Quick Answers
Doctoral Thesis Viva Voce Examination

This is intended as a source for quick reference on the examination process. Please see the Policy and Procedures for Conducting Remote Viva Voce (Viva) Examinations for Research Degrees document for full details; if you have any questions, please contact student support.

1. What does Viva Voce mean?

Viva Voce literally means ‘live voice’.

2. Why do we have a Viva Voce?

According to the University’s Postgraduate Research Handbook, “the objective of the viva examination is to allow students the opportunity to explore, clarify and defend their research in the presence of academic leaders in their chosen discipline area.”

3. Why is the Viva Voce sometimes referred to a defence?

The Viva Voce should be a focused academic discussion whereby as the student you answer questions posed by the examiners in a manner that reflects your knowledge base surrounding your doctoral research study. In this way, you should be able to provide a reasoned rationale (defence) underpinning your doctoral study.

4. What happens at the Viva Voce?

The processes involved in the Viva Voce are specified in the Policy and Procedures for Conducting Remote Viva Voce (Viva) Examinations for Research Degrees for 2015-2016. It is important that you are familiar with these regulations, and therefore it is important that you re-read these in the lead up to your Viva Voce. You can access these here.

5. On what basis is the viva voce assessed?

The thesis and the viva are assessed according to the following criteria:

- Intellectual, ethical and methodological soundness of the practitioner research, including coverage of areas indicated as relevant to the construction of a practitioner research thesis.
- Critical analysis, informed by consideration of a range of factors pertinent to the doctoral level, such as the application of research technique and limitations on the extent to which knowledge is actionable.
- Contribution to knowledge and practice, and to own personal and professional learning.
• Adherence to appropriate academic standards of written communication, in keeping with formal requirements on the style and presentation of dissertations.
• Defence of thesis in an oral examination, judged further in relation to the capacity of the candidate to respond comprehensively and robustly to questions posed by the assessors

6. Will my thesis supervisor be present at the Viva Voce?

As per the University regulations your supervisor will not be present at the viva examination.

7. How long will the Viva Voce last?

There is no standard time set for the Viva Voce. In practice, the Viva Voce often lasts between 1 and 2 hours.

8. What are the possible outcomes of the viva?

Following the viva voce examination and a review of all previous performance in the programme, the Examiners may recommend (subject to the University’s Framework for Online Professional Doctorates):

1. Pass
2. Pass (with minor modifications)
3. Pass (with major modifications)
4. Resubmission
5. Fail

Please consult your programme’s Thesis Handbook for more information about each of these categories.