Programme Specification

1. <u>Programme Title:</u>   Doctor of Business Administration

2. <u>Awarding Institution:</u>   University of Reading

3. <u>Programme Status:</u>   Existing programme

4. <u>Programme Length:</u>

Part-time -	
Expected:	Maximum:
4 years	6 years

Part-time students are able to submit their thesis after the first day of the 12th term. The Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies can approve requests for earlier submission where a case merits this.

5. <u>Entry Requirements</u>

Academic   Applicants should normally possess a Master's degree in addition to a first degree.

               The Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies can approve the admission of students with lower or non-standard qualifications.

Language: Applicants whose first language is not English should normally have attained a score of at least 7 on the IELTS (International English Language Testing System), or equivalent, test. A few Schools will accept students who have attained a level of 6.5.

               The Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies can approve the admission of students with a lower mark if there is other evidence of appropriate English language proficiency.

APEL: Where previous experience in research is deemed satisfactory by the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies, the prescribed period of study may be reduced to three academic years for applicants to part-time DBA study.

6. Learning Outcomes[1]

On completion of the DBA, students should be able to demonstrate:

- That they are competent as an independent researcher in their discipline and capable of continuing to undertake research at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new ideas, techniques or approaches. As part of this, they should have gained;
    - An ability to evaluate critically the existing literature relevant to their thesis topic
    - An ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of significant new knowledge and / or understanding
    - An ability to relate theory and concepts to evidence in a systematic way and to draw appropriate conclusions based on evidence
- An understanding of the place of the student's research in the context of the relevant field of study
- Awareness of the research integrity and relevant ethical and professional considerations
- Effective management of a project, from identifying research questions, planning interim milestones and timescale, prioritising activities, through to timely completion
- A clear contribution to practice in the domain of the research which may be at individual, organisation, industry, policy or societal level
- An appreciation of the impact (interpreted in the broadest sense) of their research and how to exploit this
- Personal Development Skills and Research Development Skills
- They should also be able to demonstrate that they can:
    - Write clearly and in a style appropriate to the purpose and audience
    - Construct coherent arguments and articulate and defend ideas clearly to a range of audiences, through a variety of techniques
    - Develop and maintain working relationships and co-operative networks with supervisors, colleagues, peers and the wider research community
    - Demonstrate self-awareness and the ability to identify own training needs, in relation to their current position and future career development.

In addition, many students will have attained additional skills relating to areas such as teaching, mentoring, public engagement, exploitation and commercialisation of research, and leadership.

7. Programme outline

The programme will comprise:

- An independent research project that makes an original contribution to knowledge, written up in the form of a thesis
- Research training
    - Discipline Specific skills, including qualitative and quantitative research techniques

---

[1] This adheres to level 8 of the FHEQ as required by the QAA

(Where such courses are mandatory, an annex setting out the courses and any associated requirements and credit bearing details are set out in the Annex).

- Generic / transferable skills:
  Programme members complete a Personal Development element which comprises a Personal Action Research Project and focuses on development of personal, teaching or consultancy competences.

- Other training:
  Students may wish to take advantage of additional training from within the University, such as that provided by the RRDP programme, IT Services, and the International Study and Language Institute.

8. Progression

- Students will be subject to an annual review of progress, the details of which are summarised in the Code of Practice on Research Students[2]
- In Year 2/3 (part-time students) the review will take the form of a Confirmation of Registration assessment. The four possible outcomes of this assessment are:
  - Confirmation of DBA status at first attempt
  - Deferral of the decision, with an agreed plan of remedial action, and an opportunity to be re-assessed at an agreed time (normally with 3 months of the original interview). This is the expected outcome if Confirmation is not agreed at first attempt.
  - Transfer of registration to MPhil
  - Invocation of procedures for Academic Engagement & Fitness to Study

Additional requirements

- Students should normally make at least one annual oral presentations of their work, to an appropriate audience within the DBA community, during the course of their programme
- DBA students are invited to attend the School/Department research seminars.

9. Final Assessment

Students are required to submit a thesis, the length of which should not normally be greater than 90,000 words. The format of this is specified in the *Rules for Submission of Theses for Higher Degrees*[3]. Any divergence from these rules must be approved by the Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies before the student submits.

---

[2] Available at https://www.reading.ac.uk/graduate-school/-/media/project/uor-main/schools-departments/graduate-school/documents/student-policies-procedures/code-of-practice-research-students.pdf
[3] Available at https://www.reading.ac.uk/graduate-school/-/media/project/uor-main/schools-departments/graduate-school/documents/1_pgr_rules_for_submission_of_theses_july2022.pdf

Assessment of the thesis normally takes the form of a *viva voce* examination, conducted by two independent examiners. Further details of the procedure can be found in the *Guide for Examiners of Doctor of Business Administration*[4].

Criteria for the award of the degree

- The work presented by the candidate is such that it might reasonably be expected as a result of three years full-time or four years part-time postgraduate work;
- The abstract of the thesis is acceptable as it is, or with some modification
- The candidate understands how his or her thesis topic is related to a wider field of knowledge
- The candidate can demonstrate;
  - the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, to extend the forefront of their discipline, and to merit publication in an appropriate form
  - a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of the discipline or area of professional practice
  - the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and the ability to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
  - a comprehensive understanding of techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry applicable to the research topic
  - an understanding of how research informs professional practice and knowledge.

10. Research Environment and Facilities

Schools and Departments are responsible for providing students with information about the availability of, and access to, relevant research facilities, as well as information about relevant School / Department based events.

11. Student Support and Guidance

In addition to that provided by the supervisor/s, Director of the DBA, and other School staff, students can draw on support and advice relating to the progress and management and their research programme from the Doctoral Research Office within the Graduate School.

Sources of additional support and advice within the University are listed on the Graduate School website[5].

---

[4] Available at https://www.reading.ac.uk/graduate-school/-/media/project/uor-main/schools-departments/graduate-school/documents/pgr_guide_for_examiners_of_research_degrees_final_sept2019.pdf
[5] Available at http://www.reading.ac.uk/graduateschool/currentstudents/gs-university-services.aspx

12. Student representation

- Each School / Department will ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for the election of a postgraduate research student representative, each year.
- School / Department representatives attend termly meetings in the Graduate School to bring forward any matters of concern and to comment on matters raised by Graduate School staff.
- One or more postgraduate research students will also be a member of the appropriate board or committee where postgraduate research matters are discussed within the School / Department.
- Faculty level Postgraduate Research Studies Committees also include one or more research student representatives.

13. Student feedback

Students are expected to complete a questionnaire on their supervisory arrangements, as part of their annual reviews of progress. Completed questionnaires are sent to the School / Department Director of PGR Studies and are only discussed with supervisors with the agreement of students.

- Where Schools and Departments run subject specific training courses, they will have arrangements in place for students to provide feedback on these
- Students are asked to complete a feedback questionnaire on each RRDP course attended
- Students can also feedback on any aspect of the RRDP directly to the Graduate School[6], or through their School / Department Director of PGR Studies, or their School / Department PGR Representative.

Annex for Doctor of Business Administration

Students are expected to complete the following modules and associated assessments during the programme of study[7]:

Introduction to Academic Research (MDD2IAR2) – 15 credtis

Introduction to Research Design and Methodology (MDD2RDM2) – 15 credits

Introduction to Qualitative Techniques (MDD2QLA2) – 15 credits

Introduction to Quantitative Techniques (MDD2QTA2) – 15 credits

Personal Development (MDD2PD1) - non-credit bearing

Finalising the Thesis – Contribution and Impact (MDD2RCI1) – non-credit bearing

---

[6] Email gradschool@reading.ac.uk

[7] Students can apply for partial or full exemption from taught elements based on their qualification and learning needs agreed with supervisors. The exemtion application has to be reviewed by the supervisor/s and approved by Programme Director.

As part of the annual assessment, the DBA Director (or the Head of School for Postgraduate Research students supervised by the DBA Programme Director) and an independent assessor may require DBA students to retake any modules for which a satisfactory mark was not achieved. The results achieved in the assessed modules and the attendance of the taught courses will be reviewed as part of the Confirmation of Registration process. A nonsatisfactory performance with respect to the assessed modules may lead to failing the Confirmation of Registration process.

December 2022