



Approved by  
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## Use of Video-Conferencing at Viva-Voce Examinations

POLICY DOCUMENT



**UCC**

Coláiste na hÉireanna Corraithe, Éire  
University College Cork, Ireland

## **UCC Guidelines on the Use of Videoconferencing at *Viva Voce* Examinations for Research Students**

The normal expectation is that the *viva voce* examination for research degrees will take place at University College Cork. However, consideration may be given to conducting *viva voce* examinations using the University's videoconferencing facilities in the following circumstances:

1. Video conferencing facilities may be used in *viva voce* examinations when the most suitable available examiner is based at such a distance from the University that s/he is not able, for reasons of prohibitively high cost, difficulties of time or restricted mobility, to travel to University College Cork in order to conduct or participate in a *viva voce* examination within a reasonable time frame.
2. The option of video conferencing should not be made available to a student who does not wish to return to the University for the *viva voce* examination. However, in circumstances where there may be difficulties such as immigration, health or financial issues, an exceptional request to hold the *viva voce* by video conference may be considered.

### **Procedures for using video conferencing in *viva voce* examinations:**

1. Video conferencing may be used only with the written agreement of the PhD candidate and all members of the Examination Board.
2. This agreement should be sought and confirmed prior to the proposal being considered by the Chair of ACGSC.
3. The Chair of ACGSC should be emailed of the intention to use video conferencing facilities in the *viva voce* and of the reasons behind the decision. These reasons should include details of why this particular examiner is being approached; why he/she is unable to travel to UCC; and why an alternative examiner who can travel to UCC (if available) is not a suitable option. The Chair has the right to request further information or to refuse a request where he/she feels a strong enough case has not been made.
4. The internal examiner is responsible for ensuring that all parties involved in the examination are informed of the details of the video conferencing arrangements.
5. When an examiner attends the examination by video conference, all expenses associated with providing a video link between the examiner and UCC will be covered by the School/Department. Where the candidate attends the examination by video conference, all costs associated with providing a video link between the candidate and UCC will be covered by the candidate.

6. Any time differences between the two locations must be taken into account to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged by an examination taking place at an inappropriate time.
7. When arranging video conferencing the quality of the equipment used should be taken into account. Contingency plans are essential in the event of technology failure and the School/Department must ensure such plans are in place and that adequate security measures are taken to ensure the integrity of the examination process.
8. Examinations shall not be recorded.
9. The set-up of the conference facilities should be such that the person/people at each end of the link should be able to see the other person/people present at all times.
10. Examiners will be required to comment on the conduct of the *viva voce* examination using the standard examiners' report form and should refer explicitly to the use of video conferencing.

**In addition to the above, in cases where the candidate will be attending the *viva voce* by video link, the following requirements apply:**

11. The viva should normally take place in a recognised third level institution with appropriate video conferencing facilities. If it is not possible to use facilities in a recognised third level institution, the candidate must provide detailed evidence of the reliability of the facilities that are proposed for use. If there are any costs incurred for using the video conferencing facility, these must be borne by the PhD candidate.
12. The responsibility for identifying a suitable institution/facility lies with the PhD candidate. Once identified the PhD candidate should contact the proposed institution to request permission to use their video conferencing facilities.
13. Once permission has been sought from the institution, the following details should be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Office:
  - a. Name of proposed institution
  - b. Video conferencing facilities available
  - c. Written agreement from the proposed Institution to host the viva by video conference
  - d. Contact details (telephone number and email address) for the Student Records and Examinations Office (or equivalent) at the Institution
14. The Graduate Studies Office must approve the arrangements prior to the organisation of the *viva voce*.

15. The Graduate Studies Office should approve the appointment of an invigilator from the Institution providing the video conferencing facilities. The invigilator must be present at all times during the examination.
16. The candidate must ensure that the video conferencing facility is functioning prior to the exam.
17. Taking into account of the time difference, a suitable time for the PhD examination must be agreed between the PhD candidate and examiners.