

Postgraduate Researchers

Online vivas: tips and resources

BEFORE THE VIVA



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- **Preparation** : much of the same advice applies to online vivas as face to face - be as prepared as possible. Talk to your supervisors, reread your thesis, challenge yourself to explain the 'weaker' parts, take notes, understand the possible outcomes
- **Practice**: mini mock vivas can be very helpful. Ask your supervisor if they can do an online one, or ask a friend
- **Technology and environment**: make sure your computer is set up properly in advance. Ensure that you have a comfortable, uncluttered place to sit for the viva, away from distractions, where possible. Make sure you have plenty water at hand
- **Enlist a 'buddy'**: this may be your supervisor, a family member or friend and they should be available to support you (face to face or remotely) at the end of the viva

DURING THE VIVA



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- **Take your time** : just as in a face to face viva, pause if necessary, ask for clarification or repetition if a question is unclear
- **Quirks of technology**: you may suffer issues such as speech distortion, failures with WiFi etc. Don't panic - this will have no impact on the outcome of your viva
- **Lack of examiner facial expressions/ body language**: try not to worry about this. Remember, in exam conditions, it is often difficult to pick up on these cues, even face to face
- **Try to enjoy**: strange as it sounds, this is an opportunity to have an in-depth discussion of your research. Try to focus on this
- **'Bye-bye'**: one of the most peculiar things about an online viva can be the abrupt ending. This is why a 'buddy' is important, to provide support. Lastly, make sure you celebrate your achievement, even if remotely

Useful Links

Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

- A Guide to Viva Preparation
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral/advice-support/writing-up>

UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE)

- Conducting Vivas Online: A Guide for Institutions and Candidates
<http://www.ukcge.ac.uk/>

Viva Survivors

- Lots of resources for preparing for the viva
<http://viva-survivors.com/>



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