

**Guidelines for Preparation and Defence of Term Papers and BA Theses**  
**written by the students of**  
**the BA programme in Political Science and World Politics**  
**St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
**HSE in St. Petersburg**

**APPROVED**

**St. Petersburg School of  
Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
**Minutes No. \_\_\_\_\_**  
**as of \_\_\_\_\_**

**Chairperson**  
**Dr. Andrey V. Starodubtsev**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. These Guidelines for Preparation and Defence of Term Papers and Theses (hereinafter, the Guidelines) have been prepared in line with the Regulations on Term Papers and Theses written by BA, Specialist and MA Students of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (hereinafter, the Regulations), approved by the HSE Academic Council (Minutes No. 08 dated November 28, 2014). As per the Regulations, these Guidelines shall be observed by the faculty and students of the 'Political Science and World Politics' programme (hereinafter, the Programme), as well as all persons involved in preparation and defence of the term papers and theses (including the Programme's Study Office staff, advisors, reviewers, etc.).

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TERM PAPERS AND THESES**

2. A term paper is a research paper comprising analysis and consolidation of theoretical and empirical materials aimed at strengthening and showcasing knowledge and skills acquired by the students in the course of their studies at the Programme.
3. A thesis is an academic paper reporting the findings of a study conducted with the aim of gaining new insights into the structure, properties and patterns of the phenomenon under examination.
4. A term paper is an independent work performed and written by the students of the Programme individually.
5. A thesis is an independent work performed and written by the students of the Programme individually.
6. The term paper requirements differ depending on the year of study.
  - Term papers prepared by the second-year students shall be a literature review on the topic chosen by the student and approved by the Academic Board of the Programme. Such term papers are prepared with an aim of reviewing the state of the art in the research problem chosen for a review and formulating the hypothetical questions and research puzzles for further study based on the literature review completed in the term paper.

- Term papers prepared by the third-year students shall focus on showcasing the student's skills at analyzing the existent theoretical approaches and empirical findings, as well as collecting, processing and analyzing new empirical data to deepen the fundamental understanding of the problem under consideration.
- 7. In their theses, students shall present the results of their research effort and demonstrate the skills and competencies they have acquired. Students are expected to produce a high quality literature review covering their chosen research subject, a fundamental theoretical analysis of the problem under consideration as applicable to the student's research project, as well as to collect and analyse empirical data and formulate their findings which have to be of some theoretical and, possibly, practical value.
- 8. Second, third and fourth year students are free to choose the language of their term papers and theses (English or Russian), upon their supervisor's approval, at the stage of choosing and approving the topic of their papers, and in accordance with the timeline specified in items No. 10-30, as well as Annexes 1 and 2 below.
- 9. Depending on the language chosen, the students shall use the GOST Footnotes referencing standard for the papers written in Russian, and the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition) Full Footnotes Referencing Style for the papers written in English.

## STAGES OF TERM PAPERS AND THESES PREPARATION

- 10. Deadlines for completing the main stages of the topic selection and approval, as well as the preparation and defence of the term papers, are specified in Annex 1.
- 11. Deadlines for completing the main stages of the topic selection and approval, as well as the preparation of the theses, are specified in Tables 1 and 2 of Annex 2.

### Stages of Term Paper Preparation

- 12. The student and supervisor (assigned to work with her by the Academic Board of the Programme) agree on a workplan that may include the following milestones:
  - submission by the student to her supervisor of the term paper outline which may include the tentative description of the academic relevance, the structure and conceptual framework of the term paper, as well as the most important and relevant sources for the literature review, and the expected findings and outcomes of the research;
  - submission by the student of the first draft of the term paper (to be revised if necessary);
  - submission of the final version of the term paper to the supervisor;
  - uploading of the term paper by the student onto the LMS (where it is automatically run through the *Antiplagiat* system);
  - the supervisor's grading and feedback on the term paper. For the second-year students the supervisor uses for her feedback the template provided in Annex 4 below. For the third-year students the supervisor uses for her feedback the template provided in the Annex 5 below;
  - review and grading by the reviewer assigned to the paper by the Academic Director / Deputy Director of the Programme (for third-year students only). For her review the reviewers shall use the template provided in the Annex 7 below;
  - term paper defences (for third-year students only) where the student presents their main findings to a committee, the committee also hears the reviewer's review and the student's supervisor's feedback, gives its own grade, and calculates the grade for the paper according to the procedure stipulated in item No. 52 below).
- 13. Dates for relevant milestones are provided in Annex 1 below.
- 14. The electronic version of the term paper shall be uploaded via dedicated LMS module.
- 15. Grades for term papers are communicated to the students via the LMS module.

16. Students are considered to have failed if they receive a fail grade for their term paper. In accordance with the University regulations, to have this academic failure waived they shall make appropriate corrections and revise the text of the term paper as may be necessary; the topic of the term paper and the academic supervisor may also be changed in this case. Such a change is put in place by the Director of the St. Petersburg Campus of the HSE.
17. Term papers are evaluated against the criteria stipulated in these Guidelines.

### **Stages of Thesis Preparation**

18. **Preparing the research proposal.** At this stage, students shall prepare and submit the thesis proposal, which shall include the following elements:
  - the provisional research topic;
  - a literature review, as well as a research puzzle and research question formulated on its basis;
  - the empirical focus and conceptual scope (also known as Object and Subject, *объект* and *предмет исследования*, respectively);
  - the goal and objectives of the paper which must be met in order to achieve the research goal;
  - the theoretical grounds, including, on the one hand, the analysis of prior research findings within the conceptual scope of the thesis, and, on the other hand, theories and concepts which could potentially be used for studying the problematic chosen;
  - underlying hypotheses, if the research is focused on discovering the cause-and-effect (causal) relations; if the research project is descriptive in nature, a clearly formulated research question will suffice;
  - the research strategy (case study, comparative or statistical study) and methods for data collection and/or analysis to be used in the course of research;
  - preliminary structure of the paper.
19. Based on its oral presentation (accompanied by .ppt slides), the thesis research proposal shall be evaluated by the committee comprised of the student's supervisor, the 4<sup>th</sup>-year research seminar instructors, and a member of the Academic Board of the Programme, who will decide to 'approve' / 'not approve' the tentative thesis title. Students can revise the thesis proposal and reformulate its title if it does not get the approval, and duly resubmit the title in writing to the committee by the deadline specified in Table 1 of Annex 2.
20. **Submitting the first draft of the thesis.** The first draft of the thesis shall be submitted to the supervisor for review; the text shall then be revised accordingly if needed. The first draft of the thesis shall be submitted in accordance with the timeline specified in Table 2 of Annex 2. The supervisor shall notify the Study Office via e-mail or special LMS module if her supervisees fail to submit the first draft on time.
21. **Revising and finalizing the thesis.** At this stage, the student revises the thesis as may be needed and then submits the final text and abstract to the dedicated LMS module and to the supervisor for feedback no later than the date stipulated in these Guidelines. The supervisor shall prepare her written feedback and submit it to the Study Office within one calendar week from receiving the finalized thesis.
22. **Uploading the thesis to the *AntiPlagiat* system.** All students shall upload electronic copies (not scans) of their theses to the dedicated LMS module for term papers and theses which will automatically forward them to the *AntiPlagiat* system. If instances of plagiarism are uncovered in the thesis, the 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).
23. **Submitting the final version of the thesis.** By the deadline set in these Guidelines and the Directive listing the approved thesis titles, and no later than two weeks before the thesis

defence, students submit one copy of the final version of the thesis in hardcopy to the Study Office. They shall attach to it:

- the thesis abstracts (in Russian and in English),
- the academic supervisor's feedback (in the template form provided in Annex 6 below, evaluating the paper according to the criteria established for assessment of term papers and theses provided in these Guidelines),
- a certificate from the *Antiplagiat* system.

24. **Reviewing the thesis.** A reviewer is appointed from among the University's academic staff. A reviewer may also be an employee of another university or an organisation whose professional focus matches the topic of the thesis.
25. A reviewer is proposed by the Programme's Academic Director and appointed by the Dean no later than one month before the scheduled defence. The Dean's decision shall state the student's full name, thesis topic, and information about the reviewer (full name, academic degree, academic title, employer, position).
26. The reviewer analyses the main ideas of the thesis under review, and assesses how well the methods are applied, how grounded the findings are, if the research design corresponds to the research question, and how original and practically significant the presented findings are. Appendix 6 contains a review template form to be filled out by the reviewer.
27. The Study Office shall forward each thesis for review within 3 calendar days from its receipt. The reviewer shall prepare a review in writing and submit it to the Study Office at least 6 calendar days before the defence.
28. The Study Office shall communicate the content of the review to the student at least 5 calendar days before the defence, so that the student has an opportunity to prepare a response to the reviewer's comments.
29. The thesis, the academic supervisor's feedback, and reviewer's opinion(s) shall be submitted to the State Examination Committee no later than 2 calendar days before the thesis defence.
30. **The thesis defence** procedure shall be set forth by the Regulations for the Final State Certification of Students of the BA, Specialist and MA Level at National Research University Higher School of Economics.

## SUPERVISION OF TERM PAPERS AND THESES

### Term Paper Supervision

31. The academic supervisor appointed by the Campus Director shall oversee the preparation of the student's term paper.
32. The academic supervisor can be replaced, and an additional adviser of the term paper can be appointed by the Campus Director at the student's request and upon approval by the current academic supervisor, the new academic supervisor and the Academic Director of the Programme no later than 1 month before the deadline for submission of the final version of the term paper.

### Thesis Supervision

33. The academic supervisor appointed by the Campus Director shall oversee the preparation of the student's final thesis.
34. Thesis supervisors are appointed from among the University's faculty (from among full-time associate professors, professors, and research fellows).
35. The academic supervisor can be replaced, and an adviser of the thesis can be appointed by the Campus Director at the student's request and upon approval by the current academic supervisor, the new academic supervisor and the Academic Director of the Programme no later than 1 month before the deadline for submission of the final version of the thesis.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TERM PAPERS AND THESES: WORD COUNT AND CONTENT

36. Usually the research projects shall be carried out within one academic year, otherwise it is recommended to divide the research process into several stages, so that it could be completed by the time of the thesis defence.
37. If a student opts to continue the work that he/she did in the previous years, the text of the term paper and the thesis can include references to the previous student's term papers. However, word-for-word borrowing of entire paragraphs or chapters from the previous term papers are considered unacceptable and shall be qualified as resubmitting the same paper, as defined by the HSE Regulations on Checking Student Papers for Plagiarism. In exceptional cases, students are entitled to ask for the academic supervisor's permission to use small excerpts from their previous term papers, but such excerpts cannot reproduce a whole paragraph or a chapter. Upon approval of the academic supervisor, small excerpts borrowed from a previously submitted term paper and properly formatted as quotations (with quotation marks and followed by a reference), shall not be regarded as self-plagiarism.
38. The structure of the term papers and theses includes the front page, two abstracts (in Russian and English), the table of contents, the introduction, the main body, the conclusion, bibliography and related annexes (if any).
  - Annex 3 contains a sample front page of a term paper / thesis.
  - The table of contents shall be automatically generated in Microsoft Word or any other word processor of student's choice.
  - The introduction shall define the main idea and the research design of the study.
  - The results of the theoretical analysis and empirical research, as well as the above-mentioned elements of a research project, shall be presented in the main body of the paper. Each chapter and paragraph shall include fundamental ideas, followed by a description of findings and a summary. Key theoretical statements, underlying each conclusion, shall be substantiated with references to the scholarly works and experts' opinions, as well as statistical data and findings of sociological polls, following the applicable standards. Students can refer to their own practical experience.
  - Research findings shall be summarized in the conclusion of the term paper / thesis. It is of utmost importance that such research findings shall correspond to the paper's objectives, provide solutions to the key research problem(s) and thereby achieve the stated research goal. The conclusion can also include proposals as to how the topic of the term paper / thesis can be developed further on.
  - The bibliography includes all legislative acts, research papers, specialized publications and other sources used while preparing and writing term papers and theses and referenced in the text. The bibliography prepared by the second-year students shall consist of at least **20 academic items** (monographs and scholarly articles); by the third-year students – at least **25 academic items**; by the fourth-year students – at least **35 academic items**. Academic sources in Russian may account for up to a half of the total number of academic items in the bibliography. It is recommended to refrain from including textbooks and teaching aids in the bibliography.
  - If students fail to comply with the minimal requirements established for the number of the bibliography items as specified in item No. 38/6, one point (based on a 10-point grading scale) shall be deducted from their final grade for every two items<sup>1</sup> absent in the bibliography.

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<sup>1</sup> One point is deducted for 1-2 missing items, two points for 3-4 missing items, three points for 5-6 missing items, four points for 7-8 missing items, five points for 9-10, six points for 11-12 missing items, seven points for 13-14 missing items, eight points for 15-16 missing items, nine points for 17-18 missing items, ten points for 19-20 missing items.

- The failure to comply with the requirements in item No. 38/6 has to be stated by the academic supervisor of the paper in her written feedback while points are deducted from the final grade for the paper (the one given to the paper after the defence in the case of third-year papers and BA theses).
  - Annexes shall be used if the author uses a large body of 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 in annexes.
39. The word count of term papers and theses is defined as follows:
- 2nd year of study: 40,000 up to 60,000 characters with spaces (including all elements of the term paper, mentioned above, except annexes).
  - 3rd year of study: 60,000 up to 80,000 characters with spaces (including all term paper elements, mentioned above, except annexes).
  - 4th year of study (thesis): at least 90,000 characters with spaces (including all paper elements, mentioned above, except annexes).
  - If a second or third-year student fails to comply with the above-mentioned requirements for the term paper word count, one point (based on a 10-point grading scale) will be deducted from their final grade for every 5,000 characters (spaces included) missing or in excess.<sup>2</sup>
  - The failure to comply with the requirements in item No. 39/1-3 has to be stated by the academic supervisor of the paper in her written feedback while points are deducted from the final grade for the paper (the one given to the paper after the defence in the case of third-year papers).
40. Narrative style. A term paper and thesis shall follow the terminology accepted in the relevant field, as well as notations, applicable abbreviations and symbols. The author of the term paper / thesis shall stick to the academic style of presentation and focus reader's attention on the issue under consideration. Journalistic clichés, slang, terms and expressions, which are typically not used in academic literature, as well as words with diminutive suffixes, shall be avoided. Research papers shall be free of excessive expression of emotion, as well as populist and political slogans, accusations and emotional assessments.

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

41. The term papers and theses shall be prepared electronically and typewritten using Times New Roman 12 font size (footnotes shall 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 shall be prepared using the template form provided in these Guidelines (Annex 3). Abstracts, up to 1.5 page in length, in Russian and in English shall follow the front page.
42. All pages shall be consecutively numbered in the page header in the centre of the page, starting from the second page (the front page is left unnumbered). Page numbers shall be provided for all elements of the Table of Contents (chapters, sections, etc.). The consecutive numbering shall be used for all tables and figures. Tables and figures shall be titled.
43. 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 sections 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 shall not be used. Arabic numbers shall be used for chapter numbering; a dot shall be placed after the figure with a space before the chapter title. Titles of all main parts of the paper and page

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<sup>2</sup> One point is deducted for 1 – 5000 characters, two points for 5001 – 10 000 characters, three points for 10 001 – 15 000 characters, four points for 15 001 – 20 000 characters, five points for 20 001 – 25 000 characters, six points for 25 001 – 30 000 characters, seven points for 30 001 – 35 000 characters, eight points for 35 001 – 40 000 characters, nine points for 40 001 – 45 000 characters, ten points for 45 001 – 50 000 characters.

numbering in the text shall be reflected in the table of contents. Headings shall be highlighted in semi-bold.

44. The text alignment throughout the paper shall be justified, including footnotes. References to the sources cited shall be provided as footnotes placed in page footer.
45. If there is a reference to personal names (of scholars, researchers, experts), their initials shall precede the last name (i.e. V.M. Petrov, rather than Petrov V.M., as is customary for the bibliography).
46. Each annex shall start from a new page with the word “Annex” given in the upper right corner, above the title. The main body of the text shall correlate with annexes via links. Annexes shall retain continuous numbering of pages, originating from the main text.
47. If a student uses quotations, excerpts from documents, research monographs, reference books or statistical data in the paper with the aim of supporting their own ideas and conclusions, relevant references to the sources shall be given. For the papers written in Russian the GOST Footnotes referencing style shall be used. For the papers written in English the Chicago Manual of Style (17<sup>th</sup> edition) Full Footnotes Style shall be used. If the source is quoted verbatim, the author shall provide the material ‘as it is’, with quotation marks and a full reference. References shall also be provided if somebody’s opinion is paraphrased (even 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).
48. If the paper is based on a large body of academic literature, the bibliography can be subdivided into several parts, including: legislative acts and official documents; specialized literature, e.g., monographs, research articles, publications in periodicals, etc. Sources in Russian shall be listed first and are to be followed by materials in foreign languages. All papers included in the list are given in alphabetical order (by the author’s surname), with full details of the publication provided. If the author’s name is not 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 legislative documents shall be compiled in chronological order based on the legal effect of the documents (international enactments are given first and are to be followed by the federal constitutional and federal laws, legislation of constituent bodies, and bylaws). If electronic sources are used, the student shall indicate the title of the relevant material, the source, and the electronic address (URL) with the access date. The bibliography shall be comprised of only those papers and sources to which the student has made references to in the footnotes.

## CRITERIA FOR THE TERM PAPERS’ AND BA THESES’ ASSESSMENT

49. The following criteria shall be used for assessment of term papers prepared by the second-year students:
  - correspondence between the topic (title), the goal, objectives, content and conclusions of the paper;
  - justification of the literature selection: does the student justify the way literature is picked for the review? How good is this justification?
  - coverage of the review and its analytic depth: the number of papers reviewed; balance in their selection;
  - orientation within the broader literature and the relevant ongoing academic debates; representation of different views within the field;
  - coherence of the structure of the paper and its correspondence to the state of the art within the subfield and/or issue area reviewed;
  - logical reasoning in building connections within the argument, as well as in the student’s writing, reliability and accuracy of conclusions;

- the extent to which the literature review results in the student asking interesting (puzzling) and academically relevant research questions related to the field reviewed, and reveals the gaps in the literature;
- conformity with requirements for the formatting, citation rules, as well as bibliographical references and lists.

50. The following criteria shall be used for assessment of term papers by third-year students, and final theses:

- explanation and substantiation of the research puzzle by the student;
- justification of the puzzle's relevance to the state of the art in the field, and its connection to the academic debate;
- correspondence between the topic (title), research goal, objectives, content and empirical findings (conclusions) of the paper: does the paper answer the research question?
- breadth and coverage of the literature review and its analytic depth: the number of papers reviewed; quality of conclusions; explication of the logic underlying the selection of the sources;
- ability to use theoretical concepts for building theoretical and methodological research framework, as well as formulating the research expectations and/or hypotheses (if a research question requires them);
- effective use of methods for data collection and analysis;
- the structure of the paper, logical reasoning in building connections within the argument and between different parts of the paper; reliability and accuracy of the findings;
- conformity with requirements for the formatting, citation rules, as well as bibliographical references and lists.
- defence: the presentation (content of oral and visual presentation, availability of handouts and illustrations), adequate answers to the reviewer's and committee members' questions and comments, using relevant political science terminology.

## RULES FOR TERM PAPERS EVALUATION

51. The grade for term papers prepared by the second-year students shall be assigned by the academic supervisor alone, based on the submitted text, without a review or public defence. In addition to the grade, the academic supervisor shall prepare a detailed feedback regarding the student's term paper, which shall be submitted to the Study Office by the deadline defined in these Guidelines, after the final version of the paper has been submitted by the student.
52. The grade for term papers prepared by the third-year students shall be based on the grade by academic supervisor (the grade will follow from his/her detailed feedback), the grade by the reviewer (substantiated in the reviewer's review), and the grade by the defence committee. The grade will be calculated as an average of the three grades as follows:  $(G_{\text{supervisor}} + G_{\text{reviewer}} + G_{\text{committee}}) / 3$ . If the supervisor's and the reviewer's grades differ by four points or more (e.g., 10 and 6, 9 and 5, etc.), the grade is entirely determined by the defence committee.
53. The academic supervisor's feedback shall be submitted to the Study Office after the submission of the 3-year term paper by the student, no later than the date set by the Academic Director of the Programme.
54. In order to maintain a high quality of the third-year term papers, the Academic Director of the Programme initiates and coordinates the preparation of reviews for the term papers written by the third-year students. To this end, the Academic Director shall appoint reviewers from among the faculty of the degree programme.



55. Reviews of the third-year term papers shall be provided by the reviewers to the Study Office after the submission of the final text by the student, no later than the date set by the Academic Director of the Programme.
56. The Study Office shall communicate the content of the academic supervisor's feedback and the reviewer's review to the student no later than 24 hours before the third-year term paper defence starts.

Guidelines for Preparation and Defence of Term Papers and Theses  
written by the students of the BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics

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

STAGES OF TERM PAPER PREPARATION	DEADLINES
<b>Second-year undergraduate students</b>	
Students negotiate their topics with prospective supervisors; supervisors submit the negotiated topics through the LMS by September 30 the latest.	September 7 – September 30
The list of the negotiated topics submitted to the LMS is preapproved by the Academic Director of the Programme.	October 1 – October 14
Students fill out an electronic request to assign them an initially negotiated topic from the list of the preapproved topics in the LMS; consequently supervisors agree to the students' selection via the LMS.	October 15 – November 15
If a student and a supervisor have managed to agree on the topic only after September 30 (and as a result, a supervisor has not submitted the negotiated topic to the LMS by September 30), the student has to propose the negotiated topic and to pick an academic supervisor at her own initiative; consequently supervisors agree to the students' selection via the LMS.	October 15 – November 15
Topics of term papers and their academic supervisors shall be assigned to students upon the decision of the Academic Board of the Programme. If the Academic Board finds that some of the topics need adjustments, the Academic Director and the Deputy Director contact the respective supervisors with a request to introduce necessary adjustments.	November 16 – November 30
The Study Office prepares and issues a directive on assigning the topics of term papers.	December 1 – December 15
A term paper topic can be revised.	Up to February 17
The students work on the term paper and communicate with the academic supervisors	November 16 – April 4
Deadline for online submission of the final version of the term paper via the LMS	April 5
The academic supervisor writes a detailed feedback on the student's term paper and enters the grade in the examination record sheet.	April 6 – April 16 Grades shall be added to the examination record sheet no later than April 16

<b>Third-year undergraduate students</b>	
Students negotiate their topics with prospective supervisors; supervisors submit the negotiated topics through the LMS by September 30 the latest.	September 7 – September 30
The list of the negotiated topics submitted to the LMS is preapproved by the Academic Director of the Programme.	October 1 – October 14
Students fill out an electronic request to assign them an initially negotiated topic from the list of the preapproved topics in the LMS; consequently supervisors agree to the students' selection via the LMS.	October 15 – November 15
If a student and a supervisor have managed to agree on the topic only after September 30 (and as a result, a supervisor has not submitted the negotiated topic to the LMS by September 30), the student has to propose the negotiated topic and to pick an academic supervisor at her own initiative; consequently supervisors agree to the students' selection via the LMS.	October 15 – November 15
Topics of term papers and their academic supervisors shall be assigned to students upon the decision of the Academic Board of the Programme. If the Academic Board finds that some of the topics need adjustments, the Academic Director and the Deputy Director contact the respective supervisors with a request to introduce necessary adjustments.	November 16 – November 30
The Study Office prepares and issues a directive on assigning the topics of term papers.	December 1 – December 15
A term paper topic can be revised.	Up to March 26
The students work on the term paper and communicate with the academic supervisors	November 16 – May 10
Deadline for online submission of the final version of the term paper via the LMS.	May 11
The Study Office forwards term papers to reviewers who prepare their reviews. Academic supervisors write their feedbacks. Reviews and feedback shall be sent to the Study Office and the students by reviewers and academic supervisors no later than 24 hours before the defence starts.	May 12 – May 23
Defences take place, and the committees grade the term papers.	May 24 – May 29

Table 1

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

Stage of preparation	Subdivision/person responsible for the given stage	Deadlines
Students negotiate their topics with prospective supervisors; supervisors submit the negotiated topics through the LMS by September 30 the latest.	Students, supervisors	September 7 – September 30
The list of the negotiated topics submitted to the LMS is preapproved by the Academic Director of the Programme.	Academic Director / Deputy Director	October 1 – October 14
Students fill out an electronic request to assign them an initially negotiated topic from the list of the preapproved topics in the LMS; consequently supervisors agree to the students' selection via the LMS.	Students, supervisors	October 15 – October 22
If a student and a supervisor have managed to agree on the topic only after September 30 (and as a result, a supervisor has not submitted the negotiated topic to the LMS by September 30), the student has to propose the negotiated topic and to pick an academic supervisor at her own initiative; consequently supervisors agree to the students' selection via the LMS.	Students, supervisors	October 15 – October 22
<b>Deadline for choosing the thesis topic by the student in the LMS</b>	Students	<b>No later than October 22</b> of the ongoing academic year
Preparation by the student of her thesis research proposal which is submitted to her academic supervisor via e-mail, and to the 4 <sup>th</sup> year Research Seminar instructors via the LMS	Students, supervisors, 4 <sup>th</sup> year Research Seminar instructors	<b>No later than November 16</b> of the ongoing academic year
<b>Defence of the thesis research proposals at the meeting of the committee,</b> comprised of the academic supervisor, the 4 <sup>th</sup> year RS instructors and a member of the Academic Board of the Programme	Students, supervisors, 4 <sup>th</sup> -year Research Seminar instructors, members of the Academic Board of the Programme	November 17 – 24

<b>Revising the wording of the topic, in case a relevant decision has been made by the committee</b> (the revised topic shall be forwarded for approval to the members of the committee via e-mail)	Students, supervisors, committee members	<b>Within 2 working days</b> after the defence of the thesis research proposal
Approval of the revised topics of the theses by the committee members	Supervisors, committee members	Within 3 working days upon submission of the revised topics
The 4 <sup>th</sup> year Research Seminar instructors submit the list of the approved thesis topics to the Academic Director of the Programme	4 <sup>th</sup> year Research Seminar instructors	No later than December 2 of the ongoing academic year
Assigning thesis topics and their academic supervisors to the students, and issuance of the directive by the Study Office	Academic Board, Study Office	The Academic Board approves the decision on assigning thesis topics and supervisors – <b>no later than December 5.</b> The directive shall be issued <b>no later than December 15</b> of the ongoing academic year
<b>Revising / rephrasing the thesis topic</b> (on the basis of the student's request approved by the academic supervisor and the Academic Director of the Programme)	Student, supervisors, Academic Director, Study Office	<b>No later than April 5</b> of the ongoing academic year

### STAGES OF THESIS PREPARATION

Stage	Parties involved in the thesis preparation	Deadlines
Submitting the first draft of the thesis to the supervisor	Students, supervisors	No later than April 17
Revising and finalizing the thesis	Students, supervisors	No later than May 16
<b>Uploading the final version of the thesis to the LMS</b> (via the dedicated LMS module).	Student	<b>No later than May 17</b>
Submission of the supervisor's feedback on the thesis to the Study Office	Supervisors, Study Office	No later than May 23
<b>Submitting a printed version of the thesis to the Study Office, along with the academic supervisor's feedback and a confirmation from the <i>Antiplagiat</i> system (plagiarism check)</b>	Student, Study Office	<b>No later than May 24</b>
<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> The reviewer's appointment on the basis of a relevant directive	Supervisors, reviewers, Academic Director of the Programme, Study Office	April 12 – May 9
<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> The thesis is sent to the reviewer	Study Office, reviewers	May 18 – May 20
<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> A review is submitted	Reviewers, Study Office	No later than June 2
<b>Reviewing the thesis:</b> Notifying the student of the review's content	Study Office, students	<b>No later than June 3</b>
<b>Thesis defence</b>	Student, supervisors, reviewers, State Qualification Exam (SQE) board	Deadline shall be set forth in the SQE schedule as per the Regulations for the Final State Certification of Students of the Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Level Programmes at National Research University Higher School of Economics

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY  
HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies  
Programme in Political Science and World Politics

The author's full name

**TERM PAPER/THESIS TITLE**

Term paper / Thesis

in the field of study 41.03.04 'Political Science'

Reviewer  
Doctor of .... Sciences, Professor

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Initials and Last name

Academic supervisor  
Doctor of .... Sciences, Professor

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

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Initials and Last name

Saint Petersburg 202\_

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics

**Academic supervisor's feedback**

**2-nd year** student of the BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics of the St.  
Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies

Full name

Topic:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Academic supervisor's comments
1.	Correspondence between the topic (title), the goal, objectives, content and conclusions of the paper	
2.	Justification of the literature selection: Does the student justify the way literature is picked for the review? How good is this justification?	
3.	Coverage of the review and its analytic depth: the number of papers reviewed; balance in their selection	
4.	Orientation within the broader literature and the relevant ongoing academic debates; representation of different views within the field	
5.	Coherence of the structure of the paper and its correspondence to the state of the art within the subfield and/or issue area reviewed	
6.	Logical reasoning in building connections within the argument, as well as in the student's writing, reliability and accuracy of conclusions	
7.	The extent to which the literature review results in the student asking interesting (puzzling) and academically relevant research questions related to the field reviewed, and reveals the gaps in the literature	
8.	Conformity with requirements for the formatting, citation rules, as well as bibliographical references and lists	



9.	Conformity with the formal requirements with regard to the number of academic sources (no fewer than <b>20</b> academic items) and the word count (from <b>40,000 to 60,000</b> characters with spaces for the whole piece)	
10.	<b>Recommended grade for the term paper</b>	

Other comments

Academic Supervisor

academic degree, academic title

department/subdivision

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

Date

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics

**Academic supervisor's feedback**

**3-rd year** student of the BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics of the St.  
Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies

Full name

Topic:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Academic supervisor's comments
1.	The degree to which the paper achieves the main goal	
2.	Quality of the actual writing of the paper (as compared to the general level), how well and accurate the argument is formulated	
3.	Reliability of results / findings and how well the empirical part is implemented	
4.	Evaluation of the student's diligence demonstrated while preparing the paper (communication with the academic supervisor, independent work, response to recommendations and comments)	
5.	Dynamics of development of the student's competencies while preparing the paper	
6.	Conformity with the formal requirements with regard to the number of academic sources (no fewer than <b>25</b> academic items) and the word count (from <b>60,000 to 80,000</b> characters with spaces for the whole piece)	
7.	<b>Academic supervisor's grade</b>	

Academic Supervisor

academic degree, academic title

department/subdivision

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

Date

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics

**Academic supervisor's feedback**

**4-th year** student of the BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics of the St.  
Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies

Full name

Topic:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Academic supervisor's comments
1.	Explanation and substantiation of the research puzzle by the student	
2.	Justification of the puzzle's relevance to the state of the art in the field, and its connection to the academic debate;	
3.	Correspondence between the topic (title), research goal, objectives, content and empirical findings (conclusions) of the paper: Does the paper answer the research question?	
4.	Breadth and coverage of the literature review and its analytic depth: the number of papers reviewed; quality of conclusions; explication of the logic underlying the selection of the sources	
5.	Ability to use theoretical concepts for building theoretical and methodological research framework, as well as formulating the research expectations and/or hypotheses (if a research question requires them)	
6.	Effective use of methods for data collection and analysis	
7.	Structure of the paper, logical reasoning in building connections within the argument and between different parts of the paper;	

	reliability and accuracy of the findings	
8.	Conformity with requirements for the formatting, citation rules, as well as bibliographical references and lists	
9.	Conformity with the formal requirements with regard to the number of academic sources (no fewer than <b>35</b> academic items) and the word count (no fewer than <b>90,000</b> characters with spaces for the whole piece)	
10.	<b>Recommended grade for the thesis</b>	

Other comments

Academic Supervisor

academic degree, academic title

department/subdivision

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

Date

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies**  
BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics

**Review**

**3-rd year / 4-th year** student of the BA Programme in Political Science and World Politics of the  
St. Petersburg School of Social Sciences and Area Studies

Full name

Topic:

No.	Evaluation criteria	Reviewer's comments
1.	Explanation and substantiation of the research puzzle by the student	
2.	Justification of the puzzle's relevance to the state of the art in the field, and its connection to the academic debate;	
3.	Correspondence between the topic (title), research goal, objectives, content and empirical findings (conclusions) of the paper: Does the paper answer the research question?	
4.	Breadth and coverage of the literature review and its analytic depth: the number of papers reviewed; quality of conclusions; explication of the logic underlying the selection of the sources	
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7.	Structure of the paper, logical reasoning in building connections within the argument and between different parts of the paper;	

	reliability and accuracy of the findings	
8.	Conformity with requirements for the formatting, citation rules, as well as bibliographical references and lists	
9.	<b>Recommended grade for the term paper / thesis</b>	

Other comments

Reviewer

academic degree, academic title

department/subdivision

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

Date