

Guidance on the Audio Recording of Vivas

For those Research Degree candidates who submit their application to be examined after 01 November 2012, it is a regulatory requirement that their viva is either recorded (audio) or is conducted in the presence of an Independent Chair.

Audio Recording Equipment

- The audio equipment for vivas taking place on Campus has been provided centrally. If there are any queries, please contact Ben Credland (Faculty Manager for Management and Economics): ben.credland@rhul.ac.uk / x.4627.
- The audio equipment should be stored with a member of the departmental administrative staff (normally the PG administrator), who will be responsible for its general upkeep, for preparing it for the viva and for ensuring that the recording is stored securely and dealt with appropriately (see below).
- For vivas taking place at Bedford Square, there are 3 audio recorders available. The equipment should be reserved in advance through the administrator at Bedford Square, David Meech, when the room is booked for the viva. Contact details: bedfordsquare@rhul.ac.uk / tel: 0200 7307 8604 or 020 7307 8600.

Prior to the Viva

Candidate

The candidates are informed in section A of the MPhil/PhD Exam Entry form whether their Department has opted for the audio recording method. They are informed that:

- the recording will only be made during the viva between them and the examiners. No recording will be made of any discussion held before or after the viva when they are not present
- the recording will only be listened to in the event of an appeal made against the viva outcome, and only by a small number of staff who are involved in the investigation into the appeal
- the recording will be kept securely for 2 months after they have been informed of the outcome, after which time it will be destroyed

Examiners

The examiners are informed by the Examinations and Research Degrees Office in their invitation letter whether the viva they will be conducting will be recorded. They will also be sent an 'Examiners' Guide to the Recording of Vivas' to explain the purpose of the recording and how the recording should be administered. A reminder about this aspect of the viva will be sent when their copy of the thesis is dispatched to them.

Supervisor

If the candidate's viva is to be recorded, the Examinations and Research Degrees Office will remind the supervisor of this when they are asked to organise the viva.

PG Administrator (or other designated departmental administrative staff member)

As well as being copied in to all correspondence between the supervisor and the Exams Office regarding the date of the viva, PG administrators can check that they are aware of the dates of all the vivas in their Department by running the Infoview report:

'Postgraduate_Research_Student_Viva_Dates_by_Department'

Prior to the viva, the PG administrator should:

- check that the battery life and volume settings of the recorder and that it is otherwise functioning satisfactorily.
- that it has been wiped clean since the previous viva

- help with the set up of the equipment on the day (if required)

If the viva is to be held at Bedford Square, the PG administrator should ensure that the audio equipment has been booked via David Meech (bedfordsquare@rhul.ac.uk / tel: 0200 7307 8604 or 020 7307 8600).

On the Day of the Viva

Supervisor

It is requested that the supervisor ensures that the audio equipment is set up for the viva and that the examiners know where to return the equipment and recording to at the end of the viva.

Examiners

The internal University of London examiner should take responsibility for ensuring that the viva is recorded. The Examinations and Research Degrees Office will have provided them with the following guidelines:

- The recording device should only be on when the candidate is present i.e. the discussion of the panel should not be recorded
- The internal examiner is responsible for starting and stopping the recording
- At the end of the viva, the audio equipment and recording should be returned directly to the PG administrator
- If the viva is held at Bedford Square, the audio equipment and recording should be returned directly to David Meech, the administrator at Bedford Square

After the Viva

PG Administrator

The PG administrator should:

- extract the electronic copy and store it securely on a network drive or USB stick to be kept on the student's file
- ensure that the recording is wiped from the recorder once the electronic copy has been extracted
- delete the electronic file 2 months after the candidate has been informed of the outcome

Bedford Square Vivas

For vivas held at Bedford Square:

- David Meech will assist in extracting the electronic copy and will ensure that the recording is then wiped from the recorder.
- If a RHUL staff member (e.g. supervisor / internal examiner) is present at the viva, they should take responsibility for returning the recording to the PG administrator.
- If a RHUL staff member is not present, David Meech will ensure that the recording is sent to the PG administrator.