

PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINE OF VIVA-VOCE EXAMINATION FOR PHD AND MASTER BY RESEARCH CANDIDATES FOR SPECIAL SITUATIONS AND EMERGENCIES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document describes the procedure and guideline for conducting Viva-voce examination session for PhD and master candidates for special situations and emergencies. The latest documents of **Postgraduate Academic Regulations UTHM** and **Guideline for Research Programme UTHM** are always referred for Viva-voce examinations implementation.

2.0 General procedure for conducting an online Viva-voce examination during special situations and emergencies

- 2.1 Video conferencing/ online platforms may be used in Viva-voce examinations where the candidate/ examiners face travel restrictions during special situations and emergencies. Candidate here refers to local and international postgraduate student.
- 2.2 Centre for Graduate Studies (CGS)/ Faculties must ensure that video conferencing/ online platform is the most appropriate course of action, and that the interests of all parties are fully considered.
- 2.3 Parties here refer to Viva-voce chairperson, assistant chairperson, examiners and candidate PhD and Master by research candidate inclusive. The external examiner may share his/her questions to the Viva-voce chairperson during the discussion prior to the commencement of the Viva-voce session.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 A **CONSENT** form must be filled up as evidence of agreement for the candidate and examiners.
- 2.6 Due to special situations and emergencies, the session may take place with all **parties** in different locations.
- 2.7 The decision to conduct online Viva-voce may be considered as the last resort. It should therefore be carefully and selectively implemented.
- 2.8 The decision to conduct online Viva-voce will take these aspects into account:
 - 2.8.1 Only to be conducted for students receiving no correction and minor correction results based on thesis examination report. For any case other than that, it should depend on the examiners' agreement to conduct the online Viva-voce.
 - 2.8.2 The availability of complete Viva-voce examination related documents for the online session.
 - 2.8.3 The availability of infrastructure and Internet facilities among all parties. Telephone conference might be permitted in the event where Internet connection fails during the session or for discussion with examiners.

- 2.8.4** Priority will be given to students who have submitted their thesis prior emergencies situation, sponsored students and international students who need to return to their home countries.
- 2.9** The candidate/ student must complete the correction within the stipulated time. The student may be terminated if he/ she fails to fulfil the specific correction requirement period according to the latest documents of **Postgraduate Academic Regulations UTHM** and **Guideline for Research Programme UTHM**.
- 2.10** It is important that appropriate arrangement be made to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and credibility of the examination process.

3.0 Preparation before Viva-voce examination

- 3.1** The CGS/ Faculty would contact all parties and obtain agreement on a proposed date and time for the session.
- 3.2** The CGS/ Faculty must issue the video link to all parties at least 2 days before the session.
- 3.3** The CGS/ Faculty must check the video link to the remote person within an hour before the start of the Viva-voce session. Should there be any problems, appropriate technical support must be made to enable the Viva-voce session to start on time.
- 3.4** The CGS/ Faculty should ask for a telephone number and the e-mail address where the remote person could be contacted in the case of a problem with the video link.
- 3.5** 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 video conferencing facilities at each end.
- 3.6** A thorough testing of the connection for sound and vision must be conducted at least 3 days prior to the Viva-voce session. If there are any doubts about the connection and whether it can last the duration of the Viva-voce, then the Viva-voce session should not proceed.
- 3.7** It is the responsibility of the candidate, where he/she has been given permission for an online Viva-voce examination to secure appropriate premises with proper video conferencing facilities.
- 3.8** All related documents which include candidate's CV, examiners' guidelines, examiners' reports, and result form should be emailed to all panel members **three days** prior to the session. Candidate must submit via email the presentation slides **ONE** week before the Viva-voce session.

4.0 During Viva-voce examination

- 4.1** All parties must be visible during the Viva-voce examination.
- 4.2** Where the candidate is the remote party, the candidate should be alone during the examination.
- 4.3** Candidate needs to show their matric card/ identity card/ passport as evidence of true identity prior starting the session.
- 4.4** It is the Chairperson's responsibility to ensure that at the start of the viva everyone is comfortable with the arrangement and that the candidate and the examiners can see and hear each other.
- 4.5** The candidate should be warned that, should the Examiners have reason to suspect that the candidate is in breach of any of the rules as agreed in the agreement, he/ she would be subject to disciplinary action for examination misconduct, and the Viva-voce session shall be terminated.
- 4.6** It is expected that all parties would have with them, their own copy of the submitted thesis or proposal.
- 4.7** The session begins with the chairperson of Viva-voce and panel of examiners to discuss critical issues regarding the thesis. The chairperson can change the audio mode of the candidate and supervisor/s into "mute' status.
- 4.8** The session starts with a brief presentation about the dissertation from the candidate. The candidate can provide a recorded video presentation prior Viva-voce session and the recorded video can be shared to all parties. In addition, the candidate can give comprehensive online presentation and he/ she should only focus on major aspects of his/ her thesis that should be highlighted. The candidate must submit the presentation slides and recorded video presentation via email, ONE week before the Viva-voce session.
- 4.9** Viva-voce examination session will be recorded by Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) only for the purpose of quality assurance.
- 4.10** In the event of any failure with the technology before or during the Viva-voce session, or other concerns regarding the conduct of the Viva-voce by video conferencing, (it is the Chairperson's discretion to decide whether the examination could be continued or rescheduled)
- 4.11** 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 viva examination has been completed, the candidate should be removed/ silenced from the video conference whilst the Examiners deliberate on their decisions. The candidate should be re-admitted to the session to be informed of the outcome of the Viva-voce examination.
- 4.12** If communication is broken during the Viva-voce examination and a connection cannot be re-established, examination must be terminated and rescheduled.
- 4.13** If communication is broken during the Viva-voce examination and a connection cannot be re-established, the Chairperson 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-voce examination.

- 4.14** 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-voce examination may be concluded and the candidate notified of the examiners' joint recommendation. This should be detailed in the Chairperson's report and account should be made of any content that was potentially missed after the break in communication.

5.0 After Viva-voce examination

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

6.0 Responsibilities of a chairperson and assistant chairperson Viva-voce examination

- 6.1** The latest documents of **Postgraduate Academic Regulations UTHM** and **Guideline for Research Programme UTHM** are referred for Viva-voce examinations implementation.
- 6.2** Sections **1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0** and **5.0** are referred for conducting online and remote Viva-voce examination session.
- 6.3** The CGS/ Faculties will arrange all online Viva-voce examination session. All communications involving the parties will be through electronic platforms such as telephone, e-mail, *WhatsApp* and others.
- 6.4** Chairperson and assistant chairperson should be familiar with video conferencing software, tools and platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom and others. CGS will inform all parties the video conferencing software, tools and platforms used. (*Additional*)

- 6.5** A trial session will be conducted 2 days before the actual Viva-voce session between candidate, chairperson, assistant chairperson and CGS to test the internet connectivity and devices used. The examiners are required to test their internet connectivity and devices compatibility which might be conducted through the same trial session or different session. (*Additional*)
- 6.6** Should there be any technical complication (eg: internet connections, devices used) faced by the chairperson and assistant chairperson, they can ask for assistance from the CGS/Faculty. (*Additional*)

**CONSENT FOR VIVA-VOCE EXAMINATION (PHD AND MASTER BY RESEARCH)
FOR SPECIAL SITUATIONS AND EMERGENCIES**

Declaration by the Candidate (Student)

I confirm that I have read and understood the procedures for conducting Viva-voce examination during special situations and emergencies, and agree to abide by these Terms and Conditions. I also agree that I will not use the remote online examination involving video conferencing as grounds for appeal.

Candidate (Student)

.....
(Signature)

Name:

Matric No.

Date:

Agreement by the Examiners

Examiner 1 (External)

.....
(Signature)

Name:

Date:

Examiner 2 (Internal)

.....
(Signature)

Name:

Date: