

### **Guidelines on the Conduct of Remote Oral Examinations for Research Degrees**

1. The normal expectation is that the oral examination for a research degree will take place at the University of Bristol. An oral examination may only be conducted remotely (e.g. using videoconferencing facilities) in exceptional circumstances, when the candidate or external examiner is at a distance from the University (normally outside the UK) and is unable, for reasons that should be detailed, to travel to the University at the appropriate time.
2. The decision to allow an oral examination to be conducted remotely rests with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students). Any request to conduct an oral examination remotely must have the written agreement of the candidate, all of the examiners and the Head of School, and the approval of the relevant Graduate Education Director.
3. All parties should have the benefits and difficulties of the technology to be used explained prior to requesting a remote oral examination. No pressure should be put on any party to assent to the oral examination being carried out remotely.
4. As with other examination costs associated with research degrees, the expenses of remote oral examinations will normally be met by the school. However, if the remote link is to be used because of the candidate's inability to return to Bristol, the school will normally require the candidate to contribute all or part of the additional costs. These costs may be payable in advance of the examination taking place.
5. If exceptional circumstances make it necessary for the examination to be conducted remotely the following points should be observed:
  - The technology used must accommodate the anticipated needs of the examination (e.g. video must be available where the examiners may need to see a written response by the candidate).
  - The quality of the equipment to be used (and particularly that to be used by the remote party) must be taken into account when agreeing and arranging the remote examination.
  - Oral examinations by video link will be conducted using the Videoconferencing Service run by the Estates IT support office (e-mail: [video-conferencing@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:video-conferencing@bristol.ac.uk)).
  - The videoconferencing facilities (or other technology) should be available for sufficient time for the examination to take place. If there is doubt about the length of time required, every effort should be made to ensure that possible overrunning can be accommodated. It is suggested that the facilities are booked for at least one hour beyond the anticipated length of the examination.
  - Time should be allowed in advance of the examination for all parties to undertake a short training session and become familiar with the use of the technology.
  - If the examiners are at different sites, they must take account of their need to share their preliminary reports and consult privately with each other on the conduct of the examination.
  - If the candidate is the remote party, (s)he must be accompanied by an approved independent person, for example, a British Council representative or a member of academic staff at another academic institution. Any materials brought by the candidate into the room should be identified at the start of the examination.
6. Oral examinations carried out by remote link will not be routinely recorded.
7. Appeals will be conducted under the University's standard procedures.