

**UNIVERSITY OF  
INSPIRING  
RESEARCH  
WESTMINSTER** 

University of Westminster  
Graduate School  
Guidance for Examiners of Research  
Degrees

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# Contents

<b>Examination Guidance</b> .....	4
<b>1. Appointment of the Examination Panel</b> .....	4
<b>a. Approaching Examiners</b> .....	4
<b>2. Role of Examiners</b> .....	4
<b>a. Joint Responsibilities</b> .....	4
<b>b. Internal Role and expectations</b> .....	5
<b>c. External Role and expectations</b> .....	5
<b>d. Fees and expenses</b> .....	6
<b>e. Chair</b> .....	6
<b>f. Director of Studies</b> .....	7
<b>g. Timetable for examination</b> .....	7
<b>3. Criteria for Award/Assessment Criteria</b> .....	8
<b>4. Special examination arrangements</b> .....	8
<b>5. Thesis Submission and Dispatch</b> .....	8
<b>a. Submission</b> .....	8
<b>b. Dispatch and accessing the thesis</b> .....	8
<b>c. Confidentiality</b> .....	9
<b>6. Arrangement of the Viva</b> .....	9
<b>7. Examination</b> .....	10
<b>a. Preliminary Reports</b> .....	10
<b>b. Viva Voce</b> .....	10
<b>c. Joint Report</b> .....	11
<b>d. Amendments report</b> .....	12
<b>e. After the Viva and Ratification of Outcome</b> .....	12
<b>8. Submission of Amendments</b> .....	13
<b>9. Resubmission of Thesis</b> .....	13
<b>10. Conferment</b> .....	13
<b>11. Summary</b> .....	13
<b>12. What to do when</b> .....	14
...Examiners fail to reach an agreement .....	14
...Conducting a viva exam by video link or video conferencing .....	14
... If the candidate becomes unwell during the viva .....	15
...The candidate requests more time to complete corrections/revisions .....	15
...Plagiarism is detected in the thesis .....	15

...There is an unexpected interruption to the examination.....	15
Contact details.....	15
Appendix 1: Possible Outcomes .....	16
Appendix 2: Viva Good Practice.....	18

## **Examination Guidance**

This guidance has been produced by Graduate School and is intended to help examiners of research degrees. It contains important information on the University's requirements for research degrees and the criteria to be met before award of the degree can be considered. It also provides detailed information about the recommendations open to examiners, with advice on when it is appropriate to use them.

Additionally, the overall examination process is outlined, as are the roles and responsibilities of all concerned in the examination process.

Please be advised that the examination process uses the University's [Virtual Research Environment \(VRE\)](#). Examiners are therefore requested to bring a laptop with them on the day of the viva examination.

Please note, nothing in the content of this guidance takes precedence over [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#), which may be subject to amendment.

### **1. Appointment of the Examination Panel**

#### **a. Approaching Examiners**

It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies and wider supervisory team to identify appropriate examiners for the examination well in advance of the submission of the thesis.

Verbal or written agreement of the examiners to undertake this task should be obtained prior to their formal nomination via the [VRE](#). The Director of Studies should request a copy of the examiner's recent CV and their completion of the [External Examiner Form](#) to assist with the nomination.

The nomination should then be made via the VRE. This should be done at least 3 months prior to the submission of the thesis (see [Research Degree Academic Regulation B8.21](#)).

The proposed panel will then be reviewed by the School PhD Co-ordinator, Graduate School Registry and finally ratified by Graduate School Board.

Once approved the examination panel will be notified and their appointment confirmed via an automatic notification sent via the [VRE](#).

The examination may not take place until the examination arrangements have been approved by the University's Graduate School Board (GSB).

Late appointment of examiners (i.e., after the thesis has been submitted), will result in a delay in the overall examination process and can cause considerable distress and inconvenience to the candidate and other related colleagues.

In exceptional circumstances, Graduate School Board may act directly to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of a candidate.

### **2. Role of Examiners**

#### **a. Joint Responsibilities**

Examiners must be sensitive to the need to treat all candidates fairly and equally, to respect diversity and diverse needs, and to take into account in the examination process any reasonable adjustments required for accessibility.

It is the joint responsibility of examiners:

- To examine the thesis (and practice-based work where applicable) according to the University's criteria for research degrees within the specified timescale;
- To follow the University's procedures in relation to the examination of its degrees;
- To read the thesis and to each complete an independent preliminary report prior to the viva examination;
- To produce a joint report immediately following the viva examination and to make an agreed recommendation;
- To informally notify the candidate of the outcome of the examination. Formal notification will be sent by the Graduate School Registry following Graduate School Board ratification of the examiners' reports;
- (where applicable) to provide the candidate with written details of any required amendments to the thesis. **This should be provided within two weeks of the examination.**

Examiners may only examine a thesis they have accessed via the VRE (access being granted by Graduate School Registry following successful appointment). The candidate should have no unauthorised contact with the examiners, either directly or via a third party, prior to the first examination/re-examination on matters relating to the thesis. Examiners should not accept an electronic copy of a thesis (e.g., a PDF file sent by email) sent to them by the candidate or any member of the supervisory team, as there is no way to verify that its content is identical to the copy submitted to Graduate School Registry.

#### **b. Internal Examiner Role and expectations**

It is the responsibility of the Internal Examiner to:

- Examine the candidate's suitability for the award of the higher degree in question;
- Ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with the University's Regulations and Quality Assurance procedures;
- Verify that the standards expected of successful candidates are appropriate for the level of the award;

The Internal Examiner is expected to:

- Complete a preliminary report on the work presented for examination and submit this via the VRE at least a week before the viva examination date;
- Co-ordinate with the external examiner to produce a jointly written report immediately after the viva;
- Co-ordinate with the external examiner to produce, where necessary, a corrections/revisions list and agree who will sign off those amendments, within two weeks of the viva;
- Examine a resubmitted thesis at a later date (if that is what has been agreed as per the above).

#### **c. External Examiner Role and expectations**

It is the responsibility of the External Examiner to:

- Examine the candidate's suitability for the award of the higher degree in question;
- Enable the University to ensure that its degrees are comparable in standard with those awarded by other universities in the United Kingdom in similar subjects;
- Verify that the standards expected of successful candidates are appropriate for the level of the award;

- Monitor and report on the proceedings of the Board of Examiners and in particular on whether these ensure that candidates are treated fairly and consistently.

The External Examiner is expected to:

- Complete a preliminary report on the work presented for examination and submit this via the VRE at least a week before the viva examination date;
- Attend the viva voce examination and recommend an outcome;
- Co-ordinate with the internal examiner to produce a jointly written report immediately after the viva;
- Co-ordinate with the internal examiner to produce, where necessary, a corrections/revisions list and agree who will sign off those amendments, within two weeks of the viva;
- Examine a resubmitted thesis at a later date (if that is what has been agreed as per the above).

#### **d. Fees and expenses**

Following the oral examination, external examiners will be paid the following:

- £200 for PhDs
- £150 for MPhils and PhD Resubmissions after 12 months.

The payment of the examination fee will be made gross, and it will be for the examiner to declare the payment with their relevant tax authorities. Overseas based examiners will be required to confirm that they are tax registered in their own country and subject to that country's tax laws.

Examiners may also claim back expenses incurred for the oral examination. This includes one night accommodation at a standard price hotel, plus up to £300 travel.

***Please note:** any expenses incurred that exceed the above would need to be claimed through the candidate's School. Please check with the candidate's Director of Studies before making arrangements.*

The Graduate School are unable to cover any visa related expenses.

Payment can only be made directly to examiners. We do not pay invoices nor make payment to or via a third party, including an examiner's home institution.

Examiners should submit the forms which can be found on [the website](#) following the viva.

These should be emailed to [graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk). Once the exam reports have been received by Graduate School, your payment paperwork will be processed, and the payment request form prepared. The payment request form is then submitted to finance colleagues on a monthly basis, at the end of the month, featuring all examiners who undertook exams in the preceding month i.e., examiners who conduct vivas in July could expect payment in August (provided they submit their paperwork before the date the request is submitted to finance colleagues).

#### **e. Chair**

Oral Examinations at the University of Westminster are supported by a Chair of Examiners. The Chair of Examiners will normally be the candidate's School Doctoral Coordinator, or a senior member of staff nominated by the Doctoral Coordinator.

The Chair of Examiners is not an examiner and will be responsible for ensuring and attesting to the proper and fair conduct of the examination.

The Chair of Examiners is also responsible for:

- Organising viva voce examination: liaising with the external and internal examiners, candidate, and Director of Studies to arrange a suitable date for the viva examination;
- Confirming the viva date and submitting this to the VRE;
- Making the appropriate arrangements for the viva examination, booking a room on campus/ catering, and taking into account any specific requirements identified by the candidate and supplied by the Graduate School Registry (e.g., in a Disability Action Plan);
- Making appropriate arrangements for a pre-viva meeting between the examiners to discuss the preliminary reports and agree a line of questioning to use in the examination (please note that members of the supervisory team should not attend the pre-viva meeting, but will make themselves available on the day to consult with the examiners before the examination, if requested);
- Ensuring that all the examiners have completed and made available the preliminary reports to the University at least one week before the oral examination;
- Ensuring that the oral examination (viva) is conducted in a fair and proper manner and confirm this via the section of the joint report in the VRE;
- Ensuring that the examiners' joint report is completed immediately following the viva via the VRE and indicates a recommended outcome that has been signed off by all examiners before exiting the examination room;
- Facilitating any essential communications between the candidate and the examiners that may be necessary after the oral examination, e.g., clarification on a required correction.

For full guidance on the Chair of Examiners and their role, please see [Chair of Examiner Guidance Notes](#).

#### **f. Director of Studies**

The Director of Studies is required to check the electronic copy of the thesis for plagiarism prior to, or after submission. Once this check has been completed the Director of Studies should confirm this via the VRE. This must be done before the thesis can be cleared for distribution outside of the University.

It is the responsibility of a member/s of the supervisory team to be available to the candidate prior to and immediately after the oral examination in order to offer advice and support (where the Director of Studies is not available, another member of staff should be nominated for this role) and to provide continuity and support to the candidate where corrections to the thesis are required, whether this be minor amendments or a full resubmission, following the examination.

#### **g. Timetable for examination**

In the interests of the candidate, the university expects that the examination will be completed within three months of the examiners receiving the thesis. If there is difficulty in complying with this request, please inform the Graduate School Registry.

Examiners will have a minimum of one month to read a thesis and prepare to examine it.

The candidate must be given as much notice as possible of the date of an upcoming viva examination (at least one month's notice).

Examiners are expected to examine a corrected thesis and return the relevant examiners' report within one month of receipt.

Candidates will be made aware of the time needed for examiners to properly carry out their role, and examiners should contact the Graduate School Registry if they are the recipient of undue pressure from the candidate or supervisory team to set a viva date, or to examine a corrected thesis to a foreshortened deadline.

### **3. Criteria for Award/Assessment Criteria**

A Doctorate (e.g., PhD or D. Prof) shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

The MPhil shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

Please see [Appendix B of the Research Degree Handbook](#) for the full award descriptors.

### **4. Special examination arrangements**

The Disability Discrimination Act requires institutions to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities. Examiners will be advised of any adjustments to be made for a candidate in advance of the examination by the Chair of Examiners and/or Graduate School Registry.

Examiners informed directly by the Director of studies or candidate of any disability, even in confidence, should contact the Graduate School Registry at [graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk).

Where particular arrangements for the examination are made in response to needs identified by the candidate or covered in a Reasonable Adjustments Form, these should also be treated as confidential.

### **5. Thesis Submission and Dispatch**

#### **a. Submission**

Submission of the thesis must be made via the VRE (see [Research Degree Handbook](#) pg. 42).

Under no circumstances should the candidate, Director of Studies, or member of the supervisory team email or post the examiners the thesis. The thesis should only be sent by the Graduate School via the VRE. If examiners have received the thesis by any other means they should contact the Graduate School Registry immediately.

#### **b. Dispatch and accessing the thesis**

In line with the University's sustainability values, we do not normally provide printed copies of theses (candidate submission is electronic only).



Access to the thesis via the [VRE](#) will be granted to the examiners at least four weeks before the viva.

The required thesis length is detailed in the regulations as follows:

**Master of Philosophy Thesis:** maximum of 40,000 words. This includes footnotes, but not appendices, table of contents, tabulated and statistical data, diagrams and analogous illustrative material (maps, facsimile documents etc) and the bibliography.

**Doctor of Philosophy Thesis:** maximum approximately 80,000 words. This includes footnotes, but not appendices, table of contents, tabulated and statistical data, diagrams and analogous illustrative material (maps, facsimile documents etc) and the bibliography.

**Practice based PhD Thesis:** maximum of 40-50,000 words plus an exhibition/practice portfolio

**Professional Doctorate:** a minimum of 40,000 words for a STEMM subject area and 60,000 words for a non-STEMM subject area.

**PhD By Published Work:** The submission shall be a coherent body of work which, constitutes an original contribution to knowledge and is of the same quality, rigour and volume required of a normal PhD in that field. It shall be accompanied by an abstract and a commentary which describes the aims of the research, incorporates an analytical discussion of the main results and conclusions, and puts the total work submitted in context. The commentary should not normally exceed 5,000 words for science and technology (STEMM) subjects and 10,000 for arts, social sciences and humanities (non-STEMM).

The full regulations can be found here: [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#)

### c. Confidentiality

All matters relating to the examination will be treated as confidential both during and after the assessment process.

## 6. Arrangement of the Viva

After the thesis has been made available to the examiners, the Chair of Examiners should arrange a mutually convenient time and place to hold the oral examination. Once the date has been set this will need to be submitted to the [VRE](#) by the Chair of Examiners.

A viva can either be held in person, online, or a hybrid approach but the format of the viva must be agreed with the candidate in advance of the examination.

For guidance on conducting an online viva please see the following resource put together by UKCGE: <https://ukcge.ac.uk/resources/resource-library/conducting-vivas-online-a-guide-for-institutions-and-candidates>

The candidate's Director of Studies or other member of the supervisory team should not attend the viva unless the candidate has given their permission. The candidate should detail, via the VRE at the time of submission, if they would like any members of their supervisory team present at the viva.

If present, the Director of Studies or Supervisor should enter and leave the room at the same time as the candidate and should participate in the discussion only if asked to provide clarification on a specific matter by the Examiners. After the examination, the Chair should indicate in the Chair's Report whether or not the supervisor was present (See Regulation B8.15).

## **7. Examination**

### **a. Preliminary Reports**

An independent preliminary report is to be submitted by each examiner at least five working days before the viva voce examination. Once both reports have been submitted, they will be made available to each examiner and the Chair. This report forms the basis for the pre-meeting discussion between examiners and chair. These reports are not made visible to the candidate.

Examiners are asked to consider the submission, respond to and comment on the following:

- Does the thesis represent a significant contribution to knowledge of the subject by:
  - the discovery of new methods or materials?
  - the exercise of independent critical powers?
- Does the thesis provide evidence of originality?
- Is the thesis satisfactory as regards literary presentation and succinctness?
- Is the abstract of the thesis submitted acceptable?

Examiners should also provide a written report of at least 500 words which should be sufficiently detailed to form the basis for the questions to be asked at the viva, before making a provisional recommendation.

### **b. Viva Voce**

The purpose of the oral examination is for the examiners to establish whether all the requirements for a thesis submitted for the research degree have been met and that the thesis is genuinely the work of the candidate.

Examiners will be required to access the University's [VRE](#) on the day of the viva and are therefore requested to bring a laptop with them on the day.

#### *Pre-meeting*

All MPhil and Doctoral viva examinations are expected to start with a preliminary meeting between the two examiners and the Chair of Examiners. The purpose of this meeting is to consider the views of the two examiners, including any differences of opinion and to set an agenda of questions for the candidate (based on the preliminary reports).

Drawn from the preliminary reports, the agenda may encompass: areas for discussion; specific questions; direction to be taken ... as appropriate to the discipline and the initial views of the thesis. It is reasonable to acknowledge that the questions/discussion will be responsive to the candidate's responses as the viva progresses.

#### *Viva*

The candidate then comes into the room (in person or virtually), accompanied by the supervisors (some or all of whom attend at the discretion of the candidate). The Chair will make introductions and keep track of time. Members of the supervisory team are not allowed to speak during the viva unless specifically requested to do so.

There are no set requirements about the conduct of oral examinations, but they should be conducted in such a way that the candidate has adequate opportunity, encouragement and time

to explain their research and to defend the thesis. Candidates should be offered short break(s) as appropriate.

There is no set limit to the time of the viva. However, if it is going on over an extended period of time and the candidate is distressed, then the Chair of Examiners might deem it necessary to intercede and wind down the examination.

For further guidance on Viva Good Practice see **Appendix 2**.

At the conclusion of the viva, the candidate and supervisors are asked to leave the room before the examiners/chair have a brief meeting to discuss the outcome of the viva\* and the recommendations and agree the outcome. For possible outcomes see **Appendix 1**.

#### *Informing the candidate of the outcome*

At the end of the viva the candidate should be informed verbally of the examiners' recommended outcome. It should be made clear to the candidate that the examiners' recommendation is provisional until it has been confirmed by Graduate School Board (GSB). The candidate will be formally notified in writing once Graduate School Board confirm the outcome of the examination.

If there are corrections or revisions required, then the time period allowed for completion of this work will start from the date of the Graduate School Board notification of the outcome of the examination.

If the candidate requires clarification about the corrections or revisions after the viva date, they should consult in the first instance with their supervisory team or the Chair of Examiners. Examiners are not permitted to provide feedback on draft corrections/ revisions prior to formal submission of the corrected or revised thesis.

### **c. Joint Report**

The joint examiners' report is to be completed and submitted via the [VRE](#) straight after the viva examination. Examiners will complete this with the aid of the Chair of Examiners. This report should detail the grounds on which the examination outcome is based.

The Chair of Examiners is required to formally confirm that the examination has been conducted in a fair and proper manner and in accordance with the regulations as part of this report.

This report will not be seen by the candidate.

Examiners' need to indicate their recommendation and mark against the criteria, as well as write the report.

The criteria for assessment are:

- Are you satisfied that the thesis (and the practice if applicable) presented is the candidate's own work?
- Did the candidate show a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding of:
  - matters relating to the thesis
  - background studies to the subject of the thesis?
- In the case of a candidate whose research programme was part of a collaborative group project, did the oral examination demonstrate that the candidate's own contribution was worthy of the award?

The joint report should make reference to:

- the written submission (this can be an amalgam of the two independent preliminary reports, which the candidate does not see) included submitted works as appropriate;
- any creative practice;
- the viva voce examination.

It should include:

- What you commend
- A rationale for your decision on the outcome;
- Any key points that the candidate has been advised to address.
  - What are your conditions
  - What are your recommendations

Minor amendments may include minor errors, typographical errors, stylistic or grammatical flaws, corrections to references, addition or modification of a small number of figures or paragraphs, and minor changes to layout and require no new research or revision. **The candidate will have 3 months in which to complete these.**

Revisions may include omissions of substance and/or require limited further analysis or development but shall not affect the originality of the central thesis. They shall be of a scale to require certification by both the internal and external examiners, though normally not so extensive that a viva voce is required. **The candidate will have 6 months in which to complete these.**

If the decision is resubmission after 12 months, please indicate if a further oral examination must be held.

For all possible recommendations see [Appendix 1](#).

#### d. Amendments report

Where the agreed outcome is for minor amendments, revisions, resubmission or further amendments, the Examiners will need to agree a list of corrections to be made and submit this via the [VRE](#) **within two weeks of the examination.**

The report should enable the candidate to make the final push to revisit their thesis and make it the best it can be to achieve a successful outcome (unless, of course, there are no corrections). The tone should be positive and encouraging with clear feedback.

If it's a resubmission the report should indicate ways in which the current thesis fails to satisfy the requirements for the research degree, and should indicate clearly, the changes which they consider should be made.

Examiners should only include requirements that have been explored in depth during the viva and be sure that the report matches the outcome awarded.

Where amendments are required, the examiners can specify if these should be made to the satisfaction of both the Internal Examiner and External Examiner(s), to the Internal Examiner, or to the External Examiner(s).

#### e. After the Viva and Ratification of Outcome

The Joint Report should be submitted and signed off by both examiners immediately after the viva. The Amendments Report by the examiners, should be completed within two weeks of the

examination. Once both reports are completed these will be referred to Graduate School Board for ratification.

Once approved the candidate will be informed of the outcome and given access to the Amendments report.

## **8. Submission of Amendments**

The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the VRE within the specified deadline. This will then be made available via the VRE, where the examiner will be asked to complete an outcome report.

If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted.

## **9. Resubmission of Thesis**

Where a candidate is required to formally resubmit their thesis this should be treated as a formal re-examination. The examiners will examine the amended thesis, submit preliminary reports (where a second oral examination is required) and will provide a second joint examination report. The examiners will be asked to confirm whether the amended thesis now meets the criteria to award the degree.

Unless it is not possible for them to do so, it is expected that the original examiners will re-examine the candidate on their revised and re-presented thesis.

A maximum of one re-examination will be permitted.

For possible outcomes following a resubmission please see the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#).

## **10. Conferment**

Conferment of the appropriate award, where applicable, shall be approved by the Graduate School Board, on behalf of Academic Council, following the fulfilment of the legitimate requirements of the University.

In addition, candidates must comply with the requirements to submit an electronic copy of their final approved thesis to WestminsterResearch and EThOS (see Sections B2.16 and B2.17). Candidates should note where an embargo has been approved (Section B2.17) the Graduate School Registry will manage and restrict dissemination of the thesis in line with the embargo agreement.

If a candidate fails to submit their thesis the University reserves the right to withdraw any award made.

## **11. Summary**

Please be advised that the entire examination process uses the University's [Virtual Research Environment](#) (VRE).

- The Director of Studies proposes the examination panel. The arrangements should be in place at least 3 months before the submission of the thesis.

- The Candidate submits the thesis
- Graduate School Registry dispatch the thesis to the examiners who have at least four weeks in which to read the thesis
- The Chair of Examiners makes arrangements for the viva
- Internal and External Examiners submit their preliminary reports at least one week before the viva
- The Viva happens
- The Chair of Examiners co-ordinates the submission of the joint report in the VRE immediately following the viva
- The Examiners confirm the outcome report and submit the Amendments Report via the VRE to the Graduate School Registry within two weeks of the examination
- The Graduate School Registry refer the Examination Outcomes reports to the Graduate School Board for Ratification.
- Graduate School Board ratify the outcome
- Graduate School Registry, via the VRE, then send formal notification of the outcome, plus the Amendments report, to the candidate and supervisors.
- In the case of minor corrections, the candidate resubmits, and the thesis is sent to the Examiner/s appointed sign off the corrected thesis. (candidates should be informed whether or not their corrections have been approved within 4 weeks of submission).
- In the case of revisions, the candidate resubmits, and the thesis is sent to the Examiner/s appointed sign off the corrected thesis. (candidates should be informed whether or not their corrections have been approved within 4 weeks of submission).
- Graduate School Registry notify the candidate
- The candidate completes conferment

## **12. What to do when...**

### **...Examiners fail to reach an agreement**

Please refer to regulation B8.41:

*B8.41 Where examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation, they may submit separate final reports. When considering individual reports, except in exceptional circumstances, the report of the external examiner will be given a greater weighting. The recommendations shall be made on the appropriate form. Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the GSB may:*

*a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner); or*

*b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or*

*c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner and request a new oral examination (viva).*

### **...Conducting a viva exam by video link or video conferencing**

An oral examination (viva) will normally take place in person in the UK. However, with the agreement of the candidate, a remote or blended (a mix of in-person and remote) viva may take place via the appropriate video-conferencing platform(s). Expectations of candidates, examiners, and Chairs of Examiners before, during and following a viva are detailed in the Research Degree Handbook. Neither in-person nor remote vivas will be recorded via audio or visual equipment.

For practical advice on conducting an online viva please see the following guidance:  
<https://ukcge.ac.uk/resources/resource-library/conducting-vivas-online-a-guide-for-institutions-and-candidates>

### **... If the candidate becomes unwell during the viva**

If the candidate becomes unwell or distressed during the oral examination, the chair of examiners should consult with the candidate and Director of Studies (if present) to decide whether or not to continue the oral examination. This should be noted in the final report. If the examination is stopped, examiners should determine whether sufficient evidence has been provided to allow a decision to be taken or whether it will be necessary to hold another oral examination.

### **...The candidate requests more time to complete corrections/revisions**

If the candidate cannot submit the amended thesis by deadline (includes minor amendments, revisions, re-examination, and further amendments) they should apply via the VRE for Mitigating Circumstances, Extension or Suspension as applicable.

candidates should consult the [Research Degree Handbook](#)'s section on 'Change in personal circumstances' for full guidance on this.

### **...Plagiarism is detected in the thesis**

Please refer to regulation B8.18 of [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#):

*B8.18 Research Degree candidates are required to meet the standards outlined under the University Framework for Research Governance and its supporting codes of practice (see Section A1.10). Where cheating or plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis is established either before or during the examination the examination process will be halted pending the outcome of investigations and decisions under the University's Research and Academic Misconduct procedures. If misconduct is confirmed, the degree shall not be awarded. Where misconduct is established after the examination, the GSB shall consider the matter, if necessary, in consultation with the examiners, and take appropriate action, which may include making a recommendation to Academic Council for the withdrawal of the award.*

### **...There is an unexpected interruption to the examination**

The Chair should take the lead in instigating appropriate action. Where it is not possible for the viva voce to continue, the examiners should determine whether sufficient discussion has taken place for a final recommendation to be made or whether a new date needs to be arranged to continue the examination.

## **Contact details**

The Graduate School Registry is located on the Ground Floor, 32-38 Wells Street, London, W1T 3UW. It is responsible for overseeing all aspects of research degree programmes and assists the exam process with:

- Approval of examiners
- Queries about reports
- Queries about using the VRE

Please contact us via [graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk) or visit [www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school](http://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school) for more information.

## **Appendix 1: Possible Outcomes**

Where amendments are required, the examiners can specify if these should be made to the satisfaction of both the internal Examiner and external Examiner(s), to the internal examiner, or to the external Examiner(s).

PHD
That the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD
That the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis, to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome
That the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD subject to revision of the thesis, to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome
That the candidate not be awarded the degree but is permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with viva
That the candidate not be awarded the degree but is permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, without viva
That the candidate be not awarded the degree of PhD and be not permitted to be re-examined. <i>The Examiners should prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which will be forwarded to the candidate</i>
That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the satisfactory completion of minor amendments, to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome
That the thesis potentially meets the criteria for the award of MPhil, and that the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to revision of the thesis, to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome

PhD by Published Work
That the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD
That the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis, to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome
That the candidate be awarded an MPhil
That the candidate not be awarded the degree of PhD <i>The Examiners should prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which will be forwarded to the candidate</i>

MPhil
That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil
That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis, to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome
That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to revision of the thesis, to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome
That the candidate not be awarded the degree but is permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with an oral examination.
That the candidate not be awarded the degree but is permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined without an oral examination.
That the candidate not be awarded the degree of MPhil and not be permitted to be re-examined. <i>The Examiners should prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which will be forwarded to the candidate</i>

DPROF
That the candidate be awarded the degree of Professional Doctorate
That the candidate be awarded the degree of Professional Doctorate subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis, to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome



That the candidate be awarded the degree of Professional Doctorate subject to revision of the thesis, to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome
That the candidate not be awarded the degree of Professional Doctorate but is permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with an oral examination.
That the candidate not be awarded the degree of Professional Doctorate but is permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, without an oral examination.
That the candidate be not awarded the degree of Professional Doctorate and be not permitted to be re-examined, but is eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma (eligibility to be considered by the Board following review of taught components)  <i>The Examiners should prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which will be forwarded to the candidate</i>
That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the satisfactory completion of minor amendments, to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome
That the thesis potentially meets the criteria for the award of MPhil, and that the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to revision of the thesis, to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome

## **Appendix 2: Viva Good Practice**

### Preparation:

- At least three readings of the submission - for overview, for meaning, for determining questions;
- Clear questions arising from the submission;
- Do not indicate the outcome of the examination before it starts because the viva is part of the decision. The candidate should be able to proceed with the viva without pre-conceived expectations (good or bad) and there is the potential to give one impression as the start and then that to be changed by the end.

### During:

- Work with the other (if more than one) to discuss of the submission with the candidate (each contributes equally - usually taking turns);
- Ask the questions agreed on the agenda.
  - Don't tell – ask;
  - Try to complete each question to your satisfaction;
  - Avoid bias, misconduct, unfairness;
  - Avoid diverting from the agenda;
  - Avoid any disadvantage to the candidate;
  - Avoid engaging with supervisory team.

### Care of the candidate:

- Stressful time so be mindful of their well-being;
- Clarify question if candidate is becoming confused;
- Remember that the viva should be a formal discussion not an interrogation.

### Outcomes:

- Based on whether or not the candidate meets the criteria through submitted thesis and defence in viva.

### Report:

- Prompt (to be completed immediately following the viva with the amendments report agreed within two weeks of the examination);
- Other than presentational requirements, the report should only contain requirements that have been explored in depth during the viva;
- To match the outcome awarded.