

PhD Oral Examination arrangements

The PhD oral examination may be held once a written report (with revisions to the satisfaction of the supervisor) has been received from all examiners. It is acceptable to *schedule a tentative* date for the oral at an earlier stage. As soon as all the examiner reports have been received, the supervisor may be able to estimate the timeline for corrections and arrange the oral. If a resubmission should happen to be required, the arrangements would usually wait for the outcome of the resubmission.

The supervisor may approach a suitable departmental colleague to act as independent chair. Many environments ask an administrator or postgraduate coordinator to handle the arrangements for the virtual oral, although the supervisor sometimes does so personally. Please inform the HoD of the arrangements as a matter of courtesy.

All orals are being held virtually. Due to the significant savings, this is likely to continue. Any international examiners need to be accommodated in terms of time zones, apart from their diaries.

The timelines are usually very tight toward graduation, so that this needs to be finalised with urgency. For that reason, many people arrange a tentative date early on. This could ideally be precisely eight weeks after the submission date (submission of the dissertation for examination), with a draft supervisor's report prepared in advance.

The entire oral session is generally between 40 to 60 minutes, inclusive of:

- Introductions
- Presentation by the candidate (optional - 10 to 15 minutes at most, if included)
- Question / discussion by examiners; clarification by student
- Candidate and supervisors leave
- Examiners and chair discuss the dissertation and presentation
- Candidate and supervisors return for final result

The final Supervisor Report should be submitted to the Tygerberg Doctoral Office directly after the oral has been held. There is no form. This summary report of 2 to 3 pages in total should provide insight into the contribution of the dissertation and include:

- The full names and student number of the candidate;
- The correct name as per the year book of the PhD programme for which the candidate was registered;
- The full initials, surnames and affiliation of all supervisors;
- A comment on the extent to which the candidate worked independently;
- A brief summary of the knowledge contribution; and
- A brief summary of the examiners' assessment of the dissertation in their reports and at the oral (reflecting frankly on any resubmission).
- You may mention any other aspect that may have a significant bearing on the final evaluation of the dissertation.

Please let me know if you need any more information.
Wishing you all the best for this event.