

The *viva voce* Examination: Guidance Note for Postgraduate Research Students (including Stage 2 Part 2 “Research Stage” of Professional Doctorates)

Please also see the Operational Handbook, which is available at <https://myport.port.ac.uk/guidance-and-support/research-degrees> for details regarding the nomination and appointment of the examiners.

Before the *viva voce* Examination:

- After discussion with your First Supervisor, you should decide with them whether they will be in attendance at the *viva voce*.

- You have the right to request an Independent Chair for the *viva voce* examination. This request needs to be submitted in writing to Student Administration Services (researchdegrees@port.ac.uk) who will then ask the relevant Faculty Research Degrees (FRD) Coordinator to appoint an Independent Chair. An Independent Chair may also be appointed by the University if the external examiner does not have experience of examining research degree students, the supervisory team or FRD Committee have any concerns, any examiner has examined another thesis put forward by your First Supervisor in the previous two years or the internal examiner has published with, sought external finance with, or delivered a joint conference paper with you during your registration.

- Your First Supervisor will inform you of the date, time and place of the *viva voce* examination.

- There is no dress code as such for your *viva voce*, but you should note this is a formal examination.

- The examiners may decide that the thesis is unsatisfactory and that no useful purpose would be served by holding the *viva voce* at this time. In the event of a referral being agreed, the examiners will provide a summary of the shortcomings of the thesis. The period of referral will be 12 months, by the end of which you must re-submit your thesis for examination. A referral fee will be due for this period.

Role of Your First Supervisor:

- Your First Supervisor should offer you the opportunity to have a mock *viva voce* to assist your preparation. They would then arrange this for you. If you are not given the opportunity to have a mock *viva* then please contact your FRD Coordinator.

- If your First Supervisor attends the *viva voce* then they will only participate in the discussion if asked by the examiners to provide clarification on a specific matter.

- Your First Supervisor may also sit in on the feedback session if you request it.

- Your First Supervisor is not permitted to take part in the discussion regarding the outcome of the examination and will therefore leave the room with you while the examiners discuss their recommendation.

The *viva voce* Examination:

- Unless an Independent Chair has been appointed, the examination will normally be conducted under the chairmanship of the external examiner. If two external examiners are present, the decision as to who will chair will be by mutual agreement of the examiners.
- During the *viva voce*, the examiners will:
 - test your knowledge of matters relevant to the subject of the thesis,
 - clarify any ambiguities in the thesis,
 - confirm they are satisfied that the thesis is your own work,
 - discuss any issues raised by their preliminary examination of the thesis,
 - ensure you are familiar with the relation of your work to the field of study from the literature review, and
 - ensure that your knowledge and understanding of the subject is of the standard required for the award of the degree.
- On completion of the *viva voce* examination you will be asked to leave the room while the examiners discuss their recommendation.
- You will be asked to return to the room (with your First Supervisor, if you request it) and will be informed of the result by the examiners.
- The recommendations available to the examiners are as follows:
 - The degree is awarded.
 - The degree is awarded subject to minor corrections. You may have up to **three months** to submit the amended thesis.
 - The degree is awarded subject to major corrections. You may have up to **six months** to submit the amended thesis.
 - The degree is not awarded, but you may have up to **one year** to submit a revised thesis for further examination and be re-examined with or without a further *viva voce*. A re-examination fee will be due for this period.
 - The degree is not awarded.
 - If a PhD was submitted, the examiners may award an MPhil, subject to amendments.

Post *viva voce* Examination:

- The result you receive at the end of the *viva voce* will be confirmed in writing by Student Administration Services and will include the time limits, who and where to submit any amendments and if any further fees apply.
- You must adhere to the deadline as your award is dependent on submission within the time limits.
- Professional Doctorate only – The award is only confirmed once agreed by the Board of Examiners
- If submission will be delayed due to extenuating circumstances please contact Student Administration Services as soon as possible.
- You have the right to appeal in accordance with the University's approved procedure.

For further information, please contact: researchdegrees@port.ac.uk +44(0)23 9284 7707