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**NEWCASTLE**  
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**The UNIVERSITY of NEWCASTLE**

**Faculty of Business & Law**

**Newcastle Business School**

**DBA DISSERTATION PROJECT  
GUIDELINES**

March 2009

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# The University of Newcastle

## Faculty of Business and Law Newcastle Business School

# DBA DISSERTATION PROJECT GUIDELINES<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) is a professional doctorate for managers. The aim of the DBA program is to significantly enhance the competencies of practising managers and business professionals, thereby providing them with the capability to make a leadership contribution to their own organisations and the wider communities in which they work and live. The focus of the DBA is to develop students' management capabilities to a high level, enabling them to exploit the opportunities offered by an increasingly globalised and competitive business environment.

The DBA Dissertation Project complements the coursework component in achieving these objectives through the application of research pertaining to management and business practices within a particular business context. The Project is intended to contribute to students' professional development in their particular field which will enhance their overall managerial effectiveness and increase their understanding of management and business practices through extensive research training.

These guidelines set out the Newcastle Business School's (NBS) expectations of students undertaking research at the DBA level through GraduateSchool.com Pty Ltd ("GradSchool") and offshore in conjunction with our partners HKMA and SEGi.

In general, the plan for undertaking research leading to the DBA Dissertation Project can be divided into the following steps:

- Completion of the project related assigned tasks related to the courses Literature Review, Research Methodology I & II, and Research Proposal;
- Preparing and submitting an Ethics Application (where required);
- Interaction with an assigned supervisor;
- Practical work of the research;
- Analysis of results; and
- Writing up the research as a Dissertation Project for submission.

The student must complete each step in a timely manner. The DBA Dissertation Project will need to be revised several times in order to produce an authoritative and coherent document and students must allow time for this revision process in their planning.

## CONTACTS

**Students who are enrolled in the DBA program at HKMA (Hong Kong) or SEGi (Malaysia) are to direct any enquiries to Faculty International Operations (FIO), Faculty of Business and Law email: [Bus-Law-FIRS@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Bus-Law-FIRS@newcastle.edu.au)**

**Students who are enrolled in the online DBA program through GradSchool are to direct any enquiries to GradSchool by emailing: [GS@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:GS@newcastle.edu.au)**

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines are adapted from: the Code of Practice for Research Higher Degree Candidature, University of Newcastle, Research & Research Training, available at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/rhd/docs/codesupr.html>; and Guidelines for Thesis Writing, Newcastle Business School, The University of Newcastle.

## 2. Choosing a Dissertation Project Topic

In choosing a Dissertation Project topic, the following questions should be considered:

- Has the research issue already been covered in detail elsewhere?
- Does the topic have any managerial/business significance?
- Can the research objectives be achieved within the allocated time?
- Does the topic match with your/ the student's capabilities and interests?
- Are there facilities and/or data available to achieve the research objectives?

### DBA Dissertation Project Proposal

The purpose of the Dissertation Project Proposal is to protect the student from investing effort in an impractical or poorly planned research project. This process is undertaken in consultation with the Research Proposal Course Instructor course and the assigned supervisor. The proposal should indicate:

- The field of research
- The research issues/question(s) to be addressed
- Research method(s)
- Limitations of the research
- Anticipated outcomes
- Contribution to knowledge (is it likely to extend current understanding on a topic/field of enquiry)
- Managerial/business significance for theory and practice
- An indicative reference list
- A timeline of the dissertation aims and objectives to be completed

## 3. Enrolment in the Dissertation Project

In order to undertake the Dissertation Project research and be allocated a supervisor, all students must formally enrol in the following units: GSBR6204 Research Proposal AND GSBR6301-6306 Dissertation Project I - VI.

At the conclusion of the Research Proposal course (after all assessment items have been submitted), all formally enrolled students will be sent a letter advising them of their Supervisors and their Dissertation Submission Deadline. This letter will also contain an enrolment declaration for the Dissertation Project courses: GSBR6301- 6306. All students must sign and return this enrolment declaration by the specified date. Failure to enrol in the Dissertation Project may result in supervision being cancelled. Students who have not enrolled in all 60 units of the Dissertation Project will not be permitted to submit their Dissertations.

### Leave of Absence

If, during or following the completion of GSBR6204 Research Proposal, you wish to take a **leave of absence** from your studies for a period of up to 12 months due to extenuating circumstances; you will need to apply to the Faculty of Business and Law for permission. Please ensure that you apply for leave in a timely manner, as approval is not guaranteed.

1. Leave of Absence is not normally granted for a period longer than 12 months. A leave of absence request must be made in writing, addressed to the Pro Vice Chancellor of the Faculty of Business and Law and sent via email to the contact for your program (see Introduction on page 1 for details). Any additional leave will not be granted except in exceptional circumstances in accordance with Clause 18 of the Rules Governing Professional Doctorates.
2. Supervision is suspended until you re-enrol in the Dissertation Project. Although it is hoped that you will be allocated the same supervisor upon your return to the DBA program, please note that this cannot be guaranteed, as staff may have other commitments such as study leave.

3. You are not to submit or resubmit an Ethics application during the period of leave as supervision has been suspended and therefore your supervisor cannot approve the Ethics application submission.
4. You must notify the Faculty of Business and Law of your intention to return to studies by emailing the contact for your program (see Introduction on page 1 for details).
5. You will be notified of your new Dissertation Project submission deadline upon your re-enrolment. The deadline will be determined by the DBA Program Convenor and the Director of Postgraduate Studies. The deadline will be communicated to you in writing along with details of your supervisor.

**Students who take leave from the DBA without formal approval may be required to re-apply for admission.**

#### Exit Option

Effective from January 1 2009 the program "Graduate Certificate of Business Research" is an approved exit option for DBA students who have successfully completed GSB6201 Research Methods I, GSB6202 Research Methods II, GSB6203 Literature Review and GSB6204 Research Proposal.

If any student wishes to exit from the DBA and take out this award (assuming you have passed these four courses), please email [city-hub@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:city-hub@newcastle.edu.au). Please note that if you elect to take this option, it means that you will not be continuing with your DBA studies as it is an EXIT OPTION only. Students who take this exit option will not be permitted to re-enter the DBA program at a later date.

## 4. Rules Governing Professional Doctorates

The Rules Governing Professional Doctorates can be accessed at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000580.html>

All DBA students should familiarise themselves with these rules and in particular should note Clause 24: ***No research project may be undertaken until the research-related courses have been successfully completed.***

Clause 24 refers to the following four research-related courses:  
GSB6201 Research Methodology 1  
GSB6202 Research Methodology 2  
GSB6203 Literature Review  
GSB6204 Research Proposal

## 5. Ethics

Students wishing to conduct research involving contact with human subjects require ethics approval and must be conducted in a manner consistent with University policy and relevant guidelines including <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/index.htm> . This includes research involving data collection by interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, observation; Clinical research; and Action research projects.

Informal, professional conversations with people about their area of professional or academic expertise do not normally require ethics approval. However, if such conversations are a means by which the researcher systematically collects research data, regardless of the informality of the situation or questions asked, ethics approval is required.

Research involving human subjects should also meet appropriate professional and cultural standards and MUST NOT proceed without ethics approval. Approval of your ethics application by the University of Newcastle's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) automatically means that you are covered by the University's insurance policies in relation to your research project.

Students will be given information about Ethics application in the Research Proposal course. All ethics submissions must be submitted by your supervisor to the HREC.

For more information about the Ethics process, please visit:  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/human/index.html>

All staff and students requiring human research ethics approval now apply through the one portal to the Research Office. The application forms and procedures are posted on the above website. From there you will see options for "What needs ethics approval" and "Application Procedures" amongst others.

Essentially there are 2 application pathways:

1. Expedited review for low risk research (it is expected that the majority of DBA student projects will fit into this category); and
2. Full review by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee for research that does not qualify for expedited review.

Please refer to the website for more details.

For the DBA students, Blackboard will not be used for applications. However, in cases where students and supervisors are located off shore there are provisions for electronic submission using email - there are instructions about this process in the '*How to submit*' section of the application forms.

**NEW for DBA students: The application forms include a Peer Review and Head of School Declaration which must be completed. The *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* has always required that it be ensured that proposed research has merit, however the 2nd consultation draft of the revised National Statement (expected to be released as the final version in February) goes further and requires institutions to "implement policies and procedures for establishing that human research meets relevant scholarly or scientific standard". The Research Committee has endorsed a peer review proposal and this will go forward to Academic Senate in February. For now, it is up to the Faculties as to how peer review is organised and what form it takes. (However, the peer reviewer must be independent of the research.)**

Your supervisor should refer to the Faculty of Business and Law peer review process at:  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/research/peer-review-process.html>

Projects where interview/survey/questionnaire research activities are undertaken off-site by DBA students (i.e. does not include survey activities conducted online, by phone, or by mail) are required to have safety clearance before they can proceed.

Information regarding the application process, application forms and a link to the Offsite visit/interview safety guideline can be found at

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/ohs/teachressafety/r2osa.rtf>

## 6. Working with a Supervisor

### Supervision

At the DBA level, it is assumed that, given adequate supervision, the student will be able to perform independent research. The University of Newcastle therefore seeks to provide the DBA students with continuous, timely, and well-structured supervision. Supervision will be discontinued if a student withdraws from the Research Proposal course, the Dissertation Project or takes an approved Leave of Absence. Although it is desirable that a student is allocated the same supervisor upon return to the DBA program, please note that it is not guaranteed, as academic staff may have other commitments/ or constraints that will prevent reappointment.

### Supervisor's Responsibilities

#### It is expected that supervisors will:

- Be aware of the tight time constraints under which the students are working and strive to ensure that they assist the students in a timely way.
- Provide guidance about the standard of performance expected and assist in planning of the research program.
- Provide feedback and advice concerning structure, approach, and contents of the Project Dissertation.
- Recognise their responsibility to ensure the Dissertation Project is conducted in an effective professional manner.
- Establish communication through electronic means (e-mail and blackboard, possibly by telephone on occasion) or meetings where it is possible, identifying a timetable for completion of the various elements of the research proposal, and specifying when written work is to be completed so that progress can be monitored.
- Provide guidance as to the delineation of a clear topic, methods to use for the research, the relevant body of literature to consult and the timing of the research and written aspects of the project.
- Provide guidance as to the ethical standards and the University policies and procedures especially those associated with research. The University Policy Library for Students is available at: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/audience/students.html>
- Advise the student of appropriate ethical practices and where required, supervise and endorse an application for clearance to the University and/or Faculty's Research Ethics Committee
- Provide constructive feedback on the draft chapters as appropriate - both in terms of the timeframe and content. Supervisors need to progressively review all chapters as they are completed to minimise the reworking of the dissertation at the end of the process.
- Provide detailed advice on necessary completion dates of successive stages of work so that the Dissertation Project may be submitted within the scheduled time.
- Encourage the student to show initiative so that the student will be able to pursue independent research with confidence, particularly in the final stages of candidature and afterwards.
- Keep records of notes and advice given and actions to be taken.
- Advise the student of any expected absence and make alternative arrangements for supervision during that absence.
- Ensure that the student is aware of the *Faculty Ethics Guidelines* (<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/research/peer-review-process.html>).
- Ensure that the work reported in the Dissertation Project is the student's own, except where due reference is made in the text of the dissertation, and that any editorial assistance in the writing of the dissertation is appropriately acknowledged. Students must abide by the University's Policy on Student Academic Integrity and all work must be submitted through Turnitin prior to submission.
- Clearly articulate expectations for the student's research outcomes that a supervisor expects them to meet.

## Student's Responsibilities

### It is expected that students will:

It is important to note that candidates should endeavour to make satisfactory progress and complete the Dissertation Project within the designated timeframe, since the completion of the dissertation is ultimately a candidate's responsibility. The role of the supervisor is to support and give guidance rather than to lead and give instruction. Candidates are expected to behave proactively during the process and take initiatives to ensure the successful completion of their projects.

- Endeavour to make satisfactory progress and complete the Dissertation Project within the designated timeframe.
- Take responsibility to ensure that the completion of the dissertation is undertaken in a timely manner. The dissertation must be submitted at the conclusion of enrolment in the units prescribed for the dissertation. Students failing to submit within this timeframe (except under the provisions of the Procedures for Addressing Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items) must enrol in a 20 unit course in the following term.
- Where appropriate, obtain approval for the study from the Faculty's **Research Ethics Committee**
- Behave proactively during the process and take initiatives to ensure the successful completion of the project. The role of the supervisor is to support and give guidance rather than to lead and give instruction.
- Ensure a professional manner with the supervisor is maintained at all times.
- Develop, in consultation with the supervisor, the research plan and timeline for completion of the various stages of the Dissertation Project.
- Submit draft work in a readable form, and indicate briefly how the piece of work fits into the plan of the Dissertation Project as a whole, meet deadlines, and maintain satisfactory progress with the research project.
- Submit draft works in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussions.
- Advise the supervisor of any significant factors which may affect their progress and initiate any variations to candidature as required.
- Attempt to acquire and develop the skills and knowledge necessary for completion of the Dissertation Project.
- Communicate a clear set of questions to be answered by the supervisor through meetings or email contact.
- Keep notes of advice received at meetings and records of emails.
- Be well versed with the *University's Policy of Student Academic Integrity (R608)*  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000608.html>
- Submit all work through Turnitin prior to final submission of the Dissertation Project.
- Adhere to the University's policies, procedures and guidelines. The University's Policy Library is located at: <http://search.newcastle.edu.au/policy/>

## Student and Supervisor Relationships

Every effort will be made to provide effective supervision to DBA students. However, if a student becomes concerned that they are not receiving the support and guidance they need, the first step is to discuss the issue with the supervisor. If this is not feasible, or if it fails to remedy the situation, the next step is to raise the matter with the DBA Program Convenor Dr Patricia Stanton ([patricia.stanton@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:patricia.stanton@newcastle.edu.au)). Additional avenues of grievance and appeal are available if the matter is not resolved with the DBA Convenor and the student considers that they have not been treated in a fair and reasonable manner. Likewise, your supervisor has expectations regarding your research outcomes, which you are expected to meet. These will need to be clarified between you and your supervisor.

More information about the University Policy on Resolution of Complaints may be found at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/complaints/>

Information concerning student rights and obligations may be found in the Code of Ethical Conduct <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/000607.html>

General information on policies concerning student conduct and discipline may be found at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policy/000341.html> .

### **Suspension of Supervision**

The Faculty of Business and Law Policy on Allocation of DBA Supervisors states:

- (i) Should a DBA student fail, withdraw from or suspend studies in GSB6204 Research Proposal, supervision will be suspended, effective from the relevant date. Students cannot progress into the Dissertation Project (GSB6301-GSB6306) until all research related courses have been successfully completed, in accordance with section 24 of the Rules Governing Professional Doctorates.
- (ii) If a student enrolls in Research Proposal and is allocated a supervisor but has failed Literature Review, Research Methods 1 or Research Methods 2, a student will have their supervision suspended at the conclusion of Research Proposal until they successfully complete the failed course(s) and enrol in the Dissertation Project courses.
- (iii) In the event that a student is permitted to take a leave of absence following the successful completion of GSB6204 Research Proposal, supervision will be suspended and a supervisor will be assigned upon enrolment in the Dissertation Project courses.

## **7. Writing a Dissertation Project – Overview**

The DBA Dissertation Project should be a coherent exposition of a research project. As such, it should follow an ordered sequence in which the research objectives, relationships to other scholarly work (i.e. literature review), methodology and strategies employed, and the results obtained are identified, analysed and evaluated. The main text should include a discussion of the conclusions or results and the significance of the issues explored. The dissertation will be assessed by two examiners in the field who will have an expectation that the Dissertation Project meets the commonly accepted standards for a piece of academic research. The dissertation must be written in English.

Draft chapters of the Dissertation Project will be written and commented on by the lecturer during the Literature Review, Research Methods I and II, Research Proposal courses. After comment and feedback from the relevant lecturers for these courses, the students should revise the chapters and give them to their supervisor for feedback and approval. In this way the student will progressively build their dissertation with several sources of advice. **At the conclusion of the Research Proposal course (after all assessment items have been submitted), all formally enrolled students will be sent a letter advising them of their Supervisors and their Dissertation Submission Deadline.**

The following strategy may be employed for the work leading to the submission of a project:

- Identification or location of a problem, topic and/or theme;
- Review of the relevant literature;
- Identification of a theoretical framework and/or methodology;
- Accumulation of relevant data;
- Analysis of information or material obtained;
- Analysis of the results;
- Arrival at a conclusion in light of material analysed; and
- Writing of the Dissertation Project.

DBA students may benefit from giving early consideration, in consultation with their supervisor, to matters such as the development and presentation of their material. The task of writing the Dissertation Project is part of the research process and is often best undertaken progressively.

It is important that the material in the Dissertation Project be thoroughly referenced, that these references are complete, cross referenced between the text and the reference list and presented as requested in the student manual:  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Faculties/Faculty%20of%20Business%20and%20Law/Orientation/NGSBStudentManual08.pdf>

Examples of DBA Dissertation Projects are available at:  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/adt/index.html> then click on 'Search the National ADT database' then set the parameters as 'all institution' 'all fields' and write in Doctor of Business Administration and then click on Search.

Please note that the sample Dissertations that are retrieved from this search are not all from the University of Newcastle and as a consequence they are of varying quality and they should be used as a guide only – students should consult with their supervisors regarding the content and layout of their Dissertation Project.

## **8. Formal Progress Report**

Formal progress reports are to be submitted at the mid-point of the student's research component Project Dissertation III & IV. Both the student and the supervisor are to complete sections of the Progress Reports and return them to FIO or GradSchool for review. Specific DBA progress report forms will be provided for this purpose by FIO and GradSchool.

## **9. Procedure for Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items**

Students are required to submit their DBA Dissertation Project by their published due date unless formal approval for an extension of time has been approved by the DBA Program Convenor and the Director of Postgraduate Studies. The following websites contain the Policy and the on-line form for applications for Special Consideration as well as information on the options available to you:

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html>

The form is located at: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/adverseforma.pdf>

Students applying for an extension of time for submission of the DBA Dissertation Project must advise the Newcastle Business School of the reasons for the application. Approval may be granted on the following grounds: medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment.

Students wishing to apply for an extension for the DBA Dissertation Project must complete the appropriate form and include a statement outlining the reasons behind the request for an extension and any other relevant supporting documentation: For example, a medical certificate or official letter from their employer to the FIO unit via HKMA or SEGI or to GradSchool on the prescribed form. It is also advisable that a supporting email from the supervisor is included with the application.

Please note that Clause 2.4 of the Procedure for Addressing Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items states that:

"Except in exceptional circumstances, a student will be able to apply for adverse circumstances on only one occasion for any particular assessment item".

Students who submit their DBA Dissertation Project after the published due date without an approved extension will be subject to a Continuation Fee.

## 10. Dissertation Project Presentation and Format

Dissertation Preparation and Submission Guidelines are available from: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/graduate/forms/Prof Doc Diss Prep and Submission.pdf](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/graduate/forms/Prof_Doc_Diss_Prep_and_Submission.pdf)

### Length of the Dissertation Project

A DBA Dissertation Project is intended to demonstrate the student's capacity to report on the research in a clear and concise manner. The length of the dissertation will be within the range of 30,000 – 40,000 words.

Responsibility for the format of the dissertation rests with the student after consultation with the supervisor. A major consideration in the presentation of work is the ease with which an examiner can undertake the task of examination. It is a requirement that a written dissertation be prepared as follows:

### Dissertation Project Format

- The size of the paper shall be A4 Metric (approx. 21 cm x 30 cm) except for drawings and maps, upon which no restriction is placed.
- The following information should be presented on separate single-sided sheets in the following order:

1. Title page showing dissertation title, author's name in full, previous qualifications held in abbreviated form {e.g. BSc (Hons)}, full name of degree for which dissertation is submitted, and the date (month and year) of submission.

2. After the title page shall appear a page with the following signed declaration:  
*I hereby certify that the work embodied in this Dissertation Project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.*  
(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

3. Each copy of the Dissertation Project should be signed individually by the student after printing and binding. Acknowledgments and/or a dedication should follow on a separate page. These entries are not part of the required format and are made at the student's discretion.

4. The table of contents shall appear next.

5. The synopsis or abstract consisting of approximately 300 words should follow the table of contents.

- The main argument of the Dissertation Project shall be typed in double or 1½ line spacing. The student's own discretion should be used where variation in spacing is considered desirable for the presentation of tables, quotations and other distinct inclusions, provided that quoted text is clearly distinguished from the author's composition.
- Author, date style referencing system is recommended for the Dissertation Project. Citations should appear either in the body of the text, at the bottom of each page (if a footnote), or at the end of each chapter (if an endnote). Author (date) should only be cited within the text.
- Figures and tables may be integrated into the main text (within the normal publication style for the discipline) with the exception of photographs, charts, maps and diagrams of material that should not be mounted on the back of typed pages
- The margin on each page should be not less than 4 cm on the left, 2 cm on the right, 3 cm at the top and 2 cm at the bottom for right hand pages. For left hand pages the side margins are reversed to 2cm on the left and 4 cm on the right to allow for binding.

After the title page, the **contents** of the Dissertation Project normally take the following order:

- A statement acknowledging the extent and nature of any assistance received in the pursuit of the research and preparation of the research. This entry is not part of the required format and is made at the student's discretion.
- A table of contents, a list of all diagrams and illustrations, and a list of supplementary material if any.
- A short synopsis (abstract) of approximately 300 words.
- The main text.
- Bibliography/references.
- Appendices.
- Supplementary material separate from the bound dissertation and submitted as part, or in support, of the Dissertation Project such as computer printouts.
- All pages should be printed single-sided and numbered consecutively.

### **Referencing Details**

- The Dissertation Project should be of a form consistent with the normal publication requirements of the discipline. This will require that references be correct and cited in a consistent and accepted manner.
- Other researchers upon whose work or publications the Dissertation Project has drawn must be acknowledged. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. All books and articles mentioned in the body of the Dissertation Project must appear in the bibliography/references. Adequate documentation of sources is expected and relied upon by the dissertation examiners who may wish to consult sources referred to in a Dissertation Project. Failure to adequately document sources could lead to allegations of plagiarism.
- For guidance with references and style, see:  
<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/library/guides/referencing.html>

### **Use of Confidential Material**

It is recognised that there will be instances when a Dissertation Project will contain confidential information which cannot be made freely accessible. Wherever possible, confidential information should be used as supplementary material rather than as the principal basis for the dissertation. If practicable, confidential material should form a separate confidential appendix. Supervisors can provide advice on what is appropriate to include in a confidential appendix.

## **11. Dissertation Project Submission and Examination**

(Please note that these procedures are currently under review and may be subject to change).

### **Submission**

#### **Submission Date for GradSchool**

Students are required to submit their Dissertation by a specified date. The due date for GradSchool DBA students to submit their theses is the last day of the examination period of the trimester in which they have enrolled in GSB6306 Dissertation Project VI (the sixth unit of your Dissertation Project). For trimester dates (including examination period dates) please refer to: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/dates/trimester/index.html>

#### **Submission Date for HKMA and SEGi**

The due date for the submission of the dissertation project is six months after notification of supervisors.

Please note Rule 28(6) of the Rules Governing Professional Doctorates. A dissertation submitted for a degree shall embody the result of a project (or projects), investigation, design or other research undertaken by the candidate, and shall be completed and submitted at the conclusion of the units assigned to the dissertation, with a maximum of one calendar year at a

full-time load from the commencement of the dissertation, or part time equivalent. **Students failing to complete and submit within this timeframe (except under the provisions of the Procedures for Addressing Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items) must enrol in a 20 unit dissertation extension course in the following term.** The Committee must be kept informed of any variations in this timeline and be supplied with reports on progress towards completion and submission.

Students who fail to submit their DBA Dissertation Project by the due date without an approved extension will be required to enrol in the 20 unit Dissertation Extension Course and pay the associated tuition fee.

#### **Notice of Intention to Submit**

Students need to advise the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) approximately 6 – 8 weeks prior to their intended submission date by submitting 'Professional Doctorate Notification of Intention to Submit' form.

[http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/graduate/forms/Intention\\_to\\_submit.rtf](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/graduate/forms/Intention_to_submit.rtf)

OGS will then send the student the 'Professional Doctorate – Dissertation Examination Application' (Supervisor's Certificate) form and 'Professional Doctorate – Dissertation Preparation and Submission' guidelines. Students complete the candidate's section of the Dissertation Examination Application (Supervisor's Certificate) and then send the form to their supervisor for completion. The supervisor will then return the form to the student as this form **MUST** be submitted with the student's three copies of the Dissertation.

**THE SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE CAN BE FAXED OR SCANNED WITH THE CANDIDATE'S AND SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURES.**

**AN EMAIL FROM THE SUPERVISOR WILL ALSO BE ACCEPTED.**

The Supervisor's advice by email must include the following declaration (in lieu of signing the original certificate)

"I certify that to the best of my knowledge the work for this dissertation has been carried out under conditions which comply with the Degree Rules and also with the University's policy on the supervision of the Research Component of a Professional Doctorate. The responsibilities of supervisors are set out in section C "Responsibilities of Supervisors" of the Code of Practice for Research Higher Degree Candidature.

I have read the final draft of the dissertation before it was bound. In my opinion:

- (a) The dissertation is of sufficient merit to warrant its examination and meets the formal requirements of the University concerning typing.
- (b) The dissertation has been submitted to Turnitin and I have checked the contents of the report.
- (c) The 'Appointment of Examiners' form has previously been forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies.

**Supervisor's Name:**

**Date:**

**STUDENTS MUST SUBMIT THE SIGNED SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE OR EMAIL ADVICE WITH THEIR THREE COPIES OF THE DISSERTATION.**

**IT IS THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO OBTAIN THE SIGNED SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE OR ADVICE BY EMAIL.**

**THE DISSERTATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR EXAMINATION WITHOUT THE COMPLETED SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE.**

**STUDENTS MUST SIGN ALL COPIES OF THE DISSERTATION.**

### **Embargo – Confidentiality of Research**

If students require an embargo to be placed on their dissertation due to confidentiality of the research, it must be done at this stage. Students must provide a letter, also signed by the Supervisor and the Assistant Dean - Research Training, stating the dates the embargo is to start and finish. This period should initially be for twelve months with the possibility of an extension.

### **Copies**

Three copies (spiral bound) of the dissertation need to be submitted by the due date to the Office of Graduate Studies. NOTE: Electronic copies of the dissertation will **NOT** be accepted. Following submission the Office of Graduate Studies is responsible for entering transcript text (Dissertation title, submission date).

### **Mailing address**

The Office of Graduate Studies  
The Chancellery, East Wing  
The University of Newcastle  
University Drive  
Callaghan NSW 2308  
Australia

Phone: (02) 49216537

Fax: (02) 49216908

## **Examinations**

### **Appointment of Examiners**

The Office of Graduate Studies administers the examination of the dissertation. The Supervisor will be asked eight weeks prior to submission to nominate suitable examiners for the approval of the Head of School and Assistant Dean - Research Training. Students are permitted to nominate suitable examiners or to request that a particular examiner not be approached, however the final choice lies with the School and the names of examiners are **not** disclosed to the student.

**FAILURE TO SUBMIT AN APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS FORM TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES WILL CAUSE DELAYS TO THE EXAMINATION PROCESS.**

### **Criteria by which Examiners will be asked to evaluate the Dissertation Project**

Important requirements which form the basis for examiners' assessment are:

- Execution of research
- Selection of appropriate techniques and justification of methodology
- Significance and justification of the research question
- Ability to locate, use and synthesise published literature and source materials
- Ability to analyse data, report results and to present logical conclusions
- Evidence of the exercise of scholarly judgement
- Managerial/business significance of the research
- Clear presentation – including definition of research questions, organisation of argument, clarity in terms of writing style and illustrative materials.

### **Examination Process**

- The dissertation is despatched to the examiners who will be requested to return their reports within two months of receipt of the dissertation.

- If a response is not received from an examiner at the end of eight (8) weeks the Chair of the Research Training Committee may determine to move to a reserve examiner.
- Examiners' reports are returned to the Office of Graduate Studies and forwarded to a subcommittee comprising the Supervisor, Head of School, Chair and Deputy Chair of the Research Training Committee and the Assistant Dean – Research Training.
- It is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide comments on the examiners' reports to the Assistant Dean - Research Training and Head of School. The Assistant Dean assesses the supervisor's and examiner's comments and provides the Faculty recommendation to the Research Training Committee who makes a determination.
- The Research Training Committee meets on the first Monday of each month.

### **Dissertation Evaluation**

DBA Dissertation Projects will be evaluated by two examiners. Examiners will be requested to report on the content and form of the dissertation in detail. They will be specifically requested to make a recommendation under one of the following categories:

- the dissertation as submitted be accepted as satisfying the criteria for the supervised research component of the degree
- the dissertation be accepted subject to corrections as specified by the examiner
- the candidate be permitted to revise the dissertation and resubmit it for further examination
- the dissertation be not accepted as satisfying the criteria for the supervised research component of the degree

**PLEASE NOTE THAT IT WILL TAKE APPROXIMATELY SIX MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF SUBMISSION FOR THE DISSERTATION TO BE EXAMINED AND FOR THE RESULTS TO BE APPROVED.**

### **OUTCOMES**

Following the University's Research Training Committee meeting, students will be advised of the Committee's decision by an official letter emailed to the student's student mail account. A hard copy of the official letter will be sent to the student's mailing address. The recommendations from the Research Training Committee will be one of the following:

- **Accepted as satisfying the research component of the degree:** A student whose dissertation is accepted as satisfying the research component of the degree will be requested to submit their hardbound copy to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- **Required to make corrections:** A student who is required to make corrections to the satisfaction of the Supervisor, Head of School and Assistant Dean Research Training has eight (8) weeks from the outcome advice to make the corrections and submit the hard bound copy to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- **Revise and resubmit:** A student who is required to revise and resubmit a dissertation must enrol in an extra 20-unit course in the next term from the date on which the candidate is advised of the result of the first examination and submit the revised dissertation within that period, otherwise the candidature shall terminate. The dissertation is then sent back to the original examiners and the recommendation will be either pass or fail the research component. A candidate will be permitted to amend and resubmit a dissertation for examination once only.
- **Fail:** The Office of Graduate Studies will advise the Faculty Pro Vice Chancellor that the dissertation did not satisfy the research component of the degree.

### **Lodgement of a hard bound copy and completion of the research component of the degree**

The Assistant Dean Research Training will notify The Office of Graduate Studies when corrections to the Dissertation Project have been made to the satisfaction of the Supervisor and Head of School.

The Office of Graduate Studies will then notify the student via email that they may submit their hard bound copy to the office.

Hardbound copies are lodged with the Auchmuty Library. Students also have the option of providing a digital copy of the dissertation. Please refer to the website:

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/adt/index.html>

**Students must sign the hard bound copy.**

On receipt of the hard-bound copy the Office of Graduate Studies will advise the Pro Vice Chancellor of the relevant Faculty that the student has met the requirements of the research component of the program. **Faculty staff will then check the requirements of the degree have been met and complete the process for award of the degree.**

## **12. Useful Web Links**

Rules Governing Professional Doctorates

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000580.html>

Guidelines for Professional Doctorates

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000775.html>

Faculty of Business and Law's Research Ethics Committee

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/business-law/research/peer-review-process.html>

University of Newcastle Research Practices

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research/researchpractice-gld.html>

University Policy Library

<http://search.newcastle.edu.au/policy/>

Graduate Studies- Professional Doctorates

Contains: Rules and Guidelines, Policies and Procedures & Forms for Current Students and Supervisors

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/graduate/professionaldocorates.html>

## DBA Dissertation Project Checklist

Students are to submit this form with their spiral bound dissertation copies.

	Tick on completion
Title page details are correct	
Contents of dissertation includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title page</li> <li>Synopsis (300 words)</li> <li>List of tables, figures, diagrams, illustrations</li> <li>Acknowledgements (optional)</li> <li>Main text</li> <li>References</li> <li>Appendices</li> </ul>	
Length of dissertation is between 30,000 - 40,000 words	
Print size at least 12 point	
Double or 1.5 spacing	
Margins: The margin on each page should be not less than 4 cm on the left, 2 cm on the right, 3 cm at the top and 2 cm at the bottom for right hand pages. For left hand pages the side margins are reversed to 2cm on the left and 4 cm on the right to allow for binding.	
Page numbering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roman numbers for abstract, table of contents etc</li> <li>Sequential numbers commencing from main text (chapter 1) onwards</li> </ul>	
Chapter section numbers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbered sequentially, in sections eg: 1.0, 1.1; 1.2 etc 1.1; 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 etc 1.2; 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 1.2.3 etc</li> </ul>	
Tables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labelled appropriately</li> <li>Sources appropriately identified</li> <li>Numbered sequentially and located within close proximity to the discussion (i.e. not 2 pages away)</li> </ul> TIP: number tables/figures as they pertain to the section number eg: in section 1.1 a table will be labelled Table 1.1	
Appendices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place a labelled covering sheet before each appendix</li> <li>Identify in Table of Contents</li> </ul>	
Referencing: All references checked for inclusion	
Copies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 copies (spiral bound) submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies</li> </ul>	

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Project received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_