



Strathclyde Business School DBA Handbook

2016/2017



Welcome to Strathclyde Business School (SBS)

I am delighted to welcome you to the SBS DBA programme, which I hope will prove to be a challenging and rewarding experience that enhances your professional career.

In choosing SBS, you have joined a strong and diverse community of about 120 research academics and more than 240 research students, who are located across seven departments spanning all the disciplines of business. Many of our researchers are recognised internationally for their cutting edge work, which aims to be both theory-driven and relevant to policy and practice. In the most recent national research assessment exercise (REF 2014), SBS was recognised as the top business school in Scotland, and first amongst UK Business Schools for the research environment that we foster. We also ranked third in the UK for the demonstrable impact that our research has in the business world. SBS is the first business school in Scotland, and one of only 73 in the world to be triple accredited (AMBA, AACSB and EQUIS) – an indicator of the quality of our international scope and standing not only in research, but also in teaching and engagement with the wider business community.

Strathclyde University is committed to enacting its mission to be ‘A place of useful learning’ through all its activities, including its support for postgraduate researchers such as yourself. The University offers a comprehensive range of information services to facilitate your progress and development. We actively support equality of opportunity in the learning, teaching, research and working environments, and we value the diversity of our students by encouraging a climate of mutual respect and positive relations between people (www.strath.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityinformationforstudents/). We also seek to provide an inclusive learning and working environment for disabled people (www.strath.ac.uk/disabilityservice/).

This Handbook is intended to give you an overview of the DBA process at Strathclyde, but I would also encourage you to browse the University’s webpages if you have particular information needs.

Best wishes for your studies. I look forward to meeting you along the way.

Associate Dean (Postgraduate Research)
September 2016

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WHO'S WHO?

As you proceed with your studies, your first point of inquiry will always be your supervisors. In addition, each department has a Director of Postgraduate Research who will facilitate and monitor your performance throughout your degree. The current Directors are:

Department	Director of Postgraduate Research
Accounting and Finance	Dr Devraj Basu
Economics	Dr Alex Dickson
Human Resource Management	Prof Ian Cunningham
Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship	Dr Niall MacKenzie
Management Science	Prof Alec Morton
Marketing	Dr Matthew Alexander
Strategy & Organisation	Prof Peter McKiernan

USEFUL RESOURCES

Neptune - www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/neptune

Neptune is the online database used for all Postgraduate Research students in the Business School. Once you register for your degree, your details will automatically appear in Neptune and information relating to your progress will be stored in this database. Login to Neptune requires your DS user ID and password.

SBS Research Methodology Training webpage – www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/

This page provides information about research training opportunities, news, and events relevant to postgraduate research students in the Business School, as well as links to a variety of other resources that you may find helpful.

Policy and Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes accessible from www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/

This Policy document, along with the relevant University Calendar Regulations (20.1), has informed the information provided in this Handbook. It is the definitive source for guidance on the requirements of PhD study.

MRes in Business & Management Handbook accessible from www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/

This should be read alongside this PhD Handbook. It provides details of the taught elements of an SBS PhD.

Researcher Development Programme www.strath.ac.uk/rdp/

The University co-ordinates a variety of seminars and workshops in transferable skills targeted at developing postgraduate and early career researchers. You should check this site regularly and ensure you access as many of these training opportunities as you can.

University Ethics Committee www.strath.ac.uk/ethics/

The University requires all research that investigates human beings to be subject to Ethics approval. This site provides a link to the current Code of Practice for such investigations including details of the approval process.

Academic Honesty and Integrity www.strath.ac.uk/plagiarism/

Plagiarism Warning – Don't Do it!! The University considers plagiarism unacceptable, and the consequences of committing plagiarism are serious. Candidates should ensure they know what plagiarism is, and how to avoid it in their own work.

University Student Handbook 2016-17 accessible from www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers/

This Handbook contains a lot of useful information, particularly if you are a newcomer to Strathclyde. Here you can find details of facilities and locations on campus, information about the Students' Association, and important Regulations and Policies.

WHAT IS A DBA?

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) is a higher learning degree designed to develop business professionals who are skilled in researching practical business problems. The focus is very much on researching in a practical context, as opposed to the more abstract, theory-driven research development that is provided by a PhD degree. DBA candidates at Strathclyde Business School (SBS) will learn high level skills in conceptual and reflexive thinking, the analysis of complex situations, the use of information systems for inquiry, and the design, implementation and monitoring of research inquiries and interventions in their own organisational domains. Research projects undertaken during the course of this programme will be aimed at understanding and exploring the practicalities of organisational experience and managerial practices.

The DBA is more structured than a PhD, combining taught elements and independent research. The overall course comprises:

- Directed study on research methods (60 credits);
- Directed study on areas of specialist knowledge (60 credits);
- A mini dissertation, pilot study, or first phase research project (60 credits); and
- A scheme of research leading to a thesis in an approved area of study.

Research methods training is provided through the schedule of classes that comprise the SBS Master of Research Methodology (MRes) degree (www.sbs.strath.ac.us/researchers). DBA candidates are required to complete a minimum of 60 credits from this schedule, of which, classes in Research Philosophy (BF991) and Research Methods (BF992) are compulsory. In addition, students must take a sufficient number of researcher training classes from the MRes schedule to make up the 60 credit requirement. Upon completion of these 60 credits of researcher training, candidates not progressing further in the DBA course will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methodology.

Specialist knowledge areas for directed study are intended to lay the foundations for understanding theory and practice relevant to each candidate's proposed research. Topics will be agreed by the supervisors and student and will typically explore the evolution of a specific field, its key writers and schools of thought, the contested domains and consequent debates, and opportunities for new research in these topic areas. This specialist knowledge curriculum may also include advanced methods classes from the MRes schedule, Special Topics classes (BF977, BF978, BF979) for practical project-based learning, or any other Level 5 class that enhances the candidate's knowledge of research. The overall requirement is that students complete the equivalent of 60 credits of directed study into specialist areas of knowledge. Candidates not progressing further in the DBA course will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Research Methodology, having completed the 120 credits of these first two taught elements.

Where a student can demonstrate that relevant learning outcomes have already been achieved through a prior course of study, the Course Director may grant a credit transfer of 40, or exceptionally up to 60, of the credits required for researcher training and/or specialist knowledge development. Credit will be recognised once and only for achievements within the five years preceding registration for a postgraduate research qualification at Strathclyde. Applications for recognition of prior learning should be accompanied by official academic transcripts and outlines for the completed classes for which credit is being claimed.

The third element of the SBS DBA is a practical project, mini dissertation or pilot study, which would normally comprise a piece of preliminary research that allows students to try out some of the ideas that have emerged from their research training and specialist knowledge classes. This project is worth 60 credits. On completion of this element of the DBA, the candidate's work will be reviewed to assess the progress of the student and determine whether the student should be permitted to continue to complete the DBA degree. Students not progressing further in the DBA programme, may be considered for the award of a Masters degree in Research Methodology in Business and Management. Such an award would be subject to satisfactory examination by approved external and internal examiners.

The final element is the DBA thesis, which is a major piece of independent research (50, 000 to 60,000 words in length) that draws lessons from, and builds upon the mini dissertation. Successful completion of all the preceding elements is a pre-requisite for embarking on the thesis. Students will be required to defend their thesis in a Viva examination conducted by approved external and internal examiners.

Duration of Study

The SBS DBA programme is intended for practising managers who continue to hold professional positions in parallel with their part-time studies. Their employer's support will thus be crucial to successful completion of the degree. The *minimum* period of study for DBA candidates will reflect the learning conditions under which the candidate is working. So for instance, for a candidate who maintains a consistent effort on their research of 17-18 hours per week, the *minimum* duration of study would normally be 72 months (see University Regulation 20.2.5). However, with the approval of the Associate Dean (PGR) this *minimum* period may be reduced to reflect the efficiencies achieved by researching and working at the same site.

The *maximum* period of study for part-time DBA candidates must be regularly reviewed and confirmed by supervisors (see University Regulation 20.2.6). Candidates must submit a thesis for examination within the *maximum* period of study.

Voluntary Suspension

Candidates may, despite their best efforts, occasionally experience personal, family, or medical difficulties that interrupt the progress of their studies. Under such circumstances, the

Head of Department may recommend a period of up to one whole academic year to be taken as voluntary suspension. This mechanism temporarily stops the clock counting down towards the *maximum* duration for study. Voluntary suspensions are available only to candidates who are still within their *minimum* period of study and who are of good academic standing. Under exceptional circumstances, voluntary suspension may be renewed for up to a total of two years maximum. Candidates unable to resume their studies after two consecutive years in voluntary suspension will normally be withdrawn from DBA registration.

Your Supervisors

Typically candidates work largely independently, but with guidance from supervisors who have expertise in knowledge domains that are relevant to the candidate's programme of study. Two or more supervisors are appointed by the University and are responsible for establishing regular contact and keeping candidates informed about requirements for progress and completion of the DBA degree. At least one supervisor will be an academic member of staff in SBS. Second, and other, supervisors may be appointed from the existing staff of the School, or from another Faculty, University, or relevant Institution. The supervisors will normally operate as a team, providing guidance about the nature of research and the standards expected. They will also prepare the candidate for the final Viva Examination.

Candidates can expect to meet their supervisors on a regular basis (face-to-face or by telephone or Skype), and to receive feedback on their research and publication plans, their progress, and their written outputs. Supervisors may also encourage candidates to pursue appropriate training and development opportunities including attendance at seminars and conferences. However it is the candidate's responsibility to take the initiative in setting meeting times and dates, to raise any problems or issues that may affect progress, and to ensure that agreed deadlines are met.

The supervisory relationship is a professional one, where all parties are expected to meet professional standards of performance. If there is a failure to establish a satisfactory working relationship between candidate and supervisors, the department may make alternative arrangements for supervision.

Progress Reviews and Monitoring

The University conducts formal, twice yearly reviews of doctoral candidates' progress until a thesis has been submitted for examination. These reviews are conducted through the NEPTUNE online system and involve inputs from the candidate, the supervisors, and a departmental reviewer (or review panel). Candidates should supplement their review reports by uploading written information such as research proposals, presentations, literature surveys, thesis chapters, and feedback on their performance in the instructional elements of the DBA degree. Their progress will be assessed at every review against defined criteria, and they will receive feedback that will confirm their progress as either

:

- Satisfactory
- Satisfactory with reservations
- Unsatisfactory

Performance targets will be set for the next review, and where progress has been found to be less than satisfactory, these targets will seek to rectify the situation before the next review. Cases where performance continues to fall below a satisfactory level will be referred to the Associate Dean (PGR) for further action, which may include termination of, or a change in registration.

The Viva Examination

Candidates should work closely with their supervisors to determine when their thesis will be ready for examination. About 3 months before the expected submission date, the Head of Department (or nominee) will propose an examination committee comprising:

- an External Examiner who has a publication record and practice experience that confirms her/his expertise in the field of study,
- an Internal Examiner, who has a broad knowledge of the topic area and the examination process, and
- a Convenor, who organises the Viva Examination, receives initial reports from the Examiners, and makes sure the exam runs fairly and smoothly.

With your agreement, your supervisors may also attend the Viva Examination, but in a strictly non-voting capacity.

The Examination Committee will normally conduct an oral examination that explores the candidate's knowledge of the field of study, and interrogates details of the thesis argument to determine its quality and originality. The Committee will then make a recommendation, which will be one of the following:

- i) The degree be awarded
 - ii) The degree be awarded subject to minor amendments being made to the satisfaction of:
 - (a) the internal examiner only
 - (b) the full Examining Committee
 - iii) The thesis be revised in accordance with the recommendations of the Examiners and re-submitted within 12 months or earlier of the date of this report.
Recommended deadline for resubmission (please give date):
Re-examination will be required:
 - (a) with oral
 - (b) without oral
 - iv) The thesis be resubmitted after further research as indicated by the examiners and a further oral examination be held within 18 months or earlier of the date of this report.
Recommended deadline for resubmission (please give date):
 - v) The degree be not awarded
- EXCEPTIONALLY
- vi) The degree of Master of Philosophy/Science by Research/Laws by Research be awarded

- vii) The thesis be amended and submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy/Science by Research/Laws by Research

You will find a helpful video on preparing for your Viva included in the Video Library on www.sbs.strath.ac.uk/researchers and in addition there are classes within the Researcher Development Programme to help you in your planning and preparations.

Seminars and Conferences

Attending and presenting work at conferences and seminars is an essential part of your intellectual development. These events not only provide valuable networking opportunities, but they can also be seen as important stepping stones towards the publication of your own work. As such, they should feature in your publication plans and as a regular topic of discussion in your supervision meetings. Your supervisor will be able to advise you about which conferences would be most appropriate for you to attend. Your department may also expect you to present your work at departmental seminars and/or internal researcher events.

Ethics

Investigations involving human beings as participants are frequently undertaken in the course of teaching and research. The University seeks to ensure that the conduct of all its staff and students carrying out such work, whether biological, psychological or sociological, conforms to standards set by professional bodies, and is known to do so. The University Ethics Committee, with its associated Departmental/School Ethics Committees, has been established to consider general ethical issues relating to teaching and research that involves investigations on human beings. It aims to provide impartial advice to participants and investigators and to protect the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all actual and potential participants. In carrying out this role it is the body responsible for giving ethical approval for investigations involving human participants. Ethical approval is required before any such investigation may commence.

If your research requires any of the following, you must apply for Ethics Approval. :

- investigations involving human beings using any type of research methodology; or
- investigations conducted on University property, through the University, or under the auspices of the University (including on sites external to the University and involving investigators from outside the University), that involve human beings as participants, including investigations which have been transferred from other organisations; or
- collaborative investigations involving human participants carried out by University staff and students working with investigators who are not staff or students of the University, including data analysis where the data has been obtained by a collaborating body

Further information and application forms can be found at www.strath.ac.uk/ethics/

Academic Integrity

The *University Procedures and Guidelines for Dealing with Possible Instances of Academic Dishonesty* will be followed in all cases of alleged academic dishonesty. Candidates must make themselves aware of the definitions of academic dishonesty and the consequences of breaching these standards. Each candidate is personally responsible for maintaining appropriate standards of integrity in their own work. Further information may be found at www.strath.ac.uk/plagiarism/.

Academic Appeals

Any letters informing a candidate of a decision to transfer or terminate his or her registration, or not to award a degree includes notification of the right to appeal in writing to the Faculty Board of Study. The letter also gives notice of the date by which the candidate must lodge any appeal with the Faculty Manager.

The Faculty sets up an Appeals Panel of impartial academic staff with a Senior Academic Officer of the Faculty as Convenor. The Faculty Appeals Panel decides the outcome of the Faculty Appeal, operating in accordance with the principles of natural justice and the maintenance of academic standards.