**Guidelines for Conducting a Viva Voce Examination using Brightspace**

**Background**

1. These guidelines are approved by the Graduate Research School Board, and should be read in conjunction with Chapter 4 of the Graduate Research Regulations available at <https://www.tudublin.ie/media/website/research/postgraduate-research/documents/GRS-1st-edition-March-2024.pdf>
2. Viva voce examinations for students registered on research programmes at TU Dublin are normally conducted face-to-face, at a venue on the University campus. In extraordinary circumstances, these examinations may be conducted using Brightspace, the approved University system.
3. Use of this format of viva voce examination cannot be used as grounds for appeal.
4. Brightspace is the approved system to be used, which is supported by IS Services. No alternative system can be used.

**Organisation of the Examination**

1. Prior to agreeing to this format of 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 these circumstances.
2. Supervisor(s) may attend this format of viva voce examination, 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.
3. The Graduate Research School office will contact all relevant students and their examination panels and written agreement, via email, must be obtained from all parties (the student, the chairperson, the internal and external examiners). If all parties do not agree the viva voce must be delayed.
4. The examination is conducted in private session and must not be recorded.
5. All parties (the student, the chairperson, the internal and external examiners) 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.
6. 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.

**Week Before Examination**

1. A test of Brightspace, involving the student and both examiners, must be conducted by the Chairperson, at least 1 working day before the examination.
2. 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**

1. At the start of the examination in this format, 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.

1. All parties should be able to see one another at all times during the examination.
2. Normally, the viva voce examination should be completed within 1 to 2 hours.
3. If 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.
4. If 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:
5. The award is recommended with no corrections required in the thesis;
6. 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.

1. For re-scheduled examinations, written agreement must be obtained from all parties, to again use the virtual 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.
2. Following the viva voce examination, 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.
3. The student and the supervisors will rejoin the meeting as per the viva schedule and the Chairperson will inform the candidate of the proposed result, once a recommendation is agreed.
4. The examiners’ report must include a statement that the viva voce was conducted using Brightspace.

**Week After Examination**

1. Following an examination in this format, the examination panel will agree a joint report, including a precise list of corrections, if any, to the thesis. This report and the list of corrections must be submitted via email to the Chairperson, within 5 working days of the examination. And the Chairperson is responsible for submission of the report and corrections to the Graduate Research School Office immediately.