

Annex to
HSE University's Directive
No. 6.18.1-01/200422-7,
dated April 20, 2022

APPROVED
by HSE University Academic
Council Minutes No. 03,
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**Regulations on Final State Certification of Students
in Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Degree Programmes at
National Research University Higher School of Economics**

DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1. These **Regulations** refer to the Regulations on Final State Certification of Students in Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Degree Programmes at National Research University Higher School of Economics;
2. **HSE University / the University** refers to National Research University Higher School of Economics;
3. **FSC** refers to final state certification;
4. A **state examination** is a form of FSC;
5. The **State Examination Board** (hereinafter the "SEB") shall be established for carrying out the FSC process;
6. The **Local State Examination Board** (hereinafter the "local SEB") shall be established for holding respective state examinations;
7. The **Presidium of the State Examination Board** (the "SEB Presidium") refers to the state examination board, which has been established for tallying FSC results for all state examinations;
8. **AC** refers to the Appeals Committee;
9. A **thesis** means a final graduation paper;
10. **EIOS** refers to the virtual learning environment at HSE University;
11. **Electronic means of information transmission** refer to services and websites, enabling decisively identifiable users to interchange data;
12. **In-class or face-to-face format** refers to a format for conducting state certifying examinations, relying on classroom-based interaction between students and SEB members when they are all present in the same classroom;
13. **Distance format** denotes a format for holding state examinations, relying on interactions between students and SEB members, organized with the application of remote technologies and electronic means of information transmission, as well as utilizing remote technologies and electronic means of information transmission via EIOS or other online

systems¹, as per the decision of the relevant Academic Committee / Academic Supervisor (if there is no Academic Committee) of a respective degree programme;

14. **Blended format** denotes a format for holding state examinations that combines a distance format and a face-to-face format.

15. **Proctoring** refers to a combination of procedures that ensure the identification of students and monitoring their progress with assignments completed as part of a state examination, in order to avert instances of copying and/or cheating;

16. **Pre-examination consultation** refers to consultations for students on questions included in a programme of a state examination;

17. **Degree programme** refers to core degree programmes at the Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's degree level, respectively, provided in any mode of study and offered by HSE University and/or its regional campuses;

18. A **student/learner** refers to an individual pursuing a degree programme;

19. A **graduate** means an individual who, based on his/her FSC results, has received a degree and a respective degree certificate, thereby confirming his/her respective qualification;

20. The **Programme Office** refers to the curriculum support unit responsible for providing support to learning processes under a given degree programme, including part-time and remote instruction under undergraduate programmes, offered to students who have previously completed vocational education or a degree programme;

21. A **programme manager** is the head of the programme office of a given degree programme, or a manager, responsible for ensuring support to learning processes under this programme;

22. **Regulations on Practical Training of Students** refer to the Regulations on Practical Training of Students under Core Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Degree Programmes at National Research University Higher School of Economics;

23. **Internship programme** refers to a mandatory element of a degree programme, which describes the terms and conditions for the implementation of all elements of practical training, including writing theses.

24. **Guidelines for Writing Theses** refer to the standards and methodological recommendations for preparing, writing, and evaluating theses;

25. A **campus** may refer to HSE University's main campus in Moscow or any of its regional campuses;

26. A **faculty** refers to a subdivision of the University (including its regional campuses), which is engaged in the provision of degree programmes;

27. **Faculty Dean** refers to the head of a subdivision involved in the provision of degree programmes, including those offered at HSE University's regional campuses;

28. **HE FSES** refers to federal state educational standards of higher education and/or educational standards set forth by the University;

29. **Academic staff** refers to HSE University's staff members, including faculty members and research fellows;

30. **Coordinating Vice Rector** is the Vice Rector for academic affairs who is charged with overseeing the provision of HSE University's degree programmes;

31. **The Degree Programmes Office (DPO)** refers to the Degree Programmes Office.

¹ Zoom, Skype, MS Teams, Webinar, etc.

1. General Provisions

1.1. These Regulations set forth the procedures and rules for organizing and carrying out the FSC process, including the procedures for organizing the operations of SEBs and ACs, convened for holding FSCs for degree students across respective modes of study at HSE University and its regional campuses.

1.2. The FSC process is mandatory for students graduating from degree programmes. The FSC process for HSE University's students is organized for all degree programmes accredited by the state.

1.3. Students who have fully completed the curriculum or their individual curriculum for their respective degree programme and who do not have any current academic failures for the respective elements of their degree programmes shall be able to progress to the FSC process.

1.4. The FSC may be comprised of one or several state examinations of the following types:

1.5.1. a state examination:

1.5.1.1. a final examination in a given course²;

1.5.1.2. a final interdisciplinary examination in a given field of study (concentration) (hereinafter a "final interdisciplinary examination")³;

1.5.2. the thesis defence.

1.6. A specific list of mandatory state examinations, which are included in the FSC for students of a given degree programme, shall be determined by respective degree programmes in line with the HE FSES, as per which the given programme is implemented, either in the "Requirements for Programme Structure" section, or in "Special Aspects of Educational Modules of the Degree Programme" in the profile of the respective field of student, which, in turn, is a part of the HE FSES⁴.

1.7. Thesis defence shall be a mandatory part of the FSC process.

1.8. Should there be any exceptional circumstances:

1.8.1. the Academic Committee / Academic Supervisor (if there is no Academic Committee) of a degree programme may recommend that the coordinating Vice Rector decide to cancel the state examination process, provided that the state examination is not required by respective educational standards. This decision must be made as per a memorandum drafted by an Academic Supervisor to introduce changes / amendments to the degree programme's curriculum, which must be initiated at least 30 calendar days prior to the start of the FSC process⁵;

1.8.2. The Academic Committee / Academic Supervisor (if there is no Academic Committee) of a given degree programme may decide to change the following no less than 30 calendar days before the start of the FSC process⁶:

² Final examinations for individual courses are aimed at evaluating each student's academic progress in a given course of a degree programme and covers all course content, as stipulated by the respective HE FSES.

³ Final interdisciplinary examinations, in turn, are aimed at evaluating students' knowledge and skills attained from general professional and special training. In addition to the requirements to the contents of individual courses, it should also cover the general requirements for final-year students, as stipulated by the HE FSES for this field of study (concentration). Such examinations allow to identify and evaluate each student's theoretical knowledge necessary for solving professional tasks and the competencies required for career development in the main areas of his/her chosen profession.

⁴ Applicable to the HE FSES as developed after the year of 2019.

⁵ The start and the completion of the FSC process shall be fixed in the academic calendar of the degree programme.

⁶ Should exceptional circumstances arise, the introduction of changes after the deadline specified in p. 1.8.2 hereof shall be permitted following a positive decision on the part of the coordinating Vice Rector. The respective request shall be

1.8.2.1. the formats for holding state examinations (verbal, in writing, etc.), in comparison with earlier formats established, unless a decision to cancel the state examination has been made;

1.8.2.2. the procedures for the thesis defence of Bachelor's students, i.e., to cancel an obligatory peer review of the Bachelor's theses⁷.

1.9. Changes to the format of state examinations shall be made by amending the programme of a respective state examination at least 30 calendar days prior to the start of the FSC process.

1.10. The peer review of Bachelor's works may be cancelled by amending the internship programme under a given degree programme.

1.11. State examinations must be preceded by pre-examination consultations.

1.12. State examinations (all or several), as well as pre-examination consultations, may be held entirely with the application of e-learning technologies.

1.13. Decisions as to which technologies may be used in the course of state examinations shall be made by Faculty Deans, based on recommendations provided by the Academic Committee / Academic Supervisor (if there is no Academic Committee) of the given degree programme. The use of a distance format for state examinations shall be confirmed in the directive on holding the FSC. The SEB's Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that the identities of students and SEB members taking part in the FSC remotely are identified. Proctoring technologies, along with the choice of the proctoring type, must be agreed upon with the University's eLearning Office.

1.14. Students shall be provided with the programmes of respective state examinations, which shall include a list of questions offered for a given state examination, as well as recommendations for preparing for state examinations, e.g., recommended reading for state examinations, and relevant assessment criteria. Programmes for state examinations shall be brought to students' attention no later than six months prior to the start of the FSC process. In turn, programme offices, within the established timeframes, shall post this information on respective degree programmes' websites on HSE University's portal. In addition, the use of other means for the transmission of information is possible.

1.15. The criteria for theses and procedures for their composition shall be stated within the internship programme and the Guidelines for Writing Theses and brought to students' attention no later than six months prior to the start of the FSC process. In turn, programme offices, within the established timeframes, shall post this information on respective degree programmes' websites on the University's portal. In addition, the use of other means for the transmission of information is possible.

1.16. The programmes for state examinations and Guidelines for Writing Theses shall be approved by Academic Councils at faculties / Faculty Deans (in the absence of an Academic Council) on the basis of the recommendations put forward by degree programmes' Academic Committees / Academic Supervisors (in the absence of an Academic Committee). Approved programmes shall be posted on the University's corporate portal within the timeframe set out by these Regulations.

1.17. Abstracts to theses in Russian⁸ and English, as well as theses themselves, shall be published on the HSE University's website in accordance with its relevant bylaws.

1.18. The requirements for the structure and procedures for forming the SEB,

initiated by the degree programme's Academic Supervisor by uploading a memo to HSE University's electronic documentation system.

⁷ Peer reviews of Specialist and Master's degree theses are mandatory and hence may not be cancelled.

⁸ If a thesis is written in a foreign language, the abstract thereto will be drawn up and published in both the foreign language and English. If a thesis is in English, both the abstract and the thesis body shall be in English.

procedures for the organization of the SEB operations during ongoing state examinations and thesis defences shall be established as per the Procedures for Holding the Final State Certification of Students in Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Degree Programmes at HSE University, which are provided in Annex 1 hereto.

1.19. The requirements to the structure and procedures for forming and holding the AC shall be determined as per the Procedures for Appeals Committees for Considering Academic Appeals Against the Results of Final State Examinations Filed by Students in Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Degree Programmes at HSE University, which are provided in Annex 2 hereto.

2. Completion of the FSC Process

2.1. Following the decision of a SEB Presidium about conferring qualifications on graduates in line with their field of study (specialization) and issuing them a degree certificate confirming their degree level and qualification, as drawn up in the relevant minutes of the Presidium's meeting, a directive shall be released on dismissing students owing to the completion of their course of study.

2.2. No later than eight days after the completion of the FSC, as established in the University's academic calendar, graduates shall be provided with a degree certificate confirming their degree level and qualification (Bachelor's degree diploma, Bachelor's degree diploma with Honours, Specialist degree diploma, Specialist degree diploma with Honours, Master's degree diploma, or a Master's degree diploma with Honours).

2.3. Degree certificates with Honours are issued provided that the following requirements are satisfied:

2.3.1. all grades listed in the diploma supplement for courses / modules and elements of practical training are "Excellent", "Good" or "Pass";

2.3.2. all grades for the FSC are "Excellent";

2.3.3. the proportion of "Excellent" grades listed in a diploma supplement, including those for the FSC, shall come to at least 75% of the total grades, with the exception of passing grades, as listed in the diploma supplement.

2.4. Upon the completion of the operations on the part of the SEB and SEB Presidium, but no later than December 31 of the current academic year, the floor shall be given to a presentation of the report on the relevant SEB's operations and activities at the meeting of the respective faculty's academic council / another collective administration body of the faculty.

3. Procedures for FSC Retakes

3.1. Students who have been absent from a state examination without a valid excuse or who have received an unsatisfactory grade shall not be able to proceed to the next final state examination and shall be dismissed owing to failure to carry out their obligations to master the respective degree programme with due diligence, as well as complete the relevant curriculum.

3.2. Students who have not passed the FSC, owing to their absence from a final state examination, owing to a valid excuse, shall be eligible to complete the FSC within six months after the end of the FSC⁹ and shall not be subject to dismissal from HSE University.

3.3. Students who have not passed one final state examination owing to a valid

⁹ Starting from the date when the FSC process reaches its conclusion, as established by the Academic Calendar.

excuse, shall be allowed to progress to the next final state examination (if any).

3.4. Valid excuses for absences from final state examinations shall include the following:

3.4.1. illness, as confirmed by a medical certificate on an official letterhead, submitted to the Programme Office on the day when the student is allowed to return to studies¹⁰;

3.4.2. other exceptional reasons, which may have objectively hindered the student from appearing at the final state examination, as confirmed by documentary evidence¹¹ no later than three working days after their absence. These excuses may include the following:

3.4.2.1. the individual curriculum of the learner, who is a participant in the international academic mobility programme, which foresees later dates for the participation in the FSC, as compared to those specified in the given degree programme's curriculum;

3.4.2.2. the individual curriculum of the student, who has had the writing and defending of his/her thesis deferred to the next academic year owing to exceptional objective circumstances, which have resulted in the interruption of access to the materials, information, and equipment for the proper completion of the thesis;

3.4.2.3. illness or death of a close family member;

3.4.2.4. fulfilment of social or state duties;

3.4.2.5. a summons to law enforcement body, court or other institution, where respective legislation prescribes obligatory appearance if a summons is received;

3.4.2.6. transport-related difficulties (e.g., cancellation of a flight, no tickets, etc.);

3.4.2.7. force majeure circumstances, including ongoing technical problems (or those arising during a final state examination held remotely), which are considered as per the established procedures at HSE University.

3.5. Valid excuses do not include a student's absence from a final state examination, which was the result of work-related circumstances (e.g., business trips, working hours, with the exception of those instances outlined in pp. 3.4.2.4 of p. 3.4 of these Regulations).

3.6. With respect to the instances described in pp. 3.4.2 of p. 3.4 hereof, a decision to declare the reason for missing an examination valid shall be made by a Faculty Dean, with the prior approval of the respective degree programme's Academic Supervisor.

3.7. Students who have appeared at a final state examination, but decided that they would not be able to go through with the process owing to health reasons must provide notification about this before they receive their final state examination assignment / the start of the thesis defence process; this shall be recorded in the local SEB's minutes with a note stating "Absent". The reason for a student missing a final state examination may be declared valid if he/she provides appropriate confirmation in line with the procedures set out in pp. 3.4.1 of p. 3.4 hereof. If a student has started completing a final state examination assignment / the thesis defence process, the completed portion of a final state examination work / presented portion of the thesis defence shall be evaluated as per established programme for a state examination / the internship programme / assessment criteria in the Guidelines for Writing Theses. If a student has refused to continue his/her participation in a state examination process and has not completed any portion of the work, this shall be recorded as a grade of "0" in the minutes of the local SEB meeting, regardless of the submission of a medical certificate, either before or after a refusal to continue his/her participation in the state

¹⁰ Subject to the presence of valid excuses, which have prevented a student from submitting a medical certificate by the established deadlines, it is possible to send a copy thereof to the programme office of one's degree programme via corporate e-mail, with the subsequent submission of the certificate's original copy no later than 30 calendar days from the completion of the established period.

¹¹ Ibid 10.

examination process.

3.8. If, during a period for FSC retakes, a student has failed to attend the FSC without a valid excuse, he/she shall be dismissed from the University for their failure to fulfil obligations to master a degree programme in good faith and complete the relevant curriculum; as such, he/she shall be issued a certificate of attendance, thus confirming the period of studies.

3.9. If, during a period for the FSC retakes, within the 6 (six) months after the end of the FSC, a student has not appeared at a final state examination for a valid excuse, e.g., health reasons, and has not submitted the conclusion of a medical board requesting that he/she be granted academic leave for health reasons¹², this student shall be dismissed from HSE University for their failure to fulfil the obligations to master a degree programme in good faith and complete a curriculum.

3.10. A student, who has not passed the FSC and has been dismissed owing to his/her failure to fulfil the obligations to master a degree programme in good faith and complete the curriculum, upon their reinstatement to HSE University, may make a second attempt to take the FSC no earlier than in the following academic year, within the timeframes determined for the FSC process for students in their graduating year, but at least 10 months after and within five years after the FSC, which the student had previously failed.

3.11. With another attempt to take the FSC, a thesis topic and/or a thesis supervisor may be changed (if the involved student so wishes).

3.12. Repeat final state examinations may not be assigned for one individual more than two times.

¹² If a student submits the conclusion of a medical board of a healthcare institution, he/she may be granted an exceptional leave of absence.