

## **Additional guidance - *viva* by video conferencing – without Independent Chair**

### **Before the *viva voce* examination**

#### **UP7A (Preliminary report)**

All examiners will have been sent the thesis, a UP7A Preliminary report form, a link to the Regulations for Research Degrees and a detailed Guidance Note for the Examination of Higher Degrees by Research.

The UP7A must be completed and returned to the Research Degrees team **at least 10 working days** before the date of the *viva voce* examination.

**The *viva* may not proceed unless all preliminary reports have been received by Research Degrees.**

#### **UP7B (Examiners' Recommendation) and Pre-*viva* meeting**

The Examiners' Recommendation form (UP7B) will be emailed to all examiners before the *viva* is to take place. A Pre-*viva* meeting should take place between all examiners, to discuss a format and agenda for the oral examination.

If any further clarification is required then examiners should contact the Research Degrees team on +44 (0)23 9284 7707.

#### **The Role of the Candidate's First Supervisor**

It is the responsibility of the First Supervisor to arrange the date and time of the *viva voce* with the Candidate and Examiners. They must also notify Research Degrees team by completing and returning a UPR5(A) form (Confirmation of arrangements for a Postgraduate Research *viva voce* examination).

Both the pre-*viva* meeting and the *viva* itself should be set-up and hosted by the Internal Examiner, however the First Supervisor may also set this up.

Any or all member of the Supervisory Team (usually the First Supervisor) may attend the *viva voce*, if the Candidate agrees.

If attending, the Supervisor will join and leave the online meeting at the same time as the Candidate and should only participate in the discussion if asked to do so by the Examiners in order to provide clarification on a specific matter. During the *viva*, the **First Supervisor must switch off their camera and their microphone** to ensure that they sit out of sight from the Candidate and do not contribute to the exam unless invited to do so.

If the Candidate agrees, the First Supervisor may sit in on the feedback session at the end of the *viva*. The participation of the First Supervisor should be agreed with the Candidate prior

to the online *viva* and communicated with the host so that the online meeting can be set up to include all the appropriate participants.

### **The *viva voce* Examination**

The *viva voce* may not proceed unless all the Examiners and the Candidate are present in the online meeting.

The examination will normally be conducted under the chairmanship of the External Examiner.

All examiners and the candidate should be visible by means of webcams.

The Internal Examiner should ensure that the private chat function is disabled during the online meetings.

It is expected of Examiners to ensure that the online arrangement of the *viva* does not threaten the Candidate's opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, defend their thesis and respond to all questions asked by the Examiners, nor the opportunity for all Examiners to contribute to the examination process.

The examination is a formal assessment, and if any irregularities are spotted or there is any unusual behaviour on the part of the Candidate, the examination will be stopped, either to be resumed once the Candidate has been able to provide a satisfactory explanation for such behaviour, or terminated altogether and a report of suspected misconduct lodged for further investigation.

On completion of the *viva voce* examination, the Candidate and the First Supervisor (if present) will leave the online meeting while the Examiners discuss their recommendation. The candidate (and the First Supervisor) will be able to return to the meeting once examiner deliberations are completed and they will be advised of the outcome. At this point the Examiners should also give a verbal report to the Candidate regarding required amendments, where applicable to the recommendation.

It is important that the Candidate, irrespective of the outcome, is not alone following the *viva*. Try to establish that the candidate will have a friend or family member 'standing by' on the phone or using other media at the end of the *viva*, if there is no-one else available.

### **Following the *viva voce***

The Internal Examiner should organise the completion of the UP7B form via email and its return to [researchdegrees@port.ac.uk](mailto:researchdegrees@port.ac.uk) within 24 hours.

Should the outcome of the *viva* require the student to complete corrections, a report of required amendments must be emailed to the Research Degrees team ([researchdegrees@port.ac.uk](mailto:researchdegrees@port.ac.uk)) within 10 working days.

## An example set-up of an online *viva*

