

**LI KA SHING FACULTY OF MEDICINE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

**Guidelines for Setting Up and Conducting Oral Examinations for  
Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Master of Surgery (MS) Candidates**

(For students enrolled in or after September 2012)

**A. Setting Up a Thesis Examining Committee**

A Thesis Examining Committee (TEC) shall be established to conduct an oral examination and to recommend the examination result in accordance with Regulation M33/M41. A TEC shall consist of a Chairman and four members (3 voting members and 1 non-voting member). The external examiner(s) and internal examiner(s) are voting members while the candidate's supervisor is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Committee. The Chairman, who is a non-voting member, shall be the Head of the Department of Medicine/Surgery or his/her delegate.

**B. The Conduct of Oral Examinations**

1. The oral examination should allow
  - a. the candidate to defend his or her thesis and clarify any matters raised by the examiners;
  - b. the examiners to probe the candidate's knowledge in the field;
  - c. the examiners to assure themselves that the work presented is the candidate's own and to clarify matters of any collaboration; and
  - d. the examiners to come to a definite conclusion about the outcome of the thesis examination.
2. The oral examination shall be conducted by the TEC with the Chairman representing the Faculty to preside over the oral examination. The role of the Chairman, who must be present for the whole of the examination, is to ensure that
  - a. the oral examination is conducted in a fair manner;
  - b. questions are put fairly and that the candidate is given adequate opportunity to answer;
  - c. examiners are given sufficient opportunity to ask questions and to evaluate the candidate's performance;
  - d. if the External Examiner is not present at the oral examination, all substantive questions raised in the External Examiner's report are put to the candidate by the Additional Examiner;
  - e. it is the candidate alone, and not the Supervisor or any other member of the Committee, who defends the thesis;
  - f. the candidate should leave the room after the questioning and before the start of the discussion by the members of the Committee;
  - g. in reporting their conclusions on the result of the oral examination the examiners confine themselves to evidence arising from the oral examination;
  - h. the examiners' recommendations are clearly indicated on the report form with the amendment; and

- i. the completed report form, duly signed by the members of TEC, is returned to the Faculty Office immediately after the oral examination.
3. Persons other than the candidate, the Chairman, members of TEC / Supervisor and Co-Supervisor(s) of the candidate may be present at the oral examination subject, in each case, to the approval of
    - a. the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee;
    - b. the Chairman; and
    - c. the candidate.

The Chairman is empowered to determine (in keeping with the spirit of these 'Guidelines') whether such person(s) should merely observe or may also address questions to the candidate and / or to the examiners. In no case shall such person(s) contribute(s) to the examiners' final assessment of the result of the oral examination or their recommendation to the Faculty.

4. The roles of the examiners (and of the Additional Examiner(s), if any) at the oral examination are:
  - a. to satisfy themselves that the candidate has in fact done the work reported in the thesis and has sufficient understanding and grasp of the subject matter to be able to defend the thesis;
  - b. to determine whether the candidate understands the significance of his or her work in the broad context of his or her subject;
  - c. to resolve any points raised by the examiners of the thesis;
  - d. to assist the Chairman to record on the report form those aspects of the thesis and / or of the field of study (and research) on which the candidate has been examined (excluding repetition of the specific points raised by the examiners of the thesis which are recorded in their respective reports);
  - e. to decide, on the basis of the evidence arising from the oral examination, whether the candidate should be required to attend a further oral or written examination on the thesis and / or on the field of study; and
  - f. to arrive at a final assessment of the quality of the thesis and the performance of the candidate, and in consultation with the Chairman, to jointly arrive at a recommendation on the examination result, which will be recorded in a written report.
5. If TEC cannot reach a consensus on the examination result, the Chairman shall make a recommendation to the Committee on whether an additional independent examiner should be appointed.

#### C. Conducting Oral Examinations by Teleconferencing or Video-conferencing

1. In principle all thesis examiners should participate in as much of the oral examination process as possible. To this end, oral examinations which are normally held in Hong Kong should rely on teleconferencing or video-conferencing if needed to ensure that all relevant parties (internal examiner(s), external examiner(s) and student) participate in the examination. Oral examinations should be held by teleconferencing or video-conferencing under the following circumstances:
  - a. In cases where one or more examiners is/are of the view that the thesis is of

insufficient standard for conferment of the degree, it is mandatory for the external examiner(s) to participate in the oral examination. If the external examiner(s) is/are overseas and cannot come to Hong Kong to attend the oral examination, the external examiner should participate in the oral examination by teleconferencing or video-conferencing. Only in exceptional circumstances should an additional examiner be appointed to attend the oral examination;

- b. In order not to delay the examination process, an oral examination should be conducted by means of teleconferencing or video-conferencing if one or more examiner(s) will not be present in Hong Kong on the date of the oral examination;
- c. If a student is abroad and cannot return to Hong Kong to attend the oral examination within a reasonable period of time, the oral examination should be conducted by video-conferencing.

2. The use of teleconferencing and video-conferencing is summarized as follows:

<b>Members not in HK</b>	<b>Conduct oral exam by teleconferencing</b>	<b>Conduct oral exam by video-conferencing</b>
Student	Not normally allowed	Allowed
External examiner	Either teleconferencing or video-conferencing is required	
Internal examiner	Either teleconferencing or video-conferencing is required	

- 3. An internal or external examiner who participates in the oral examination by teleconferencing or video-conferencing should follow the following guidelines:
  - a. The identity of the examiner at the oral examination via teleconference or video-conference must be verified.
  - b. The examiner should be requested, through mail or fax, to sign the TEC report.
  - c. The Department concerned should be responsible for the expenses used for teleconferencing or video-conferencing facilities at both sides.

November 2014