



Online Viva Resource

For Students and supervisors

WHAT IS A VIVA?

The term “Viva” is short for the Latin term “viva voce” meaning “live voice”. In the context of medical sonography, the Viva offers an opportunity for students to demonstrate skills and ideas that may not be readily examinable in written or clinical settings.

The medical sonography Viva is an oral examination or a conversation between a student and examiner/s. It offers students the ability to reflect on ideas, elaborate on the discussion and communicate the analysis of concepts, all whilst in a dynamic environment.

As we know the written examinations provide tangible and measurable objectives relating to academic competencies. The Viva offers an additional form of assessment to written examinations, with less of a focus on content and more on the analytical and practical response of the student. Unlike written assessments, content alone does not make the final mark for a viva with the process of the students’ performance and demonstration of communication skills being of importance.

The format of a viva offers a way to assess the strength of the students’ subject learning outcomes in real time, thus increasing the academic integrity of the assessment.

This will take the form of a relatively unscripted interaction between the student and the examiner and provides a verbal demonstration of skills and knowledge relating to potential scenarios encountered in the workplace environment.

It is important to remember that the viva is not just aiming to assess how many questions students can answer correctly, but how a student approaches answering the questions, including how they might critically analyse their responses.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY?

In a program like the Medical Sonography program, where there is a substantial amount of time spent in clinical settings, an online viva assessment provides another avenue of assessment in this busy time.

Students will utilise skills from across your academic sonographic journey, as well as incorporating clinical skills- thus the conversation in the viva will seek to understand whether you have developed your understanding from earlier studies. Additionally, this will demonstrate how students continue to develop their clinical reasoning – as we have mentioned throughout the course, accredited medical sonographers will continue lifelong learning in the form of continuing professional development.

During the viva students may be asked questions on fundamental sonographic knowledge. Preparation should include ways examinations may be carried out and potential impacts on patients. Students may want to explore the effects of a different approach have yielded a different result during the conversation.

An understanding of why something was done – what the effect may be on sonographic and patient outcome is critical in any clinical setting – in the viva, students are asked to verbalise this thinking process.

WHAT IS THE VIVA FORMAT?

Each student will have to set aside 30 minutes (Viva is 20 minutes only) from the following date **range June 12- 23**. Time slots and days will be offered based on examiner availability to accommodate various time zones and work commitments. These choices will be made available to you on the learn-online site. Please choose one slot only and make sure you are available during that time to log in.

Online vivas will be held via zoom.

A zoom link to join the oral viva sessions will be made available on the learn-online site.

Students should Log in and ensure they are set up at least 3-5 minutes before the start time of your session and wait for the examiner to let you into the session.

Students must check their device and internet prior to the day of the viva – links and phone numbers for IT are available on the learnonline pages, BUT students must check these connections in advance of their selected Viva session.

It is important you know

1. Ensure you have a **webcam capacity** (the examiners must be able to see you and verify you are who you say you are)
2. Have **identification, this** may be drivers' licence – something with photo ID
3. Your session will be **recorded** SO please dress professionally (appropriately)

WHAT WILL BE IN MY SESSION?

- Each session will be of 20 minutes duration
- Your session will be recorded, there will be 1 examiner online with you.
- A second examiner will moderate sessions prior to release of results.
- The viva will consist of a PowerPoint presentation with a set of questions. Each set will have different questions testing similar components.
- Questions offered will include images/ scenarios from each topic you have studied including
 - Professional Issues
 - Physics
 - Obstetrics and Gynae
 - Small parts (breast, thyroid scrotum)
 - Vascular
 - Abdominal- including male and female pelvis and paediatric abdomen
 - MSK

The viva will consist of questions from any of these areas, so students are encouraged to be prepped with information from throughout their study.

Questions may include

- Sonographic technique, - including patient preparation, positioning, transducer, and system pre-sets
- image optimization- for colour, 2D and Spectral Doppler in each field (this is beyond automatic optimisation)
- How examinations may be extended in different scenarios
- Questions related to patient care in a sonographic environment

Whilst there are time restraints, students must prepare for a variety of different competencies – It is expected you will be able to respond to all areas covered during your studies.

The overriding purpose of this type of examination is that students can apply their understanding of theory into clinical practice and clinical reasoning and ensure entry level sonographers are

- Delivering safe, patient-centred services,
- That they practice within professional and ethical frameworks
- That they contribute to workplace health and safety
- they can communicate effectively

ARE THERE EXAMPLES AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH MY PREPARATION?

Yes, exemplars with testing of the sessions with recent graduates, practice vivas and grading rubric is provided on the learn-online site. Please check the links to sort responses to questions like

- What the examiners are looking for? The possible questions asked during the viva will be on the following aspects: •
- What would you do in each scenario? • Why did you do it? • What are your findings? • What is the significance of your findings?

DURING THE VIVA

For students it is important to remember the examiners will be trying to obtain information from them. They may ask questions, they may try to push a point – this doesn't mean answers are not correct, examiners may be wanting more information.

The best advice is to encourage students to be as calm as possible prior to commencing the viva and during the viva. Questions should be responded to as calmly as possible.

What happens if a student disagrees with the examiner?

Remember, the examiner may be wanting to understand how a student may behave in a challenging situation, students should always try to listen to the question, consider their response and be open minded to interactions.

Are we all being asked the same questions?

The questions of a viva exam will differ from each student, although the format will remain the same. One of the things to keep in mind is, the viva is not aiming to assess how many questions a student can respond to correctly, but rather how each question approached when answering. The examiners are looking to understand how students critically analyse situations.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE VIVA?

As the vivas are a part of the three assessment components of the OSCE, all results will have to be collated prior to giving you the results. Brief comments on your performance during the session will be provided.

HOW DO I PREPARE?

Here are some tips for your preparation

What to do	What to avoid
Take your time, consider your response	Don't rush to answer – ensure you understand the question being asked
Answer concisely but as fully as possible	Try not to talk too long, if you don't understand what has been asked, say something,
If you don't know the answer, admit it	Being defensive or waffling will not assist you – if you don't know the answer, its better to admit, remember the purpose of this process is to critically assess your work
Be open to suggestions	Don't blame nerves for everything, even the examiners might be nervous
Check your tone, don't be aggressive	Don't be angry with the examiners if you don't understand or know the response/ image/

PRACTICE USING TERMINOLOGY

Students are encouraged to practice before the VIVA date, set up a time with supervisor's peers or other.

Students should set up a place that is safe, clear of clutter and has good ambiance for communicating – students should check IT connections and devices including batteries – practice using the ZOOM software –

Students should practice speaking on zoom, ensure sound and audio is correct and that they can be heard clearly by others. Students may want to consider using headphones or a microphone.

Whilst the process has been tested out on PCs, iPad (tablet device), and mobile phones, you will be reviewing images, so you may want a **large screen**.

Make sure you have downloaded the correct APP to access the links.

WHAT IS THE BEST PLACE TO SIT THIS EXAM?

This is an exam for you – please do not sit the exam with another student, your supervisor, or a friend.

Ensure you are set up ahead of time in a

- Quiet well-ventilated space
- Don't have family friends or pets in the room
- You have been allocated a time – you want no interruptions,
- Turn off all other programs and devices that may interrupt your concentration – email and pop-up alerts on your computer for example, and ensure your mobile phone is not accessible to act as a distraction.
- Have a glass of water next to the computer.

ON THE DAY

Remember to log onto ZOOM a few minutes early. You will be invited into a room, so don't be alarmed if you are waiting for a couple of minutes.

Each student is allocated a time, and the examiners will adhere to this time, so hopefully there will not be any delays. Once you log on please stay on your computer and wait to be invited.

ANXIETY

This is a normal phenomenon, but it means you may start shallow breathing, and this could impact you when you are responding in the viva. Make sure you practice and use the following consciously ***“Pause- think- speak”***- this will provide you with space to consider and your response.

EXPLAIN YOUR THINKING

This type of encounter offers you an opportunity to explain your thought process to the examiners – let them know how you join the dots.

Don't be disheartened if you are asked additional questions, this is not a bad thing, it may provide clarity to your response.

Rather than just giving yes or no answers, explain your thinking, guiding the examiners through your thought process rather than expecting the examiner to 'connect the dots' or tease the answer out with multiple follow up questions. Do not be disheartened if the examiners do ask additional questions though – that isn't a negative, it may just provide further clarity for the examiner of your understanding of the question.

PROBLEMS DURING YOUR TIME

During the viva, raise any issues you may have – for example if the audio is not quite clear, please advise the examiners – if you have pretested your computer and connections (as requested with online exams) – advise the examiners ASAP – not at the end or the day after the exam.

If you don't understand the question, ask for it to be repeated

PRACTICE

Make sure you take the time to prepare for this exam as you would for any other. There are practice viva's on the learnonline pages – you should also practice explaining your understanding to others.

Consider setting up a time to a mock viva with your supervisors or peers. This is an excellent method of practice use of words and answering the questions as well as engaging in discussion rather than just preparing on paper. Make sure you ask them to point out where you could improve with your language or responses. They might also point out small things or mistakes that you did not notice before.

It is natural to worry about any form of assessment, particularly if you have had little to no experience participating in vivas. Remember your examiners understand exams in general are stressful and that in the case of a dynamic and live assessment, your nerves may be particularly hard to hide. Practice with peers and reflect on why you are doing what you are doing on every sonographic examination at work!

SUMMARY

You are well on the way to becoming an Accredited Medical Sonographer = the viva is an important part of that process. It is not a method to catch you out, it provides an opportunity to demonstrate your skills and what you do know to the examiners. Remember they are there to help guide you through this process. The vivas are practically orientated, so when presented with a scenario reflect on how you would approach that in the workplace.

Your workplace protocols will play a part in your responses- this is your supported evidence that demonstrates your understanding to adhere to guidelines.

As for all your assessments in this course, the role of the viva is to ascertain whether students are at a level of competency required of an entry level sonographer. Remember to be confident and proud of what you have achieved over the last few years of your study and clinical – this is an opportunity to shine and show your examiners that you are ready to wear the respected title of Accredited Medical Sonographer.

WILL I RECEIVE FEEDBACK

Results from this viva will be incorporated into the other OSCE components. Students are encouraged to provide feedback about the OSCE process at the end of the semester in course evaluation.

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