



Arranging and conducting vivas: A guide for supervisors and independent chairs

Contents

Introduction	3
1. Special viva access arrangements.....	3
2. Summary of roles and responsibilities	3
3. Setting a date for the viva	6
4. Confirming the date of the viva	6
5. Recording arrangements for the viva.....	7
6. Agreeing the format of the viva.....	7
7. Supervisor in attendance at the viva	8
8. Arrangements for a In-person viva	8
1. Booking a meeting room.....	8
2. Useful information about Bedford Square.....	8
3. Royal Holloway staff travelling to London for an In-person viva	8
4. Refreshments for a viva held in a meeting room on Egham campus	8
5. Parking arrangements for examiners driving to Egham campus.....	9
6. Fee and expenses - External examiners.....	9
7. Booking accommodation and tickets for examiners	9
8. Payment of Royal Holloway staff.....	9
9. Recording an in-person viva - Doctoral School recording device	9
1. Collection and returning a recording device	10
2. Where is the Doctoral School helpdesk?	10
3. The voice recorder pack contents	10
4. How to operate the loaned audio device from the Doctoral School	10
10. Recording an online viva - MS Teams.....	11
1. Agreement of all parties to an online viva arrangement.....	12
2. How to record in MS Teams – with notes on transcription function	12
3. To stop the transcription	13
4. When to stop the viva recording	13
5. Deleting the transcription	13
6. Transferring an MS Teams viva recording to the Doctoral School.....	13
7. Creating the link from your Royal Holloway OneDrive folder to the viva deposit folder	14
8. To move the recording to the Viva Deposit folder.....	15
11. Giving presentation permission access to a 'guest' in MS Teams	15
12. Connection issues	16
13. Examiner access to the Whiteboard?	17
14. A hybrid viva.....	17

15. Post viva reporting of the outcome – Who and When? 17

Arranging and conducting vivas: A guide for academic staff

Introduction

This guide provides information for supervisors and Independent Chairs about students who will have a viva following submission and dispatch of their PhD/MPhil thesis.

See also – [The Doctoral School microsite](#) – [PhD/MPhil Exam process](#)
[Guidance on the appointment and role of the Independent Chair](#)
[Examiners guide to the MPhil/PhD examination process](#)
[Research degree regulations](#)

1. Special viva access arrangements

Before making arrangements for the viva the **supervisor** should consider if the candidate is registered with the Disability and Neurodiversity Team and if they have requested adjustments (special access requirements) for the viva.

This requirement should be noted on the examination entry form by the student. The Doctoral School will liaise with the Disability and Neurodiversity Team, the student, supervisor and examination team about this prior to the viva. The chair will facilitate any arrangements ahead of and on the day of the viva.

Please see the [Guide for supervisors](#) as well as the [Guide for students](#).

2. Summary of roles and responsibilities

See subsequent sections for further details.

Stage of the Process	Primary Supervisor	Independent Chair	Doctoral School
Examination entry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Assists student in final stages of thesis writing. Together with the student, seeks appropriate examiners, completes the examination entry form and obtains Departmental and School approval (DPL/DPE). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Confirms availability to assist with the examination process . Familiarises themselves with the process and research degree regulations . 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prompts timely receipt of an approved entry form so that examiners are invited in advance of the thesis submission. Registers the examination entry and invites the examination team.
Thesis Submission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Supports student with submission of thesis. Signs Declaration of Number of Words. 	Receives a copy of the thesis and instructions from the Doctoral School.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Receives and dispatches the thesis to the examination team. Updates the supervisor and reminds them about the viva process.
Pre Viva arrangements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> On receiving confirmation from the Doctoral School that the thesis has been dispatched, consults with the student, independent chair and examiners in order to set a date for the viva. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Once the viva date has been set liaises with the examiners, supervisor and student to diarise the viva. Sets up trial run 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Registers the viva date and offers assistance with room booking and recording arrangements with the Independent Chair. Gives the chair access to the viva recording deposit

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Confirms the agreed viva date, format and start time and then notifies all parties including the student and Doctoral School. 3. Supports the student in pre-viva preparation including special access requirements any dummy runs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Arranges viva recording method. 4. Books and collects recording device (if needed). 5. Sends out MS Teams invites (if needed). 6. Familiarises themselves with any special access arrangements that have been agreed by D&N. 	<p>folder.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Sends all documents and instructions to the examiners and chair 4. Ensures both preliminary reports are received before the viva. 5. Shares the preliminary reports with the examiners and chair so long as they are received in time to do so before the viva.
Stage of the Process	Primary Supervisor	Independent Chair	Doctoral School
At the viva	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attends as observer with the agreement of the student. 2. Supplies a laptop where a viva is in-person but the Independent Chair has to attend remotely. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees an agenda with the examiners. 2. Introduction** 3. Facilitates the viva, taking into account any special access requirements. 4. Receives any pre-ordered refreshments. 5. Welcomes the student. 6. Starts the viva and recording. 7. Allows for breaks. 8. Facilitates the results discussion in the absence of the student. 9. Oversees feedback to the student. 10. Closes the viva. 	
The candidate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If they are attending remotely, be prepared to show on camera that they are in a room on their own. 2. If possible, have a friend or family member 'standing by' to be with them at the end of viva (virtually if there is no-one else in their household); it's important that the candidate is not alone following the viva. 3. If they have requested that their supervisor is not present at the viva and neither independent chair nor the internal examiner know the candidate, the candidate must be prepared to show the examiners some official ID (e.g. passport / driving licence / EU/Student ID card). 		

Stage of the Process	Primary Supervisor	Independent Chair	Doctoral School
Post viva	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Supports the student after the viva giving assistance and reviewing any post viva corrections. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Transfers ownership the viva recording or returns the recording device to the Doctoral School. Completes the Independent Chair report and sends to the Doctoral School. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors receipt of outcome report from the examiners and chair. Registers the outcome and notifies the student, supervisor and Departmental PGR Lead/Director of Postgraduate Education (DPL/DPE). Ensures safe receipt of the viva recording. Monitors and registers receipt of any post viva corrections (and any further corrections where applicable) from student. Monitors and registers receipt of the final confirmation of corrections from the examiner(s). Updates the student and requests that they submit their final thesis to PURE. Ensures any restriction of access to the thesis are registered. Seeks approval of the award from the Departmental PGR Lead/Director of Postgraduate Education (DPL/DPE). Sends confirmation of the award to the student. Pays external examiners fees and expenses.

For details of current Departmental Leads and Directors of Postgraduate Education - See [here](#)

****Suggested Independent Chair viva introduction**

To be read out by the Independent Chair at the start of the viva

Introduction

Welcome to the in person/on-line/ hybrid viva for XXXX. Today's date is XXX

Present

- *myself (name)*
- *name of the viva candidate,*
- *examiners names*
- *supervisor (if applicable)*
- **Indicate if anyone is participating on Teams*

Summary of my role at this viva

My role as independent chair is to oversee the oral examination to ensure that the examination is conducted fairly and in accordance with Royal Holloway Research Degree Regulations and ensure that the conduct of the viva provides the XXX with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and to explain their work

If necessary, I can help mediate between the examiners to identify possible recommendations and facilitate an agreed outcome by advising the options available, but I may not provide any academic assessment. Other than this, I will not interject.

Recording the viva

It is my role to record the viva and transfer the recording to the sole ownership of the Doctoral School at the end of the viva. The recording will only be listened to in the event of an appeal and only by select members of University staff investigating the appeal.

On-line vivas only

Before commencing the via please can I ask xxxx to show there is no one else present in their room.

Only where special access arrangements are in place

I would like to point out the following special access arrangements which have been approved by the disability and neurodiversity team.

Post viva discussion of the examiners

I will be present at the post viva discussion and ensure that actions required of the candidate and examiners are clear and understood by all parties.

For example

- The examiners should send their joint report should to the Doctoral School within 2 weeks of today.
- The student will be formally advised of the outcome and any corrections by the Doctoral School following their receipt of the examiner report.
- From this point, the candidate should have no direct contact with the examines unless instructed to do so

3. Setting a date for the viva

Following dispatch of the electronic thesis to the examiners and Independent Chair, the **supervisor** will be asked to **set a date** and make arrangements for the viva. We recommend that the viva date is not confirmed until the thesis has been confirmed as dispatched.

If the **supervisor** is going to be absent for any of the examination period (including setting up the viva, the viva and post viva when the student is completing their corrections) they should ensure that the student has a point of contact for support and advice. This may be an advisor or second supervisor. This should be made known to the student and the Doctoral School.

4. Confirming the date of the viva

The **supervisor** should arrange and confirm the date with all those attending the viva (including the candidate) The supervisor should also inform the Doctoral School so that they can pursue receipt of the preliminary reports from the examiners in time for the viva.

The viva should take place within 3 months of the thesis being dispatched. If the viva cannot take place within 6 months of the thesis submission, the supervisor will need to apply for a [suspension of the](#)

[regulations.](#)

If the date of the viva changes for any reason, the supervisor should update the Doctoral School as soon as possible.

5. Recording arrangements for the viva

All vivas are recorded as well as being held in the presence of an Independent Chair. The recording is kept safe and solely by the Doctoral School for references in the event of an academic appeal, after the viva has taken place.

Copying of the recording is not permitted by anyone else. Viva recordings can be made on either a digital recorder loaned from the Doctoral School or recorded in MS Teams. To comply with GDPR and to limit post viva access to the recording by members of the viva party, **transfer** of the recording to the Doctoral School is required immediately after the viva has taken place. This is the responsibility of the **Independent Chair**

As students (and supervisors when present) are expected to take notes during the viva to assist with corrections, copies of the recording will **not** be made available to the student for this purpose.

The recording is permanently deleted from record once the student has been awarded.

6. Agreeing the format of the viva

Vivas can be held:

- In-person in a **meeting room**
- Online - Remotely using **MS Teams**
- Hybrid - A combination of the above

7. Supervisor in attendance at the viva

Only the principal supervisor should attend the viva. The supervisor should have their microphone on mute. They should not participate in the viva beyond liaising with the participants if there are any connection issues. They can however participate if invited to do so by the examiners. They can also assist with note taking for post viva thesis corrections.

8. Arrangements for a In-person viva

1. Booking a meeting room

In-person vivas should be held on either Egham or central London campuses only. The Doctoral School can assist with centrally bookable meeting rooms once the **supervisor** has confirmed the date and format of the viva.

The Doctoral School do not have access to rooms which are department controlled and therefore not in the central booking system. These rooms should be booked directly with the academic school office.

Please note that academic offices are **not** generally considered a suitable environment for a viva.

2. Useful information about Bedford Square

For helpful information about the location and rooms at Bedford Square please see <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/campus-life/visit-our-london-campus/bedford-square-and-senate-house.aspx>

3. Royal Holloway staff travelling to London for an In-person viva

Royal Holloway examiners and Independent Chairs travelling to a viva in London can claim their travel expenses after the viva has taken place. Electronic copies of expenses should be sent along with the [invoice](#) to doctoralschool@royalholloway.ac.uk.

Once approved, the Doctoral School will provide a charge code to claim expenses back via Agresso. The Doctoral School cannot process the expense claim on behalf of staff members but must approve them in the first instance.

4. Refreshments for a viva held in a meeting room on Egham campus

For a viva held in a meeting room on campus, the Doctoral School have been able to negotiate a viva refreshment package of tea, coffee, water and cookies. This package is **not** funded by the Doctoral School. These should be funded by the supervisor/department or Academic School. Refreshment orders for less than ten people are not normally considered by the hospitality team.

On confirming the date of the viva, the Doctoral School can provide the supervisor with template information so that they can easily place an order for this package directly with roombookingsandcatering@rhul.ac.uk. This needs to be ordered at least 5 working days before the viva takes place. The package content cannot be altered (with the exception of a specific dietary requirement), and please be aware that any late cancellations may be charged.

Refreshments can only be delivered to meeting rooms and reception areas. They cannot be delivered to academic teaching rooms. All empties must be collected up as per the instructions that come with the booking confirmation. If not, a £50 charge may be incurred.

Unfortunately, the refreshment pack cannot be organised for vivas taking place in Bedford Square due to their minimum order requirements.

The Doctoral School **do not** cover any 'on the day' viva hospitality charges. This should be organised and paid for by supervisors/Department/School.

5. Parking arrangements for examiners driving to Egham campus

If any of the examiners are travelling to campus by car for the viva, the **examiner** can register their car to park on campus [here](#). For this they will need to provide their registration number, make, model and colour of their vehicle to register it. The Doctoral School will also make this link available to the examiner at the time the thesis is dispatched. Parking spaces cannot be reserved.

6. Fee and expenses - External examiners

The examiner **fee** and any eligible **expenses** incurred such as travel, accommodation, lunch etc are claimed directly by the examiner from the Doctoral School following submission of their post viva report and [invoice](#).

Fee information and instructions about this process are sent to examiners as part of their invitation to examine the candidate and on dispatch of the thesis. They are also reminded to make a claim after submission of their post viva report.

For current fees, expenses and the reimbursement process please see - [Guide to the payment of PGR examiner fees and expenses](#)

The examiner fee also includes the checking of corrections. There is no further payment for this. However, the examiner can submit a further invoice if they are reappointed to examine a thesis which is to be resubmitted.

7. Booking accommodation and tickets for examiners

Due to the personal nature of the information required to make reservations, and to book travel, the Doctoral School is unable to book this ahead of the viva on behalf of examiners. Examiners are informed about how to reclaim expenses throughout the examination process.

[Guide for the payment of PGR examiner fees and expenses](#)
[PGR examiner invoice form](#)

8. Payment of Royal Holloway staff

Payment of the examination fee is **only** applicable to examiners who are **not** employed by Royal Holloway. Members of staff (including Emeritus) cannot claim the fee.

Current members of staff (but not emeritus) can claim **expenses** for travel to a viva in London. The PGR examiner invoice (above) should be submitted to the Doctoral School with electronic evidence of expense. Instructions from the Doctoral School will follow this.

Any expense outlaid by members of staff on behalf of examiners e.g. lunch **cannot** subsequently be claimed from the Doctoral School.

9. Recording an in-person viva - Doctoral School recording device

An In-person viva can be recorded on a loaned digital recorder. The **Independent Chair** is responsible for recording the viva.

1. Collection and returning a recording device

The Doctoral School can make an audio recording device available to the **Independent Chair or supervisor** for collection. The Doctoral School helpdesk in Founders South Tower, S1-05 is open on Tuesdays 10am to 4pm.

We ask that the device is collected on the nearest Tuesday to the viva if possible. If this is not convenient, and with enough notice, we can make alternative arrangements for the collection of a device.

The recorder should be returned to the Doctoral School helpdesk as soon as possible after the viva has taken place. Alternatively, if this is not possible for any reason, it can be returned to the Help Desk in the Student Services Centre in the Emily Wilding Davison Building (opposite Café on the Square). Please liaise with the Doctoral School about this so we can work with you on this. We regret that we are unable to offer a drop-off service. Opening hours for the student Services centre are Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm, but please check [here](#) for any changes to this.

2. Where is the Doctoral School helpdesk?

The Doctoral School helpdesk can be found in room 1-05 of the Founders South Tower. This is on the first floor between the Herringham room (now closed for through access) and the Founder's reading room.

We recommend entering the south tower from the ramp under the tower archway. Take the ramp opposite the Lower Herringham room. If you can make your way there, we can give you a recorder pack including instructions. [Instructions on how to use the devices follow below.](#)

3. The voice recorder pack contents

Please feel free to make use of the 'exam in progress' sign provided in the pack and Blu tack but we ask you kindly to return this to the pack along with the recording device after the viva.

Please do not include any documents other than the documents already in the pack, when returning it to the Doctoral School. Post viva reports should be sent electronically, directly to the Doctoral School by the examiners.

Please do not take loan of a device in Bedford Square. We have no means of securing recordings made on their devices and these are therefore not GDPR compliant.

If a device other than one loaned by the Doctoral School is to be used, this must be approved beforehand by the Doctoral School, and arrangements made for the safe transfer of the audio files immediately after the viva. The files should **not** be copied or made available to anyone other than the Doctoral School.

Please note that although an In-person viva can be recorded with a loaned audio device, we still recommend [recording the viva in MS Teams](#).

4. How to operate the loaned audio device from the Doctoral School

The **Independent Chair** is responsible for starting and stopping the voice recorder.

The **Independent Chair** should announce the date, time, people in the room and that this is the

recording of PhD viva for (name of candidate).

To switch on: Move the slide on the left-hand side of the Dictaphone in a downward direction. The screen will illuminate at this point.



At the end of the In-person viva, **before the examiners confer** over the outcome, the **independent chair** stops the recording and both the supervisor (when in attendance) and the candidate leave the meeting room. **The viva outcome discussion should not be recorded.**

To switch off the recorder: Move the slide on the left-hand side of the Dictaphone to the lower position and hold until the words "Power Off" appear on the display and it subsequently goes blank. Release the slide.

10. Recording an online viva - MS Teams

The viva can take place (or be recorded) online under the following conditions:

1. All parties agree with the arrangement.
2. The Independent Chair accesses MS Teams on a laptop or University device using their **University user ID**.
3. The **Independent Chair** schedules the viva in Microsoft Teams. This way they are awarded the 'meeting organiser' role. This also ensures that the viva recording is then saved to the Independent Chair's Royal Holloway personal OneDrive. The meeting **should not** be arranged via a Teams channel. It is important that **no one other than the Independent Chair sets up the meeting**.
4. When sending out the Teams invites to the Examiners and candidate, the Independent Chair should also invite Joanne.barrs@rhul.ac.uk and Tracey.jeffries@rhul.ac.uk from the Doctoral School.
5. The **Independent Chair** ensures that the viva is recorded and that the recording is **transferred** to the Doctoral School, who will ensure the recording is held securely and only listened to in case of appeal.

Non-Teams users are able to access MS Teams as guests (see below).

1. Agreement of all parties to an online viva arrangement

The university regulations state that all vivas must be recorded as well as being in the presence of an Independent Chair. The **independent chair** is responsible for setting up the MS Teams meeting **and** for recording the viva:

It is important that all parties involved in a remote viva agree in writing that they are happy for it to go ahead online. The Doctoral School will obtain the agreement as follows:

Candidate:

- When submitting the examination entry form the candidate is asked to read the guide to [conducting vivas online for candidates](#). We also suggest that this is discussed with the candidate ahead of making viva arrangements. If anyone objects, this should be made known to the Doctoral School by email.
- The fact that a viva is held online is not valid grounds for appeal if the candidate is not satisfied with the viva outcome.

Supervisor:

- When the supervisor informs the Doctoral School of the date / time and format of the viva, they should also confirm their agreement to the viva being held by video conference.

Examiners and Independent Chair:

- Examiner and independent chair invitations will include a section about online vivas so they will be agreeing to this format as part of their acceptance of the invitation to examine/chair.

Although members of the Doctoral School are invited to the Teams meeting, they do not attend the viva. This is just for monitoring the post viva transfer of the viva recording.

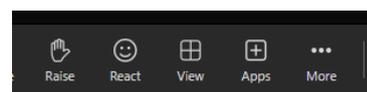
2. How to record in MS Teams – with notes on transcription function

DO NOT RECORD ANY PRE OR POST VIVA EXAMINER DISCUSSION

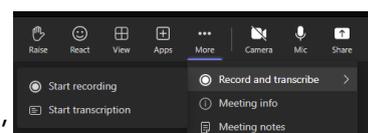
The following instructions apply to any viva that is being recorded in MS Teams

- Ensure that the laptop or Teams ready AV equipment is positioned to capture all attendees. This is particularly important for recording in-person and hybrid vivas in MS Teams. If visual capture is not possible, please ensure that the laptop is located in a place that will at least pick up a good audio record.

- From the menu bar, click on the **three dots** (more actions)

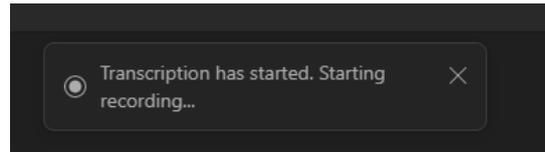


- Choose **Record and transcribe** followed by 'Start recording'



After a short delay you will see a message at the top of the screen to confirm that the meeting is being recorded and transcribed.

The Independent Chair should announce that that viva is now being recorded to the viva participants.



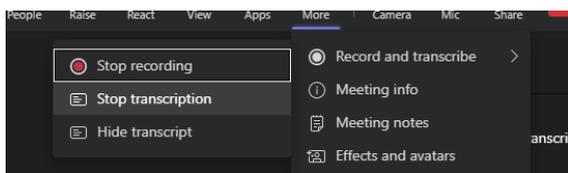
MS Teams transcription - Auto start

MS teams transcribes as it records with no option to record only. The transcription is **NOT** required and if not stopped or deleted, it will be available for download after the viva.

It is important that the Independent Chair stops the transcription as soon as recording begins.

3. To stop the transcription

Go back to the **Record and transcribe** menu and select '**Stop transcription**'



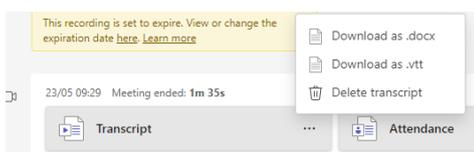
4. When to stop the viva recording

At the end of the viva, **before the examiners confer** over the outcome, the **independent chair stops the recording.**

At this point both the supervisor (when in attendance) and the candidate leave the meeting/room. There is also the option of creating a breakout room (in MS Teams) for this point in the meeting should the chair wish to do so.

5. Deleting the transcription

If the Independent Chair forgets to stop the transcription at the start of recording, they should go back to the meeting 'chat' at the end of the viva and delete the transcription from there.



6. Transferring an MS Teams viva recording to the Doctoral School

To ensure the safety of the viva recording we ask the **Independent Chair** to take the following steps immediately after the viva has finished.

Although the Doctoral School can view the recording in the Teams recap, they **do not** have access to the Independent Chair's Royal Holloway OneDrive folder, so are unable

to carry out the file transfer.

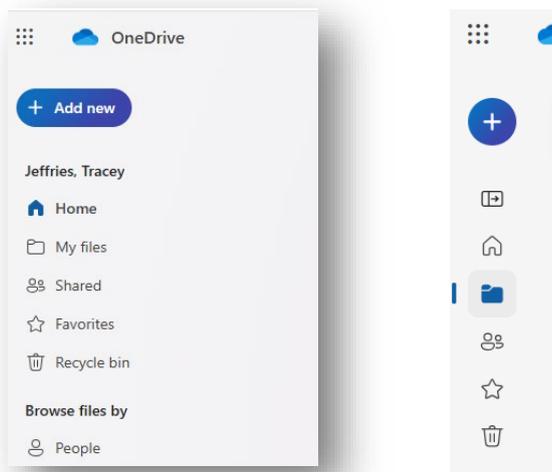
7. Creating the link from your Royal Holloway OneDrive folder to the viva deposit folder

If you have already carried out this step (having been an Independent Chair previously), skip this step and move to **'To Move the recording to the viva deposit folder'** below

Open your Royal Holloway OneDrive with this link - <https://rhul-my.sharepoint.com/>

If you have not signed in to this, you may be prompted to sign in using your Royal Holloway credentials.

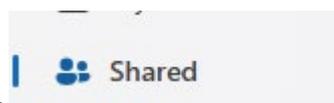
You should see a list or menu similar to this.



The recording will be sitting in the folder called 'recordings' within the folder called 'My files'

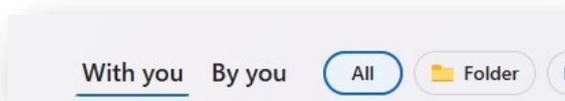
Step 1

Click on the icon called **Shared** -



Step 2

Find/select **'folder'** to the right of **'with you'** (we have shared viva deposit with you)

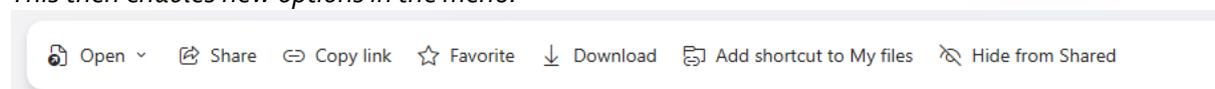


Step 3

Select the radio key to the left of the folder called **'viva deposit'**.



This then enables new options in the menu.



Step 4

With the folder still selected click on **'Add shortcut to my files'**.

You are now ready to move the recording.

8. To move the recording to the Viva Deposit folder

Step 1

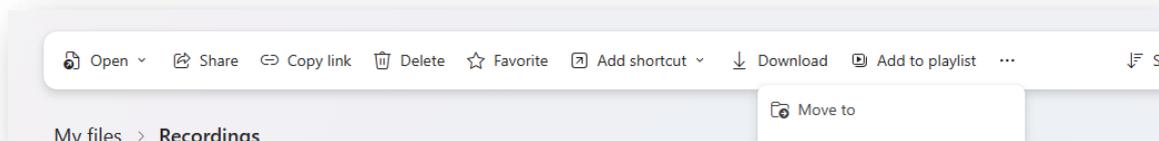
In the **'my files'** menu you will see a folder called **'recordings'**. Open this folder.

Step 2

Open the folder and find the viva recording(s) and select the radio key to the left of this/them.
On doing this a new menu opens at the top of the screen.

Step 3

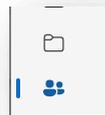
Depending on your view you may need to expand the menu options to view the option **'Move to'**



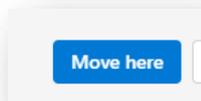
Choose the **'Move to'** option.

Step 4

Navigate within **'My files or Shared'**



To find the **'viva deposit'** folder, select that folder and select **Move here**

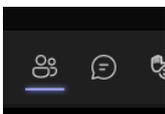


- You can now log out of OneDrive and the Doctoral School will receive an automated message to confirm the safe transfer of the file to their ownership. From this point no one other than the Doctoral School can view the recording.
- The Independent Chair is also asked to submit their [Independent Chair report](#) to the Doctoral School by email doctoralschool@rhul.ac.uk

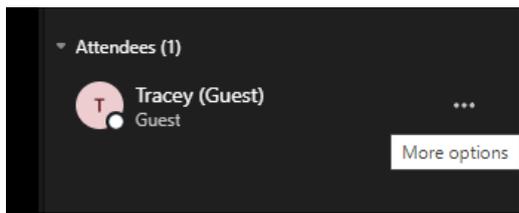
11. Giving presentation permission access to a 'guest' in MS Teams

Should one of the examiners wish to present during the viva, the meeting organiser can grant them access to present as follows:

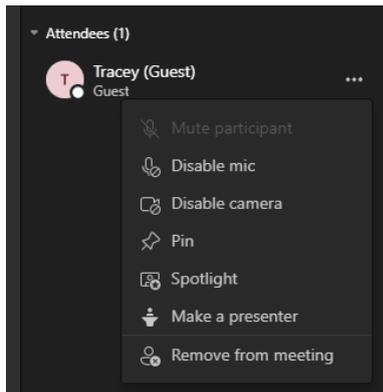
Whilst the meeting is ongoing, click on 'show participants'



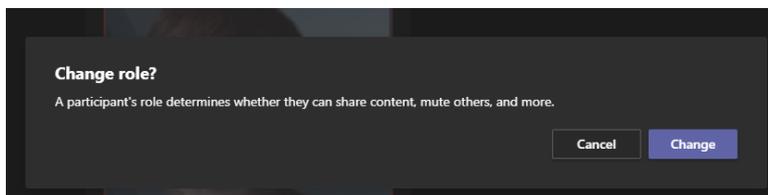
From the list of guest participants select the name of the person who wishes to present and the '...' 'more options'



Choose – 'Make a presenter'



Allow the change



12. Connection issues

- If any of the connections break down during the viva but can be restored after a short break, the viva should continue.
- If any of the connections break down during the viva but cannot be restored after three extended dropouts of the MS Teams connection, participants will be asked to come to an agreement as to whether the viva should be halted and a new viva date set (e.g., if this happens near the beginning of the viva); rescheduling would be the most appropriate course of action but this may not be considered necessary if it were to happen near the end of the viva).

If at any point the candidate feels they are being disadvantaged due to technical issues they are able to request that the viva is stopped and request a postponement to another date that would be in-person.

Non-Teams users

Non-Teams users will still be able to join meetings via the browser version of Teams. When they click 'join meeting' on their invite it will open up Teams in their browser suggesting they download the app. They can ignore this and click the button that says '**Join on the Web instead**'.

13. Examiner access to the Whiteboard?

The MS Teams **Whiteboard** functionality is not accessible for non-Royal Holloway users. If an external examiner makes a specific request to make use of the Whiteboard, the supervisor will need to arrange to set-up a temporary Royal Holloway user account. For information on how to do this, please contact doctoralschool@rhul.ac.uk

14. A hybrid viva

Hybrid vivas create an opportunity for some in-person participation but also lends to a situation where one or more participants cannot attend in-person. It can also create opportunity to appoint international examiners. Again, hybrid vivas should take place with the consent of all parties. These vivas should be recorded in MS Teams.

How to record a hybrid viva

This requires MS Teams ready AV equipment in the room where the 'in-person' participants are attending. We recommend that the Independent Chair takes a laptop to the meeting room as the Doctoral School are unable to guarantee the AV equipment in the meeting rooms will be fully functioning on the day.

As well as any 'in-person' calendar invites, the Independent Chair should also send an MS Teams invite to just those attending remotely on MS Teams. They should also invite joanne.barrs@rhul.ac.uk and tracey.jeffries@rhul.ac.uk from the Doctoral School. Please be advised that this is solely as a means of tracking the recording following the viva. They will **not** join or interrupt the viva.

In circumstances where the Independent Chair has to attend remotely (thought this strongly discouraged and permission should be sought), the supervisor will be asked to bring a laptop or ensure that there is suitable AV equipment in the meeting room. Responsibility for this should not be placed with the examiners or student. The Doctoral School do not have any loan laptops to make available for vivas. Setting up the MS Teams meeting and [recording the viva](#) are explained above.

After the viva

Either the supervisor (if in attendance) or the independent chair should check there is someone with the candidate (virtually if not possible in-person):

*'It is important, irrespective of the outcome, that the candidate is not alone following the viva. For most this will be a time for celebrating the successful culmination of their studies (even remotely), but for others, the outcome will be less pleasing than they were expecting.'*²

15. Post viva reporting of the outcome – Who and When?

In advance of the viva, the Doctoral School will have sent all guides and instructions to the examiners and Independent Chair.

- **The examiners** are asked to return their [joint viva outcome report](#) directly to doctoralschool@royalholloway.ac.uk within 2 weeks of the viva and **not** directly to the student or supervisor.
 1. After returning their reports external examiners are invited by the Doctoral School to send in their invoice.
 2. **The Independent Chair** is asked to transfer viva recording(s) to the Doctoral School and return their [Independent Chair report](#) immediately after the viva.
 3. The **Doctoral School** will send formal notification of the outcome with further instructions to

the student and copy the supervisor. This is usually within 5 working days of receipt from the examiners.

For summary information about the **MPhil/PhD exam process**, please see – [Overview of the PhD/MPhil exam process](#)

For further information on information available to **examiners**, please see – [Forms and guidance for examiners](#)

For information available to the **candidate**, please see [PhD/MPhil exam process](#)