

Guidelines for Video Conferencing Technology in Higher Degree Oral Examinations

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The use of Video Conferencing Technology is permitted in a Higher Degree Oral Examination to enable one or more attendee(s) to be present remotely and refers to platforms such as Microsoft Teams. Physical attendance is considered most conducive to effective participation and remains the preferred mode of examination. However, an oral examination may be conducted using video conference technology where the circumstances make it unreasonable to expect physical attendance by any of the attendees.

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

- The oral examination for a Higher Degree is an important and substantive part of the examination process. It is essential that this be a controlled examination process of a high standard.
- It is recommended that oral examinations should use the Microsoft Teams platform, in accordance with University of Waikato software guidelines.
- The meeting should be booked for at least 3 hours and should not be recorded.
- All attendees should participate with their cameras on.
- The Chief Supervisor should check that all attendees understand the platform being used (e.g. Microsoft Teams), and can access it, prior to the examination.
 - Quick start guide for Microsoft Teams: <https://www.microsoft.com/cms/api/am/binary/RWwJyu>
 - All attendees should check their microphone and camera work correctly with the platform being used
 - The candidate should ensure they are familiar with how to share their screen or presentation on the platform being used and have checked this works correctly
- Those attending remotely via video conference technology must ensure they participate from a location that is private and free from background noise. It is advised to use noise cancelling headphones to avoid echo.
- It is not permitted to attend via a mobile phone, as there may be quality issues.
- It is advisable that the Chief Supervisor have mobile numbers for all participants, so in case of technical difficulties there is a way of communicating troubleshooting solutions or a decision to postpone.
- Contingency plans should be made in advance in case participants cannot be connected or have technical difficulties during the exam. For example, the Convenor should:
 - Have a copy of the student's presentation to send to attendees directly
 - Have access to a troubleshooting guide (e.g. Microsoft Teams)
<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/troubleshoot/teams-welcome>
- The Convenor has the authority to postpone an oral examination if technological difficulties make the examination process unmanageable or does not ensure a fair examination for the candidate. If the connection is lost and is unable to be reconnected, the examination should not continue via telephone and should be rescheduled.