

Online *viva voce* or oral examinations

This document summarises recent research that articulates the benefits, issues and recommended practices for online *viva voce* or oral examinations.

This examination is frequently used as an assurance of learning measure for critical, professional hurdle requirements. It is a test comprised of interactive questions and answers between the academic and the student.

Benefits	Potential issues	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Can proctor/ authenticate student identity (Akimov & Malin, 2020) » Authentic assessment opportunity e.g. for oral communication skills & higher order thinking (Akimov & Malin, 2020; Sotiriadou, Logan, Daly, & Guest, 2019) » Allows for interaction and follow-up questions from examiner » Students value conversational style and can feel more confident and knowledgeable » Marking carried out in real time (Akimov & Malin, 2020) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Can provoke high levels of anxiety and stress for students » Considerable up-front planning and resourcing required » Limited flexibility around marking times » Opportunities for identity fraud/academic dishonesty » Potential for perceived marker bias and lack of inter-rater reliability (Akimov & Malin, 2020) » Impact of technical problems and connectivity on the student/ marker experience (Okada, Scott, & Mendonca, 2015) » Accessibility and support issues for diverse students (Sotiriadou et al., 2019) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use for high-stakes professional hurdle requirements or small classes (Okada et al., 2015) » Create formative activities with feedback for students to practice required skills » Adopt a friendly conversational manner to assist with student anxiety » Require students to show their card online » Record tests for random moderation by another academic (Akimov & Malin, 2020; Sotiriadou et al., 2019) » Articulate clear exam length expectations for examiners » Require students to choose their own case study focus (Sotiriadou et al., 2019) » Select easy-to-use technology that requires little training (Okada et al., 2015)

References

- Akimov, A., & Malin, M. (2020). When old becomes new: a case study of oral examination as an online assessment tool. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1-17. doi:10.1080/02602938.2020.1730301
- Okada, A., Scott, P., & Mendonca, M. (2015). Effective web videoconferencing for proctoring online oral exams: A case study at scale in Brazil. *Open Praxis*, 7(3), 227-242. doi:10.5944/openpraxis.7.3.215
- Sotiriadou, P., Logan, D., Daly, A., & Guest, R. (2019). The role of authentic assessment to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and employability. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-17. doi:10.1080/03075079.2019.1582015

USQ is working to ensure consistent University-wide responses to your important questions about online learning and online assessment. If there is unintentional conflicting information between what you hear here and through other sources, please follow the advice of your Head of School.

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