

Academic Misconduct Vivas

A guide for students

What is a Viva?

A viva (or viva voce examination to give it its proper title) is essentially an oral examination. You might want to think of it as an interview on the piece of work under investigation.

Why a viva?

The university uses vivas when there is suspicion of misconduct to find whether the student wrote/created the piece of work themselves, or they had help from others.

Essentially what your tutor is trying to see is how much you know about the subject of the piece of work, and whether you can explain how you researched and wrote/created the work.

Why have I been asked to attend a viva?

The reason why you have been asked to attend a viva is because your tutor(s) suspect your work of academic misconduct. Normally, vivas are convened for specific types of academic misconduct:

1. Collusion – when the work is suspected to be the product of more than one individual, i.e. that you wrote/created it with someone else;
2. Third-party assistance -when the work is suspected to have been written/created by someone other than yourself, whether it is a friend, relative or an online service.

What should I expect in the viva?

Normally in the viva (whether done via TEAMS or in person), you will be in a (virtual) room together with at least two other people. One of them will be your tutor, and another one will be chair. It may be that there is also another senior academic present, and a note-taker.

What is the purpose of these people?

Your tutor is there to ask you questions about the work you have submitted.

The chair is there to explain what is going on, and may also ask questions about your work.

Any other individuals present are there either as administrative help (such as a note-taker) or as representatives of the university (such as a second marker for works that are second-marked).

What sort of questions will I be asked?

Normally questions will centre on two topics:

1. Your understanding and comprehension of the ideas, views and issues in the piece of work you have submitted. So, you may be asked questions like:
 - a. You mention that Jones 2012 argued XXX. Why do you think this is relevant to the topic?

- b. Can you summarise the main findings of your research for this essay?
 - c. Can you identify the main theoretical standpoints in relation to this topic?
 - d. You chose to use Gibb's reflective cycle in this assignment. Can you explain your choice?
2. The process of your research and writing/creating of the piece of work. So, you may be asked questions like:
- a. Your bibliography brings together a variety of articles. Where did you find these articles? How did you access them?
 - b. Did you find that a book or article that you consulted was particularly helpful? Why?
 - c. How did you structure your essay?
 - d. Did you take any previous feedback into account when writing/creating this piece of work?
 - e. Did you create the figures/tables in your work? What did you use to create them?
 - f. The language in your work is more complex than what you used in previous works/what you use in class. How did you proofread your work.

Do not be alarmed if you are asked questions that relate specifically to the issues identified by your tutor. So, you may be also asked questions like:

- a. Did you ask anyone for help with this assignment?
- b. Did you use someone else's computer/laptop at any point when writing/creating this assignment?
- c. Did you and XX discuss this assignment? Did you work together or show each other your essays?

How do I prepare for the viva?

It is very important that you bring with you to the viva any materials that you used in the process of research, such as your notes or previous drafts.

Read through your submitted work and consider the issues raised by your tutor in the SC05 form (Academic Misconduct Investigation Form).

It may be that it is a few weeks since you wrote/created the assignment. Refamiliarise yourself with the topic, your argument and the research that you did.

I think I may have done something wrong. What do I do?

It is better to be honest in the viva. If you think that you may have committed academic misconduct, then it is better to say so in your viva. Explain what you did and why.

I still don't get what I am being accused of. What do I do?

The first step is to make sure that you understand the types of academic misconduct and the issues raised by your tutor.

The university offers students an asynchronous lesson as a refresher on academic misconduct. It is free and you can self-enrol at any time. You can find it on Moodle: [Course: Academic Misconduct Refresher \(uwtsd.ac.uk\)](https://uwtsd.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1234)

If you are still uncertain, then speak to your tutor or the Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator. They will be able to answer your questions.

If you have not had the chance to speak to your tutor or the Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator before the viva, then ask in the viva. It is best to start off the discussion with an admission that you do not understand the issue raised by the tutor. This way your tutor can explain the issue.