



GUIDELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING VIVA-VOCE EXAMINATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Oral Examination (viva-voce) is the final process that postgraduate by research students need to undergo in order to be conferred as a Master or Doctor of Philosophy graduate. Students are required to defend their research findings in front of a viva-voce panel or committee appointed by the Centre for Postgraduate Studies. This Guideline explains in detail the processes for implementing the viva-voce before, during and after the oral examination session.

2.0 APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINATION PANEL

- a. The Examination Panel is appointed by the Centre for Postgraduate Studies based on recommendations from the Faculty/Centre/Institute, and it is endorsed by the Postgraduate Studies Committee.
- b. For a Doctor of Philosophy student, the Examination Panel consists of one (1) External Examiner dan two (2) Internal Examiners. For a University staff who is a Doctor of Philosophy student, two (2) External Examiners and one (1) Internal Examiner will be appointed. For a Master student, one (1) External Examiner and one (1) Internal Examiner will be appointed.
- c. A supervisor is not permitted to be appointed as his/her student's examiner.
- d. The appointment of the Examination Panel is based on the examiner's expertise, high ethics and academic professionalism.
- e. An External Examiner from an overseas university may be considered, however all travel expenses to attend the viva-voce will be borne by the Faculty/Centre/Institute.
- f. The Examination Panel must be active staff members (i.e. have not retired, are not nearing retirement, have not resigned, have not been dismissed, amongst others) throughout the duration of the thesis examination.
- g. Academic staff working externally from UMS (e.g. industrial attachment, post-doctoral, sabbatical leave, amongst others) may be appointed as Internal Examiners, with justification from the Faculty/Centre/Institute.
- h. For the purpose of integrity, the Examination Panel must not have any family relations with the student and supervisor.

- i. For the purpose of integrity, the Examination Panel must not have any working relations with the student and supervisor (for example, if the student is employed by University Y and is studying at University Z, an examiner from University Y cannot be appointed).
- j. The Examination Panel is not permitted to communicate with the supervisor about the student's thesis before the viva-voce session.

3.0 APPOINTMENT OF VIVA-VOCE CHAIRPERSON

- a. The viva-voce Chairperson is appointed from among qualified academic staff as follows:
 - i. The appointment of a Chairperson is based on the nominee's ethics and high academic professionalism.
 - ii. For a Doctor of Philosophy candidate, the Chairperson must be a Professor or an Associate Professor.
 - iii. For a Master by Research candidate, the Chairperson must be at least an Associate Professor. In certain circumstances, a Senior Lecturer may be appointed as the Chairperson.
 - iv. The Chairperson must be independent and has no conflict of interest with the student, supervisor and examiners. The Chairperson will act independently in deciding the outcome of the viva-voce without any influence from any party.
 - v. For the purpose of integrity, the Chairperson must not have any family relations with the student, examiners and supervisor.
 - vi. The Chairperson is responsible in ensuring the viva-voce session is conducted in accordance with the stipulated rules.

4.0 VIVA-VOCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members of the viva-voce Committee are drawn from the following:

- a. Dean of Centre for Postgraduate Studies or a representative appointed as Chairperson**
- b. Internal and/or External Examiners**
- c. Supervisor, Chairperson of Supervision Committee or a member of the Supervision Committee is invited as an observer**
- d. Secretariat (Secretary)**

- Assistant Registrar of Examination and Graduation Section at the Centre for Postgraduate Studies/Assistant Registrar of Faculty/Centre/Institute or Grade 29 and above staff appointed by the Faculty/Centre/Institute.

5.0 FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE	BEFORE	DURING	AFTER
1. CHAIRPERSON	Ensure viva-voce documents are complete. If incomplete, notify the Centre for Postgraduate Studies.	Act as moderator to ensure best solutions are agreed upon, if any disagreement arises during viva-voce session.	Request student to leave viva-voce room. Chair discussion amongst the Examination Panel, Dean/Dean's Representative and Supervisor (if any).
		Ensure no discussion takes place between examiner and supervisor during question and answer session with student.	Ensure correction list is detailed and correction period (if any) is agreed by Examination Panel.
		Manage presentation, and question and answer session according to allocated time.	Endorse minutes that have been signed by all the Examination Panel.
	Gather consent from the Examination Panel on viva-voce procedures (e.g. flow of activity, question and answer session, time allocation, suitability of questions asked by	Ensure viva-voce setting is conducive for student to respond calmly to Examination Panel.	Discuss with Examination Panel and decide which examiner is assigned to check thesis after correction (if any).

	examiners, amongst others).	Ensure Examination Panel ask relevant questions only to student.	Invite student back to viva-voce room and announce outcome of viva-voce, list of corrections (if any) and period for correction (if any).
		Chairperson is not encouraged to ask questions beyond examiner's report during question and answer session.	
2. EXTERNAL/ INTERNAL EXAMINER	Read thesis objectively without prejudice and examine whether thesis fulfils stipulated academic standards.	Attend viva-voce session as scheduled, except due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. accident, death, amongst others) and it is agreed by Chairperson.	Endorse thesis corrections based on stipulated period in viva-voce outcome.
	Examine thesis in detail and professionally in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Examiner's report must be independent, without any consultation.	Present questions to student based on examiner's report that has been submitted.	
	Complete and return Examiner's Report Form to Centre for Postgraduate Studies on day of the viva-voce.	List proposed thesis corrections in detail based on collective agreement from Examination Panel.	Ensure no additional corrections are included except for the lists that have agreed on during viva-voce.

	Provide flight and accommodation details for booking arrangements.		
3. DEAN/ REPRESENTATIVE	If External Examiner is absent, Dean is permitted to act as representative.	Dean/Representative is permitted to ask candidate and panel for explanation on thesis examination, if necessary.	Offer his/her views on the candidate's ability in answering questions during viva-voce.
			Ensure degree/field awarded to candidate is accurate (minutes of session).
4. SUPERVISOR	Not to reveal content of Examiner's Report to candidate before the viva-voce. (Examiner's Report will only be given to Supervisor on day of viva-voce; it cannot be released earlier.)	Act as observer and not to participate or assist candidate, unless requested by Chairperson.	Explain any arising matter or disagreement to Examination Panel during discussion session.
			Ensure student completes all corrections for thesis, as suggested by Examination Panel before submitting to Examination Panel.
	Provide feedback to Examination Panel on candidate's overall commitment and progress throughout his/her study.	Take note of all corrections and comments from examiners.	Not to be involved in thesis certification process.
5. COMMITTEE		While viva-voce is in progress, be aware of setting to ensure session	Ensure Chairperson fills in and completes minutes.

	Ensure all Committee Members are present on day of viva-voce.	is conducted in a conducive and orderly manner.	
	Ensure all necessary items are complete for viva-voce session.		Prepare candidate's outcome letter immediately after end of the viva-voce session.
			Ensure thesis and Examiner's Report are presented to student.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF VIVA-VOCE

6.1 A student's viva-voce will be arranged after reports from all External and Internal Examiners are received. The Examination and Graduation Section of the Centre for Postgraduate Studies will propose a date for the viva-voce to the Examiners. After the date has been agreed by all Examiners, the Examination and Graduation Section will inform the student and the Committee Members involved of the viva-voce date.

6.2 However, a Faculty/Centre/Institute is also permitted to propose a date for the viva-voce, to inform the student and Committee Members involved of the viva-voce date, to propose a Chairperson, and to manage its own viva-voce session. The Centre for Postgraduate Studies must be notified about the outcome of the viva-voce immediately after the session ends.

7.0 THESIS SUBMISSION AFTER VIVA-VOCE

7.1 The student is required to check his/her thesis corrections with the Supervisor. The thesis must be submitted to the appointed Examiner for further checking before it is endorsed by the Dean/Director.

7.2 For checking of thesis format, the student is required to submit a copy of the thesis (ring binding) and the Submission of Thesis After Correction Form, which has been signed by the Centre for Postgraduate Studies. A hard-bound copy of the thesis may finally be submitted if its format adheres to the UMS Thesis/Dissertation Writing and Submission Guideline.

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