

# Guidelines for Video Technology in Higher Degree Oral Examinations

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## GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF VIDEO TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER DEGREE ORAL EXAMINATIONS

The use of Video Technology is permitted in a Higher Degree Oral Examination. The examiner(s), Chief Supervisor and/or other members of the supervision panel may attend the oral exam via a Video Technology link. However, the candidate is normally expected to attend in person. If the candidate is unable to attend in person, a request may be made to the Postgraduate Research Committee citing any extenuating circumstances.

Video Technology is defined as video and/or audio conferencing, ZOOM, SKYPE and any other technology used to connect to an oral exam. The preferred Video Technology for an oral exam is a video conferencing link, best held in room S.1.10. The use of ZOOM is preferable to SKYPE as the use of SKYPE technology has been used before with often unsatisfactory results, and is discouraged.

The School of Graduate Research recommends that if a Chief Supervisor wishes to arrange an audio or video conference for an oral exam, they approach the Technology Support person in ITS on extension 4008. Alternatively, the Chief Supervisor may wish to arrange through the faculty's own IT support.

The following guidelines apply for the use of any video technology used in an oral examination:

- The PhD oral examination is an important and substantive part of the examination process. It is essential that this be a controlled examination process of a high standard.
- Any technology to be used in a PhD oral exam needs to be tested to the satisfaction of the Oral Exam Convenor prior to the oral exam, preferably in the room where the oral will take place. This includes ensuring that toll bars are removed for audio conference calls. It is advisable that the Chief Supervisor would also have landline and/or mobile numbers for all participants, both local and remote, in case of travel delays or other circumstances.
- It is recommended that the room is booked for at least 3 hours, as a Zoom video conference cannot be easily extended once started, and that the Chief Supervisor notify the Convenor of the length of time booked.
- The Chief Supervisor should ensure technical support is scheduled to start 15 minutes before the oral exam, and be quickly accessible for the expected duration of the examination, especially for examinations outside of normal business hours.
- Contingency plans should be made in advance in case participants cannot be connected or have technical difficulties during the exam. Scenarios to be considered include:
  - If the Overseas Examiner attends via SKYPE or ZOOM and the New Zealand Examiner attends in person, will the call be retrieved if the call drops out?
  - If the Candidate, New Zealand Examiner (or nominated primary examiner) or Chief Supervisor are attending via video conference and the quality of the call is impacting the oral exam, will the oral exam be postponed? How many attempts will be made at reconnection?
- It is preferable that those attending via Video Technology are connected to a projector screen for visibility and have access to noise cancelling headphones to avoid echo.
- If the Candidate plans to use a PowerPoint presentation, it is recommended that this be sent to the nominated primary examiner prior to the oral.
- The Oral Exam Convenor has the authority to postpone an oral examination if technological difficulties make the exam process unmanageable.