

Conduct of Oral Assessments (including Viva Voce Examinations) for Undergraduate and Master's Level Programmes

1. This document provides guidance on the conduct of oral assessments, including viva voce examinations.
2. Oral assessments are defined by Imperial as a conversation or oral presentation on a given topic. Examples of oral assessments might include individual or group conversations, discussions, debates, presentations, poster presentations, and contributions to seminars and spoken language assessments. This category also includes the viva voce examination which is used in specific circumstances, such as for the defence of a thesis or similar body of work (e.g. to candidates or to determine prizes. Vivas must include an external examiner and no-one may attend except the examiners and the candidate.
- 3. Examining Oral Assessments**
 - 3.1. For all oral assessments, the Board of Examiners must determine who should attend, and these must be conducted by not less than two examiners acting together.
 - 3.2. For oral assessments which form part of the normal scheme of assessment (e.g. discussions, debates, presentations, poster presentations, and contributions to seminars and spoken language assessments), it is acceptable for both examiners to be internal members of staff.
 - 3.3. When a viva voce examination is used (i.e. for the defence of a thesis, to determine the final degree result or for borderline/prize purposes) there should be one external and one internal examiner. In exceptional circumstances, where the external examiner is unable to attend the viva voce (e.g. due to illness), a second member of College staff must be present.
 - 3.4. In all cases, the department/programme should inform the examiners of the total possible number of marks available to award the student prior to the assessment.
 - 3.5. Examiners should make a report for the Board of Examiners on each oral assessment which includes a note of the questions asked and a record of why marks were awarded. The report should include a recommendation to the Board of Examiners who shall confirm the final outcome.

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