VIVA VOCE OR ORAL EXAMINATION

Equality and Diversity statement
City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.
Viva Voce or Oral Examination

The following statements should be read alongside the University’s Regulations for Doctoral Programmes (Senate Regulation 24) and Masters Degrees by Research (Senate Regulation 23). The statements are intended to provide further clarity on the policies and processes that assure the quality and enhancement of research degree provision across the University and which are outlined in the Framework for Research Degrees Provision.

The University’s Research Degree Framework and Regulations apply equally to partnership provision unless different arrangements have been agreed between the University and partner institution and have received University approval. Details will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership and in information provided to students.

Principles

1. Students are required to present themselves for a viva voce examination on the subject of their thesis unless, by permission of the Doctoral College Board of Studies through delegated powers of Senate on the recommendation of the examiners, they are deemed to be exempt from the oral examination.

2. Students are required to attend a viva in order to defend their thesis and to demonstrate that the work is their own.

3. The supervisor is not permitted to act as an examiner but may attend the examination as an observer at the discretion of the examiners and the student. Students have the right to ask that their supervisor(s) not be present at the viva.

4. Two examiners, a chairperson and usually the first supervisor are present at the viva. The examination can be of varying lengths but an examination will normally last between one and three hours.

5. Where possible, the viva voce examination should take place with all participants present at a City, University of London venue. In exceptional circumstances, participants may attend using videoconferencing (typically, one of the examiners). Where this applies, the remote attendance should be noted as part of the nomination of examiner and/or viva arrangements processes; all participants (candidate/examiners/chair) must consent to the use of videoconferencing in advance of the viva voce examination.

6. A Chair is appointed to ensure that the examination is conducted in a fair and academically rigorous manner. The Chair will advise the examiners and the student on any regulatory matters that may arise

7. The examination process should normally be completed within a period of three months from the date of submission wherever possible and only when the student has given sufficient notice of intention to submit for appropriate examiners to be appointed and arrangements for the viva to be made. Where it is not possible for the examination process to be completed within the proposed three-month period, every endeavour will be made to ensure that the process is completed as close to within three months as practicable.
The examiners may decide on any one of the following outcomes:

a) that the candidate be awarded an appropriate doctoral level degree drawn from clause 1 of the regulations for doctoral programmes

b) that a doctoral level award be made subject to typographical amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within 1 month

c) that a doctoral level award be made subject to amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiner within 3 months without the need for presentation for a further oral examination

d) that a doctoral level award be made subject to amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiners within 6 months with or without the need for presentation for a further oral examination

e) that a doctoral level award be made subject to amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the examiners within 12 months with or without the need for presentation for a further oral examination

f) that the candidate be awarded a Masters Level qualification in accordance with clause 11 of Senate Regulation 23

g) that the candidate be not awarded a degree.

8. It is normally expected that minor amendments will be completed within six months and major amendments will be completed within twelve months. Examiners are also permitted to recommend a different period in which amendments should be completed and should specify the proposed length of time in the joint report along with reasons for the recommendation

9. In the rare case that the examiners are not be able to reach a recommendation on the day of the viva further advice will be sought. This may involve the appointment of a third examiner who will be asked to read the thesis and make a final judgement;

10. The first supervisor is provided with a copy of the examiners’ reports in order that the student and the supervisor(s) can discuss any amendments required. Copies of the examiners’ reports may also be provided to the student.
11. In the event of a resubmission, examiners may agree to recommend

a) that the candidate be awarded an appropriate doctoral level degree drawn from clause 1 of the regulations for doctoral programmes

b) that the candidate be awarded an appropriate doctoral level degree drawn from clause 1 of the regulations for doctoral programmes subject to minor amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. Such amendments are required to be completed in no more than 4 weeks of the reexamination and include the following:
   • Typographical errors
   • Minor amendments to text
   • References or other diagrams or
   • More extensive corrections that do not require significant reworking of the intellectual content of the thesis

c) That the candidate be awarded a Masters Level qualification (see regulation 23)

d) That the candidate be awarded an appropriate Masters level degree drawn from clause 1 of the University’s regulations for Masters degree by Research subject to minor amendments being carried out to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. Such amendments are required to be completed in no more than 4 weeks of the re-examination and may include the following:
   • Typographical errors
   • Minor amendments to text
   • References or other diagrams or
   • More extensive corrections that do not require significant reworking of the intellectual content of the thesis

e) That the candidate be not awarded a degree.

12. Students may apply for an extension to the period in which they are required to re-submit their thesis for further examination through an application to the Senior Tutor for Research and in agreement with the examiners

13. Should the examiners reach the decision that the candidate be not awarded a degree or that a degree of MPhil (or equivalent) be awarded where the degree of PhD (or equivalent) was sought the student should be advised of their right to appeal the decision.
## Policy Title

Viva Voce or Oral Examination

## Policy Enabling Owner and Department

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<tr>
<th>Policy Enabling Owner and Department</th>
<th>Responsible for Implementation and Department</th>
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<td>Quality and Academic Development, Student and Academic Services</td>
<td>Schools; City Doctoral College</td>
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## Approving Body

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<td>Senate</td>
<td>07/10/2020</td>
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## Last Reviewed and Version

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## Publication of Policy (tick as appropriate)

- For public access online (internet)? ☑
- For staff access only (intranet)? ☐


Intranet Link:

Storage (Previous versions of the policy must be stored in the drive by the author)

reg-dev\QUAD\Quality Manual\9. Research Degrees\Policy

## Queries about this policy should be referred to

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Quality and Academic Development (QUAD), Student and Academic Services (S&AS)