

Structured PhD Programme

Thesis examination

Following submission of the thesis, it is sent to 2 examiners. One (the external examiner) is a well-qualified individual in your field of interest who does not work in Trinity College and has no direct connections with your work e.g. is not a co-author with you. It is usually a Professor at another university. The other (the internal examiner) is an academic member of staff in Trinity College. Within 3 months of submission, you are then examined in person by the two examiners. This oral examination is known in Trinity College as the viva voce, a Latin phrase that literally means "with living voice" and a relic of the time when all business in the university was conducted through Latin. The viva consists of you, the two examiners, and a chairman. Your supervisor usually also attends, although this is at your discretion and he or she will not contribute to the viva. It is a closed examination and not open to the public, as is the case in other parts of the world e.g. France, USA. The viva typically lasts 2 to 3 hours. At the end, the examiners decide one of the following:

- That the thesis be passed as it is;
- That the thesis be passed following minor corrections;
- Major corrections are required;
- A lower degree is awarded e.g. M.Sc.;
- That the thesis be rejected.

Minor corrections do not require you to re-register, must be completed within 2 months, and are checked by the internal examiner only before being passed; no further viva is required. Major corrections require that you re-register, pay a 6 month fee, and are checked by both examiners, who can request a further viva if deemed necessary.

Last updated 11 April 2014 by enquiries@scss.tcd.ie.