Approved by:

Academic council of the “Global Business” programme

**METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WRITING AND DEFENDING MASTER’S THESIS**

**MAIN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME OF MASTER PROGRAMME – “GLOBAL BUSINESS”**

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These rules present general requirements for writing, formatting and defending Master’s thesis in the field of “Management” 38.04.02 under the “Global Business” Master’s programme.

1. Introduction

These rules have been developed based on the education legislation of the Russian Federation, educational standard of National Research University Higher School of Economics for the field of “Management” 38.04.02 for the Master’s programme, Regulations on Term Papers and Thesis of Students Studying under Bachelor’s, Specialist, and Master’s Programmes at National Research University Higher School of Economics (Minutes No. 08, dated November 28, 2014), Regulations on State Final Certificationof Students of Institutions of Higher Learning, approved by the federal executive body charged with developing state policy and regulations in regards to education, as well as the Concept for the Master’s Programme approved by the Minutes of the Academic Council No. 31, dated December 23, 2011, thereby establishing the procedures for developing, formatting and defending term papers and Master’s thesis for the Master’s programme in “Global Business” 38.04.02 offered by HSE Nizhny Novgorod’s Faculty of Management.

1. General Provisions
   1. The preparation and defense of a Master’s thesis (hereinafter, a “thesis”) is an integral component of State Final Certification of students from the University in line with the HSE ES.
   2. A Master’s thesis is the final research project of an HSE student, on the basis of which the State Examination Board shall decide on awarding a degree in the given field of study and issuing a degree of state-recognized higher education as per the terms for the thesis defense.
   3. A Master’s thesis may be completed by a student either individually or as part of a group (no more than 2 (two) persons) and shall be presented as an independent and logically completed work, which is focused on settling the objectives of a certain type (types) of activity, for which the Student is being trained. The Concept of the Master’s Programme may foresee Master’s thesis in the following formats: academic or project/research (including an integrated business plan):
2. *Academic format -* this is research conducted in order to uncover new information or knowledge about the structure, characteristics and principles of a subject of interest (i.e., phenomenon). This is a traditional research format for Master’s thesis, which should include independent research and a report on its results in the form of a thesis prepared in line with academic writing standards and the University’s internal bylaws. This type of thesis must solve a given problem based on independent research (this may be done using already developed standard methodologies). At the same time, the student must demonstrate his/her ability to select an applicable standard methodology, adapt them to the research objectives or develop their own organizational approach, as well as demonstrate their skills in processing data and producing a fairly in-depth academic interpretation of the given results.

A secondary data analysis may be applied but only if the student has access to databases compiled by other researchers. In addition to the theoretical and research components, a student thesis in the academic format may include a project component, the quality of which should enhance the overall evaluation result of the thesis. However, project proposals must be drawn from the results and conclusions of the research component, primarily, diagnostics of the nature and problems related to the given research subject.

1. *Research project format* – This concerns the development (either on an individual basis or as part of a group) of an applicable problem, resulting in the creation of a certain product (project solution). A thesis should be comprised of a review of a relevant problem/issue within the framework of the given project and a report on the implementation of the project and its results. In addition to the research component, a thesis of this type should feature a project component, which should be performed in an independent manner, feature well-stated, detailed grounds for respective project solutions, the steps and methods for implementing the project, and, if possible, the results of the project’s implementation. A thesis that is considered excellent should have an in-depth, multifaceted basis for the project solutions presented therein, based on an analysis of the actual situation in a given organization and its external environment, as well as an analysis of the organization’s situation and developmental problems based on a broad volume of empirical research.
   1. When composing and defending a thesis, a student should demonstrate his/her abilities and knowledge, relying on one’s in-depth and professional competencies. He/she should independently find an up-to-date, relevant solution to a given professional task, as well as expertly state special information, and provide an academic argument and defend his/her position.
   2. A Master’s thesis shall be written in an English language.
   3. The requirements as to the composition and format of a Master’s thesis, written by a group, should conform to the regular requirements on the writing and format of thesis, if not otherwise stated in these rules.
2. **Goal and Objectives of Completing Master’s Thesis**
   1. The goal of completing Master’s thesis is the systematization, expansion and development of general academic, instrumental, social, cultural and professional competencies through engaging with complex objectives, while also relying on research elements, as well as determining the level of a student’s readiness to engage in both research and practical work.
   2. The main objectives with respect to the completion and defense of thesis include:
      1. expanding upon, systemization and integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills in a given field of study;
      2. developing one’s skills to critically assess and summarize concepts and various points of view on a given topic;
      3. stimulating one’s skills to carry out independent analysis of a given research phenomenon;
      4. applying acquired knowledge in finding solutions to real-life issues related to the given field of study;
      5. developing approaches to rectifying administrative problems, related to the development of new technological innovation in Russia;
      6. presentation of one’s public speaking skills and ability to defend one’ ideas, proposals and recommendations;
      7. presenting the results of work activities in reports, abstracts, and articles written as per relevant requirements, using the latest editing and publishing technologies.
   3. Thesis are meant to deepen a student’s knowledge in regards to respective disciplines that he/she may be studying through theoretical and practical learning, as well as provide them with the skills to independently study subject-based materials and care out research.
3. **Procedure for Writing and Defending Master’s Thesis**
   1. *Developing and Establishing Topics for Master’s Thesis*
      1. In many ways, the selection of a paper’s topic shall determine a student’s success in his/her research. However, a Student’s academic interests still play a major role in selecting a topic, as well as the thoroughness of the given topic in terms of academic works on the subject, the writer’s Bachelor’s thesis, his/her assessment of the possibility of investigating the subject in an in-depth and original manner.

Furthermore, when selecting a topic, the student must pay attention to the fields of interest of the proposed supervisor, as to whether the subject of the research issue coincides or intersects with them, thereby ensuring the most productive partnership possible.

* + 1. A student shall select a the Master’s thesis topic in the second year as per his/her educational programme.
    2. According to Internship programme key deadlines, HSE departments and other academic subdivisions shall confirm the preliminary topics for Master’s thesis, as well as a list of supervisors. This list shall be presented to the Study Office of the educational programme.
    3. It is possible for potential employers to propose Master’s topics.
    4. A list of preliminary topics for Master’s papers, approved by the academic supervisor and academic council of the programme, shall be published by the Study Office on the programme’s website according to Internship programme key deadlines.
    5. Student shall submit an application to the Study Office of the educational programme, cosigned by his/her supervisor, and addressed to the academic supervisor in regards to selecting the Master’s topic. With the approval of the academic supervisor, it is then possible to confirm the topic proposed by the Student.
    6. After a student finishes the selection of the Master’s thesis, the academic supervisory of the programme shall decide on approving the topic, as well as the supervisor for the student.
    7. A directive on the approval of Master’s thesis topic and the deadlines for presenting a final version must be issued no later than December 20 of the current academic year. This directive shall be drawn up by the Study Office of the educational programme as per HSE’s Collection of Standard Directive Templates for Student Affairs, and signed by the director of the relevant subdivision.
    8. Any changes, including clarifications to the subject of Master’s thesis, may be made no later than one calendar month to the date for the presentation of the final version of the paper as stipulated in the relevant directive. Changes to the topic of Master’s thesis shall be made official as per the directive of the relevant branch.
    9. Students who have not selected a Master’s thesis topic within the set deadline shall be deemed as possessing an academic failure. Such a student must eliminate this failure within the timeframe specified by the relevant legislation of the Russian Federation and HSE’s internal bylaws.
  1. *Stages for preparing a Master’s thesis*
     1. **Writing a draft of a Master’s thesis.** At this stage, the student should develop a working hypothesis/concept for their paper, identify a key problem, for which the thesis should propose a solution, as well as propose a structure for the paper.

The student may write up a draft of the thesis during the course of a research seminar and/or individual consultations with his/her supervisors.

A draft of the Master’s thesis shall be evaluated by the thesis supervisor on an “approved/not approved” basis; his/her assessment shall be recorded in the teacher’s work bulletin and/or a special LMS module. The student may revise the draft of the thesis, if it has not received the approval of the supervisor and resubmitted for evaluation (the actual dates for secondary submissions and assessment must be agreed upon with the supervisor, but the recommended one is no later than December 25 of the current academic year). If the thesis draft still has not received approval by the established deadline, the supervisor shall inform the Study Office of the programme of the student’s field of studies.

* + 1. **Presentation of the first draft of the Master’s thesis.** The text of the first draft of the Master’s thesis shall be presented to the supervisor for comments; if necessary, the student shall make changes to the text. The first version of the Master’s thesis shall be submitted according to the deadline specified by supervisor. If the first version of the thesis text has not been submitted, the supervisor shall inform the programme’s Study Office about this.
    2. **The Master’s thesis can be revised, and a final version is written**. At this stage, if necessary, the student shall make corrections to the thesis. Upon completing this, he/she shall present the final version of the Master’s thesis with an annotation to his/her supervisor for feedback. The supervisor must submit his/her feedback on the Master’s thesis to the programme’s Study Office (a sample of supervisor feedback form is presented in App 2).
    3. **The Master’s thesis shall be uploaded to the Antiplagiat system.** Without fail, the student shall upload a version of the Master’s thesis in an unscanned electronic format to a special module for term papers and the thesis section of LMS, after which, the paper shall be automatically submitted by these modules to the Antiplagiat system.

The share of original text in a Master’s thesis should come to at least 80%. If any instance of plagiarism in the document of the is uncovered, the student may be subject to disciplinary measures as per the Procedure for the Application of Disciplinary Sanctions In Case of Violations of Academic Rules in Students’ Papers at HSE (Appendix 2 to HSE’s Rules on Internal Code of Conduct). Furthermore, the inclusion of the previous term paper’s content in the final version of Master’s thesis shall not exceed 50% of the text.

* + 1. **Presentation of the final version of the Master’s thesis to the Study Office.** The student shall submit the final version of the Master’s thesis to the programme’s Study Office in hard copy (total copies – 1) with annotation, along with the supervisor’s feedback, and a certificate/registration form from the Antiplagiat system by the deadline. App 1 presents a sample of a master’s thesis title page.
    2. **Review of a Master’s Thesis**

A reviewer shall be selected from HSE’s teaching and/or research staff. They can also be representatives of another institution of higher education, or employees of other organizations in a relevant professional sphere related to the topic of the thesis.

A directive presented for appointing a reviewer shall be signed by the department’s director and presented to the programme’s academic supervisor no later than one month before the Master’s thesis’ defense date. Such a directive should include the student’s full name, the thesis topic, and information about the reviewer (full name, degrees, academic title, place of work and position).

The reviewer must carry out an expert analysis of the key ideas in the Master’s thesis under review, the student’s ability to apply research/project methodology, the feasibility of the conclusions and recommendations/academic validity of the means used to generate the given results, the solutions presented, their innovative quality and practicality. The reviewer may assess the competencies of the thesis’ author as per the HSE ES. A sample of a reviewer’s feedback form is presented in App 3. The reviewer’s feedback may also be scanned.

A review of a Master’s thesis should be brought to the attention of the student by the Study Office no later than three calendar days prior to the thesis’ defense, so that he/she can prepare responses to any comments in due time.

* + 1. **The defense of a Master’s Thesis** (procedure for conducting a defense) is governed by the Regulations on Term Papers and Master’s Thesis for Bachelor’s, Specialist and Master’s Students of HSE. As per the academic supervisor’s decision, a preliminary defense of a Master’s thesis may be held at the relevant department/faculty.

1. **Overseeing Master’s Thesis**
   1. A supervisor shall directly oversee the development of a student’s Master’s thesis. He/she shall be appointed as per the directive of the relevant subdivision’s director.
   2. A Master’s thesis supervisor is usually an HSE staff member with an academic degree, as well as practical experience in the given sector/subject for at least three years, including working at HSE under terms of secondary employment.
   3. Master’s thesis supervisors may be staff members of an outside organization with practical experience in the relevant field, or experience in an supervisor role, and/or possessing an academic degree indicating his/her professional competency in the given field or sector covered by the thesis, as long as the bulk of the thesis’ composition is carried out at the supervisor’s place of work.
   4. For students who have supervisors who are not HSE staff members, curators from HSE’s staff shall be appointed who are engaged in the implementation of the educational programme. They shall oversee the composition of the thesis and check the student’s adherence to the requirements for its contents and development.
   5. In order to provide consultations, advisers of Master’s thesis from HSE staff members or employees of outside organizations can be appointed, whose professional fields and/or academic interests are related with the given thesis topic. Advisers may hold a consultative vote in the development of a thesis, and are obliged to provide consulting support to the student.
   6. For work, which combines fields of study, up to two advisers may be brought in to assist.
   7. A adviser shall:
      1. consult the student in his/her selection of a research/project methodology, as well as in selecting literature and source materials;
      2. provide the student with recommendations on the Master’s thesis’ contents;
   8. A decision on the need to appoint a adviser(s) shall be made by the academic supervisor of the programme (upon the recommendation of the thesis supervisor and with the approval of the head of the faculty).
   9. The replacement of a supervisor, appointment of advisers and curators of a thesis, shall be approved as per a directive of the subdivision’s director that shall be presented to the Study Office’s academic supervisor.
   10. The supervisor and/or curator of a thesis shall oversee its composition and quality for its subsequent defense, in conjunction with the programme’s Study Office, with respect to the student’s adherence to the deadlines for submitting necessary documentation and fulfilling the steps of the thesis’ development on time.
   11. A thesis’ supervisor may be replaced no later than two months prior to the thesis’ scheduled defense.
   12. A supervisor shall oversee the composition of a thesis, including the following:
       1. Consult the student in deciding on a final thesis topic, preparing a timeframe for the thesis’ completion, including its draft, initial version, as well as selecting literature and source materials;
       2. assist the student in selecting a research/project methodology; work with the student to determine the steps for the thesis’ development;
       3. provide in-depth oversight of the process and quality of the thesis’ development as per its established plan and schedule;
       4. inform the programme’s Study Office if the student fails to follow the thesis’ preparation schedule;
       5. provide the student with recommendations on the thesis’ contents;
       6. provide assessments of the quality of the thesis’ composition in terms of its established requirements (e.g., providing feedback);
       7. approve the information/data included in the thesis, prepared by the student to be posted on HSE’s corporate portal (website) and/or other electronic resources.
   13. The supervisor has the right to:
       1. select an appropriate and comfortable format for both him/her and the student to organize joint working processes, including a regular schedule of meetings and/or other forms of contact;
       2. based on the results of such meetings, request that the student prepare and approve a short resume of the recommendations and comments on the further stages of the thesis’ development;
       3. request that the student pay particular attention to the recommendations provided and be properly prepared for meetings;
       4. when assessing the thesis work, check whether the student has met the deadlines for submitting draft and final versions of the thesis, as well as met the agreed upon deadlines for related works;
       5. attend state examination board meetings for the defense of the thesis.
   14. If the supervisor is not an HSE employee, a thesis curator, selected from the University’s academic staff, shall be obliged to:

* work with the supervisor to oversee the composition of the thesis and the student’s adherence to its plan and schedule;
* inform the Study Office of the programme under which the student is studying about his/her failure to meet the thesis’ deadlines as per schedule.

1. **Content and Text of Master’s Thesis**
   1. The student shall put together a preliminary structure and work plan independently on the basis of his/her knowledge of the relevant literature and shall agree upon this with the supervisor. When developing the thesis plan, the student must determine the content of respective chapters of the thesis, as well as assign them appropriate names. He/she shall also give consideration to the contents of each chapter and devise the sequence of issues that will be reviewed in a series of paragraphs. The structure of a thesis plan should follow the logical progression of the research process in regards to the given topic. Furthermore, the thesis’ topic, related chapters and paragraphs should be subordinated to each other in a logical form.
   2. The working plan of a Master’s thesis should be flexible, as it may be subject to change owing to adjustments in the field of research, which might be required after an in-depth investigation of the problem that the thesis is to address, as well as owing to circumstances and issues in regards to respective sections; it can also be revised owing to a lack of necessary materials, or should new information or data appear that is theoretically relevant or of practical interest. Any changes should have the approval of the thesis supervisor. A final version of the thesis plan should be approved by the supervisor and provide an outline of the work’s contents.
   3. Respective literature shall be selected right after the topic of the paper has been determined. Literature used as source materials for writing a Master’s thesis may include textbooks, monographs, periodicals, legal and regulatory acts, collections of academic articles, conference materials, foreign sources, materials found online, etc.
   4. When analyzing information, it is important to observe the following recommendations:

- firstly, review literature that illuminates the theoretical aspects of the issue being studied – monographs, textbooks, journal articles; after doing this, instructional/reference materials may be used;

- when studying respective literature, it is not necessary to take in all information but rather focus on what has a direct bearing on the topic of the paper/thesis; assessment criteria for readings may be used for this process;

- focus on the most recent data and information on the given topic/problem, relying on the most authoritative of sources (e.g., foreign professional literature and periodicals);

- precisely indicate where the materials were obtained;

- maintain a critical approach when drawing on or referring to facts from literary sources;

- in order to properly reflect the thought and intention of an author of a primary source, use quotes to identify and contrast respective views. However, the number of quotes used should be optimal (e.g., depending on the requirements for developing a paper/thesis topic), as their overabundance may reflect the weakness of the author’s own position.

* 1. *Collection of factual materials -* This is one of the key steps when writing thesis research, as the overall quality of the work produced entirely depends on the materials collected. Factual materials may be collected as part of the student’s research activities. Statistical materials should be collected along with extracts from the administrative or logistical documentation of the given organization. In addition, the student should study current instructions, methodological guidelines, regulatory documents and directives which affect the regular operations of the organization. Furthermore, it is recommended that he/she summarize the materials collected, check and confirm their reliability and sufficiency for writing the thesis. In addition, the student should study current instructions, methodological guidelines, regulatory documents and directives which affect the regular operations of the organization. Furthermore, it is recommended that he/she summarize the materials collected, check and confirm their reliability and sufficiency for the master’s thesis.
  2. In order to enhance the quality of the research, use of databases with information on the given topic should be used. Access to such information can be provided through HSE Nizhny Novgorod’s internal network.
  3. After relevant literature is studied and organized in a systematic fashion, along with the collection and review of factual materials, various changes may be introduced to the initial plan for the thesis.

1. **Requirements on the Contents and Size of Master’s Thesis** 
   1. Master’s thesis is an obligatory element of the educational programme, a form of student’s research, project work; master’s thesis defense is an integral part of State Examination Certification. The content of chapters and paragraphs should correspond to their given titles.
   2. The recommended size for a Master’s thesis, if written individually, should come to 45-80 pages of printed text without appendices. At least 50 English sources should be included in the thesis’ bibliography, out which, academic, popular research, media articles and Internet articles should come to no more than 30%. The inclusion of the previous term paper’s content in the final version of Master’s thesis shall not exceed 50% of the text.
   3. The recommended size of a Master’s thesis, written by a group, should come to 40-60 pages of printed text without appendices per group member. At least 50 sources should be included in the bibliography, out of which study sources, popular research, media articles and Internet articles should come to no more than 30%.
   4. The principal parts of a Master’s thesis shall include: a title page, a table of contents, an introduction, main body, conclusion, bibliography, appendices.
   5. An introduction shall present the reasons for the selection of the research topic, its relevance, and the extent of its development, as well as its academic and practical significance. The thesis’ goal, subject and research objectives, as well as its working hypothesis shall be stated.

The requirement as to the relevance of a given topic means that the research is in line with current ongoing academic enquiry, its real requirements and the possibility of solving real-life problems. With respect to justifying the given topic, it is advisable to explain why this problem bears relevance at present and what has prevented its earlier analysis, as well as why it bears priority in comparison with other issues.

In describing the relevance of the selected research topic, it is possible to consider the extent to which it has been studied.

In such cases, a review of the works of foreign and domestic researchers who have studied this topic should be considered. If the author considers it necessary, he/she may describe the inadequacy of research on the given issue and the possible deficit of information on the subject in domestic academic literature.

The objective of the research must be concisely formulated and defined, thereby expressing the main focus of the author’s enquiry. Furthermore, the research objective shall be given further details and developed as part of specific research objectives, so that solutions to the specified objectives are focused on a target objective. In this way, the objectives of the research shall be determined on a generally individual basis, as interim endpoints of the research process, thereby allowing the student to fulfil his/her objective in full.

Research objectives are usually presented in a list, formulated usually using the following verbs: to study…, to uncover…, to analyze,…to develop,…to systematize…, etc. Each of these objectives is a specific step in the research process, with the aim of reaching an established outcome. Therefore, the solution to respective tasks shall be determined as per the contents, priority and title of the respective paragraphs in the paper.

The research hypothesis shall also be specified in the thesis introduction.

Furthermore, it should specify how the Master’s thesis presents innovation, theoretical and/or practical relevant with respect to the research results, as per the evaluation of the research outcomes (if available).

Furthermore, the introduction should describe the general structure of the text, pointing out the main points of each chapter, as well as indicating the importance of the results put forth.

* 1. The *main part* of a Master’s thesis is usually divided into chapter or sections, which, in turn, are further broken down into paragraphs. It should usually have 2-3 chapters/main sections, all equal in size to each another. Their contents should correspond directly to the paper’s topic and fully investigate it. The chapters of the main part should also demonstrate the author’s understating in a logical, concise and argumentative exposition of the material.

The main parts of the work usually should include a theoretical part and a practical part.

In a Master’s thesis, the Theoretical Chapter should include a literature review, a description of the theoretical concepts and the approach selected. In turn, its Practical Chapter should include a description of the research plan/design, the methodology used, its data collection and data analysis methodology, the research results and a discussion.

The structure and contents of the main part of the thesis may be determined as per the selected format.

When deciding on the academic format for the thesis, the Main Chapter should be presented as follows:

*The Methodology Section* presents a breakdown the research methodology utilized. This section usually should begin with a presentation of the research programme. The following must be included:

* a description of the objective and design of the research (key steps and their expected outcomes);
* a description the methodologies used to select data for each step of the research; a description of any relevant limitations;
* a description of research instruments (this also must be included in an attached appendix);
* a description of the key features of the data and source collection processes, as well as their representation;
* a description of the methods and procedures used to analyze data; identification of statistical packages used.

For papers that are based on a confirmation of a given hypothesis, the beginning of the methodological chapter should include a description of the grounds for the hypothesis and how it is theoretically justified.

*Research Section*. This section should provide a general overview of the object of the research, provide a research enquiry into the given problem, along with an analysis of factual data, processed on the basis of a developed methodology, which should be specified in the previous (main) chapter of the thesis, and presented as analytical computations. This section should also include calculations of specific indicators, which are used to characterize the result subject, as well as determine cause and effect indicators and recommendations based on the relevant research outcomes.

This section should usually start with a description of the research subject, the reasons and preconditions for its investigation, which have prompted the author to carry out an analysis and engage in activities to enhance further knowledge and understanding thereof.

After a description of the research subject, it should be subject to an in-depth analysis following the developed research plan specified in the previous section of the paper. A direct in-depth analysis shall be concluded with the presentation of conclusions and recommendations for further activities and research.

Furthermore, the research section should provide a description of the facts established in the research process, as well as their various interpretations.

In the closing part of this section, it is important to show that the conclusions are valuable and contribute to the given field of research. In this part, it is necessary to carry out a critical analysis of the results and the field for its use in other research projects.

When selecting a project/research format for the thesis, the following sections should be presented:

*The analytical section* should include a general description of the research subject and an analysis of the given problem, as well as factual data, processed through contemporary methods, which should be described in the Theoretical Section and present in the form of analytical computations. Furthermore, there should be calculations of respective figures, used in order to describe the characteristics of the given subject. The analytical section should also provide verify the validity of any research outcomes that also might be applicable. The depth and validity of the proposed actions should inform the completeness of this section.

This section should begin with a description of the research subject, the reasons and preconditions whereby the author has been compelled to carry out an analysis and engage in activities to improve knowledge thereof. Such preconditions may include the worsened, market, financial, organizational and other position of the research subject, new perspectives for development, initiatives for external and internal projects, new sources of growth, etc.

After describing the research subject, it shall be subject to an in-depth analysis, which should start with the development of the research plan. This plan should include the key stages of the analysis, selection of the instruments to be utilized and factual/statistical data, as per which each stage of the analysis should be carried out.

The in-depth analysis stage should finish with conclusions and recommendations for further endeavours, which may form the basis for development in a third section of the work.

*Project Section* – this section presents a series of activities aimed at finding a solution to the given problem (e.g., developing a strategy for a firm’s development, business plans, strategies for entering new markets, developing programmes to optimize business processes, etc.), as well as a preliminary forecast (based on early calculations) of the results of the applied measures and/or the reasoning behind the expected results (the possible outcome or effect of the proposed activities should be illustrated).

The key requirements of this section include complexity, finality, and specificity of the actual proposed solutions. The chapter should not be limited to general recommendations and/or general areas of development.

All proposals and recommendations should be developed to such an extent, so that they can be applied in a practical manner. It is also important to demonstrate how the proposed measures would be reflected in a firm, company or organization’s performance indicators.

Regardless of the selected format, each chapter of the paper should finish with its conclusions. It is advisable to compose conclusions in separate points.

The total number of conclusions may differ, however, there should be at least 3-5. If there are a large number of conclusions, it is advisable to provide an additional structure to the list of conclusions (i.e., breaking them down by group on a logical basis).

The conclusions should include an assessment of how the results of the research coincide with the goals, objectives and problems specified in the research process.

*Conclusion* – a subsequent logically constructed statement on the results and their correspondence to the overall goal and set objectives, presented and formulated in the introduction. The conclusion should present the key assumptions taken from the research, present practical recommendations, as well as highlight any academic breakthroughs and the practical relevance of the results.

Appendices may include the reporting of companies, schedules, tables, plans, inventories and other materials, which provide additional information and help to illustrate the text of the thesis (but they should not be included in the main part of the text). Appendices can help to highlight, visualize and prove the main points of the thesis. If a thesis features appendices, they should be connected via references in the text. Furthermore, appendices should be numbered.

1. **Formatting Master’s Thesis**
   1. A Master’s thesis should be printed out on standard A4 pages. Margins of all sides of a given page: left margin – 35mm; right – 10mm; upper and lower margins – at least 20mm; number of symbols per page – 2,000. Font – Times New Roman; size – 14; line spacing 1,5. Each new chapter should begin on a new page; this rule is in place for other main parts of the thesis (introduction, conclusion, bibliography, appendices, etc.). The pages of a given thesis with illustrations and appendices should feature consecutive numbering. The thesis’ pages should be numbered with Arabic numbers. The number for each page should be placed at the bottom centre, without any hyphens. The first page of the thesis is its title page, which should not include a page number.
   2. The hard copy of the thesis should be bound.
   3. *Rules for Writing Alphabetical Acronyms*

The text of the thesis may (with the exception of generally recognized alphabetic acronyms) include the author’s own personal acronyms, thereby shortening concepts and ideas from a relevant field of knowledge. In this respect, the first mention of such acronyms should be included in brackets after their full version. Further on, the shortened acronym may be used throughout the text.

* 1. *Rules for Writing Formulas and Symbols*

Formulas must be displayed in separate lines in the centre of a given page, or within a line of text. If featured in a line of text, it is advisable to present a formula in a short form, simple without any separate parts and enumeration. Formulas that are essential and important for a thesis, as well as long and cumbersome formulas, which contain symbols for aggregation, multiplication, division or integration shall be presented in separate lines. In order to save space for several short simple formulas separate from the main text, an author may include such information in a single line, rather than one following another. The most essential formulas should be numbers, including references in the paper. The numbering order for formulas in a thesis should be presented with Arabic digits in parentheses at the right edge of the page.

* 1. *Rules for Tables, Diagrams and Pictures*

Tables and pictures should be named and numerically ordered. The numeration of tables and pictures should be displayed throughout the entire text of the thesis. The consequential number of the table shall be displayed in the right top corner next to its name. Each table should illustrate figures for measuring indicators, or periods of time related to relevant data. If a unit of measure in a table is used in all data tables, it should be stated right after the name of each table. Example of a table, figure, and a picture presented in App 4.

If the work features materials borrowed from literary sources, or citations of various authors, thesis writers should include appropriate references, and, at the end of the paper, compile a bibliographic list of the works cited. A thesis bibliography should not only include references, but also concise summaries of the works cited in the thesis.

* 1. *Rules for Developing a Bibliography*

A bibliography should include literary, statistical, and other sources, materials which were used in the composition of the Master’s thesis. It should consist of literary sources like monographs and academic literature, periodicals (articles from journals and newspapers), legal and instructional materials, statistical collections and other reporting materials, as well as websites. The procedure for compiling a bibliographical list shall be decided by the student and his/her supervisor.

Materials included in a bibliographic list can be arranged as follows: in alphabetical order, chronological order, by type of publication, as per the contents of the material, or as per the order it appears in the text. If placed in alphabetical order, the last names of authors and/or the title of the work (if the author’s name is not indicated) must be strictly placed in alphabetical order. Different types of alphabets (e.g., Russian and English) should not be mixed in the same list. Foreign language materials should be presented at the end of the list of all materials. The principle of alphabetical categorization in a given list shall be “word by word”; if the first word of the given title is the same, this principle shall be applied to the second word, etc. If an author has several works, this principle is applied to their respective titles. If authors share the same name, this principle shall be applied to such distinguishing characteristics such as: Jr., Sr., father, son, starting with the eldest going to the youngest.

A chronological list (based on the year when a publication was released) is useful when the list is used to reflect the development of an academic/scientific idea. Such lists should be presented as follows: description under a given year of publication – as per the alphabetical position of the authors’ last name and the main titles (if describing under main titles); a description in languages other than that used in the thesis in the alphabet used for the name of the given material; a description of books and articles – under its year of publication, but within the context of the same year, usually with books presented first, then articles; a description of books written independently or in co-authorship – in the book list of one author under the same year, starting with independently written works, followed by those made in co-authorship.

A list based on the type of publications can be composed to present thematically similar literature. When composing such a list, authors usually categorize them as follows: official state documents; regulatory/instructive documents; monographs, reference, etc. Their order and composition shall be determined as per the name of the list and contents of the records. A list based on the types of publications is particularly recommended for papers of legal subjects.

A bibliographic list, which has been put together based on the contents of respective sources, shall be applied for works with a modest amount of cited literature. The main groups of works should be presented as follows: beginning with general or benchmark works, followed by sources that are more particular in character.

A bibliographic list, which has been compiled with references to the text, should include information about the sources, which shall be properly numbered point by point. A link connecting the reference and the bibliographic list shall be set, based on the number of the source, or material in the list, wrapped in square brackets.

When compiling a bibliographical list, all key information about a book or material shall be included: the last name and the initials of the author, the title of the book, its publishing location, the name of the publisher and total pages. With respect to articles, which are published in periodicals, the name of the publication, its number and year of release must be indicated, as well as the specific pages in the journal featuring the cited article.

* 1. *Rules for Citations of Literary Sources*

The creation of bibliographical references (footnote, in-text, and endnotes) can be based on GOST style rules (as per GOST regulation Р 7.0.5-2008 “Bibliographical Reference. General Requirements and Rules for Compilation (in effect since January 1, 2009), or based on the style of rules of the APA (American Psychological Association, 6th edition).

* 1. *Rules for Appendices*

An appendix is a final auxiliary part of the text, which should provide additional information, which is nevertheless essential for full comprehension of the thesis topic. The contents of an appendix can vary: copies of legal documents; extracts of reporting materials, respective regulations from instructions and rules, etc. In terms of format, it may be presented as text, tables, diagrams, pictures, etc.

An appendix should not include a list of literature cited in the work, informative commentaries or notes, which are not auxiliary to the main text, or parts of supporting reference materials for devices, which are referred to or described in the main text. An appendix shall be composed as a continuation of the contents of the thesis on subsequent numbered pages.

Each appendix should start on a fresh new page, with the word “appendix” written in the top right-hand corner, displaying the subject of the section. If a paper has more than one appendix, they should be numbered. The numeration of the pages with appendices should be thorough and continue throughout the entire text. The connection of the main text with its appendices shall be made through links, which can be referred to by the words “refer to…” The designation of a respective appendix in the work’s table of contents shall be made in a separate line with the full name of the given appendix.

1. **Feedback from Supervisors and Reviewers on Master’s Thesis**

* 1. Students are obliged to present a bound version of their Master’s thesis, prepared as per established rules and signed by the student on the title page, to his/her supervisor.
  2. The supervisor shall review the thesis and write up feedback. If the work is approved, the supervisor shall recommend it for defense, verifying the thesis with his/her signature on its title page.
  3. The supervisor should assess the following in his/her feedback on the thesis: the relevance of the selected topic; the depth of the literary review; the completeness of the use of legal and academic materials; the extent to which the student investigated the topic; academic innovation; practical relevance; the discussion points of the thesis; the level of the student’s independence in carrying out research and assessing the generated results; the complexity of the methods employed in analyzing the given problem; the positive and negative aspects of the work; an assessment of the work. If the work was a group effort, the supervisor must assess the respective contributions made by each member of the group in his/her feedback.
  4. The thesis shall be allowed for defense after it receives a feedback from the supervisor and/or reviewer.
  5. A review should present an analysis of the contents and the key positions of the thesis under review, an assessment of the relevance of the selected topic, the student’s independence in terms of his/her approach to research (i.e., does the author have their own point of view?), his/her ability to rely on contemporary methods for collecting and processing data, the effectiveness of the conclusions and recommendations, the reliability of the generated results, their innovative character and practical relevance. In addition to a review of the given work’s positive attributes, its weak sides may be described. In his/her conclusion, the reviewer shall characterize the quality of the Master’s thesis and give it his/her own assessment.
  6. The thesis, along with written feedback of the supervisor and reviewer(s) should be presented to the responsible secretary of the state examination board no later than 2 calendar days before the scheduled defense.

1. **Defending a Master’s Thesis**
   1. The final stage to be completed by a student in the development of a Master’s thesis is its defense, which shall be carried out on the basis of a directive on final state certification.
   2. Any negative feedback from a supervisor and/or a review shall not present any barriers to presenting the thesis for defense.
   3. The defense process shall commence with a report from the student on the thesis topic. The recommended time for defending an individual work comes to 15 minutes; for group work – 20 minutes. A presentation should start with a description of the topic’s relevance and importance, a description of the academic or real-life problem associated thereto, and how the thesis objectives are structured. Then, following the order of the thesis’ chapters, the student must describe the key contents of his/her work, paying particular attention to the most interesting issues and the practical results generated. The final part of the report should list the thesis’ general conclusions, proposals (recommendations), developed by the author(s) as a result of their research efforts. It should also highlight the thesis’ innovative character and applicability. The oral presentation of the Student, when making a report, shall be done in open format. He/she should not simply read off a prepared text of the report. If the thesis is a group project, the participants shall make the report proportionally to the number of the members of the group.
   4. Computer programmes may be used in the presentation of the paper, with the presentation of slides, prepared by using, for instance, MS PowerPoint, on the screen. When preparing presentations, students are strongly recommended to decide on the presentation and size of the text (e.g., schedules, tables), used on slides, so that the members of the board can easily understand the contents. At the same time, separate tables, which, owing to their large size, cannot be placed on one slide, can be presented in a handout provided to the board members. Furthermore, handout materials may include respective interim conclusions and research results, which the student might not have sufficient time to discuss in the framework of his/her report, but would nevertheless like to present to the board members.
   5. After the completion of the report, the board members shall pose questions to the student directly related to the thesis topic that may have arisen in regards to the research process, as well as any relevant problems.
   6. After the student has answered the questions of the board members, one of the members shall read through the feedback and reviews of the thesis. After presenting this feedback and reviews, the board’s members will have an opportunity to pose clarifying questions to the student. After the completion of the discussion, a final statement shall be made to the student. The student shall reply to any comments made by the supervisor or reviewer. After this, the thesis defense process shall be considered over.
   7. The grade for defense is evaluated by the members of examination board in regard to the assessment criteria.
   8. If the defense of the Master’s thesis receives an unsatisfactory grade, a second defense shall be held as per the Regulations on State Final Certification at HSE.

**Appendix 1**

*Sample of a Title Page of a Master’s Thesis*

**Government of the Russian Federation**

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**Faculty of Management**

Last Name, First Name, Middle Name of Author[[1]](#footnote-1)

**THESIS TOPIC**

Master’s thesis

in the field “Management” 38.04.02

of the “Global Business” Programme

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reviewer  Doctor …. Of Sciences, Professor  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Full Name | Academic Supervisor  Doctor … of Sciences, Professor  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Full Name  Adviser  Doctor …of Sciences, Professor  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Full Name |

Nizhny Novgorod, 20\_\_

**Appendix 2**

*Sample of Feedback from a Supervisor on a Master’s Thesis*

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**Faculty of Management**

**Feedback from Academic Supervisor on a Master’s Thesis**

Students (full name):

2 year of study of “Global Business” Master’s programme Faculty of Management

On the topic: “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| №# | **Assessment criteria** | **Supervisor’s grade**  **(on a 10-point scale)** |
|  | Correlation of contents of thesis to approved topic |  |
|  | Completion of set goals and objectives |  |
|  | Originality and innovation of work |  |
|  | Independent quality of work on thesis; ability to meet deadlines |  |
|  | General characteristics of the work *(coherence and logical structure of materials; structure; style, including student’s ability to use special terminology; ability to conform to formatting requirements)* |  |
|  | Evaluate the contribution and work of each group member[[2]](#footnote-2)  participant 1 full name  participant 2 full name |  |
|  | **Final grade:** |  |

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Academic supervisor

degree, title,

faculty/department

(place of work)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/Signature/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Full Name. Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 3**

*Sample of a Master’s Thesis Review*

**National Research University Higher School of Economics**

**Faculty of Management**

**Review of Master’s Thesis**

Students (full name):

2 year of study of “Global Business” Master’s programme Faculty of Management

On the topic: “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”

**(Review Text)**

*Please describe the following:*

Contents and key positions of the work under review; assess the relevance of the topic, the originality of the approach to its enquiry (i.e., the author’s own point of view), the writer’s ability to apply contemporary methodologies in collecting and processing information; veracity of conclusions and recommendations; reliability and accuracy of results, their innovative nature and practicality. Along with the positive aspects of the thesis, please describe any weaknesses therein. The appraisal should describe the overall quality of the Master’s thesis and give it an appropriate assessment.

Review of Master’s Thesis

(degree, title, position)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/Signature/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Full Name. Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 4**

*Sample of a table, figure, picture design*

**Table**

Table 1.

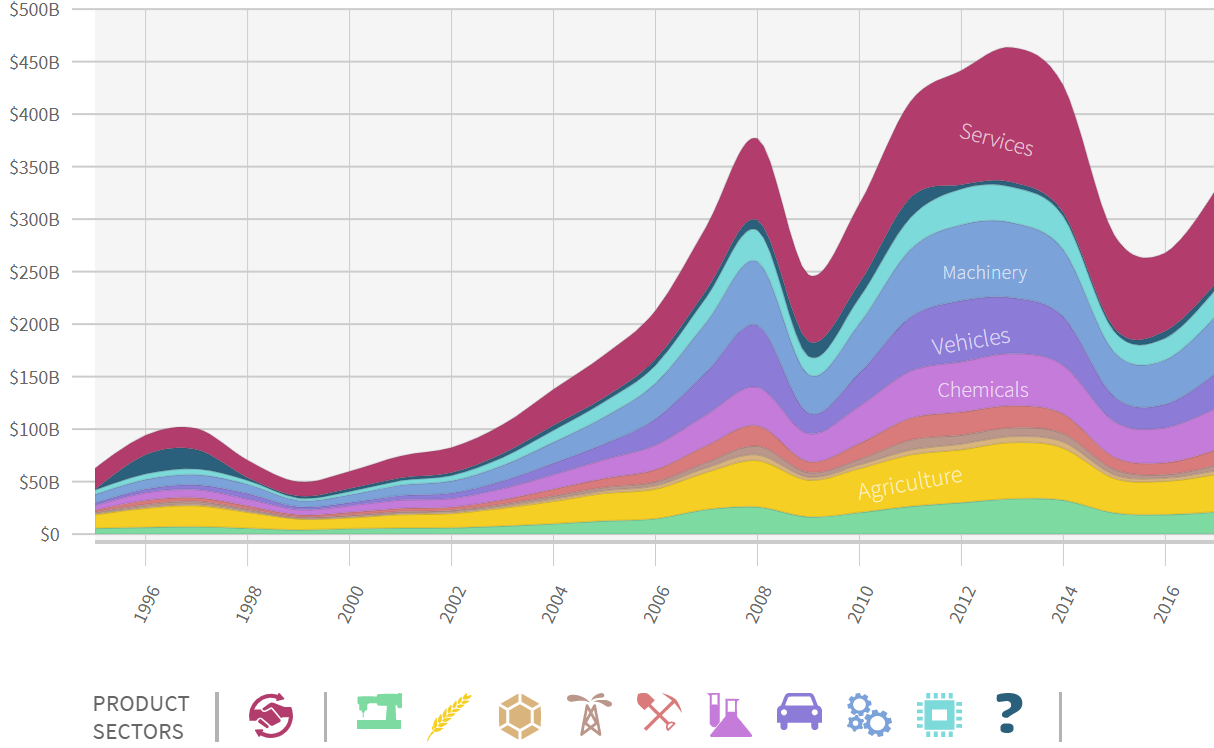
Name of Table

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**Figure**

*Fig.1.* Name of the picture

**Picture**

****

*Pic.1.* Name of the picture

1. If there are multiple authors in a group, they should all be indicated [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Criteria shall be added if this is a group work [↑](#footnote-ref-2)