

Policy on Viva Voce Examination for Research Students

1. On the *approval of examiners form* the internal examiner will indicate that s/he has received written approval from all examination board members, including the candidate, that they agree to an (a) onsite (UCC), (b) virtual or a (c) hybrid¹ viva voce examination.
2. This form is approved by the relevant Vice Dean (Head of College Graduate School).
3. The internal examiner is responsible for ensuring that all parties involved in the examination are informed of the details of the viva voce examination arrangements.
4. All associated costs of the external examiner for the viva voce whether in person or remote are covered by the School/Department.
5. Any time differences between the different locations must be taken into account to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged by an examination taking place at an inappropriate time.
6. Where (a) member(s) of the examination board is attending on-site in UCC, current public health guidelines must be adhered to at all times.
7. Use of fully virtual or hybrid viva voce examination cannot be used as grounds for appeal.
8. Only platforms as advised by UCC IT Services should be used <https://www.ucc.ie/en/it/>
9. In each location measures should be taken such that appropriate conditions are in place ensuring minimal disruption, security and integrity of the examination.
10. The candidate, the internal examiner and external examiner should be able to see one another at all times during the viva voce examination, with the exception of when the candidate is making a presentation. In addition, with the exception of introduction and closing of the meeting, the independent chair and supervisors can attend off-camera.
11. No viva voce is to be conducted solely by audio or by phone.
12. A virtual private network (VPN) and/or other solutions may be required where the intellectual property of the thesis needs to be protected; and it is the responsibility of the supervisors and internal examiner to ensure that these are in place ahead of the examination.
13. If a presentation is required, this may be facilitated through screen sharing or distributing the presentation to members of the examining committee via the internal examiner.

¹ A hybrid model may take the form of one or more members(s) of the examination board being on-site at UCC. This does not include the supervisors who are not examiners.

14. The *viva voce* must not be recorded.
15. The internal examiner has the responsibility to test the platform chosen ahead of the *viva voce* examination both with the candidate and the examiners and the independent chair.
16. Normally, if communication is broken during the *viva voce* and a connection cannot be re-established, the examination must be terminated and re-scheduled by the internal examiner.
17. Any re-scheduled examination should normally take place within one month of the original *viva voce*.
18. The conduct of the *viva voce* must be aligned with the relevant UCC research examination regulations.
19. The examiners must comment on the conduct of the virtual *viva voce* (whether fully virtual or hybrid) on the final report.
20. Following the *viva voce*, the candidate must leave the meeting (whether virtual or in person) to allow the examiners to discuss a recommendation.
21. Once a recommendation is agreed the candidate is invited to re-join the meeting to be advised of the outcome of the examination.

NB: The internal examiner must ensure that all of the following are in place before, during and after a virtual or hybrid *viva voce* examination.

Vice Dean (Head of relevant College Graduate School) approval	
Written agreement by all parties has been received by the internal examiner	
Only platforms as advised by UCC IT Services should be used.	
Appropriate conditions in each location	
Adherence to current public health guidelines at all times	
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 internal examiner or through screen sharing	
<i>Viva voce</i> not be recorded	
Internal examiner has conducted tests prior to examination	
Candidate is asked to leave the fully virtual or hybrid examination to allow the examiners to discuss the recommendation and is	

invited back to the virtual or hybrid examination once a recommendation has been made	
Examiners' report includes comment on the conduct of the virtual or hybrid viva voce on the final report.	

Approved: Academic Board 2nd December 2020 on the recommendation of Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee. The policy supersedes the following policies:

- Use of video conferencing at Viva Voce Examinations, 2015
- Policy for the Conduct of Virtual Viva Voce Examinations during the COVID-19 closure, 2020