

Application Guidelines for the HSE Student Initiative Contest

These Guidelines have been prepared by the Student Initiative Support Centre in accordance with the HSE Regulations on the Student Initiative Contest.

Goals of the Contest

- To develop social responsibility among HSE students and involve them in finding solutions to socially important issues;
- To support volunteering and social enterprise at HSE;
- To develop HSE students' leadership skills and creativity;
- To develop HSE students' teamwork and project management skills;
- To promote HSE's reputation.

The projects participating in the Contest should promote the competitive ability of HSE and its students.

Application guidelines

These guidelines concern both individual fields on the application and the general requirements for completing paperwork.

1. Project Title (up to 150 characters)

The title should reflect the Project's key idea.

For example: 'Extra-mural Sociology School for Prospective Students'

IMPORTANT: applications will be publically available online, so please don't be lazy and take the title of the project seriously; it will be the face of your project.

Bad example: HDSJ SuperHSE: such a title will say nothing about your project to the world and won't make your target audience remember it when they want to participate in something interesting.

2. Project Topic

Each application contains a 'Project topic' field where you have to choose one of the suggested categories for your application.

List of the topics:

1. Education and skills development

Projects that are created by students for school students/university students/other members of society and aim to transfer knowledge and/or form certain skills and competencies (e.g., career guidance, tutorship projects, intellectual clubs, etc.).

2. Adaptation projects

Projects that help students adjust to the new environment (your faculty/ university as a whole/ dormitory/ the city, etc.), to attract students to certain social groups, to create communities (e.g., adaptation projects for foreign students, for students in dorms etc.).

3. Projects aimed at increasing social responsibility

For example, charity projects, 'green' projects, etc.

4. Cultural events and related projects

Projects where students are involved in cultural education, creativity development, and self-realization (e.g., arts festivals).

5. Media projects

Projects that aim to distribute information in periodicals, as well as give students an opportunity to publish their texts/translations/artwork (e.g., publishing an intercampus student newspaper, a periodical with student translations of articles in foreign languages, etc.).

6. Sports and health

Projects that aim to involve students in making sports and healthy lifestyles more popular and provide opportunities for healthy living (e.g., organizing sports events, outdoor activities, student sports contests, etc.).

3. Project website

If your project has a website or a group on social media, please add a link.

4.1 Project description (up to 2,000 characters for paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2)

Three important components of the Project should be described in this paragraph: its aim/aims, its tasks, and its target audience (TA).

a) **Aim of the Project** is the result that its members want to achieve.

In order to define the aim of the project, paradoxically enough, you have to begin from the end, i.e., to determine the final result you want to achieve.

The project should have one aim that is most important. The project should adhere to the SMART criteria (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria)

For example: The aim of the Project is to introduce all 3rd-year students in the Faculty of Economics to the works of Rudyard Kipling, by the example of an interactive analysis of 'Rikki-Tikki-Tavi' short story, by the end of May 2015, as a result of which they will be able to give a short summary of the story in three phrases.

The story has been read, analyzed, and discussed; all students of the Faculty of Economics are able to give a short summary of Rudyard Kipling's 'Rikki-Tikki-Tavi' in three phrases: the aim is achieved.

Example of aim formulated NOT according to SMART criteria: The aim of the Project is to distribute knowledge on the culture of contemporary comic books among HSE student by means of regular events over a long period of time.

The result of the project must be measurable. Think in terms of what values you can measure the result of your project.

IMPORTANT: As the Project reaches its aim, it discontinues its existence or evolves in a new Project.

b) Tasks of the Project

The difference between the aim and the tasks of the Project is that while the aim is a faraway destination point, the tasks are specific and measurable steps on the way to it.

For example: The aim: visiting Atlantis. Tasks: building ships, finding maps, purchasing equipment, hiring seamen, etc. Through completion of tasks, the Project moves towards the goal, and the smarter and more specific the tasks are, the more effective this movement will be.

Ideally, each of the tasks should correspond with a certain stage of the Project's implementation.

c) Target audience (TA) of the Project – the people for whom the project is planned and who are involved in it one way or another, the environment where the desired effect (aim) is planned.

For example: The target audience of courses on how to apply makeup before the graduation ceremony in Dormitory 2 is in all likelihood senior female students living in this dormitory.

Understanding the target audience is vital for the Project: the Project tasks are set and implemented taking into account the TA.

The more accurately the TA is determined (it may be determined by professional affiliation, place of study or residence, level of education, age, gender, level of revenue, etc.), the easier it is to build up a strategy for Project implementation or development. This doesn't mean that the TA can't be very wide (e.g., all students in general): it can, but it's important to correlate its boundaries with the Project's resources and capabilities, as well as the TA's potential need or interest in the Project.

IMPORTANT: A quantitative assessment of the primary target audience (HSE students are the priority) and the secondary TA (other demographics, which are the Project's target) must be indicated.

4.2 Compliance of the Project's aims and tasks with the Contest's goals

In this paragraph, you should give reasonable proof on how your Project's aims and tasks comply with the Contest's goals, which are specifically the following:

- To develop social responsibility among HSE students and involve them in finding solutions to socially important issues;
- To support volunteering and social enterprise at HSE;
- To develop HSE students' leadership skills and creativity; teamwork and project management skills;
- To involve HSE students in project activities;
- To promote HSE's reputation.

The keyword here is 'reasonable'.

IMPORTANT: Try to represent your Project as an 'appetizing' one, mention important things but avoid 'watery' phrases. You have up to 2,000 symbols, so use them to the fullest!

5. Analysis of a social problem (tasks, needs), proposed solution and Project implementation risks

Includes:

- Analysis of the existing challenge facing the Project. This is an answer to the question ‘What problem in society as a whole or in a certain social group* does this project respond to?’ (for example, the Friends of Iran student cinema club aims to eliminate HSE students’ poor knowledge about Iranian cinema).

*A social group can be both directly related to HSE – students, staff, lecturers, prospective students – or be outside the university: for example, young people of Odintsovo, Russian high school students, police officers, etc.

IMPORTANT: You must give a reasonable argument why this problem is actually a problem and why it needs to be solved. The project can also aim not only to solve a problem, but meet the needs of the TA.

For example: A project that aims to create a short feature film, show it to students and discuss it with them, addresses the need for creative self-realization of the Project’s immediate participants (one part of the TA) and stimulates others (another part of the TA) towards similar steps and actions.

(About 500-800 characters)

- A detailed description of how to solve the problem or address the need: how this Project can solve the problem or address the need (if not completely, then at least partially – it depends on the scale of the problem), and why this solution has been chosen. This point aims to reveal your Project’s originality (in a broad sense), since various Projects can have one task, but their solutions will make them unique.

It is important that your chosen solution be reasonable. To give reasons, you can, for example, mention the experience of other Projects, how their mistakes will not be repeated in this Project, and how their advantages will be made stronger. Analysis of mistakes and advantages will strengthen your position in the view of the experts.

(About 800-1300 characters)

- Risk analysis. In order to implement a task successfully, one needs to clearly understand what may go wrong. But it is even more important to understand what can be done to avoid it.

This paragraph will give experts an understanding of how well you understand the feasibility of implementing your initiative, how prepared you are for the challenges involved and how you are planning to confront them.

(About 800-1100 characters)

Analyzing the projects implemented as part of the First Student Project Contest allowed us to outline some of the most widespread risks:

1. Instability of the team (this risk can be minimized by means of clear Project planning, assigning responsible Project members for each of its stages and tasks, having an existing ‘Project activists reserve’, and having experience implementing joint projects);

2. Failure to meet Project deadlines (this risk should be minimized by using a project management system, such as todoist.com or asana.com);
3. Lack of knowledge on the requirements for Project documentation (this risk can be minimized by studying the Guidelines on Project Documentation).

6. Importance of the expected results of the students' initiative for HSE and society

As part of this paragraph, you should answer the following questions:

- How exactly can the Project's implementation influence the life of HSE students/staff/lecturers and/or members of society? How, at the end of the day, will the Project promote the competitive ability of HSE and its students?
- Taking into account this probable influence, how promising is this Project in terms of further development and expansion (if the Project is not planned to end after reaching the aim: for example, a student model airplane engineering club)? Or are there plans to repeat the project on another scale (for example, to organize a music festival on the HSE campus in Moscow, and then expand it to all the other campuses)?

If possible, predict the potential economic effect.

For example:

- Replacing disposable dishes with reusable ones at one of HSE's cafeterias will save ____ roubles;
- Reducing costs for medicine and doctor visits for those who participate in the 'Run Cheerfully Early in the Morning' group.

7. Project team and partners

The Project team must consist only of HSE students, graduates, or staff members. The Project should be led by a HSE student.

Any individuals or legal entities may be partners of the Project, if their participation is reasonable.

It would be beneficial if your project has a curator from the teaching staff who has some experience in the appropriate field.

8. Experience implementing similar student initiatives or participation in social Projects

Describe the experience you have; give a brief description of the Project and its size; specify what the members of your team did as part of the Project and what results were achieved.

9. Project Budget

Describe the Project's budget (estimate) with more details on line items, including funds acquired through co-financing if you have such an agreement. Attach a letter of support from the sponsor (in the Documents section). The more detailed and realistic the budget is, the easier it will be for the experts to evaluate your good sense and take it into account as an additional bonus during the decision-making process.

The budget should include real prices with references to suppliers of goods and services that provide them at such prices.

IMPORTANT:

1. Indicate the number of items in the list of costs
2. The following items cannot be included in the budget:
 - a. Sports equipment
 - b. Music equipment
 - c. Computers and office equipment
 - d. Expenses to promote the Project
 - e. Expenses for charity (in accordance with the HSE Charter)

Project budget template with standard costs

	Costs item	Standard cost* (roubles per item)	Number of items	Value, roubles
1.	Transportation, Moscow – Voronovo – Moscow			
	Up to 7 people	Free (on workdays 9.00 am – 5.00 pm)		
	Up to 45 people	13,800 (one way)		
2.	Catering			
	Voronovo: 3 meals per day per person	600 roubles or more		
	Same, in lunch boxes	400 roubles or more		
3.	Moscow: coffee breaks	100 roubles per person or more		
4.	Other costs			
	Souvenirs	According to the KOMUS or BookVyshka price lists		
	Printing house (posters in A3 format)	707 roubles		

*Costs are approximate. If the Project wins the Contest, its leader should coordinate the budget with the Student Initiative Support Centre when completing the documentation.

10. Stages of implementing the initiative (no later than December 31, 2015)

The period of Project implementation can be extended (e.g., a Chinese calligraphy studio that works during the entire academic year), or can have specific dates (e.g., a two-day festival 'Dialogue of Cultures', March 27-28, 2015).

11. Plan to promote the Project

This paragraph should include an answer to the question ‘How are you planning to promote your Project among HSE students and other target groups?’ A good Project should always have a PR group (even if it’s very small) that will be responsible for distributing information on the Project across various platforms. The choice of platform and promotion tools depends directly on the aims of the project and its target audience, so you should also make a case for your choice of promotion methods.

Project promotion plan template

No.	Channel	Action	Coverage, people	Dates
...	...	...	...	...
	Total coverage:			
	Effectiveness forecast:			

Error correction: most common mistakes

- Grammar and style errors in the text; not only what you write about is important, but also how you write it;
- Text that is too short or too long;
- Unclear wording; the text should be detailed enough so that an expert can understand the idea of your project without looking for additional information. This is why your information should be comprehensible (this also applies to various terms: if they are uncommon, it's better to provide an explanation in brackets);
- Not enough detail in the Project Budget;
- Required documents missing (see the list in the Documents section);
- Lateness in submitting applications is a reason to decline its consideration.

Additional important information

ADVANCE registration on the family.hse.ru website is recommended!

Registration can be done by email in the edu.hse.ru domain or by mobile phone indicated during the registration process. If you have lost the password, please contact your programme's office.

Both the leader and the members of the team should register.

After you have registered on the family.hse.ru website, complete your profile. During the application process all required information will be populated automatically.

IMPORTANT: Please specify a correct email address for further contact with the Project leader. In addition to an email in the edu.hse.ru domain, you can specify a personal email address. If this information is missing, the organizers won't be able to contact you!

Voting for the project starts on the date the list of Projects accepted for consideration is published; voting ends on the day the Projects selected for oral defense is published. Only HSE students and graduates registered on the family.hse.ru website can vote.

If a decision is made to support your Project, its leader must contact the Centre for further consultation on documentation and further actions within five workdays from the date the list of Projects receiving funding is published.