

# GUIDELINES *for* *your* VIVA VOCE

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## Viva Voce - Oral Exam

This is a way to demonstrate your in-depth knowledge of your research and your research journey over the course of your studies. Some nerves are to be expected but there is a lot you can do to prepare for your viva.

**Remember** when it comes to an MPhil or PhD (there is a viva for both) you will be the person in the room that will know the most about your research.



## Notifications



Before your viva:

- Specify if you wish a member of your supervisory team to be present for the outcome. Attendance by a supervisor for the outcome needs to be approved by both you and the viva panel ahead of the exam.
- Detail if you require reasonable adjustments to be made on the **Notice of Intention to Submit a Research Degree Thesis**. Requests will be reviewed by the research team and the Inclusion and Disability Support team.

## Preparation

Some of these things may sound obvious but they are worth remembering:

- Have a contact number of someone (usually a supervisor) that you can inform in the unlikely event you are going to be late.
- Take a copy of your thesis (with the same pagination as the one sent to your examiners).
- Have a notebook, working pen and a drink in a sturdy container to avoid spillages! Accidents with drinks cause undue stress.
- Copies of any publications you may have and any supporting 'stuff' that you didn't put into the thesis, as appropriate

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## Viva Voce Top Tips

- Make sure you arrive early. You don't want the stress of a traffic hold up. You can always find somewhere quiet to sit with a coffee or tea while you wait.
- You may want to arrange to meet one of your supervisors, especially if they will be attending the outcome.
- About 20 minutes before the viva is about to begin go to the room and wait outside. **Don't** knock to tell the panel you are there. The Chair will come out and check that you are present.



## During the Viva

When you are invited into the room take your time to settle yourself into the seat that you have been allocated. It is important that you feel comfortable and have all the things you need to hand.

The Chair will usually introduce you to your panel and may tell you about how the panel plan to structure the viva.

**Note** that the chair is NOT part of your examination panel, they ensure the viva is conducted appropriately. If you need to take a break you can ask the chair and they will facilitate that.

The panel will usually ask you a question that they hope will settle you such as why you were interested in the study you have undertaken.



If you are not sure you have understood a question correctly, you can ask the panel to rephrase the question and/or clarify what they have asked you. You can also check back with the panel asking them 'does that answer your question?'

If you wish to write something down you can.

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## Remember



Some panels will take you through your thesis. If you are asked about a particular page, you can turn to it in your copy and take a moment to read the section. You cannot be expected to remember everything in detail that is in your thesis. Prepare, re-read your thesis. Work with your supervisors to think about what questions you may be asked.

Before the viva let your supervisor know if you wish them to be presented for the viva outcome. If you do want your supervisor to be present for the outcome, inform the Chair ahead of time so they can confirm with the exam panel.

Attend one of the Researcher Development training sessions on 'How to survive your viva'.

## Post Viva

Once the viva is concluded:

- You will be invited to leave the room. The panel will then discuss the outcome. Don't read anything in to how long you are asked to wait. It depends.
- Then you will be invited back into the room. Your supervisor will be invited to join at this point if you wish for them to be present for the outcome, as long as you have informed the panel ahead of the viva date.
- You will be told the outcome when you are called back in.

## Post Viva

- You will be given an indication of the changes required. Don't try and write these down. The changes you will be required to do will be given to you in writing after the viva (usually within 5 working days). The panel may change their mind when writing the report about what they want you to do.
- If you don't agree with some of the changes requested, the time to discuss that is not in the viva but with your supervisors after the event is concluded.
- Remember your supervisory team are there to support you through the changes and you should continue to meet with them and complete RDC5s.

