WRITING GUIDELINES
FOR
FIRST-YEAR PAPER
(MASTER OF ARTS THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL)
MA PROGRAMME IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL HISTORY

1.   GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1.   The first-year paper of the MA Programme Global and Regional History is a presentation of a MA student's research project that reflects the first year of work towards the MA Thesis (Dissertation) and represents a detailed MA Research Proposal. The first year paper is the same as the MA thesis research proposal.

1.2. The research problematic of each first-year paper must fall within be relevant to the corresponding degree programme

1.3. It According to the program's curriculum the first year paper submission falls on Module 4 during the 1ˢᵗ academic year. The first year paper has a value of 6 ECTS. According to the HSE regulations the first year paper's supervisor marks it. The oral defence of this paper is at the discretion of the Programme Academic Supervisor.

1.4.   First year paper is completed in English or Russian.

1.5. Students attend the Research Seminar (НИС) during Module 1-4 of the 1st academic year, where they discuss their research projects, work out the subject of MA thesis and get regular feedback on their progress from his instructor and peers.

2.   SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF FIRST YEAR PAPER TOPICS

1.   The faculty of the Department of History may develop a provisional list of first year paper topics or research areas. HSE academic staff outside the Department of History and potential employers may also propose topics and research areas. The Programme Office collects all these and publishes this information along with the Guidelines for preparation and processing the first year papers on the programme website.

2.   It is however chiefly the students' own initiative to propose the paper topic although they can also choose one of the topics from the above list. Students choose any member of the faculty of the Programme as their first year paper supervisor, subject to this member's consent.

3.   First-year paper topic proposals are to include
- Topic of the first year paper formulated as as a concise and clear title;
- First-year paper supervisor (full name, position, academic degree, place of employment);
- Year of study for which the given topic or research area is intended.

4.   First year paper topic proposals are submitted to the LMS system. Deadlines for this as well as other relevant dates for their preparation, writing, submission and the defence are listed at the bottom section #12 'Calendar of deadlines'.

5.   This topic is tentative and may be subject to change throughout the academic year. There is however a fixed deadline after which the topic as well as the paper supervisor cannot de changed (see also section #12 'Calendar of deadlines'). After this deadline the paper topic is considered 'final'.

6. The list of first year paper topics and supervisors must be finalised by the Academic Council. Some first year paper topics may be declined by the Academic Council if they are not suited to the MA field of study, purposes of a first-year paper or the level of complexity. In this case, the Academic Council must also provide a justification for its decision and recommendations on how to adjust the topic.

7. The Programme Office must notify students and their supervisors if their first year paper topic was declined within one business day from such decision.

8. Students may submit a new request for the first year paper topic to the Programme Office. The Academic Council must approve the final list of first year paper topics and supervisors no later than 5 working days after supervisor's approval.

9. Upon the approval of the chosen topic by the Academic Council of the Master's program, the program manager issues an order on the topic and supervisor for each student.

10. If students fail to choose a first year paper topic by the deadline, or if their topic is declined by the Academic Council, they are facing academic failure. Such students may select their first year paper topic during the extension period – from the start of the Module 3 to the end of the retake period for Modules 1 and 2. If the new topic is selected on time and approved by the Academic Council, academic failure is waived.

3. FIRST YEAR PAPER SUPERVISION

3.1. First year paper supervisors are approved by the Academic Council together with the paper topics.

3.2. First year paper supervisors have the following duties:

- Regularly meet with students checking their academic progress (online or in person, with regular email being also a possibility);

- Advise students on shaping the final topic of their first year paper, drafting first year paper outline and preparation schedule, and selecting scholarly literature and resources;

- Help students develop an appropriate research methodology;

- Monitor the progress of first year paper preparation;

- Notify the Head of Programme and Program Office if students are behind the schedule;

- Provide students with informed recommendations on the content of their first year papers;

3.3. First year paper supervisors are entitled to

- Select a suitable mode of interaction with students, in particular, agree on the first year paper preparation schedule and the frequency of meetings with students or other communications;

- Request that students prepare and present a brief summary of the received recommendations and further steps in first year paper preparation after each face-to-face meeting;

- Request that students pay close attention to the received recommendations and come to meetings well-prepared

- Take into account compliance with the preparation schedule when grading student first year papers.

3.4. Supervisors assess quality of first year papers against fixed requirements. They must fill in a special form where they put their review and grade for the first year paper.

3.5. First year paper supervisors must draw up an official memorandum to notify the Head of Programme of plagiarism and any other violations of academic code of ethics committed by students.

4. CHANGING FIRST YEAR PAPER TOPIC AND SUPERVISOR

4.1. Requests to change the first year paper supervisor signed by both former and future supervisors and addressed to the Program Academic Head may be submitted to the Program Office no later than by 15 April.

4.2. Requests to change the first year paper topic and title signed by the supervisor may be submitted to the Program Office no later than one month before the submission of the first year paper for the defence.

4.2. Changing first year paper topics or supervisors must be authorised by the Head of Programme.

5. FIRST YEAR PAPER PREPARATION RESTRICTIONS

5.1. Students prepare first year papers as prescribed by these guidelines.

5.2. Students comply with the first year paper preparation schedule developed and finalised together with their supervisors.

5.3. First year papers are not subject to external review. They are marked by the First Year Examination Committee that consults the report by MA student's supervisor.

5.4. Failure to complete a first year paper by the fixed deadline constitutes academic failure that can be remedied following the procedures established at HSE.

6. FIRST YEAR PAPER CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

6.1. The length of the first year paper should be between 40000 and 90000 characters (with spaces)

6.2. It should be based on Chicago reference style for footnotes and bibliography (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

6.3. Historical sources should be accurately cited; anthropological sources should be used in accordance with the research ethics guidelines of the American Anthropological Association (http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/).

6.4. The structure of the first year paper's content includes the following main sections:

- Title Page includeing the full title of the first year paper and the student's name, the department and the university, the supervisor's name, the place and the year of submission
  - Abstract of the proposed research is a short summary which reflects its overall scope and importance specifying the explored time and place
  - Section describing the aims & purposes of the proposed research
  - Historiography section
  - Research methodology section
  - Section on MA student background and skills relevant to carrying out the proposed research
  - Concluding section summing up the project's broader contribution
  - proposed MA thesis structure
  - list of sources and bibliography

These sections are put as asking you to address the following questions:

Question 1: Describe the purpose of your research. What will be the focus of your investigation? What is your main research question? What other questions will you need to answer to address it?

The single most important characteristic of a successful proposal is a well-developed research question, hypothesis, or research objective. You should follow these three major guidelines:

1. Narrowly focus you research question, hypothesis, or objective. Ask ″why,″ "how," or ″what″ about an issue of significance to anthropology and/or history. Do not present a vast question as the object of investigation; instead, develop **answerable questions** (or testable hypotheses) in the context of the larger research topic.

2. Do not present your research questions as if the answers were already known. Demonstrate that the proposed research will answer (or test) the question/s (or hypothesis).

3. Be realistic about what you can achieve. Many research project descriptions fail because they claim their research will answer a wide variety of questions without convincing us that their investigation will answer any single one fully and carefully.

Question 2: How does your research draw inspiration from existing scholarship in anthropology, history and other disciplines? Whose findings will you be building on? Give specific examples of the various lines of work with which you are in dialogue and which you are seeking to advance.

This section is also known as "Historiography section" in historical research proposals. It is important to clearly demonstrate that you have a good knowledge of the existing literature, as well as other disciplinary literature, relevant to your topic. Be explicit in showing how your research will draw on — as well as expand on previous work. We prioritise research that is theoretically driven, and Question 2 allows you discuss the broader conversations that have guided you in formulating your research questions. It is not enough to just cite literature in answer to this question. Please provide a clear and comprehensive discussion of the issues at stake and demonstrate both how your work fits into current debates in the field, and what is/will be new or different about your research project.

Question 3: What evidence will you need to collect to answer your research question? How will you go about collecting and analyzing this evidence?

Students are strongly advised to clearly and explicitly demonstrate that the evidence gathered and the analytical procedures proposed will realistically support the research goals expressed in Question 1.

Provide a timeline for your research. Demonstrate that you can complete your planned activities in the allotted time. Come up with a feasible research plan with clearly defined procedures.

If you are planning to conduct the research in phases, provide a timeline and explain why separate trips to the field are necessary.

The Wenner-Gren Foundation and other research funding bodies support projects using all appropriate methods of data collection and analysis commonly employed in anthropology and history, including both qualitative and quantitative methods, laboratory, archival and/or museum research, and fieldwork.

Question 4: How have you prepared yourself to do this research? Describe your language competence, technical skills, previous research, and any other relevant experience. Describe any work you have already done on this project and how this research relates to other research you

have done. You may be working with academic collaborators. If so, please describe their role in this project and how it will relate to yours.

In assessing your project we will pay close attention to your preparation. Do you have the required language skills, relevant expertise and/or have you identified relevant historical archives needed for your project? Have you developed a network of local contacts and/or arranged academic affiliations? Have you already carried out a pilot study? If so, what data/material/results are already available? Have you encountered any safety or access issues related to your research? If so, how will you manage them? What are the ethical issues raised by your research? How will you address them?

If a particular field site or archive is inaccessible for your project, what is you "plan B"? Where will you turn as an alternative?

Question 5: What contribution will your project make to anthropological theory and/or historical research? Please note that our mission is to support innovative research in history and anthropology. We are interested in supporting work that does more than simply add to an existing body of knowledge. Describe how your project will bring new insights to the field as a whole.

A successful research proposal is one that emphasizes the proposed project's contribution not only to the specific area of research being addressed but also to the broader field of anthropology and global history. Be explicit about what your research will add to wider anthropological conversations.

Additional sections:

  (6) Proposed MA thesis structure: what is a tentative content of your future MA thesis?
  (7) List of sources and bibliography of the proposed research.
   This paper should be based on Chicago reference style for footnotes and bibliography (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). Historical sources should be accurately cited; anthropological sources should be used in accordance with the research ethics guidelines of the American Anthropological Association (http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/).

7. FORMATTING

  The first year paper should electronically comply with the requirement of A4 paper size, in Times New Roman 12pt, 1.5 space intervals. Single spacing should be used for block quotations, footnotes, and bibliography. Margins should be 2.5 cm on all sides. Paragraphs should be indented, or an empty line left between paragraphs. Pages should be numbered at the bottom in the centre using Arabic numerals starting with the first page of the first page of the introduction.
  Each chapter should start on a new page.

8. SUBMISSION

  8.1. The students should submit the First year Paper Topic and Supervisor application form to the program manager on the first week of December of the 1st academic year. The form should

indicate the first year paper's title and be signed by the supervisor.

8.2. Students must upload a .doc, .docx or .pdf file with the final text of their first year paper through their personal profiles in the LMS no later than **23:59 of the date indicated in calendar (see below #12)**

8.3. Students must submit a draft of their first year paper to their supervisors ten days before the upload date. Students who fail to do so may receive a fail grade for their first year paper from the supervisor.

8.4. Submission deadlines for first year papers that are subject to defence cannot be extended. Failure to complete a first year paper by the fixed deadline (as per Clause 8.1 or Clause 8.2) constitutes academic failure that can be remedied in autumn of the subsequent academic year, following the procedures established at HSE.

9. REVIEW AND DEFENCE

9.1. First year paper defence normally takes place during the period between 20-30 June.

9.2. Defence dates and Examination Board composition are stipulated by the Head of Programme directive. The defence is held before the Examination Board of at least three faculty members, research fellows or doctoral students of the HSE St Petersburg.

9.3. The Program Office and IT Assistant must provide the Board with at least one paper copy of each student's first year paper and of the review written by the first year paper supervisor. The Board is provided with the version that had been uploaded through the student account in the LMS.

9.4. Each first year paper defence is a public event. The Program Office must publish defence dates on the program website at least one week in advance.

9.5. Results of a first year paper defence are reflected in the Board minutes. Chair of the Board is responsible for the Board's operation and minutes preparation. The Chair is appointed by the Head of Programme jointly with the members of the Academic Council of the Program.

9.6. If students miss their first year paper defence for a valid reason supported by documentary evidence, they will be allowed to defend their first year paper on a different date within the specially designated period.

9.7. Missing first year paper defence without a valid reason supported by documentary evidence is counted as academic failure.

9.8. Students whose supervisor gave their first year paper a fail grade shall not be allowed to proceed to the defence. If a fail grade is received at the defence, no repeat defence shall be held during the current academic year.

9.9. Each first year paper must go through the Antiplagiat (Антиплагиат) system pursuant to the *Procedures for Using Antiplagiat System for Collection and Checks of Academic Papers at HSE*. First year paper supervisors will be notified of the outcome of such checks and must take them into account when grading the first year papers. First year paper supervisors grade the version that was uploaded through the student account in the LMS.

9.10. If plagiarism is discovered in a first year paper, it is handled in accordance with the *Procedures for Applying Disciplinary Measures for the Violation of Academic Standards for Student Papers at HSE*.

10. GRADING, RE-EXAMINATION AND APPEAL

10.1. The grade is made up by the first year paper Examination Board in consultation with the grade of the thesis supervisor and taking into account performance at the oral defence of the first year paper. During oral defence of the first year paper the student is tested on the depth and scope of the proposal and as well as on the feasibility of the project in terms of

relevant archival, oral historical and ethnographic sources, and necessary technical as well as linguistic skills of the student. Marking criteria (see 10.8 below) apply both to the proposal's text and to the oral defence.

10.2. The first year paper's supervisor assesses the coursework on a ten-point scale. The Examination Board takes this grade into account but is not bound by it. To receive credit for the paper, students should be awarded a grade of at least 4 on a ten- point scale.

10.3. Students are considered to have failed their first year paper if they receive a fail grade after the defence or after a review by their supervisor.

10.4. Final grades for first year papers are entered into student performance records by respective supervisors in the end of June.

10.5. Students may access the grades and reviews of their first year papers through the account in the LMS or at the Program Office.

10.6. In the case where the paper is graded less than 4 on a ten-point scale the student will not get ECTS's awarded. The student is expected to resubmit the work in the next module. The paper topic can be modified upon consultation of the coursework supervisor and Head of Programme. In order to change the topic student must submit a new request signed by their first year paper supervisor and addressed to the Head of Programme before the end of the current academic year. The student may resubmit the first-year paper for new exam only once.

10.7. The student may contest the grades for the paper following the general appeal procedures. The student may file an appeal to the academic supervisor of the program within 3 working days upon receiving the grades with detailed grounds for appeal. The appeal committee will make a decision within 3 working days.

10.8. **First-year paper marking criteria:**

A grade will normally be assigned for a combination of reasons and the final grade is based therefore on the overall impression rather than on isolated features, and on both the text of the first year paper and its oral defence. The main categories are represented below.

10 - no errors were made in the work. The paper substantiated all relevant statements and argument. The work contains an literature relevant to the argument posed.

9 - no errors were made. The paper substantiated all relevant statements, formulated all necessary clear, concise, and logically connected assertions that support the author's argument. The paper contains an analysis of self-researched literature relevant to the argument posed.

8 - no errors were made in the essay. The paper substantiated all relevant statements, formulated all necessary clear, concise, and logically connected assertions that support the author's argument.

7 - no factual or methodological errors were made in the essay. The paper substantiated all relevant statements, formulated all necessary clear, concise, and logically connected assertions that support the author's argument but contains a minor amount of technical or linguistic errors.

6 – there are one or two factual or methodological errors in the essay. The paper substantiated all relevant statements, formulated all necessary clear, concise, and logically connected assertions that

support the author's argument. The paper contains a minor technical or linguistic errors.

5- there are one or two factual or methodological errors in the essay. The essay does not fully substantiate all meaningful assertions, or inconsistently formulates all the author's argument. Contains a minor amount of technical or linguistic errors.

4- there are one or two factual or methodological errors in the paper. It does not fully substantiate its assertions, or inconsistently formulates all the necessary statements to support the author's argument. Contains a significant amount of technical or linguistic errors.

3 - there are more than two factual or methodological errors in the paper. The work does not fully substantiate all its assertions, or inconsistently formulates all the author's argument. Limited use of literature; and a significant amount of technical or linguistic errors.

2- there are more than two factual or methodological errors in the paper. The paper does not fully substantiate its assertions, or inconsistently formulates its argument. The essay does not contain an analysis of any works and contains a significant amount of technical or linguistic errors.

1- the paper contains a significant amount of factual or methodological errors does not substantiate its assertions, or inconsistently formulates the author's argument. Does not contain an analysis of any works and shows a significant amount of technical or linguistic errors.

0- The first year paper does not have a central research question. It shows poor knowledge of the scholarly context and little evidence of independent thought. The research proposed is superficial, unsystematic, and shows little effort.

11. FIRST YEAR PAPER STORAGE

The Study Office of the Master's program stores copies of the first year paper for 2 years (either in the form of hard copies or electronic files).

12. CALENDAR OF DEADLINES

7 November	Submission of first-year-paper topics via the LMS system for formal approval by supervisor (the topic as well as supervisor can be changed any time before 9 May - see below)
28 November	Topics are approved by the Academic Council
10 January	**First very short draft version of the MA thesis research proposal (aka First-year paper)** of about 5000 characters/ 800 words -long is submitted to the Research Seminar, with subsequent discussion of these drafts arranged at the agreed time.

25-27 February TBC	Presentation of your thesis project at the HSE Saint Petersburg Winter School
9 May 23.59	Deadline for submitting the request for first-year-paper topic or supervisor change
12 May, 23.59	**Deadline for the fist year paper submission for its pre-defence**
15-21 May (TBC)	**Pre-defence of the fist year paper**
16 June, 23.59	**Deadline for the fist year paper submission to the LMS**
22-26 June	**Defence of the fist year paper paper**