

Part 3: Assessment regulations for taught courses

Section 9: Viva voce examinations

Definition of viva voce examinations

- 9.1. A viva voce examination is defined as a set of oral questions that assesses skills and knowledge.
- 9.2. A viva voce examination may be used in conjunction with other forms of assessment to determine an overall mark for a module. Where used for summative assessment, provisions for viva voce examinations must be detailed in the validated module pro-forma, be subject to a marking scheme and be applicable to the whole cohort.
- 9.3. Viva voce examinations can only be used to determine a final classification where there is a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) requirement to do so.

Cases of mitigating circumstances

- 9.4. A viva voce examination may be conducted as an alternative or additional assessment where very exceptional reasons for poor performance have been established and a valid claim of mitigating circumstances has been accepted (see Section 11). The Head of College, or nominee, and the Academic Registrar, or nominee, shall liaise to determine the suitability of such a request.

Cases of suspected academic misconduct

- 9.5. A viva voce examination may be used where there is a suspicion of academic misconduct. Specific regulations apply to viva voce examinations of this kind please refer to Section 10 Academic Misconduct.

Procedures

- 9.6. A viva voce examination should be conducted by at least two subject specialists prior to the Progression and Award Board. In order to ensure transparency a record of discussions must be made. An External Examiner may see a sample of the written records of discussion, be given access to a video/audio recording, or attend a sample of the viva voce examinations.
- 9.7. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are available for a viva voce examination on the date agreed with the Module Leader. Failure to attend without a valid mitigating circumstance claim will be treated as non-attendance.

Note: Where a student is aware in advance that they will not be able to attend, the student should liaise with the examiners to try and establish an alternative date. If no agreement can be made it is a student's responsibility to submit a claim of mitigating circumstances.

- 9.8. A viva voce examination should take place in term time, or during the allocated re-assessment week, unless otherwise agreed by all parties.