# Information for PhD Viva Chairs

**Please Print this Document. This Document has a chair report form and 2 Examiner Decision Forms appended.**

**Procedures for PhD *viva voce* examinations School of Medicine**

All *viva voce* examinations will be examined through a *PhD Viva Committee* structure.

**PhD Viva Committee**

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to nominate examiners and a chair.

* **External Examiner**: an expert external to the University, and not a collaborator in the student’s or supervisor’s research. In conjunction with the internal examiner this examiner will assess the candidate.
* **Internal Examiner**: a member of TCD academic staff, but is not necessarily a member of the School of Medicine. The internal examiner will examine the thesis with the extern. The internal examiner is also tasked with communicating thesis corrections, where appropriate, to the candidate after the *viva voce.*
* **Chairperson**: a member of TCD academic staff of at least TCD academic grade Associate Professor. The role of the Chair is to clarify College regulations, where appropriate, and to ensure that the *viva voce* is conducted in a courteous and professional manner. The Chair must intervene if the examiners do not adhere to these regulations.
* The Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning may be available to act as chair (please contact [GRADAPPS@tcd.ie](mailto:GRADAPPS@tcd.ie) at least 3 weeks ahead of viva).

**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 School of Medicine. This presentation can be chaired by the viva chair 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 School. A notice advertising the PhD research presentation should be sent to Ms. Mary O’Neill (e-mail: mednews@tcd.ie) for circulation to members of the School.

**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 Chair should offer a comfort break of 10 minutes.

**Examiners Evaluation & Forms**

The examiners will evaluate the merits of the thesis and submit independent reports and examination decision form (appended overleaf) to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Hard copies can be submitted to the Dean at Academic Registry, Trinity College Dublin 2. Reports can be submitted to gsothese@tcd.ie.

General procedures for examination of a thesis will be as indicated in the College Calendar (Part 2, section 2.14).

***Note:*** It is the responsibility of the ***internal examiner*** to liaise with the external examiner and chairperson and organise the time and venue for the research presentation/*viva voce* examination.

**Entertainment:** If a pre- or post- viva meal is to be offered to the examiners (and other parties) it is the responsibility of the supervisor to pay for the meal. Such meals are not paid for by the School postgraduate office or the College Graduate Studies office. The external examiner is, however, welcome to recoup expenses for their meals.

## TCD Calendar Description of The Chair

The role of the Chair is to clarify College regulations, where appropriate, and to ensure that the *viva voce* is conducted in a courteous and professional manner. The Chair 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 Chair 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 Chair.

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, in which case he/she would need to inform the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate) in advance.

## Duties of the Chair (A Stepwise Guide & Checklist)

**PLEASE TICK**

**Immediate preparation**

1. Chair should have to hand contact details for supervisor and director. 🞏
2. Arrive at viva location before time. 🞏
3. Be aware of location of restrooms convenient to examination. 🞏
4. Make sure there is water available for examiners and candidate. 🞏

**Speak to the examiners in private**

1. Explain why a chair is needed. 🞏
2. Give an overview of the TCD standard 🞏
3. Ensure that examiners have received decision forms and advice to examiners 🞏
4. Explain the ramifications of various thesis decisions 🞏
5. Ascertain the examiners’ overall assessment of the thesis 🞏

**Commence the viva**

1. Allow candidate into viva (and any other nominated individuals) 🞏
2. Ensure only those permitted. Supervisor can attend unless candidate objects to DTLP. 🞏
3. Introduce candidate to examiners, if not done so already. 🞏
4. Remind all to switch phones to silent. 🞏
5. Ensure that environment is conducive to examination, i.e. light, ventilation, noise etc 🞏
6. Make sure candidate is comfortable and has water. 🞏
7. Ensure that the candidate is being examined in a fair manner 🞏
8. Constantly check physical conditions of room are acceptable during viva (noise etc) 🞏
9. Offer candidate a break after 150 minutes 🞏

*If the chair elects to work during the viva they will do so in quiet manner.*

**The Decision making**

1. Chair asks candidate to vacate *viva voce*. 🞏
2. Chair returns to viva. Only examiners and chair are present at this point. 🞏
3. Examiners make deliberations. 🞏
4. Chair provides information on difference between minor versus major corrections

* Minor revision: within 2 months of Dean’s memo and no financial implications. 🞏
* Major revision: resubmission fee of €2150 and back on books for six months. 🞏

**PLEASE TICK**

**Completion of Decision Form**

1. Chair instructs each examiner to complete decision form 🞏
2. Chair recommend these be returned to [GSOTHESE@TCD.IE](mailto:GSOTHESE@TCD.IE) 🞏
3. Chair advises to forward separate reports to [GSOTHESE@TCD.IE](mailto:GSOTHESE@TCD.IE) promptly 🞏

(no joint reports).

1. Chair ensures that extern has a claim form, reminds examiner of need for (hard copy) 🞏

receipts and to forward claims to Teresa Fox, [GRADAPPS@tcd.ie](mailto:GRADAPPS@tcd.ie); Stone Building, Trinity Centre, St James’s Hospital, Dublin 8.

1. Chair suggests expeditious communication of corrections to the candidate. 🞏
2. Chair reminds the internal examiner of their responsibilities regarding corrections. 🞏
3. Chair recalls candidate, and candidate informed. 🞏

**The TCD advice to examiners does not explicitly state that candidates should be told of the outcome immediate.** However, in general, the result is communicated to the candidate by the extern.

**Chair report form**

Please complete the Chair Report Form and mail to [GRADAPPS@tcd.ie](mailto:GRADAPPS@tcd.ie)

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

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

## Roles not to be filled by the chair

* Booking venues/accommodation/refreshments etc is not in the remit of the Chair
* The Chair may attend the pre- viva presentation, but is **not** expected to chair it.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| School of Medicine  *Postgraduate research viva*  *Chairperson’s report form* | |  |
| Student name | I.D Number | Name of Chairperson |
|  |  |  |
| External Examiner Name | Internal Examiner Name | 2nd External Examiner Name |
|  |  |  |
| Names of other parties permitted to be present in room | | |
|  |  |  |
| Viva Location | Start time | Finish Time |
|  |  |  |

**PLEASE TICK**

**The chairperson agrees that**

1. The viva was conducted in a fair manner, and that the candidate was given the 🞏

opportunity to be appropriately examined on their content of their thesis.

1. Only those permitted to be in the viva were present in the room. 🞏
2. The examiners were given sufficient information regarding the examination process. 🞏

**Signed**  **Date**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Email this form to  [GRADAPPS@tcd.ie](mailto:GRADAPPS@tcd.ie) | or post to:  Teresa Fox  Postgraduate Studies  Stone Building  Trinity Centre  St James’s Hospital |