

Protocol for Electronic Vivas and Oral exams

The University has established a protocol for the holding of viva through electronic means. All vivas should either be conducted remotely or postponed to a later date until further notice. If a viva is to go ahead remotely, the chair should ensure that all participants are happy to proceed remotely and if any support arrangements are necessary.

During this period, the normal policy on applying for permission to hold the viva which the University normally requires special approval will be waived.

The University's suggestion is to proceed via electronic systems with all individuals, the University's preferred option would be to use Microsoft Teams, but other software systems can be used if necessary.

It is good practice for the chair to allow and encourage both staff and students to test their setup (prior to the meeting, to reduce the chance of technical issues on the day. In testing setups, a confirmation of a suitable stable connection, as well as a test of cameras and microphones should be carried out. A Teams meeting requires at least 500kbps download and upload for the lowest quality video call.

The chair will ensure that appropriate arrangements should there be in case of connectivity issues, such as confirmation of a direct telephone line which can be used to contact each participant to confirm or amend arrangements. A telephone line is not an acceptable alternative to a video connection.

At the start of the viva, the chair should confirm that the student has no one else in the room with them, unless previously agreed.

The chair should confirm the identity of all participants.

The chair should arrange that the viva is recorded. All participants should be asked to agree via email before the viva, or orally at the start.

The student will be asked to disconnect from the meeting when the panel has its private discussion. The student should then be asked to re-join the meeting. The chair should inform the student how they will be contacted when they should return.

The panel's discussion should not normally be recorded.

The recorded discussion will be available to the candidate should they request it.

Should the connection between the locations experience difficulties during the viva, the viva will be temporarily suspended in order to re-establish an appropriate connection. Should an appropriate arrangement not be found within an hour of the temporary suspension of the viva, the viva will be rearranged for a future date.

The chair will include a record of any difficulties encountered in their report.

If a student does not wish to proceed with the viva electronically or wish for the viva to be recorded, then the viva will be delayed until the viva can proceed in person. This will mean that no progression and award decisions can be made for that student, until the viva has been held.

Recorded files should be kept by the Partner for a period of six months.