



UCD Guidelines for Conducting a Viva Voce Examination Virtually March 2020

Normally the viva voce examination for doctoral candidates and other research degree candidates, where applicable, will take place at a University College Dublin campus. However, under exceptional circumstances a viva voce may be conducted virtually. Reasons for conducting a viva voce virtually include:

- The most suitable special extern examiner is (a) located at a significant distance from the university thus prohibiting travel or (b) unable to travel.
- Travel restrictions beyond the control of the candidate or special extern examiner.

Principles:

- Approval for conducting a virtual viva is through the Chair of the Governing Board.
- Written agreement must be obtained by all parties. If all parties do not agree the viva voce must be delayed.
- Use of a virtual viva voce cannot be used as grounds for appeal.
- Normally the special extern examiner is the member of the examining committee that is participating in the viva voce virtually. Normally the Chair, intern examiner and candidate are in the same location. In exceptional circumstances the viva voce may be conducted across more than two sites.
- Zoom is the recommended system to be used, which is supported by UCD IT Services.
- In each location measures should be taken such that appropriate conditions are in place ensuring minimal disruption, security and integrity of the examination.
- All parties should be able to see one another at all times during the viva voce examination.
- No viva voce is to be conducted by audio or phone.
- A virtual private network (VPN) may be required where the intellectual property of the thesis needs to be protected.
- If a presentation is required this may be facilitated through screen sharing or distributing the presentation to members of the examining committee through the Chair.
- The viva voce must not be recorded.
- Time differences must be considered to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged.
- A test must be conducted prior to the commencement of the viva voce
- Normally, if communication is broken during the viva voce and a connection cannot be re-established, the examination must be terminated and re-scheduled. However, where the examination committee agrees that a truncated viva voce provides the basis for a positive recommendation, this recommendation may be taken. No recommendation to fail a candidate can be taken where a viva voce is interrupted.
- Any re-scheduled examination should normally take place within one month of the original viva voce
- The examiners' report must include a statement that the viva voce was conducted virtually.

Procedures aligned with face to face viva voce examinations

- The Chair is responsible for ensuring the arrangements for conducting the viva voce are in place.
- Following the viva voce the candidate must leave the virtual meeting to allow the examiners to discuss a recommendation.
- Once a recommendation is agreed the candidate is invited to re-join the meeting to be advised of the outcome of the examination.
- If the examiners agree on the recommendation a joint report is supplied to the Academic Council Committee on Examinations.
- If the examiners do not agree on the recommendation separate reports are supplied to Academic Council Committee on Examinations.

NB: These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the UCD Academic Regulations and the Theses in Graduate Research Programmes Policy.

Virtual Viva Voce Examination Checklist

The Chair should ensure that all of the following are in place before, during and after a virtual viva voce examination.

Chair of Governing Board approval	
Written agreement by <u>all</u> parties	
Zoom as the recommended virtual platform	
Appropriate conditions in each location	
Video in use to ensure all parties can see one another	
VPN in use where IP needs to be protected	
Presentation, if required, circulated through the Chair or through screen sharing	
Viva not be recorded	
Test has been conducted	
Examiners' report includes a statement that the viva voce was conducted virtually	