**Report from the Independent Chair for a video streamed viva**

**To be completed after the oral examination and submitted to Doctoral College Operations alongside the examiners’ final report**

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| --- | --- |
| Name of candidate: |  |
| Date of viva |  |

As Independent Chair I confirm the following (please tick the box):

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| --- | --- |
| 1. I was present for the pre-viva meeting, for the duration of the oral examination and the discussion and feedback after the examination\*. |  |
| *\* Please cross out any that do not apply* |  |
| 1. I am satisfied that the examination was conducted in accordance with the University of Leeds’s examination regulations. |  |
|  |  |
| 1. If there are any general comments or observations you wish to make about the examination process in this case please include these in the text box below. For a video-streaming viva please record your experience of the video streaming arrangements and that you were satisfied with the overall conduct of the viva. |  |

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This report should be attached to the final, joint report of the examiners prepared after the oral examination and should be returned to Doctoral College Operations. This report will be released to the candidate if requested. Candidates receiving an adverse academic decision (referral, MPhil award on PhD, fail) will be advised that the report of the Independent Chair is available on request.

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| Signed | Print name | Date |

This report may be handwritten or [typed](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/rsa/assets/word/policies/Independent%20Chair%20Report.docx)



**Graduate Board**

**Examinations Group**

**Use of an Independent Chair for video-streamed research degree examinations (temporary arrangements in response to the Covid-19 pandemic)**

An Independent Chair may be appointed, at the request of the examining team because of the video-streaming format of the viva. Where the team is otherwise experienced in UK research degree examinations, and the Chair is requested by the examiners due to the online format of the viva, the following criteria will be applied[[1]](#footnote-1):

* The Independent Chair will normally be expected to be a member of staff of the University of Leeds and an experienced research degree examiner[[2]](#footnote-2).
* Between them, the Internal Examiner and Independent Chair will normally be expected to have examined at least three research degrees, including at least one at Leeds within the last 3 years.

For a viva by video streaming, the Independent Chair will play an important role in supporting the examiners and the PGR. The Chair will take a broader overview of the arrangements, and a [good practice guide](https://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22149/a-z_of_policies_and_key_documents/730/video_conferencing_or_skype_or_equivalent_for_a_viva_research_students) is available, which draws out areas the examiners and Chair should consider. These include:

* Ensuring a period at the start of the viva for all parties to become familiar with the environment and comfortable with the software.
* Taking an overview of the way the technology is working, which might include checking at regular intervals that sound/video quality etc. remains satisfactory.
* Ensuring the PGR is informed at the start that they must stop the examiners - or ask for a question to be repeated - if they find any issues with sound or video quality.
* Ensuring consideration is given to the use of breaks.
* Reassuring and advising all parties should unexpected interruptions occur.
* Checking with the PGR at the end of the viva whether they were happy with how it was conducted from a practical point of view and if there is anything they would like noted.

The Chair must be present for the duration of the viva but it may not be necessary for them to be present for the pre or post viva discussions. The Independent Chair may choose to attend, or the team may request that the Independent Chair is present at either or both. This should be recorded on the Chair’s report. If not attending the full pre-viva meeting it is good practice for the Chair to speak with the examiners briefly before the viva.

The Independent Chair is not expected to read the thesis, play a role in academic examination of the candidate, or question the candidate on the work being examined at the oral examination. You can, however, access a PDF copy of the thesis in GRAD, if this would be helpful to you in your role:

* You can find the PGR under the examination section of your "My Postgraduate Researchers" section in GRAD or search for them in the search box.
* From the PGR’s main project page Select “Thesis Examination” then select the “Thesis submission” workflow.
* A PDF copy of the thesis will be available when you select “Thesis”.

The Chair should record in their report their experience of the video streaming arrangements and that they were satisfied with the overall conduct of the viva.

1. Where a Chair is required by the University under the established (pre- Covid-19) position (where it will the internal examiner’s first PGR examination or a second viva on a resubmission) separate criteria and guidance will apply. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Other Leeds examination experience could be taken into account when considering any nominations which fell below the published criteria. This might include acting as Director of PGR Studies or as a member of the Examinations Group. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)