

Guidelines for Conducting a Graduate Research Viva Voce Examinations from June 2022

Background

1. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Chapter 4 of the Graduate Research Regulations available at <https://www.tudublin.ie/media/website/research/postgraduate-research/graduate-research-school/documents/Graduate-Research-Regulations-.pdf>
2. Normally all viva voce examinations for graduate research students take place on campus and full details are provided in the Graduate Research Regulations.
3. The External Examiner may, however, request to hold the examination online, using the University's approved system. In such cases, all other participants, including the Chairperson, the internal examiner, the student and the supervisor(s), if invited, must be present at the on-campus venue.
4. Brightspace is the approved system to be used for online examinations, which is supported by IS Services. No alternative system can be used.
5. Use of Brightspace for the viva voce examination cannot be used as grounds for appeal.

Thesis Submission and Examination

6. All graduate research theses must be submitted in pdf format via OneDrive and shared with phd@tudublin.ie. Only one file will be accepted. No other format or submission system can be used.
7. At least six weeks prior to the proposed date of the examination, a soft copy of the thesis in pdf may be submitted electronically, together with the completed Form PGR 4B [*Confirmation of Suitability of Thesis*], via One Drive to the Graduate Research School Office. The Graduate Research School Office will note the date of submission. OneDrive can be accessed from Office 365 available at <https://www.tudublin.ie/for-students/student-login/city-centre/>. A file may be uploaded by clicking on "Upload" (Fig.1) and then shared with phd@tudublin.ie by clicking on the 3 dots beside the file name (Fig.2).

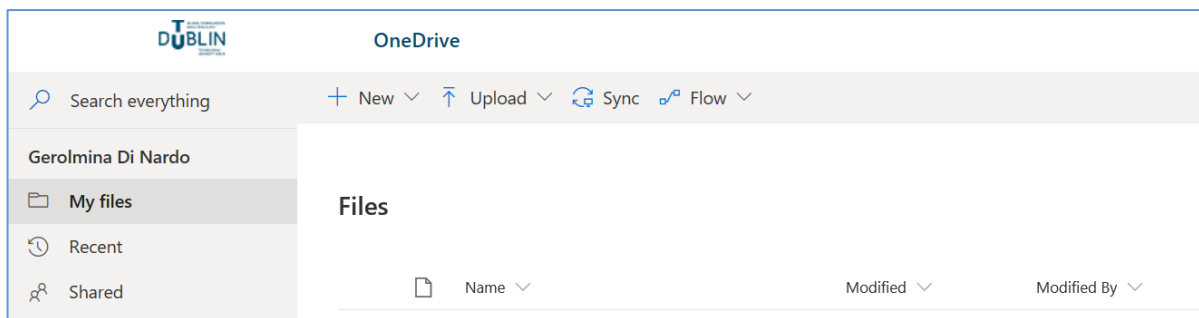


Fig.1. Upload a File



Fig.2. Share a File

8. In order to facilitate delivery and examination of the thesis by the examiners, an examination cannot take place within the five week period following submission of the thesis.
9. The Graduate Research School Office will ensure that the thesis, the Form PGR 4C [*Examination Report*] and all other documentation are sent to examiners, via OneDrive, within the first week following submission.
10. The internal and external examiners will endeavour to complete the examination of the work within four weeks of receiving the thesis. Each examiner will complete an individual typewritten preliminary report on the thesis prior to the examination and will return it, via email, to the designated chairperson 1 working day prior to the viva voce examination.
11. Discussion of the thesis between examiners, students and supervisors is not acceptable at any time prior to the examination.
12. If a student elects to submit their thesis without the completed Form PGR 4B and their supervisors' consent and if examiners have not already been nominated, the Head of the Graduate Research School in consultation with the relevant Head of School will complete Form PGR 4A [*Nomination of Examiners*]. In such cases two external examiners, of suitable academic and/or professional standing and meeting the criteria as described in step 1 of section 4.9 of the regulations will be nominated and the Graduate Research School Board approves such requests on behalf of Academic Council.

Organisation of Examinations

13. Prior to an online viva voce examination, the student and supervisor must consider if there is intellectual property (IP) to be protected. The University cannot ensure that IP can be protected in circumstances where the viva voce examination is held in a blended format.
14. Supervisor(s) may attend the viva voce examination in person, only at the invitation of the student, and the agreement of the examiners. Supervisor(s) cannot intervene at any stage unless asked by the examiners to provide clarification. The student must inform the Graduate Research School Office, at least 5 working days prior to the examination, that they have invited the supervisor to attend. The Graduate Research School Office will inform the Chairperson, who will confirm the agreement of the examiners.
15. All viva voce examinations, including those where the external examiner is participating via Brightspace, are conducted in private session and must not be recorded.
16. When participating via Brightspace, the external examiner must ensure that, for the duration of the examination, their location is private, with minimal disruption, so as to maintain the security and integrity of the examination.
17. The Graduate Research School Office is responsible for organisation of all viva voce examinations and the Chairperson is responsible for conducting the viva voce examination.
18. The student should submit a copy of the slides for their presentation to the Graduate Research School Office, at least 2 working days before the examination. The Graduate Research School Office will distribute to the Chairperson and Examination Panel, at least 1 working day before the examination.
19. A test of Brightspace, involving the student, the external examiner and staff from the Graduate Research School Office, must be conducted at least 1 working day before the examination. The student and staff from the Graduate Research School Office must be present at the examination venue for the test.
20. All parties should be able to see one another at all times during the examination. No viva voce is to be conducted by phone or other audio-only devices.

The Examination

21. At the start of all graduate research viva voce examinations, a preparatory meeting should be held between the Chairperson and both Examiners, to
- Agree the approach of the viva voce examination – the content and conduct
 - Review the written preliminary reports
 - Agree the management of post-viva voce examination paper work.
- After this preparatory meeting, the student will join the viva as per the viva schedule.
22. Normally, the viva voce examination should be completed within 1 to 2 hours.
23. In cases where the external examiner is participating via Brightspace and communication is broken during the first hour of the examination, and following three attempts, a connection cannot be re-established, the examination must be terminated and re-scheduled. This is not grounds for use of an alternative system. The Chairperson will make the decision to terminate the examination and will inform all parties of the decision via email.
24. In cases where the external examiner is participating via Brightspace and communication is broken during the second hour of the examination, and following three attempts, a connection cannot be re-established, the examination panel may be in a position to recommend an award without a re-scheduled examination. The Chairperson communicates with the examination panel via email and will inform all parties of the decision via email. In this case, the examination panel may only make one of the following recommendations:
- (a) The award is recommended with no corrections required in the thesis;
 - (b) The award is recommended subject to minor corrections to the thesis;
- If the examination panel are not in a position to recommend an award, no other recommendation is possible and the examination must be re-scheduled.
25. For re-scheduled examinations, written agreement must be obtained from all parties, to again use the blended format of examination. If all parties do not agree, the viva voce must be delayed, until such time as a face-to-face examination is possible.
26. Following all viva voce examinations, the student must leave the meeting to allow the examiners to discuss a recommendation. Supervisors do not participate in the final decision and should also leave the meeting while such deliberations take place.

27. The student and the supervisors will be re-admitted into the venue as per the viva schedule and the Chairperson will inform the candidate of the proposed result, once a recommendation is agreed.
28. The examiners' report must include a statement that the viva voce was conducted using Brightspace, if this is the case.