

Succeeding in Your Viva: What Examiners Expect & How to Show Your Best Work

Date: Dec 12, 2025

Presenter: Siti Zaiton Mohd Hashim
IIRG Colloquium

**Ph.D.
Viva Voce**
presentation





UTM
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Premier Digital
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Dr. Nancy Zhu

"My PhD Journey:
Lessons, Milestones &
Motivation"
Gain practical
strategies, motivational
insights, and discover
how to build a resilient,
purpose-driven
research mindset.
Includes an interactive
Q&A session!

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Murtadha Mohamad

"Postgraduate Vision
2026: Research, Growth
& Collaboration"
Explore strategic
initiatives to elevate
postgraduate
engagement, foster
interdisciplinary
research, and shape
your academic future.

Prof. Dr. Siti Zaiton Mohd Hashim

"What Examiners
Expect in a Viva Voce"
Unlock the secrets to
viva success and learn
how to cultivate a
strong, ethical, and
impactful research
culture.

Moderator

Assoc. Prof. Ts. Dr.
Mohd Shahizan
Othman

INTELLIGENT INFORMATICS RESEARCH GROUP (IIRG) COLLOQUIUM SESSION (DECEMBER)

Join us for an inspiring and intellectually enriching session
designed for postgraduate students and academic staff.
Let's celebrate research, share knowledge, and spark new
ideas together

12 DEC START FREE
2025 09:00 AM WEBINAR

Venue: Staff Lounge, Level 3, Block N28A

YOU'RE INVITED

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT, LEARN, AND BE INSPIRED
LET'S BUILD A THRIVING RESEARCH COMMUNITY—TOGETHER

What Examiners Expect & How to Show Your Best Work

- Understanding the Purpose of a Viva



- The Golden Questions of the Viva



- Practical Preparation Strategies



- What Examiners Look For



- Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them



- Building a Strong Research Culture



Purpose of a Viva



- A scholarly conversation
- To confirm originality, rigour, contribution
- Not an interrogation

a scholarly conversation where examiners want to understand:

- 1.Do you really own your work?**
- 2.Is your research rigorous?**
- 3.What is your contribution to knowledge?**

Remember: You are the expert of your thesis the moment you walk into the room.

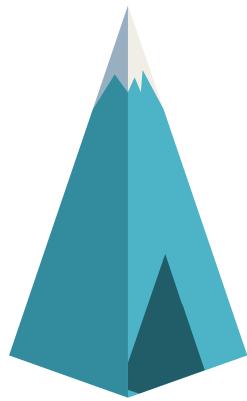
What Examiners Look For

Key Insights:

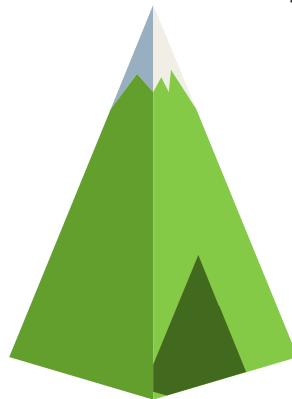
Contribution:
What changes
because of
your work?



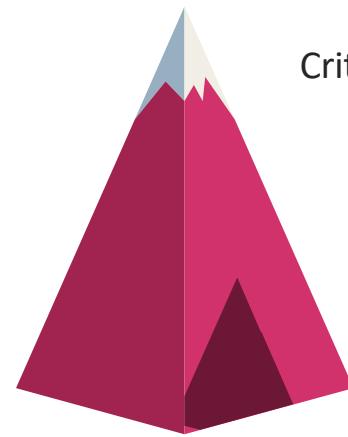
Clarity of explanation



Consistency in methodology & findings



Critical thinking



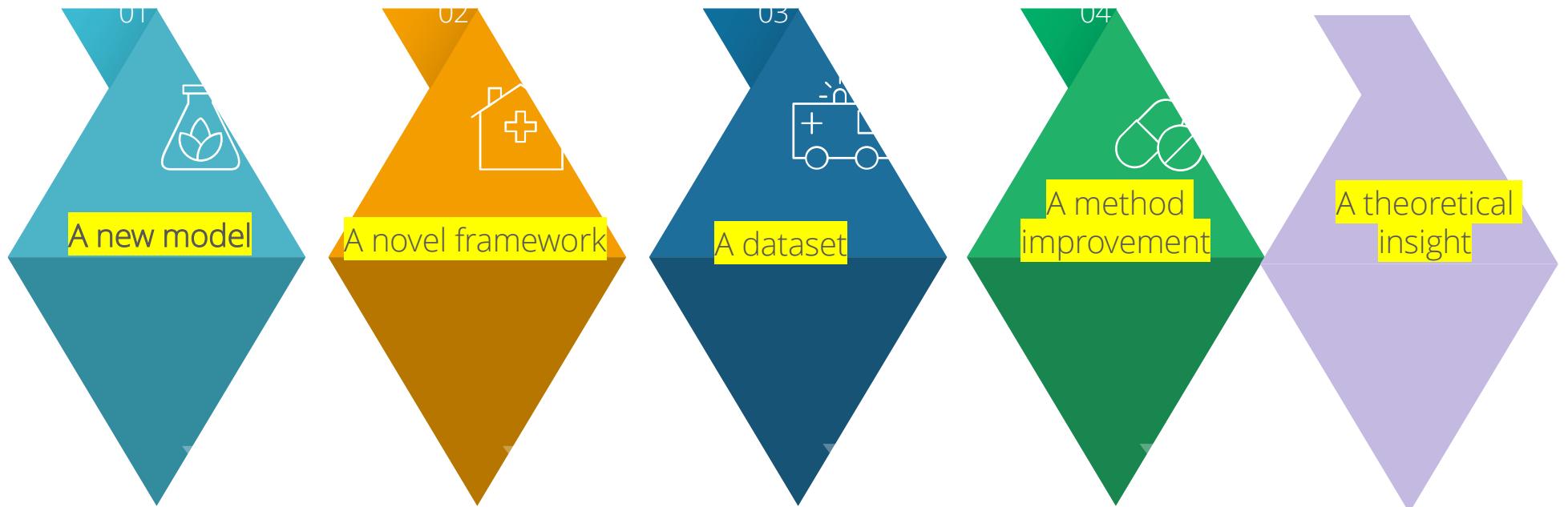
Limitations
awareness



Future work
aligned with
gaps

The Golden Question

What is the contribution of your thesis?



- If you cannot summarize your contribution clearly in three sentences, examiners will sense uncertainty
- Say it with clarity, without overselling.

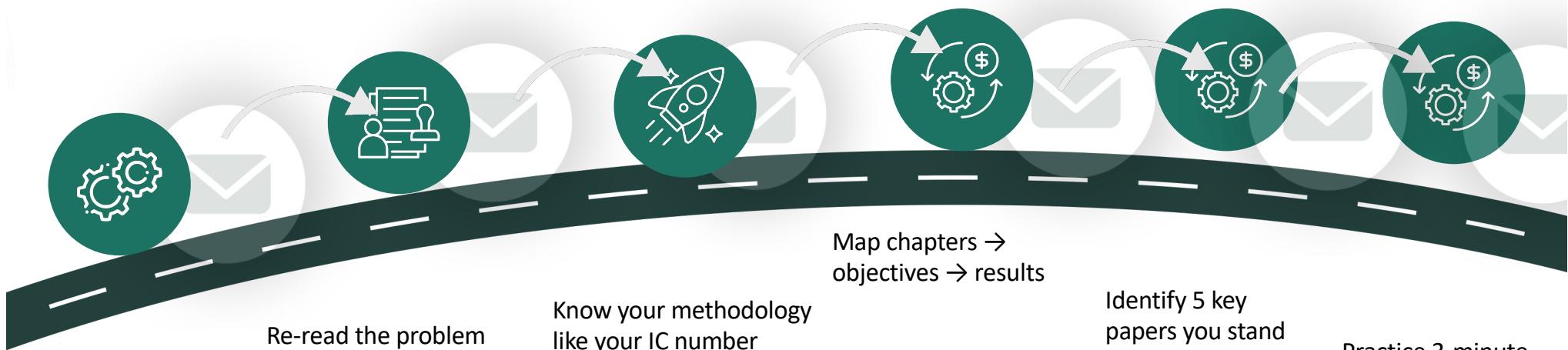
Common Pitfalls

- ✗ Overly long explanations
- ✗ Not understanding limitations
- ✗ Defensiveness
- ✗ Cannot justify design choices.
- ✗ Too dependent on slides
- ✗ Getting lost in technical details

- Admitting limitations does not weaken your thesis; it strengthens your credibility.



How to Prepare



Preparation is not memorising the whole thesis—it is developing a **clear mental map** of your research journey. If the logic is clear to you, it will be clear to the examiners.



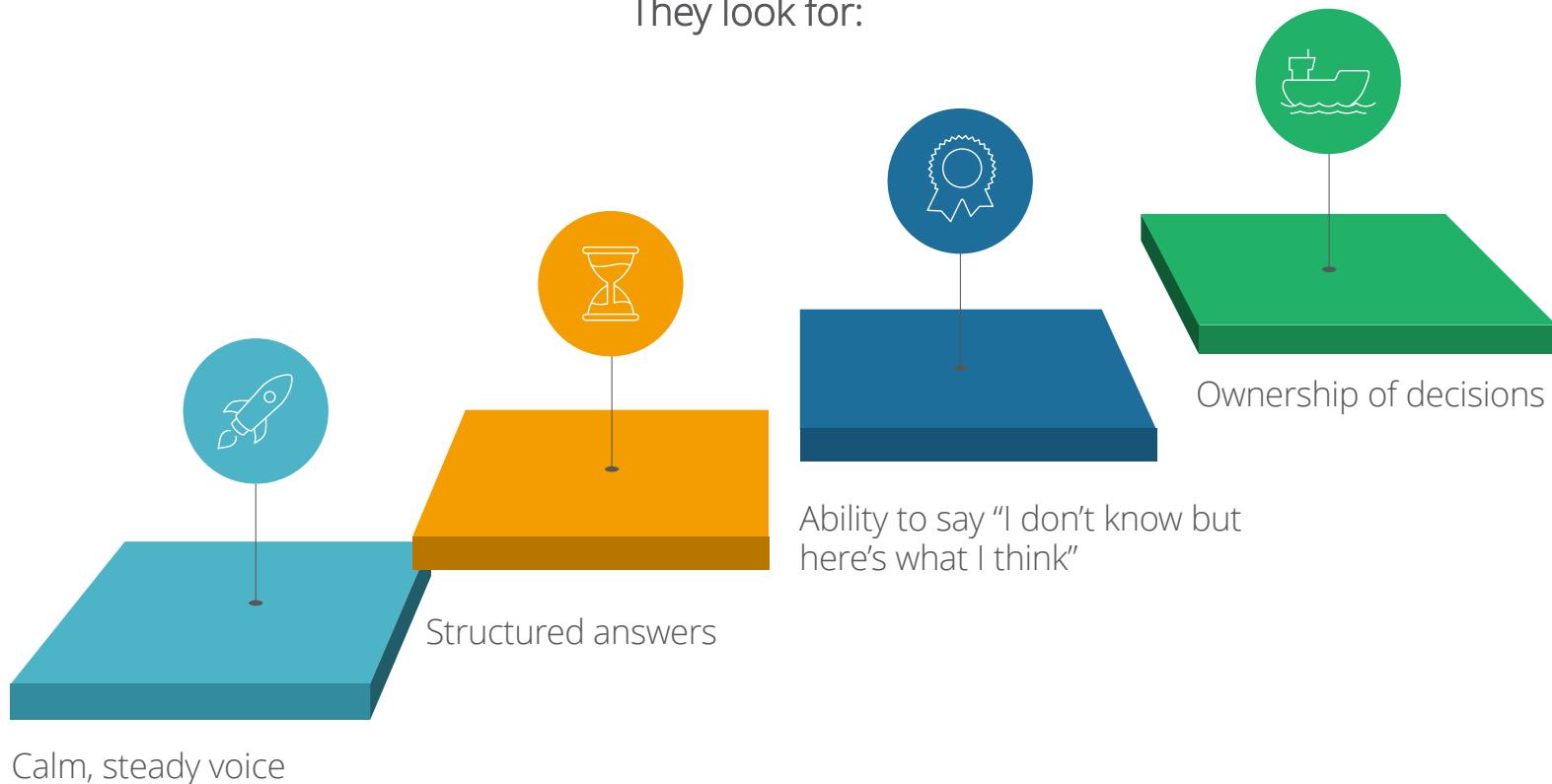
Strong Research Culture

- ▶ Integrity
- ▶ Curiosity
- ▶ Openness to critique
- ▶ Respect for evidence
- ▶ Patience in the research process

Your viva is not the end; it is a checkpoint.
A strong research culture is built on honesty, especially in reporting results.
It is shaped by curiosity—always asking the next question.
And it is strengthened by humility: being willing to improve.

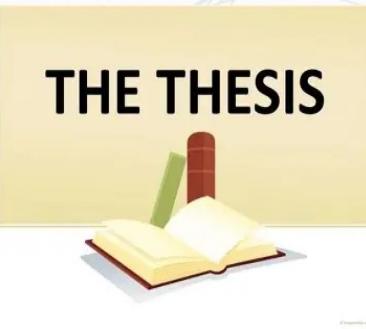
How Examiners Judge Confidence

They look for:



- Confidence is not volume or speed. It is coherence.
- If you can walk the examiner through your reasoning step by step, they will trust your scholarship

Takeaways



You have already
done the work



The viva is simply
you telling your
research story



Examiners want
you to pass



Your job: show clarity,
integrity, and academic
maturity

Your thesis reflects years of persistence. The viva is a celebration of that journey. Approach it with courage and clarity.



Thank you

RESEARCH IS
NOT A RACE;
IT IS A GROWTH

GOOD LUCK