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# GS20 CHAIRPERSON PROCEDURES FOR PhD VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION 2023-2026

**This pack contains important information for chairpersons of PhD viva voce examinations in TUS. Please read this information carefully.**

1. **Introduction**

This pack contains essential information for Chairpersons of Viva Voce examinations in TUS. All chairpersons must read this carefully in advance of the examination.

**1.1 Procedures for PhD viva voce examinations**

All viva voce examinations will be examined through a PhD Viva Examination Panel

**PhD Viva Committee**

* **External Examiner**: an expert external to the Institution, and not a collaborator in the candidate or supervisor’s research. In conjunction with the internal examiner, this examiner will assess the candidate.
* **Internal Examiner**: a member of TUS academic staff. The internal examiner will examine the thesis with the external examiner. The internal examiner is also tasked with communicating thesis corrections, where appropriate, to the candidate after the viva voce and is tasked with completing the Internal Examinations Report-Confirming Award confirming all corrections requested by the Internal and External Examiners have been addressed by the candidate.
* **Chairperson**: a member of TUS academic staff. The role of the Chairperson is to clarify the Institution regulations, where appropriate, and to ensure that the viva voce is conducted in a courteous and professional manner. The Chairperson must intervene if the examiners do not adhere to these regulations.

**1.2 Presentation**

Prior to the viva voce examination, the candidate will give a presentation (up to 40 mins duration) which will be open to any interested parties within or outside of the relevant faculty. This presentation can be chaired by the viva chairperson or internal examiner. Whilst the internal and external examiners will attend this presentation, it is envisaged that most of their questioning of the candidate will occur during the viva voce examination. The presentation provides an opportunity for the PhD candidate to share their research findings with members of the Faculty.

**1.3 Viva Voce Examination**

The viva voce examination will take place immediately following the presentation. While there is no specified length, on exceeding 2.5 hours the Chairperson should offer a comfort break of 10 minutes.

**1.4 Examiners Evaluation**

The examiners will evaluate the merits of the thesis and submit independent reports and examination decision forms as appropriate.

General procedures for examination of a thesis are as indicated in the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026.

**1.5 Role of Independent Chairperson**

The role of the Chairperson is to clarify TUS regulations, where appropriate, and to ensure that the viva voce is conducted in a courteous and professional manner. The Chairperson must intervene if the examiners do not adhere to these regulations.

The conduct of the examination is the responsibility of the examiners, in consultation with the Chairperson of the viva voce. The only parties who may be involved in any discussion of the proposed result prior to the viva voce are: the internal and external examiners and the Chairperson.

The Supervisor, or under exceptional circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Dean of Graduate Studies, other cognate person, has the right to be present at the viva voce examination purely as an observer unless the student wishes otherwise.

* 1. **Duties of the Chairperson**

The principal duties of the Chairperson are as follows:

**Preparation in advance of the Viva Voce:**

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| * Chairperson should have to hand contact details for supervisor and director |
| * Arrive at viva location before time (if online, please check that technology works, you are at an appropriate location, and that internet connection is stable). |
| * Be aware of location of restrooms convenient to examination |
| * Make sure there is water available for examiners and candidate * Chairperson should have read the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026 and understood their operationalisation. * Chairperson should be familiar with their role and must have consulted all relevant documentation before the commencement of the viva. |

**Discussion with examiners:**

* Provide overview of the TUS Postgraduate Research Regulations 2023-2026 in relation to the conduct of viva voce examinations
* Check that examiners have provided all relevant forms and documentation before the viva progresses
* Explain the different thesis decisions
* Ascertain examiners’ overall assessment of the thesis.

**Commencing the viva:**

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| * Allow candidate into viva. |
| * Ensure that access is limited to only those who are permitted. |
| * Introduce candidate to examiners, if not done so already. |
| * Remind all to switch phones off or to put them on silent. |
| * Ensure that environment is conducive to examination, i.e. light, ventilation, noise etc. |
| * Make sure candidate is comfortable and has water. |
| * Ensure that the candidate is being examined in a fair and consistent manner as per the Regulations. |
| * Constantly check physical conditions of room are acceptable during viva (noise etc) |
| * Offer candidate a break after 150 minutes * Record events that happen during the viva including any events/occurrences that may seem unusual. |

**Decision-making**

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| * Chairperson asks candidate to leave the room |
| * Chairperson returns to viva. Only examiners and Chairperson are present at this point |
| * Examiners make deliberations |
| * Chairperson provides information on difference between minor versus major corrections   **Recommendations:**  The chair must ensure that the examiners reach a consensus on their decision. The following list encompasses the recommendations: |

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| a. Recommended |  |
| b. Recommended with minor revisions (to be completed within 3 months) |  |
| c. Recommended with major revisions (to be completed within 12 months) |  |
| d. For a PhD examination only: An award of Masters in an appropriate area is recommended, (the panel to define the time period of any amendments required in line with b/c above) |  |
| e. Not recommended |  |

**Completion of Decision Form and Chairperson Report**

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| * Chairperson instructs each examiner to complete decision form. |
| * Chairperson recommend these forms are returned to the relevant email address or are given to the Chairperson if completed on the day. |
| * Chairpersons should suggest expeditious communication of corrections to the candidate. |
| * Chairperson reminds the internal examiner of their responsibility regarding corrections. |
| * Chairperson recall candidate, and candidate informed. * Chairperson report form must be completed for each viva within a timely manner and returned to the relevant office. |

**Important note: Chairing when the candidate is a member of staff**

The responsibility of the Chairperson becomes even greater in this situation as two external examiners may have less of a knowledge of the standards; thus, they may need greater facilitation in arriving at their decision. The Chairperson should ensure that one of the examiners will take the role of the internal examiner with respect to corrections.

* 1. **Roles not to be filled by the Chairperson**
* Booking venues/accommodation/refreshments etc is not in the remit of the Chairperson.
* The Chairperson may attend the pre- viva presentation, but is **not** expected to chair it.