

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”
19.11.2025

GUIDELINE

for Term Paper Preparation

Field of study 39.04.01 Sociology, 41.04.04 Political Science

Educational Program "Data Analytics for Politics and Society"

Approved by
Academic Supervisor of Educational Program “Data Analytics for Politics and Society”

Academic Supervisor:

Aleksei B. Sorbale _____

St. Petersburg, 2025

The Guideline was developed according to the local regulations of HSE University.

A student is obliged to work on a term paper based on the requirements stated by this Guideline and the Regulation on term papers and thesis papers for bachelor, specialist and master students, studying at HSE University.

The Guideline is intended for students of “Data Analytics for Politics and Society” (39.04.01 Sociology, 41.04.04 Political Science) and academic advisors.

1. General Requirements for a Term Paper writing

A term paper should be self-conducted completed English-written research, performed by an author under the guidance of an academic advisor.

A term paper may be conducted as a (1) scientific paper, as a (2) conference proceeding paper or as a (3) research paper.

In case (1), the student indicates the link to the scientific paper requirements of a journal (should be included into the ‘white’ list of journals, approved by HSE University) or Scopus/WoS-indexed conference in his or her review. If the term paper in the form of a scientific article is written by a student in a co-authorship with the academic advisor, the academic advisor in her review, as well as a student in a term paper *Preface*, describes and assesses a contribution of the student into the work.

In case (2), the student provides an extended description, formatted according to the conference guidelines. The student should put the link to the planned conference into the paper’s *Preface*. If the term paper in the form of a conference proceeding is written by a student in a co-authorship with the academic advisor, the academic advisor in her review, as well as a student in a term paper *Preface*, describes and assesses a contribution of the student into the work.

In case (3) the student should be guided by the requirements put below. In the case, the paper cannot be written in a co-authorship with the academic advisor or any other person.

In cases (1), (2) and (3) a term paper may be a result of an author’s work, accomplished within a research group activity. In this case, the term paper *Preface* must contain the information about the group study, necessary for the paper content understanding, as well as an accurate indication of the author’s contribution and the author’s personally obtained results.

A term paper should reflect the author’s skills on working with scientific literature, summarizing and analyzing of a factual material with the help of the theoretical knowledge and practical competencies obtained in the education process.

Plagiarism in a term paper is prohibited. In case of revealing the plagiarism, a term paper gets a negative review; at the further stage, a term paper gets an unsatisfactory grade, according to the ‘Regulation on disciplinary penalties of the academic norms in student papers at HSE University’ and the ‘Regulation of the control of student papers for the plagiarism and publication of the bachelor, specialist, and master thesis papers at the HSE University web-portal’. One can find the student papers via the link: <http://www.hse.ru/studyspravka/loc>

A term paper should be conducted in according with the following qualification requirements:

- Presence of an articulated research question
- Research and critical analysis of the scientific monographs, recognized international scientific papers and any other materials, related to the research topic
- Analysis and characterizing of a studied issue history, as well as its current state
- Usage of a well-reasoned research methodology, which is suitable for the stated research tasks

- Summarizing of the results, their reasoning, formulation of the detailed conclusions and possible practical recommendations
- Formatting of a term paper is in accordance with the standards, accepted by The Guideline

A term paper should be written in a scientific-style language, appropriate terminology, marking, abbreviations and symbols should be used. Using the media and usual life clichés, jargon words instead of scientific terminology is not allowed. Using informal emotional constructs and rhetorical questions is not allowed. A term paper text should be focused on the essence of the stated research problem; an argumentation should be clear and accurate, without using a conditional mood.

2. The volume, structure and formatting of a term paper

A term paper should contain the following elements:

- Title page
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Body (with a structure comprising named sections and subsections)
- Conclusion
- References (APA 7th edition)
- Appendices

At the *Introduction* section students have to provide a concise program of the research conducted, what, in turn, requires to:

reason the topic choice;

provide a clear argumentation on the relevance, as well as scientific and practical importance of the stated problem;

give an overview on size, structure and dynamics of the related research area, using the sociological and statistical data

provide an outline of the paper structure and how its overall logic helps in accessing the paper goal;

briefly mention the expected results and explain the limitations of the study.

Conclusion summarizes the outcomes of the conducted study/research project, formulates the main findings.

The volume of the work. The volume of the work means the length of the text, excluding the reference list and appendices. The recommended size of a term paper is 30 000 – 50 000 characters, spaces included.

In case of submitting a term paper as a research article:

1. Academic supervisor indicates the link on the requirements of the journal (should be included into the ‘white’ list of journals, approved by HSE University) or the conference (Scopus- or WoS-indexed), which contains the structure, formatting and size requirements in his or her review on the student’s work
2. Student includes a *Preface* into his or her paper, which should be placed after the title page and before the table of content. At the *Preface* the student indicates the title of the scientific publication, where he or she prepared the paper and the specifics of the structure and formatting related; the student describes the personal contribution into the published article.

In case the work was published as a conference proceeding (short text up to 20 000 characters), the student additionally provides an extended description, formatted according to the conference guidelines. The description should be focused on the theoretical overview, methodology, results' discussion, and personal contribution (at least 30 000 characters). If the paper was written in a co-authorship with more than one student, each of them submits his or her own description text, emphasizing a personal contribution. An original paper should be submitted as an appendix to the extended description text. A conference presentation, highlighting the key findings of the research, can be counted as a term paper defense based on the academic advisor's decision.

3. Preparation and defense of a term paper

Students can propose their own topic if agreed with the academic advisor. The suggested topics must be considered and approved/declined by the academic council of the study program. Students should decide on the topic no later than the established deadlines require and apply to the study office. The program is obliged to process the topic applications and make a decision.

The work is conducted under the guidance of the academic advisor who must provide the support, control and student's work evaluation.

4. Grading

Grade for the Master term paper covers research skills which students are expected to apply while writing the text. The Master term paper is graded by the academic supervisor of the student's MA term paper and the defense committee, according to the following formula:

$O_f = 0,5 \cdot O_{as} + 0,5 \cdot O_{dc}$, where O_{as} is a grade by the academic supervisor of the student's MA term paper and O_{dc} is a grade by the defense committee.

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

The defense committee in the assessment of the MA term papers should be guided by the criteria put in **Appendix 5** below.

The final grade becomes known to the student after the oral part of the defense.

Appendix 1. Timeline of the preparation of the term paper

Module	Deadline	Event
1 st module	November 28 th	Deadline for the choice of the topic of the term paper (submission to SmartPro)
	November 28 th	Approval of the topics by academic supervisors
	December 1 st	Approval of the topics of the term paper by the academic council of the program
	December 8 th	Deadline for the submission of a project plan of the term paper to the scientific supervisor
4 th module	May 15 th , 18:00	Deadline for the change of the topic/ advisor
	June 12 th , 23:59	Deadline for the submission of the final text of the term paper to SmartPro
	June 19 th	Deadline for the submission of the supervisor's review to SmartPro
	June 26 th	Defense of the term papers

Appendix 2. Application on the term paper topic approval

To Academic
Supervisor of
Master's Program
"Data Analytics for Politics and Society"
A.B. Sorbale
from 1st year student

Student's first and last name

Please, approve/change my term paper topic:

_____,
(topic in English)

and appoint as the advisor _____.
(Advisor's last and first name, degree, position, and department)

"_____" 20____ Student's signature _____

I agree to supervise student's course paper

"_____" 20____ Advisor's signature: _____

Appendix 3. Title Page Template

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

Saint-Petersburg School of Social Sciences

Student's full name

TERM PAPER TITLE

Term paper

Field of study 39.04.01 Sociology, 41.04.04 Political Science

Master's Program 'Data Analytics for Politics and Society'

Advisor:

Advisor's degree

Advisor's Full Name

Saint Petersburg 2025

Appendix 4. Advisor's Report on Term Paper

Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution for Higher Professional Education

National Research University Higher School of Economics

St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences

Advisor's Report on Term Paper

Prepared by the student _____,
full name

Year 1, level of study: Master

Degree programme: Data Analytics for Politics and Society

Faculty: St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences

Topic: _____

№ п/п	Assessment Criteria	Advisor's Grade
1.	Consistency of the term paper topic with the paper content	
2.	Research goals and research tasks performance	
3.	Contribution to research area or practice	
4.	Successful time management and term paper preparation organisation	
5	Formatting	
	FINAL GRADE on the term paper text:	

Comments on grade:

Advisor's

academic degree, title

department/school

(place of employment) _____/signature/ _____ last name and initials

Date

Appendix 5. Thesis Assessment Form for the Committee

Thesis Components	Assessment Criteria	Coefficient	Grade (10-point scale) (indicative) 0,1,2,3 – unsatisfactory 4,5 – satisfactory 6,7 – good 8,9,10 - excellent
Problem Statement and Theoretical Analysis	<i>The work has clearly communicated relevance and positioning</i> <i>The research problem, topic, goals, and questions are clear, correctly formulated and well-communicated</i> <i>Research questions match with the thesis problem statement</i> <i>Thesis problem statement and goals match with the thesis content</i> <i>The review matches with the thesis problem statement, RQs/goals</i> <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> <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> <i>Employed research strategy matches with the theoretical model</i> <i>There is a clear connection with the literature and reviewed theory in the discussion of the results</i>	30%	
Data Collection, Method and (Preliminary) Data Analysis	<i>RQ match with data and method employed</i> <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> <i>Data and methodology are critically evaluated, limitations of the study are discussed (including sample bias discussion)</i> <i>Data gathering process (or database search and selection), systematization and preprocessing performed according to quality standards</i> <i>Data is of sufficient quality and quantity to answer RQs</i> <i>The degree of the author's involvement in the data gathering process in case of the primary data use</i> <i>Choice of the tools and methods is reasonable and well-motivated</i> <i>Methods of analysis are applied correctly</i> <i>Data analysis process and limitations are critically analyzed</i>	20%	
(Anticipated) Results and Contribution	<i>Research independence is demonstrated</i> <i>The obtained results are credible and of importance to the research or practice</i> <i>Conclusions are theoretically motivated, empirically grounded, independent, reasonable and concise, showing a clear connection with RQs/goals</i>	20%	
Delivery, Presentation and Question Answering	<i>Demonstrated level of expertise in the topic, correctness in the usage of the professional vocabulary and sociological concepts</i> <i>Clarity, logic, professionalism of the delivery</i> <i>Time Management</i> <i>Structure of presentation and visual quality of slides</i> <i>Clarity and scientific support of the arguments</i> <i>Clear and full answers to the committee questions</i>	30%	

Final grade of the Committee (calculated based on the weighted grades on different components of the MA term paper)	
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