

## **Preparing for the undergraduate viva**

### **What is the viva?**

The viva is an oral examination in which internal and/or external examiners will ask you questions about work already completed. You will have the opportunity to talk about your work and present your ideas.

### **What will I be asked about?**

You are likely to be asked to **summarise** your arguments, **explain** your methods, **discuss** your evidence, **justify** your conclusions, and **reflect** on the effectiveness of your work.

The viva often includes questions about:

- **Content:** what is your work about?
- **Methods:** what did you do? What sources did you use?
- **Results:** what did you find out?
- **Evaluation or reflection:** what is the significance or impact?

### **How can I prepare?**

- Re-read your work. Re-familiarise yourself with the arguments you have made.
- Prepare a summary of your main points. Can you give an elevator pitch, a short summary of your work, introducing your main points and arguments in three minutes?
- Think about potential questions in advance. What will examiners want to discuss? Are there any weak points or things you could have done better?
- Look again at your sources. Are you familiar with the sources you have used and their main arguments? Can you situate your own arguments in the context of your reading?
- Practice giving analytical answers. Never answer questions with yes or no. Always develop and justify your answers, giving examples and evidence.

### **On the day:**

- Listen to questions carefully and don't be afraid to ask for clarification.
- Stay calm: if you think you might feel anxious, prepare some techniques to keep yourself calm.
- Take a hard copy of your work with you.

Remember that your examiners are there to support you and will help you to display your knowledge.