented project/project proposal, research program, plan of activities</i></li> <li>• <i>Theoretical motivation and empirical research grounding of the project, relation to the practical applications and chosen professional activity</i></li> <li>• <i>Match between the proposed activities and recommendations and study goals</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Structure and Formatting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Literacy and consistency</i></li> <li>• <i>Cohesiveness and coherence</i></li> <li>• <i>Formatting of the text, tables, and figures, reference list</i></li> <li>• <i>The correctness of the professional thesaurus and concepts usage, adherence to academic style</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Organization of work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Student's initiative in the process of the thesis preparation</i></li> <li>• <i>In the case of a group research project: teamwork skills, project communications management</i></li> <li>• <i>Following the established thesis preparation timeline</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Final grade of the supervisor (final grade may differ from the arithmetic average on the criteria)</b>		

Comments on grade:

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Supervisor

academic degree, title

department/school

(place of employment) \_\_\_\_\_ /signature/ \_\_\_\_\_ last name and initials

Date

## Appendix 5. Review of the Master's Project

**Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution for Higher Professional Education  
National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences**

### Review of the Master's Project

Prepared by the student \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
full name

Year 2. Degree programme: Data Analytics for Politics and Society

Faculty: St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Components	Assessment Criteria	Grade (10-point scale) (indicative) 0,1,2,3 – unsatisfactory 4,5 – satisfactory 6,7 – good 8,9,10 - excellent
<b>Problem Statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The work has clearly communicated relevance and positioning</i></li> <li>• <i>The research problem, topic, goals and questions are clear, correctly formulated and well-communicated</i></li> <li>• <i>Research questions match with the thesis problem statement</i></li> <li>• <i>Thesis problem statement and goals match with the thesis content</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Theoretical Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The review matches with the thesis problem statement, RQs/goals</i></li> <li>• <i>The review covers key research areas related to the problem (including at least 30 key international sources) and provides a critical overview of key research areas</i></li> <li>• <i>The thesis has clearly communicated, correct and grounded in literature theoretical model (e.g., RQs are clearly presented and theoretically motivated, proposed hypotheses are explicitly formulated and theoretically supported)</i></li> <li>• <i>Employed research strategy matches with the theoretical model</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a clear connection with the literature and reviewed theory in the discussion of the results</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Data Collection and Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>RQ match with data and method employed</i></li> <li>• <i>The validity of the methodology, data collection, and research design (including sampling strategy) is motivated based on the critical analysis of relevant studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Data and methodology are critically evaluated, limitations of the study are discussed (including sample bias discussion)</i></li> <li>• <i>Data gathering process (or database search and selection), systematization and preprocessing performed according to quality standards</i></li> <li>• <i>Data is of sufficient quality and quantity to answer RQs</i></li> <li>• <i>The degree of the author's involvement in the data gathering process in case of the primary data use</i></li> </ul>	

<b>Data Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Choice of the tools and methods is reasonable and well-motivated</i></li> <li>• <i>Methods of analysis are applied correctly</i></li> <li>• <i>Data analysis process and limitations are critically analyzed</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Results and Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Research independence is demonstrated</i></li> <li>• <i>The obtained results are credible and of importance to the research or practice</i></li> <li>• <i>Conclusions are theoretically motivated, empirically grounded, independent, reasonable and concise, showing a clear connection with RQs/goals</i></li> </ul> <p><i><u>In the case of research contribution:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The scientific contribution of the study to the research field</i></li> <li>• <i>Completeness and integrity of the study</i></li> <li>• <i>Critical reflection on the results and limitations of the study and its positioning in the research field</i></li> </ul> <p><i><u>In the case of practical contribution:</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The practical significance of the study</i></li> <li>• <i>Completeness and integrity of the presented project/project proposal, research program, plan of activities</i></li> <li>• <i>Theoretical motivation and empirical research grounding of the project, relation to the practical applications and chosen professional activity</i></li> <li>• <i>Match between the proposed activities and recommendations and study goals</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Structure and Formatting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Literacy and consistency</i></li> <li>• <i>Cohesiveness and coherence</i></li> <li>• <i>Formatting of the text, tables, and figures, reference list</i></li> <li>• <i>The correctness of the professional thesaurus and concepts usage, adherence to academic style</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Final grade of the supervisor (final grade may differ from the arithmetic average on the criteria)</b>		

Comments on grade:

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Reviewer:

academic degree, position,  
department (affiliation)

Stamp Place

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signature/ last name and initials

Date

### Appendix 6. Thesis Assessment Form for the State Certification Board

Thesis Components	Assessment Criteria	Coefficient	Grade (10-point scale) <b>(indicative)</b> 0,1,2,3 – unsatisfactory 4,5 – satisfactory 6,7 – good 8,9,10 - excellent
<b>Problem Statement and Theoretical Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The work has clearly communicated relevance and positioning</i></li> <li>• <i>The research problem, topic, goals, and questions are clear, correctly formulated and well-communicated</i></li> <li>• <i>Research questions match with the thesis problem statement</i></li> <li>• <i>Thesis problem statement and goals match with the thesis content</i></li> <li>• <i>The review matches with the thesis problem statement, RQs/goals</i></li> <li>• <i>The review covers key research areas related to the problem (including at least 30 key international sources) and provides a critical overview of key research areas</i></li> <li>• <i>The thesis has clearly communicated, correct and grounded in literature theoretical model (e.g., RQs are clearly presented and theoretically motivated, proposed hypotheses are explicitly formulated and theoretically supported)</i></li> <li>• <i>Employed research strategy matches with the theoretical model</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a clear connection with the literature and reviewed theory in the discussion of the results</i></li> </ul>	30%	
<b>Data Collection, Method and Data Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>RQ match with data and method employed</i></li> <li>• <i>The validity of the methodology, data collection, and research design (including sampling strategy) is motivated based on the critical analysis of relevant studies</i></li> <li>• <i>Data and methodology are critically evaluated, limitations of the study are discussed (including sample bias discussion)</i></li> <li>• <i>Data gathering process (or database search and selection), systematization and preprocessing performed according to quality standards</i></li> <li>• <i>Data is of sufficient quality and quantity to answer RQs</i></li> <li>• <i>The degree of the author's involvement in the data gathering process in case of the primary data use</i></li> <li>• <i>Choice of the tools and methods is reasonable and well-motivated</i></li> <li>• <i>Methods of analysis are applied correctly</i></li> <li>• <i>Data analysis process and limitations are critically analyzed</i></li> </ul>	20%	
<b>Results and Contribution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Research independence is demonstrated</i></li> <li>• <i>The obtained results are credible and of importance to the research or practice</i></li> <li>• <i>Conclusions are theoretically motivated, empirically grounded, independent, reasonable and concise, showing a clear connection with RQs/goals</i></li> </ul> <p><u><i>In the case of research contribution:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The scientific contribution of the study to the research field</i></li> <li>• <i>Completeness and integrity of the study</i></li> <li>• <i>Critical reflection on the results and limitations of the study and its positioning in the research field</i></li> </ul> <p><u><i>In the case of practical contribution:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The practical significance of the study</i></li> <li>• <i>Completeness and integrity of the presented project/project proposal, research program, plan of activities</i></li> </ul>	20%	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theoretical motivation and empirical research grounding of the project, relation to the practical applications and chosen professional activity</i></li> <li>• <i>Match between the proposed activities and recommendations and study goals</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Delivery, Presentation and Question Answering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Demonstrated level of expertise in the topic, correctness in the usage of the professional vocabulary and sociological concepts</i></li> <li>• <i>Clarity, logic, professionalism of the delivery</i></li> <li>• <i>Time Management</i></li> <li>• <i>Structure of presentation and visual quality of slides</i></li> <li>• <i>Clarity and scientific support of the arguments</i></li> <li>• <i>Clear and full answers to the committee questions</i></li> </ul>	30%	
Final grade of the Board Member (calculated based on the weighted grades on different components of the thesis)			