

# Procedure for conducting online oral examination for PhD and Master by Research



Prepared By:

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA**

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Procedure for Conducting Online Oral Examination for PhD and Master by Research (2022 Edition)  
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Sekolah Pengajian Siswazah  
81310 UTM Johor Bahru  
Johor Darul Ta'zim

## **PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING ONLINE ORAL EXAMINATION FOR PHD AND MASTER BY RESEARCH**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This guideline describes the procedure for conducting oral examinations (viva voce) session for doctoral and master by research candidates.

### **2.0 ORAL EXAMINATION FORMATS**

1. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia has following oral examination formats:
  - a) Face-to-face examination
  - b) Fully Online examination
  - c) Hybrid examination
2. It is advisable for all involved parties to agree on the format at least one (1) month in advance before the examination taking place to facilitate the examination preparation.
3. Notes:
  - a) The re- examination shall be conducted face-to-face. However, **in the event where face-to- face examination is not possible, the faculty needs to obtain** approval from **the** School of Graduate Studies **to conduct the examination online.**
  - b) Guideline for conducting a face-to-face viva voce session should be refer in the 'Prosedur Penyelidikan Pascasiswazah – ProPS 06'

### **3.0 GENERAL GUIDELINE FOR CONDUCTING AN ONLINE VIVA VOCE SESSION.**

1. Videoconferencing/Online platforms may be used in online examinations where the candidate/examiners face travel restrictions due:
  - a) Undergoing quarantine as directed by authority in the case candidate has been exposed to, an infectious disease.
  - b) Visa and immigration issues, compliance with instructions to work from home by the employer, disabilities, health problems and emergency matters that are deemed reasonable.

Notes: Candidate here refers to local and international students.

2. Faculties/Schools must ensure that videoconferencing/online platform is the most appropriate course of action, and that the interests of all parties are fully considered. Parties here refer to Chairman, assistant chairperson, examiners and students both for PhD and Master by research candidate.
3. The format for an oral examination (viva-voce) shall be made after the thesis has been submitted for the examiner's assessment. It is advisable for all involved parties to agree on the format at least one (1) month in advance before the examination taking place to facilitate the examination preparation. The agreement of the method needs to be confirmed via email for record purposes.
4. Attendance of External Examiner for PhD candidate is compulsory throughout the viva voce session (for any of the three formats of examination). It is not compulsory for external examiners for master by research candidate to attend the full session (please refer to ProPS 06 item 2.3.4.7 for the qualifications). The external examiner may share his/her questions to the chairman during the discussion prior the commencement of the viva session.

5. However, the presence of the external examiner(s) for PhD and Master by Research is set out as follows in the following condition:
  - a) The external examiner is required to be present if the decision of the thesis examination is not satisfactory (C or a lower result).
  - b) The external examiners are required to attend if the University finds that the report of both examiners questions the methodology used or there are significant questions that need to be discussed with the candidate at the oral examination session.
6. If any of the parties involved disagree with the use of video conferencing/online platforms for their viva voce arrangement, the examination shall be postponed.
7. The candidate must fill up the consent form as evidence of the agreement.
8. The session may take place with all **parties** in different locations.
9. The decision to conduct online viva voce should be considered as the last resort. It should therefore be carefully and selectively implemented.
10. The decision to conduct online viva should take into account these aspects:
  - a) Only to be conducted for students receiving grade B2, B1 and A based on the thesis examination report by examiner(s). Thesis receiving grade C, D or E that wishes to conduct the viva voce session online is required to obtain permission from School of Graduate Studies.
  - b) The availability of complete viva related documents for the online session.
  - c) The availability of infrastructure and Internet facilities among all parties. Telephone conference may be permitted in the event where Internet connection fails during the session or for discussion with examiners.
11. It is important that appropriate arrangements should be made to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and credibility of the examination process.

### **3.1 Preparation before the viva**

1. The faculty/school should contact all parties and to obtain agreement on a proposed date and time for the session.
2. The faculty/school should issue the video link to all parties at least 2 days before the session.
3. The faculty/school should check the video link to the remote person within an hour before the start of the viva voce session. If any problems are experienced, contact with the appropriate technical support should be made to enable the viva to start on time.
4. The faculty/school should ask for a telephone number and the email address where the remote person could be contacted in the case of a problem with the video link.
5. Any time differences between the locations involved must be taken into account to ensure that the candidate is not at disadvantaged by an examination taking place at an inappropriate time and bearing in mind the availability of the videoconferencing facilities at each end.
6. A thorough testing of the connection for sound and vision must be conducted at least 3 days prior to the viva. If there are any doubts about the connection and whether it will last the duration of the viva the viva should not proceed.
7. It is the responsibility of the candidate, where they have been given permission for an online oral examination to secure appropriate premises with proper videoconferencing facilities.

8. All related documents which include the candidate's information, examiners' guidelines, examiners' reports, and the result's form will be emailed to all panel members three days prior to the session. The candidate must submit via email the presentation slides ONE week before the viva voce session.

### 3.2 During the viva

1. All parties must be visible during the examination.
2. Where the candidate is the remote party, the candidate should be alone during the examination.
3. The candidate needs to show their matric card/identity card/passport as evidence of their true identity prior starting the session.
4. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that, at the start of the viva, all are comfortable with the arrangements and that the candidate and the examiners can see and hear each other (Refer to Chairman's Guideline).
5. The candidate should be warned that, should the Examiners have reason to suspect that they are in breach of any of the rules as agreed in the agreement, they would be subject to disciplinary action for examination misconduct, and the viva voce session shall be terminated.
6. It is expected that all parties would have with them, their own copy of the submitted thesis.
7. The session begins with the chairman and panel of examiners to discuss critical issues regarding the thesis with the absence of the candidate and supervisor. The candidate and supervisor will be placed in the virtual lobby during this session.
8. The viva voce starts with a brief presentation about the dissertation from the candidate. The time allocated is strictly 20 minutes and the chairman is responsible for monitoring the presentation time. The candidate should only focus on major aspects of his or her thesis that should be highlighted. The candidate must submit via email the presentation slides ONE week before the viva voce session.
9. Examinations will be recorded by the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia only for the purpose of **quality assurance purposes only**.
10. In the event of any failure with the technology before or during the viva, or other concerns regarding the conduct of the viva by videoconference, it is the responsibility of the Chairman to suspend the examination and to decide whether it is possible for the examination to continue or whether the viva should be rescheduled.
11. The Examiners should normally have the opportunity to convene for an appropriate period prior to the student being invited to the examination. Similarly, when the oral examination is complete, the candidate should be removed from the videoconference whilst the examiners deliberate in their decisions. The candidate should be re-admitted to the session to be informed of the result of the examination.
12. If communication is broken during the examination and a connection cannot be re-established, the examination must be terminated and rescheduled.
13. If communication is broken during the examination and a connection cannot be re-established, the Chairman with consultation with the examiners must decide how much of the viva voce examination was completed at the point the connection was lost and what, therefore, should be covered in the re-scheduled viva examination.

14. If communication is broken towards the end of an examination, and examiners can jointly agree that further examination would not change their decision, the viva may be concluded, and the candidate being notified of the examiners' joint recommendation. This should be detailed in the Chairman's report and account should be made of any content that was potentially missed after the break in communication.

### **3.3 After the viva**

1. All participants should be asked to confirm at the conclusion of the viva that the holding of the examination by videoconference has had no substantive bearing on the examination process. This confirmation should be stated in the Chairman's report.
2. Examiners will be invited to comment on the conduct of the viva voce examination using the standard Chairman Final Report form and should refer explicitly to the use of videoconferencing.
3. A post-viva report should be made by the Chairman at the end of the examination and should comment on the technical performance of the facilities used in both locations.
4. Having agreed to a viva voce examination involving videoconferencing the candidate will not be permitted to use this as grounds for appeal, unless the circumstances of technical failure or other unforeseen incident beyond the control of the examiners were deemed to have adversely affected the candidate's performance.

## **REFERENCES**

This procedure shall be read together with the documents below:

- a. Prosedur Penyelidikan Pascasiswazah (ProPS 06)
- b. Chairpersons guideline for conducting online oral examination
- c. WEBEX manual for conducting online oral examination
- d. Online oral examination checklist

### **Declaration of Parties – Candidate**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Procedures for Conducting Online Oral Examination for PhD and Master by Research and agree to abide by these Terms and Conditions. I also agree that I will not use the online oral examination involving video conferencing as grounds for appeal. The recording of this session is limited for viva-voce purposes and may not be disseminated to the other parties without the consent from the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
Name: Matric No: Date:	

**Declaration of Parties (Chairperson/ Assistant chairperson/ Internal Examiner/  
External Examiner/ Supervisor**

I confirm that I have read and understood the Procedures for Conducting Online Oral Examination for PhD and Master by Research and agree to abide by these Terms and Conditions. The recording of this session is limited for viva-voce purposes and may not be disseminated to the other parties without the consent from the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

<b>Chairperson/ Assistant chairperson/ Internal Examiner/ External Examiner/ Supervisor*</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Name: IC / Passport No: Date:	

\*Please strikethrough the non-related items.