

# Regulations for the Award of Doctorate in Business Administration

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## DBA

2020-21

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**Further information and advice on any aspect of these regulations is available from  
the Doctoral School, Research and Innovation Services,  
exts. 2045/4047/4053.**

# **SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY**

## **Regulations for the Award of the University's Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA)**

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## **D1. AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

D1.1 The Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) shares the general educational aims of all Sheffield Hallam University's professional doctorates; these are to:

- a) provide a programme of in-depth study and personal scholarship in a specialist professional area, including the development of expertise in appropriate methods of research and enquiry, through sustained and independent high quality work which demonstrates critical judgement via a project of advanced research and/or enquiry; *and to*
- b) enable the development of knowledge, critical understanding and/or modes of professional practice which make a significant and distinctive contribution to the advancement of the profession, and to the development of a community of professionals committed to evidence based practice.

D1.2 The specific objectives of the DBA are to:

- a) provide an opportunity to make an independent and original contribution to knowledge and to the practice of management and the professions;
- b) provide a sound research training and development to enable candidates to complete their research successfully and to continue to contribute to knowledge;
- c) build a rich community of reflective practitioners;
- d) contribute to the enhancement of management in the regions and beyond;
- e) contribute to business success in the region and beyond.

D1.3 The University shall ensure that DBAs awarded and conferred are comparable in standard with similar awards granted and conferred throughout higher education in the United Kingdom.

D1.4 The University shall encourage co-operation with other organisations for the purposes of research leading to the award of the DBA. Such co-operation shall be intended:

- a) to encourage outward-looking and relevant practice-related research;
- b) to extend the candidate's own experience and perspectives of the work;

- c) to provide a wider range of experience and expertise to assist in the development of the project;
- d) to be mutually beneficial; and,
- e) where appropriate, to enable the candidate to develop as a member of a community of professional practitioners.

Co-operation may be formalised with one or more bodies external to the University, referred to as Collaborating Organisations. Formal collaboration shall normally involve essential access by the candidate to one or more of the following categories of resource at the Collaborating Organisation:

- Equipment;
- Facilities;
- Premises;
- Staff;
- Data.

If formal collaboration occurs, the name(s) of the Collaborating Organisation(s) shall appear on the candidate's thesis and degree certificate (see Section D7).

## **D2. ADMISSIONS**

D2.1 Applicants will **normally** be expected to:

- a) have a UK or equivalent Masters' degree in Business and Management or a related area;
- b) have at least five years' experience in a senior management role **or** in a professional capacity with significant responsibility **or** be the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of a Small to Medium Size Enterprise **or** be in an equivalent position;
- c) be able to demonstrate adequate access to organisational situations relevant to their proposed study;
- d) be able to demonstrate clear evidence of ability to communicate in English (see D2.3 below).

D2.2 **Exceptionally**, admission may be granted to applicants who, although lacking a UK or equivalent Masters' degree, (as specified at D2.1.a):

- a) hold a good first degree (either First or Upper Second Class Honours) in an appropriate discipline **and**
- b) have acquired more appropriate experience than is specified in D2.1.b above and/or undertaken training in management **and**

- c) can demonstrate continuing personal development/education since graduation.

D2.3 Where English is not the applicant’s first language, the applicant must show evidence of English language ability, to the following (or equivalent) minimum level of proficiency: an IELTS score of 7.0 and/or a TOEFL score of 600 (paper-based exercise) or 250 (computer-based exercise).

D2.4 Applicants may be considered for exemption from the taught modules in Phases I and II of the DBA programme (Section D4), on the basis of relevant prior certificated and/or experiential learning. Such applicants would need to demonstrate successful completion of a recognised advanced research methods course, or have substantial experience of undertaking research activity. Applicants would be considered under the University’s APCL/APEL procedures against the learning outcomes specified for the taught modules in Phase I and II of the programme.

### D3. REGISTRATION PERIOD

D3.1 The normal minimum and maximum periods of registration are as follows:

	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Part-time	4 years	7 years

D3.2 Where there is evidence that the research is proceeding exceptionally well in Phase III of the Programme – hereafter ‘Phase III’ (Section D5), the University’s Research Degrees Committee may approve a shorter minimum period of registration.

D3.3 Where a candidate is prevented, by ill-health, personal reasons or other valid cause, from being able to meaningfully engage in their research and make progress, Research Institute-level approval may be given for study to be suspended, under the **Break in Study Policy and Procedure for Research Degree Students**. Candidates can apply for time out from their research via the RFBIS form, for periods of between 2 and 12 months in any one application. The Policy, RFBIS and Guidance Notes can be found on the Research Degrees Blackboard Site. The period of the agreed break will not count against the maximum permissible time indicated in D5.1 above.

D3.4 The candidate must submit a thesis at any time within the appropriate registration period outlined in D3.1 above. If the candidate has not presented his/her work within this period, his/her registration will lapse. If the candidate has good cause for not being able to submit a thesis within this period, the University’s Research Degrees Committee may extend his/her period of registration for not more than one year in total.

D3.5 Where a candidate has discontinued the research in Phase III, the withdrawal of registration shall be notified to the University's Research Degrees Committee. Also, members of academic staff, who will normally be the supervisory team, may instigate a student withdrawal based on relevant evidence and sound academic judgment. *Some* examples of reasons for instigating a student withdrawal are as follows:

- lack of progress
- lack of engagement
- failing to meet the required standard of academic writing
- failing the assessment process from the taught modules to the research phase
- not meeting the student responsibilities as outlined in the University's Code of Practice.

Other internal or external factors which impact on candidates' registration status may also be taken into account when instigating a withdrawal. This could be for example where Home Office rules apply and where candidates do not have a valid visa for continuing their study at the University.

#### **D4. PHASE I AND II TAUGHT MODULES**

D4.1 The progress of candidates through the taught modules in Phase I and II will be overseen by a DBA Module Assessment Board. This board will have no powers relating to conferment of the DBA award (see D8.5); its main purposes will be to:

- agree the final moderated results for each taught module within the Programme; and
- decide candidates' entitlement to progress between Phases I and II.

The purpose, constitution, duties and actions of the Board are set out at Appendix 1.

#### **D4.2 Taught Module Pass Marks**

##### *4.2.1 Module Assessment Schedule*

An assessment schedule will be published for each module, if appropriate.

##### *4.2.2 Pass Marks*

To pass a module in Phases I and II of the programme, a candidate must:

- achieve an overall pass grade *and*
- achieve a pass grade in *each* assessment component, if appropriate.

#### D4.3 Progression from Phase I to II

A candidate will normally be expected to complete and pass all modules of Phase I before being allowed to progress to Phase II, unless the candidate exercises his/her right to reassessment under regulation 4.4. **Exceptionally**, the DBA Module Assessment Board may exercise its discretion to allow progression to Phase II of a candidate who has failed one or both Phase I modules provided that the Board is satisfied that successful reassessment is likely and that reassessment in addition to Phase II work represents a viable student loading.

#### D4.4 Failure and Referral in Phase I and II Taught Modules

##### *Failure of a module*

Where a candidate fails a module in Phase I or II, the candidate will be referred in that module and has the **right to** be reassessed in the module on **one** occasion only.

The right to reassessment will **not** apply to candidates who fail to submit work by the final deadline (*Note 1*) without valid cause (*Note 2*). These candidates will **not** be permitted any further assessment in the module and may not proceed on the Programme.

Where the candidate passes all referred assessment components, the module will be passed.

Where the candidate fails one or more referred modules, the DBA Module Assessment Board will permit further reassessment only in **exceptional** circumstances.

#### D4.5 Reassessment in Phase I and II Taught Modules

##### *Reassessment requirements*

The DBA Module Assessment Board will determine the method and timing of reassessments. The Board may require a period of attendance prior to further reassessment.

Where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements or by the same method as the first attempt, the Board will determine appropriate alternative arrangements.

#### D4.6 Compensation for failure in Phase I and II Taught Modules

Compensation for failure in any of the modules in Phase I or II is not permitted.

#### D4.7 Extenuating Circumstances affecting performance in assessments for Phase I and II Taught Modules

Extenuating circumstances affecting performance in assessments for Phase I and II taught modules will be handled under the procedure as set out in the university's extenuation policy.

#### D4.8 Cheating

Any allegations of cheating will be handled under the university's academic misconduct procedure.

#### D4.9 Appeals against the decisions of the DBA Module Assessment Board in relation to taught modules in Phases I and II

A candidate may appeal, under the procedure outlined in the university's appeal procedure for taught students against a decision of the DBA Module Assessment Board in respect of assessment of taught modules in Phases 1 and II, and request that it be reviewed, on one or more of the following grounds:

- that his/her performance in assessment may have been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances which s/he was unable or unwilling to divulge for valid reasons before the Board reached its decision (Note 3). An appeal of this type must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
- that there has been a material administrative error.
- that the assessments were not conducted in accordance with current regulations.
- that some other serious irregularity occurred during the assessment process.

Disagreement with the academic judgement of the DBA Module Assessment Board in agreeing marks or progression **cannot** in itself constitute grounds for appeal.

### **D5 PROGRESSION FROM PHASE II TAUGHT MODULES TO PHASE III (RESEARCH PROJECT ELEMENT)**



D5.1 Before being allowed to progress to Phase III, a candidate:

- **must** have passed all taught modules required in Phases I and II;
- **must submit an Application for Research Programme Approval within 15 months of the enrolment start date** and have the research project proposal approved, with no outstanding approval conditions, by the University's Research Degrees Committee. To secure approval, proposals must:
  - a) be of an intellectual level consistent with doctoral study;
  - b) provide a basis for satisfying the educational aims and specific objectives of the DBA, including the emergence of an independent and original contribution to knowledge and/or professional practice;
  - c) include details of a suitable nominal Director of Studies to assist the candidate in developing their project ahead of the Confirmation of Professional Doctorate process (see D5.3).

D5.2 Candidates are also required to consider their development needs at this time. Candidates are expected to use the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) Planner for finding, updating and recording skills development activity. The University requires candidates to complete the 'my actions' and 'my action plan' parts of the planner as a minimum during the induction period. Any other skills development activity is at the discretion of the candidate. Particular care is needed in the case of a part-time candidate to agree an appropriate programme of related studies which is realistically achievable within the time and funding constraints of part-time study.

The RDF Planner is available through Shuspace and can be used by all research degree candidates to:

- keep a record of professional development activities
- identify candidates' expertise and capabilities to plan a career
- print reports for discussions with mentors, supervisors, career advisors etc.
- identify learning and development needs and monitor progress
- upload files such as CVs, conference details, testimonials to record achievements.

Candidates will be able to access information on training and development activities and events via Shuspace.

D5.3 All candidates registered for Doctorate in Business Administration must undertake the Confirmation of Doctorate process. The Confirmation process has both a formal progress and review function. It includes a report from the DBA Module Assessment Board on the candidate's

performance in Phases I and II of the Programme and allows for a formal evaluation of student progress involving assessment by academic staff who are not the student's supervisors. Candidates are assessed through a two-part process; a presentation/examination of the work produced so far to test candidates' oral skills, and the submission of a report to assess writing ability at Doctoral level. The process is managed in the Research Institute. Although the decision on the Confirmation of Doctorate application is recommended by Research Institute staff, the decision is approved at University level by the Research Degrees Committee. The stipulated timescale for submitting the report is a maximum of 15 months if studying full-time or 28 months part-time after the enrolment start date with the oral assessment taking place within 4 weeks of submission of the report. Full details can be found in the Procedure for Confirmation of DBA (Home) in SBS which can be found in Appendix 3 of these regulations.

## **D6 SUPERVISION IN PHASE III OF THE PROGRAMME**

- D6.1 A candidate for DBA intending to progress to Phase III will seek approval for a thesis supervisory team from the University's Research Degrees Committee. This will normally be done as part of the process of securing approval for the research project proposal (D5 above) and will need to take account of the following criteria.
- the need for a supervisory team which has academic expertise appropriate to the nature and focus of the thesis;
  - the need for a supervisory team which is research- or professionally-active to assist the candidate to develop the research proposal in terms of its design and the underpinning literature search;
  - the need for *combined experience* across the supervisory team of:
    - a) successful supervision of **at least two** doctoral students at a UK higher education institution; or
    - b) successful supervision of at least one doctoral student together with a completion of the University's Supervisor Development Programme.
- D6.2 A candidate for DBA shall normally have two and not more than three supervisors.
- D6.3 The Director of Studies shall be responsible for supervising the candidate on a regular and frequent basis. The Director of Studies must

be a member of the permanent staff of, or have a contract of employment with, the University. Emeritus and Visiting Professors cannot be Director of Studies but can be first or second supervisors.

- D6.4 In addition to the supervisors, an adviser or advisers may be approved by the University's Research Degrees Committee to contribute specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation.
- D6.5 A candidate for a research degree or DBA at any institution of higher education shall be ineligible to act as a Director of Studies but may act as a second Supervisor or Adviser.
- D6.6 The University's Research Degrees Committee's approval must be obtained for any change in supervision arrangements.

## D7. THE THESIS

D7.1 Except with the specific permission of the University's Research Degrees Committee, the thesis shall be presented in English.

D7.2 The thesis must contain an abstract of approximately 300 words which provides a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and the contribution made to knowledge in the subject. This should sit after the Title page and be single-spaced. A loose copy of the abstract must be submitted with the thesis. The loose copy of the abstract must have the name of the author, the degree for which the thesis is submitted, and the title of the thesis as a heading.

D7.3 The following format requirements must be adhered to in the submitted thesis as follows:

- a) Theses must be submitted in line with D7.4 and be no more **than 70,000 words in length**;
- b) Theses must normally be in A4 format; the Research Degrees Committee may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format);
- c) the size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, must not be less than a font size 12. Preferred fonts are Arial, Calibri and Times New Roman;
- d) the soft-bound thesis for assessment must be printed on the recto side of the page only; the paper must be white and within the range 70 g/m<sup>2</sup> to 100 g/m<sup>2</sup>;
- e) double or one-and-a-half spacing should be used in typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used;
- f) pages must be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages. Page numbers must be positioned centrally at the bottom of the page 20 mm above the edge; the left (binding edge) for soft-bound theses should have a margin of 40mm;
- g) the title page must give the following information:
  - the full title of the thesis **in a maximum of 12 words**;
  - the full name of the author;
  - that the degree is awarded by the University;
  - the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements;
  - the Collaborating Organisation(s), if any; and

- the month and year of submission.

D7.4 Candidates are required to submit their thesis prior to examination through Turnitin on the Research Degrees Blackboard site. For the assessment process, candidates are required to print copies of the electronic file for the benefit of the examiners. These will be submitted for examination to the Doctoral School in a temporary (soft-bound) format which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed.<sup>1</sup> A thesis submitted in a temporary bound form must be in its final form in all respects except for the binding, the incorporation of any amendments required by the examiners and the removal of any previously published material.

Following examination and the incorporation of any amendments required by the examiners, the thesis must be submitted in electronic form (PDF/A format) to [rdcadmin@shu.ac.uk](mailto:rdcadmin@shu.ac.uk) together with a Thesis Deposit Form. PDF/A is a standardised version of the PDF format which is suitable for the University's long-term archiving requirements.

The candidate must confirm that the contents of the electronic thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except the incorporation of any required amendments.

D7.5 The thesis must include a statement of the candidate's objectives and must acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and any assistance received.

D7.6 Where a candidate's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis must indicate clearly the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.

D7.7 The candidate is free to publish material in advance of the thesis and reference must be made in the thesis to any such work. Copies of published material may be submitted with the initial soft bound copy of the thesis for examination. However, to respect copyright laws, any such published material must be removed from the final electronic copy of the thesis before it is submitted as the Version of Record.

D7.8 Following the award of the degree, Doctoral School staff will send the electronic copy of the thesis in PDF/A format to the University Library. The thesis will be uploaded to the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) and the metadata will be made available through the Electronic Thesis online Service (EThoS) of The British Library. The Director of Studies will be responsible for sending a link to the thesis to any Collaborating Organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, thermal-binding which is a method of binding single pages by gluing them together on the spine of a document.

However, in cases where candidates are granted an embargo period, usually of 12 months, to curtail dissemination of their research for other publishing reasons, then the full text of thesis will not be made available until the embargo period expires.

- D7.9 The Research Degrees Committee may agree (see R4.14) that a confidentiality restriction is placed on the thesis for a specified period. In such cases, for the duration of the period, the full text of the thesis will not be made available on SHURA. Instead, only the author's name, thesis title, research degree award, year of submission, research centre/department and name of the supervisors will be published. The Research Degrees Committee may approve an application for confidentiality normally only in order to enable a patent application to be lodged, to protect commercially or politically sensitive material, or to protect material which may result in competitive advantage. However, the thesis must not be restricted in this way in order to protect researchers and research leads. Although the normal maximum period of confidentiality restriction is two years, in exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Committee may approve a longer period. However, where a shorter period would be adequate, the Research Degrees Committee will not automatically grant confidentiality for two years.
- D7.10 Copyright in the thesis submitted for examination remains with the candidate. The physical copies of the thesis submitted for assessment become the property of the University, whilst other artefacts for assessment remain the personal property of the candidate.

## **D8. PHASE III EXAMINATIONS - GENERAL**

- D8.1 The examination for the DBA has two stages: firstly the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis and secondly its defence at an oral examination. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the oral examination for students with disabilities.
- D8.2 A candidate will normally be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where, for exceptional reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause **over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life**, the Research Degrees Committee is satisfied that a candidate would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination on the due date and time previously set, the Committee may agree that the oral examination be postponed to a suitable later date.

Requests for consideration of such exceptional extenuating circumstances should be made in writing, as soon as possible before the date of the oral examination. This must be sent to the Doctoral School for consideration by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, in consultation with the examiners. The candidate must also provide

independent documentary evidence in support of the request, such as medical evidence (see Appendix 4 for further details). The request should include the following information:

- Summary of the nature of the circumstances;
- Period of time to which the circumstances apply and the candidate's view of the effect of the circumstances on his/her ability to undertake the oral examination;
- An indication of the documentary evidence attached (e.g. medical note, self-certification, or any of the types of evidence noted in Appendix D) in support of the extenuating circumstances;
- Any other effects or anything else which should be taken into account.

The Chair of the Research Degrees Committee and the Examiners will normally disregard circumstances which candidates are expected to cope with as part of the normal difficulties and unfortunately distressing aspects of life which may occur. Their consideration will include the following:

- Severity and timescale of the circumstances
- Extent to which the circumstances can be linked to timing of the oral examination
- Documentary evidence available (as per guidance in Appendix 4).

D8.3 The oral examination will normally be held in the UK. Exceptionally, on receipt of a justifiable case by the candidate's Director of Studies, the Research Degrees Committee may give approval for the examination to take place overseas via video-conferencing or similar technology. However, the candidate must be at the same physical location as at least one of the examiners or the Independent Chair (see D9.6) to ensure they are fully supported during the assessment.

D8.4 Supervisors may, with the consent of the candidate, attend the oral examination and speak if called upon, but must not participate in the preliminary private meeting of the examiners, and must withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

D8.5 The University's Research Degrees Committee will make a recommendation on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the candidate. The power to confer the degree shall rest with the Vice Chancellor of the University.

D8.6 The degree of DBA may be awarded as an aegrotat or posthumously on the basis of a thesis completed by a candidate that is ready for submission for examination (or equivalent published material or papers accompanied by a critical introduction for an aegrotat award). In such cases the University's Research Degrees Committee shall seek evidence that the candidate would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place. Please see **Policy for**

**Research Degrees Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards** on the Research Degrees Blackboard site.

- D8.7 The University's Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct against Doctoral and Masters Research Students details the procedures for dealing with allegations of plagiarism, collusion, or any other form of dishonest conduct, which apply to research degree candidates. Details can be found on the University's Rules and Regulations web pages at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>.
- D8.8 The University's Research Degrees Committee shall ensure that all examinations are conducted and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with the University's regulations. In any instance where the University's Research Degrees Committee is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

## **D9. PHASE III EXAMINATION PROCEDURES**

- D9.1 The Director of Studies shall propose to the University's Research Degrees Committee for approval the candidate's examination arrangements, including the title for the candidate's thesis and the proposed examining team; this will be done normally **no later than four months** before the expected date of the examination. The examination may not take place until the examination arrangements have been approved.
- D9.2 The Doctoral School staff will make known to the candidate the procedure to be followed for the submission of the thesis (including the number of copies to be submitted for examination) and any conditions to be satisfied before the candidate may be considered eligible for examination.
- D9.3 The Doctoral School staff will notify the candidate, all supervisors and the examiners of the date of the oral examination.
- D9.4 The Doctoral School staff will arrange for a copy of the thesis to be sent to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form and the University's regulations, and shall ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.
- D9.5 The Doctoral School staff will ensure that all the examiners have completed and returned their preliminary reports to the University before the oral examination takes place.
- D9.6 All research degree oral examinations have oversight by an Independent Chair. In line with the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher



Education (Part B, Chapter 11), the Chair will be a non-examining chair who may not contribute to the assessment judgement. The overarching role of the Chair is to ensure that:

- the viva voce examination process is rigorous, fair, reliable and consistent;
- the candidate has the opportunity to defend the thesis and respond to all questions posed by the examiners;
- the questioning of the candidate by the examiners is conducted fairly and professionally;
- the examiners adhere to the University's regulations and procedures;
- advice is given about the regulations to the examiners and the candidate if required.

Although the Chair will not take part in the formal assessment process, they will normally have the following:

- access to a copy of the thesis during the examination,
- sight of the examiners' preliminary reports before the examination commences, and
- will sign off the examiners' joint recommendation form when the examiners have completed their assessment in order to verify that due process has been followed
- will complete a short report on the oral examination for audit purposes.

## **D10. THE CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PHASE III EXAMINATION PROCESS**

D10.1 The candidate will submit the thesis to the Secretary and Registrar's staff before the expiry of the registration period (see D3.1 above).

D10.2 The submission of the thesis for examination shall be at the sole discretion of the candidate. While a candidate would be unwise to submit the thesis for examination against the advice of his/her supervisory team, it is his/her right to do so. Similarly, candidates should not assume that a Supervisor's agreement to the submission of a thesis guarantees the award of the degree.

D10.3 The candidate shall satisfy any conditions of eligibility for examination required by the University.

D10.4 The candidate shall take no part in the arrangement of the examination and shall have no formal contact with the external examiner between the approval of the examining team and the oral examination.

D10.5 The candidate must confirm their intention for the thesis to be assessed by completing a declaration form. This must be done at first assessment

and also for resubmissions. The declaration will confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. The candidate will not be precluded from incorporating in the thesis, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated, on the declaration form and also in the thesis, which work has been so incorporated (for example where some of the work may have been developed from Masters study).

D10.6 The candidate shall ensure that the thesis format is in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations (see section D7). Theses may be submitted for examination either in a permanently bound form or in a temporarily bound form which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed (*Note 4*). The thesis shall be presented in a permanent binding of the approved type (see paragraph D7.11) before the degree may be awarded. A thesis submitted in a temporarily bound form shall be in its final form in all respects except the binding. In such cases the candidate shall confirm that the contents of the permanently bound thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except where amendments have been made to meet the requirements of the examiners.

## **D11. PHASE III EXAMINERS**

D11.1 A candidate shall be examined by at least two and normally not more than three examiners (except where paragraphs D12.6, D13.2, or D13.8 apply), of whom at least one shall be an external examiner. The examining team must have suitable experience and expertise, be unbiased, and be clearly independent of the supervisor, of the student, and of each other in order that no conflicts of interest arise.

D11.2 An internal examiner shall be defined as an examiner who is:

- a) a member of staff of the University; or
- b) a member of staff of the candidate's Collaborating Organisation.

D11.3 Where the candidate and the internal examiner are both on the staff of the same organisation, a second external examiner shall be appointed.

D11.4 Examiners shall be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's dissertation and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.

D11.5 The external examiner shall have experience of examining doctoral candidates in the UK, as either an internal or an external examiner.

D11.6 The external examiner must be independent both of the University and any Collaborating Organisation and may not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser. An external examiner may not normally be a supervisor of another candidate at the University. Former members of staff of the University shall normally not be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment with the University.

The University's Research Degrees Committee shall also ensure that an external examiner is not approved so frequently that his/her familiarity with the Programme might prejudice objective judgement.

D11.7 No candidate currently registered for a DBA or a research degree, is eligible to act as an examiner.

## **D12. FIRST EXAMINATION IN PHASE III**

D12.1 Each examiner shall read and examine the thesis and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to the Doctoral School staff before any oral examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider the thesis and make a declaration that they will assess the candidate for the award through an oral examination.

D12.2 Following the oral examination the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit, on the appropriate form, a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to the Chair of the University's Research Degrees Committee. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the University's Research Degrees Committee to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in paragraph D12.3 is correct.

Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted. The recommendations shall be made on the appropriate form.

D12.3 Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend that (*Note 5*):

- a) the candidate be awarded the degree; or
- b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to amendments being made to the thesis (see paragraph D12.4) **within 4 months FTE of the oral examination date**; or
- c) the candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination **within 12 months of the oral examination date** (see section D13).
- d) as an alternative, the candidate be awarded the degree of MProf subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners, and provided that the candidate clearly satisfies the requirements for **MProf** (D14.2).

Where amendments are required (as in option b) and c) above) the candidate shall submit the corrected thesis within the period of **4 months FTE** or 12 months respectively from the date of the oral examination. The University's Research Degrees Committee may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of this period.

D12.4 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis, and recommend that the candidate has passed the thesis component subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see sub-paragraph D12.3b), they will indicate to the candidate in writing what amendments and corrections are required.

D12.5 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the University's Research Degrees Committee may:

- a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);
- b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner; any such appointment shall be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

D12.6 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under sub-paragraph D12.5c, s/he shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional external examiner the University's Research Degrees Committee shall complete the examination as set out in paragraph D8.5.

D12.7 A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by the examiners. In such cases the approval of the University's Research Degrees Committee shall be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it shall normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination unless the University's Research Degrees Committee permits otherwise. Any such examination shall be deemed to be part of the candidate's first examination.

### **D13. RE-EXAMINATION IN PHASE III**

D13.1 One re-examination may be permitted by the University's Research Degrees Committee subject to the following requirements:

- a) a candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners at the first oral examination (see paragraph D8.2) or any further examination required under paragraph D12.7 may, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the University's Research Degrees Committee, be permitted to revise the thesis and be re-examined;
- b) the examiners shall provide the candidate, through the University's Research Degrees Committee, with written guidance on the deficiencies of the first submission; and
- c) the candidate shall submit for re-examination within the period of **one calendar year** from the date of the oral examination. The University's Research Degrees Committee may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of this period.

D13.2 The University's Research Degrees Committee may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination; any such appointment shall be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

D13.3 There are four forms of re-examination:

- a) where the candidate's performance in the first oral examination (see paragraph D8.2) or further examination (see paragraph D12.7) was satisfactory but the thesis was unsatisfactory and the examiners on re-examination certify that the thesis as revised is satisfactory, the University's Research Degrees Committee may exempt the candidate from further examination, oral or otherwise;
- b) where the candidate's performance in the first oral examination (see paragraph D8.2) or further examination (see paragraph D12.7) was unsatisfactory and the thesis was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination shall normally include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral examination (but see D13.11) (see paragraph D8.2);
- c) where on the first examination the candidate's thesis was satisfactory but the performance in the oral examination(s) was not satisfactory, the candidate shall be re-examined in the oral examination, **within six months**, without being requested to revise and re-submit the thesis;
- d) where on the first examination the thesis was satisfactory but the candidate's performance in relation to the other requirements for the award of the degree was not satisfactory, the examiners may propose instead a different form of re-examination to test the candidate's abilities; such examination may take place only with the approval of the University's Research Degrees Committee.

D13.4 In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraphs D13.3a, b or c, each examiner shall read and examine the thesis and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to the Doctoral School staff before any oral examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in paragraphs D1.1 and D1.2) and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

D13.5 Following the re-examination of the thesis under sub-paragraph D13.3a or following an oral examination under D13.3b, c, d or e, the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit, on the appropriate form, a joint report and recommendation relating to the thesis component of the programme to the University's Research Degrees Committee. The

preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the University's Research Degrees Committee to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in paragraph D13.6 is correct.

Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted. The recommendations shall be made on the appropriate form.

D13.6 Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend that (*Note 5*):

- a) the candidate be awarded the degree;
- b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to amendments being made to the thesis **within 4 months FTE** of the oral examination (see paragraph D13.7);
- c) the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined (see paragraphs D13.11 and D13.12).
- d) the candidate be awarded the degree of MProf subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners within 4 months of the oral examination date.

D13.7 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis, and recommend that candidate has passed the thesis component subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see paragraph D13.6b), they shall indicate to the candidate in writing what amendments and corrections are required.

D13.8 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the University's Research Degrees Committee may:

- a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner); or
- b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner; any such appointment shall be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

D13.9 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under sub-paragraph D13.8c, s/he shall prepare an independent preliminary

report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the University's Research Degrees Committee shall complete the examination as set out in paragraph D8.5.

D13.10A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by the examiners. In such cases the approval of the University's Research Degrees Committee shall be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it shall normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination unless the University's Research Degrees Committee permits otherwise.

D13.11 In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraphs D13.3b or D13.3c, where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination, they may recommend that the University's Research Degrees Committee dispense with the oral examination and not award the degree under sub-paragraph D13.6c (see also paragraph D13.12).

D13.12 Where the Academic Board, on the recommendation of the University's Research Degrees Committee decides that the degree be not awarded, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the candidate by the Registry Services's staff.

## **D14. RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD**

### **D14.1 Award of the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)**

Subject to the requirements in Regulation D1.1 & D1.2, the Vice Chancellor, on the recommendation of the Research Degrees Committee, will award the Doctor of Business Administration to all candidates who have:

- passed all the taught modules required in Phases I and II of the programme; and
- passed the thesis element in Phase III (including the completion and approval of any amendments required by the examining team)

### **D14.2 Award of Master of Professional Studies in Business Research (MProf)**

The award of MProf Business Research will be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic/area



of professional practice, and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by Viva Voce to the satisfaction of the examiners.

The MProf is a staged exit award providing a potential alternative exit point for a candidate who may be unable to, or does not wish to, complete the full DBA programme. Provided a candidate has satisfied all requirements for the award of MProf, the examiners may also recommend this award should doctoral standard not be met after the thesis and oral examination assessment process has been concluded (see appendix 2 for details).

#### **D15. APPEALS AGAINST THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXAMINERS IN PHASES II AND III OF THE PROGRAMME**

The University has an Appeals Policy and Procedure which allows research degree candidates to appeal against decisions made by the University Research Degrees Committee on Confirmation of Professional Doctorate decisions or Research Degree Examiner Panels for final award decisions. Candidates can appeal a decision and request for it to be reviewed on the following grounds:

- There has been an irregularity in the application of the published regulation, policy or procedure which has had an impact on the decision
- There is relevant new evidence or information which the candidate did not provide and the candidate has valid reason why it was not submitted at the time of the assessment.

Further details can be found under the University's Rules and Regulations web pages at [https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/appeals\\_and\\_complaints/Appeals%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.pdf](https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/appeals_and_complaints/Appeals%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.pdf).

#### **D16 Student Complaints**

The University has a Student Complaints Policy and Procedure which facilitates investigation and resolution of issues of dissatisfaction raised by students against teaching/supervision or service-related provision. Further details can be found under the University's Rules and Regulations web pages at [https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/appeals\\_and\\_complaints/Students%20Complaints%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.pdf](https://students.shu.ac.uk/regulations/appeals_and_complaints/Students%20Complaints%20Policy%20and%20Procedure.pdf).

## THE DBA MODULE ASSESSMENT BOARD

### 1 PURPOSE

The main purposes of the DBA Module Assessment Board are to

- i) agree the final moderated results for each taught module within the DBA Programme. The Board will moderate the standards for each module, by overseeing the moderation processes carried out by internal examiners and by agreeing the final moderated results.

The Board must

- moderate sets of module results
- agree the results for each module

- ii) decide candidates' entitlement to progress between Phase I and II of the Programme.

The Board will agree:

- decisions on progression
- decisions on referrals
- all reassessment requirements
- decisions on extenuating circumstances
- decisions on action to be taken for missing results
- decisions on cases of suspected cheating
- decisions following admission of a candidate's appeal relating to Phase I or II.

### 2 CONSTITUTION

The DBA Module Assessment Board shall be appointed by the Board of Studies in the Faculty of Organisation and Management.

Members of the Board shall be:

Chair  
Programme Leader  
One Internal Examiner for each module  
External Examiner(s) for Phases I and II

The Chair of the Board shall be appointed by the Joint Board for a fixed period of office, normally 4 years. The Chair

- shall be a member of the teaching staff, normally based within O&M
- shall have substantial course management/leadership experience or prior substantial experience as an examiner in another institution
- shall not be the Faculty Executive Dean, nor the Programme Leader
- shall not have any significant involvement in the administration or delivery of the programme.

### **3 DUTIES**

The DBA Module Assessment Board shall

- agree results for each module, by
  - checking the marking standards within each module
  - comparing sets of module results to ensure comparability, adjusting results as a whole, if deemed appropriate

If necessary the Board may ask for a set of assessments to be remarked

- consider the overall performance of each registered candidate in the taught modules within the programme, taking account of information provided on extenuating circumstances, in order to
  - decide entitlement to progress from Phase I to II
  - agree the arrangements for reassessment for each candidate including methods and timing
  - agree action to be taken in the case of missing results
  - consider cases of alleged cheating and determine the action to be taken

- inform the Research Degrees Committee of candidates' performance in the taught modules of the Programme
- consider APL claims in accordance with University procedures
- consider appeals relating to Phase I or II referred to the Board by the or the Academic Board, in accordance with the University's Appeals Regulations
- refer to the Joint Board or to the Academic Board such matters as it considers relevant

#### **4 ACTION BEFORE THE MEETING**

##### **Documentation for the DBA Module Assessment Board**

The Board shall receive for each taught module within the Programme

- a list of all candidates registered for the module
- for each candidate, the result for all assessment components of the module, together with the overall module result
- any explanation for any missing results, together with any supporting evidence and recommendation from internal examiners on action to be taken
- a list of module statistics, including:
  - the number of candidates taking the module
  - the mean and standard deviation
  - the identification of any 'unusual' results
  - recommendations for action on any "unusual" results
- information on extenuating circumstances submitted by candidates in explanation of failure or poor performance, and any staff recommendations for action
- information on any alleged cases of cheating
- any additional information about the assessment of a module

##### **Documentation for External Examiners**

To perform their duties, including moderation and sampling, external examiners should:

- be involved in all aspects of assessment contributing to decisions on results
- receive samples of candidates' work, with copies of assessment tasks and criteria
- agree sampling with the Module Team as appropriate
- note that adjustment of results is only possible for the results for the module *as a whole*, not for individual candidates on the basis of sampling only. If a potential problem with results is identified as a result of sampling, this should be referred back to the module team for review, in context of the marking for the module as a whole.

### **Administrative process**

The Chair, Secretary and Programme Leader should work together to

- ensure all documentation is available for the Board and that the External Examiner and all members receive the necessary details
- co-ordinate module results by candidate profile where straightforward, and annotated where discussion is expected (eg extenuating circumstances/borderlines)
- co-ordinate/collate all extenuating circumstances forms, relevant documentary evidence and other relevant notes on individual candidates; if appropriate arrange meeting of filtering committee to consider extenuating circumstances

## **5 ACTION AT THE MEETING**

### **Confidentiality**

All proceedings of the meeting should be strictly confidential; the Chair should read out the confidentiality statement included in the University's Assessment Handbook at the start of the meeting.

### **Moderation Process / Business of the Board**

The Board should follow the same moderation procedures as described in the University's Assessment Handbook for the operation of Subject Assessment Boards.

The operation of the Board should follow the same procedures as described in the University's Assessment Handbook for the operation of Award Assessment Boards.

## **6 ACTION AFTER THE BOARD**

The same procedures should be followed as described in the University's Assessment Handbook for the operation of Award Assessment Boards.

The DBA Module Assessment Board also has a responsibility to inform the University's Research Degrees Committee of the performance of candidates in Phase I and II (see Regulations Section D5) to enable the RDC to form a judgement of candidates' fitness to proceed to Phase III.

### **Master of Professional Studies (Business Research)**

This award will enable students who are unable to, or who may be advised not to, complete the full DBA award to exit their programme of study with an alternative intermediate award. It is not anticipated that this award would be actively marketed or recruited to, but that it would simply provide an award, where appropriate, for some students. Students must have passed all assessment tasks in years 1 and 2 to be eligible for this award.

Students wishing to exit with this award will be required to re-present the written work that they produced for Modules 1 and 3. They may, if they wish to, revise and further develop these assignments in the light of feedback and changing circumstances from the first submission of these pieces of work prior to presenting them for their MProf (Business Research). The dissertation can contain elements of work undertaken in the modules and in the preparation of the research proposal (Month 15) but this work should be presented in an integrated, synthesised manner.

**These three pieces of written work, representing 28,000 words in total (submitted as a portfolio)** will be assessed and students will be required to respond to questions and engage in discussion of their work in a **viva voce** examination with an examination panel including at least one external examiner.

#### **Summary of Assessment requirement for MProf Award**

1. Re-presentation (incorporating feedback and comments) of:

A modified version of assignment two: advanced management module one, which presents the critical evaluation of the subject area relevant to their research issue.

6,500 words

A modified version of assignment three: A critical review of the theoretical perspective, research methodologies & methods appropriate to proposed research issue.

6,500 words

2. Submission of:

A dissertation that presents a critical discussion and evaluation of the student's key intellectual, personal/professional, and organisational concerns. Including an informed critical awareness of the theoretical and philosophical perspectives which have helped them develop new insights into advanced organisational research issues and a critical literature review.

15,000 words

3. Oral examination

### **3.3 Transfer to MProf Business Research Award**

Transfer to a MProf award may occur at any time following completion of the first four modules, i.e. normally the first two years, of a student's study on the programme. In some cases transfer may be planned in the sense that a student recognises or is advised that they are unlikely to be capable of successfully completing a full DBA award. In other cases transfer to the MProf award may be a consequence of an unanticipated change in circumstances that prevent a student from continuing with their DBA studies. The MProf (Business Research) award option will also be available for a student who submits a final DBA thesis but fails, in the end, to satisfy examiners.

The minimum duration of MProf is therefore two and a half years while the maximum duration is seven years the same as the maximum duration of a full DBA award.



## Procedure for Confirmation of DBA (Home) in SBS

### **1. What is Confirmation of DBA?**

Confirmation of DBA is a formal assessment point for progression on the DBA programme. It is undertaken by all DBA candidates at SHU and always comprises written and oral components.

Due to differences between academic disciplines, details of the Procedure for Confirmation of doctoral assessment vary between different subjects. These variations are motivated by a desire to provide candidates with the most appropriate and useful assessment for their field of study. It is important to note, though, that the assessment criteria for Confirmation of DBA are identical throughout SHU. Also, each Procedure has been checked and reviewed by SHU's Research Degrees Sub Committee, so as to ensure equivalence of assessment level across all academic disciplines.

### **What does Confirmation of DBA Assessment involve?**

Application for Confirmation of DBA is assessed via two academic and one administrative elements:

- a) Written Assessment – a 6000 word Confirmation of DBA Report (see below for details).
- b) The DB2A form. This can be downloaded from the Research Student BlackBoard site (please ensure that you use the latest version).
- c) Oral Assessment (see below for details).

### **When should Confirmation of DBA occur?**

In SBS, the written report and DB2A are completed and submitted BEFORE the Oral Assessment take place. There is a hard deadline for submission of a candidate's Application for Confirmation of DBA DB2A and the written report. In SBS the guidelines for this are as follows:

	<b>Target for submission of DB2A &amp; written report</b>	<b>Absolute Deadline for submission of DB2A &amp; written report</b>	<b>Oral assessment</b>
<b>Full-time</b>	12 months	15 months	Target 2 weeks after submission of report. Normally a maximum of 4 weeks.
<b>Part-time</b>	24 months	28 months	

*These timescales will be adjusted accordingly for candidates with approved suspensions of study and for candidates with disabilities who have learning contracts.*

**Candidates who do not submit their written report and DB2A by the appropriate deadline will be referred. If they then fail to submit within the timescales for a referred assessment, or their resubmission is assessed as falling below the required standard, they will not progress to full DBA study.**

## **2. What is required for the Written Assessment in SBS?**

The 6000 word Confirmation of DBA report should be produced by the candidate, under the guidance of their supervisory team. It should review progress made, detail the intended further work and the contribution to professional knowledge and practice that will likely emerge. The report should include:

- a discussion of the aims and objectives of the research;
- a review of relevant literature showing understanding of the current state of knowledge in the field appropriate to the discipline. Candidates should also aim to demonstrate an understanding of the context for the research and make reference to theoretical concepts as appropriate;
- evidence that an appropriate methodology has been established and can be defended. Candidates should aim to demonstrate that the proposed work is feasible and that research methods have been tested;
- evidence of progress towards achieving the research aims e.g. pilot study results, preliminary fieldwork, examples of creative practice;
- a statement of intended further work including a work plan. The work plan should indicate the key research tasks remaining alongside a feasible timescale for their completion;

and

- an indication of the original contribution to knowledge and practice of management that is likely to emerge, providing a suitable basis for work at DBA standard. It should indicate how the work would add to current knowledge and make a significant contribution to literature and practice in the subject/field.

The report should be presented and referenced according to the academic conventions appropriate to the candidate's discipline.

### **Submission of the Confirmation of DBA Report in SBS**

1. When a candidate has nearly finalised their report, they should complete sections 1 and 2 of the DB2A "Application for Confirmation of DBA" form, and then pass it to their DoS who is required to complete section 3. This section comprises a progress report and endorsement of the candidate's completion of research ethics approval and their initial training programme and acknowledgement that any future research plans will receive appropriate ethical scrutiny. **Successful completion of assignments of the four DBA**

**complementary studies modules is mandatory prior to submission of the DB2A.**

2. The 6,000 word Confirmation of DBA report and the completed DB2A form should then both be submitted to the SBS Research Student Administrator (either as hard copy or as e-mail attachments). **E-mail submissions should be sent to [e.brearley@shu.ac.uk](mailto:e.brearley@shu.ac.uk).**
3. The date of receipt will be recorded as the 'date submitted'.
4. The candidate's DoS will have previously been invited to nominate two independent assessor(s) (IA(s)), subject to the approval and advice of the appropriate Postgraduate Research Tutor (PGRT)<sup>2</sup> or Head of Programme Area (HoPA) and taking note of the eligibility criteria in the *SHU Research Degree Procedures*<sup>3</sup>. The SBS Research Student Administrator will send the report for review by the IAs prior to the candidate's Oral Assessment (see below).

### **Deadlines for First Submission of the DB2A and Confirmation of DBA report**

1. Whilst a target date of 24 months PT (12 months FT) is highly recommended, the DB2A and Confirmation of DBA report can be submitted to the SBS Research Student Administrator up to an absolute maximum of 28 months from the candidate's registration start date for part-timers (or 15 months full-time).
2. Candidates who do not submit by the absolute deadlines above will be referred. This means they will have just one assessment opportunity rather than the normal two.

### **3. What is required for the Oral Assessment in SBS?**

**On their first assessment opportunity, all candidates are required to deliver a seminar presentation for their Oral Assessment.**

SBS will make arrangements for Confirmation of DBA Symposia ('DBA Showcase') to be scheduled three times a year in early February, April and June. These will provide an opportunity for candidates to present and defend their research in a conference presentation format. The presentation should normally run for 30-40 minutes, with around a further 15-20 minutes for extended questions and discussion. Each Symposium will be chaired by a Postgraduate Research Tutor (PGRT) and the audience will include two Independent Assessors (IAs) for each candidate. The candidate's Director of Studies (DoS) will be invited to nominate IAs, subject to the approval and advice of the appropriate PGRT/HoPA and taking note of the eligibility criteria in the

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<sup>2</sup> In SBS the PGRTs are the PhD Programme Leader and the DBA Programme Leader

<sup>3</sup> The criteria for the appointment of independent assessors are that they should: have a contract of employment with the university; be familiar with the candidate's discipline and/or proposed methodology but have no involvement in the candidate's supervision; have supervision experience at masters or doctoral level; be, or have a record of having been, research active. Assessors will be independent of the student, but not of one another.

SHU *Research Degree Procedures*<sup>4</sup>. The IAs will be invited to the Symposium by the SBS Research Student Administrator.

Candidates who:

- a) miss the deadline for the first assessment opportunity and are referred;  
OR
- b) are required to resubmit their application (with oral assessment) after first assessment;  
OR
- c) cannot attend the symposium because of extenuating circumstances;  
may be offered an alternative form of oral assessment.

In any of these circumstances, please consult the appropriate PGRT for advice. The alternative assessment offered will normally be a mock viva. This will be scheduled by the DoS, to take place after the submission of the written report and DB2A but normally NO LATER than 2 weeks after that submission.

The viva will typically run for about an hour and will involve the candidate being questioned on their research programme and their Confirmation of DBA report by their DoS, IAs and (optionally) Supervisor(s). The candidate's DoS will be invited to nominate IAs, subject to the approval and advice of the appropriate PGRT/HoPA and taking note of the eligibility criteria in the SHU *Research Degree Procedures*.

**Whilst DoS and, optionally, supervisor(s) contribute to the oral presentation or mock viva via their questioning, they are not formally involved in the subsequent assessment decision. This decision is made by a panel comprising at least one IA and an appropriate PGRT/HoPA.**

**Any feedback given to the candidate following the oral assessment is therefore informal and for guidance only. It should not be construed as definitive.**

#### **4. Assessment**

##### **How is Confirmation of DBA Assessed?**

A Candidate's performance against the standard assessment criteria (listed below) is assessed by a Panel which is **independent of the supervisory team**. For a candidate's first assessment, the panel comprises at least one Independent Assessor (IA) and an appropriate Postgraduate Research Tutor (PGRT) or Head of Programme Area (HoPA). Whilst supervisor(s) contribute to the evidence base via their DB2A progress report and their questioning during

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<sup>4</sup> The criteria for the appointment of independent assessors are that they should: have a contract of employment with the university; be familiar with the candidate's discipline and/or proposed methodology but have no involvement in the candidate's supervision; have supervision experience at masters or doctoral level; be, or have a record of having been, research active. Assessors will be independent of the student, but not of one another.

the oral assessment, they do not contribute directly to the completion of the DB2P panel assessment form.

The Panel judges the quality of the candidate's written report and their performance in the oral assessment against the criteria listed below. In some cases, separate IAs may consider the written and oral components. Two IAs are always required for a second assessment and both are required to evaluate the written and oral elements of the submission. In all cases, the PGRT/HoPA provides a research-institute-wide perspective and moderates different candidates' assessments.

*Assessment Criteria relevant to both the written and oral components:*

- are Ethics and Health & safety issues being addressed appropriately?
- has the candidate satisfactorily completed the programme of complementary studies?
- has the candidate demonstrated an understanding of the current state of knowledge in the field as evidence by relevant literature?
- has the candidate demonstrated mastery of the methodologies appropriate to his/her research enquiry?
- has the candidate settled on a methodology or is he/she keeping their options open?
- is there evidence that progress has been made and some results obtained?
- is there clarity over the intended further work? Does the proposed timeline appear practicable?
- is there a clear indication of the original contribution to professional knowledge and practice that will emerge from this project to make it a suitable basis for work at doctoral standard?
- is the quality of the academic/technical writing used in the candidate's report appropriate standard to complete the doctoral project?

*Assessment Criteria particularly relevant to the oral component:*

- has the candidate demonstrated an ability to defend his/her work, i.e. confidently to critical questioning?
- are the candidate's language skills strong enough to a) complete a thesis and b) undertake a viva/presentation successfully in English?
- are there other presentation-skills issues that should be addressed?

### **Assessment Panel Outcomes**

Candidates are entitled to two assessment opportunities for Confirmation of DBA unless the timescales for first submission were not met. Possible outcomes following first assessment are:

- a) approve Confirmation of DBA
- b) approve Confirmation of DBA with specific conditions

- c) significant development of written or oral component needed. Applicant required to re-submit for second assessment (i.e. **referral**)

These outcomes are formally noted at RDSC and communicated to the candidate by Registry Services. However, to ensure timely communication, candidates who are required to meet conditions or to resubmit are also notified by e-mail from the SBS Research Student Administrator.

For outcome b) candidates should submit their response to conditions directly to the IA(s), copying in the relevant PGRT. IA(s) should inform the SBS Research Student Administrator using [e.brearley@shu.ac.uk](mailto:e.brearley@shu.ac.uk) when they judge that the conditions have been met. Deadline for meeting conditions is 1 month **from the date of the panel decision** for full-time students or two months for part-time students. Candidates who do not meet this deadline may be considered for referral by the HoPA.

For outcome c) the deadline for resubmission to the SBS Research Student Administrator is 3 months **from the date of the panel decision** for full-time students or six months for part-time students. Where referral is in relation to the written component, candidates should submit a revised 6,000 report with a completed DB2A form. Where referral is also in relation to the oral component, the oral assessment model described above is followed again. If candidates fail to submit within the timescales for a referred assessment, they will not progress to full DBA study – see c) below.

Possible outcomes following second assessment (in the case of a referred application) are:

- a) approve Confirmation of DBA
- b) approve Confirmation of DBA with specific conditions
- c) **not approve** confirmation.

These outcomes will be formally noted at RDSC and communicated to the candidate by Registry Services. However, to ensure timely communication, candidates who are required to meet conditions will also be notified by e-mail from the SBS Research Student Administrator.

For outcome b) candidates should submit their response to conditions directly to the IA(s), copying in the relevant PGRT. IA(s) should inform the SBS Research Student Administrator using [e.brearley@shu.ac.uk](mailto:e.brearley@shu.ac.uk) that the conditions have been met. Deadline for meeting conditions is 2 months **from the date of the panel decision** for part-time students (or one month for full-time students). Candidates who do not meet this deadline may be considered for non-approval by the HoPA. For outcome c), candidates will be advised to submit for an MProf or, if appropriate, be counselled to withdraw or be withdrawn from study.

<b>What should candidates or supervisors do if they have a query regarding the procedures described in this document?</b>
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All candidates and supervisors are encouraged to raise issues with the appropriate PGRT or HoPA at any time.

**This guidance has been adapted from the 'Evidence to support a Request to Repeat an Assessment Attempt (RRAA) application' for Taught Students under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy**

If your circumstances are having a detrimental impact on your ability to undertake an oral examination for a research degree award, you will need to make a case to the Chair of the University Research Degrees Committee in line with Regulation R9.3.

Your request needs to be accompanied with evidence to enable us to understand your situation fully. The evidence should confirm the circumstances that have affected you, confirm the start and end dates of when you have been affected, and be from an independent and authoritative third party.

**Independent** means that they are not personally connected with you in any way.

**Authoritative** means that they are a recognised expert for the evidence they are providing. All medical certificates or statements should be:

- written by appropriately qualified professionals who are independent to you;
- original, on headed paper and signed by the author;
- dated, to confirm that the date of the illness is around the dates of assessment;
- in English with any translation of supporting documentation undertaken by an authorised translator (which you will be required to organise and, if required, pay for).

**Evidence Requirements:**

The table below gives examples of the type of evidence the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, in consultation with the examiners, would expect to see to support your request to postpone an oral examination. The examples of how these circumstances can be evidenced are illustrative and should not be read as exhaustive:

Bereavement of a family member/friend	<p><b><u>Purpose:</u></b> to confirm the death. Should include the name of the deceased, and either the date of the death or the ceremony/service.</p> <p><b><u>Evidence:</u></b> death certificate; order of service; letter from a minister of religion, medical practitioner<sup>5</sup> or officer of the law; obituary notice; newspaper announcement.</p>
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<sup>5</sup> Medical practitioner can be a GP, specialist, or a registered professional in a psychiatric practice.



Ongoing impact from a bereavement	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to support the impact of the bereavement.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter of confirmation from a relevant support organisation or network; letter from a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup> or accredited counsellor. This must contain your name.</p>
Hospital admission	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the date of admission, length of stay and nature of the treatment.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> an appointment or discharge letter from the hospital, outpatient's appointment or A&amp;E attendance. This must contain your name.</p>
Worsening of an ongoing condition	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the exacerbation of the circumstances (not just the circumstances themselves).</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup>. This must contain your name.</p>
Symptoms of an illness or condition awaiting a formal diagnosis	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the treatment attendance dates, when tests were undertaken and when a diagnosis is expected. Note: this should not solely be related to routine tests.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup>. This must contain your name.</p>
Personal illness or impact of prescribed medication	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the dates when the illness affected the student and how.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup>; doctor's notes; hospital letter; hospital appointment letter; image copy of prescription medication (date of prescription must be visible) and noted side effects. This must contain your name.</p> <p>To account for absence from an examination, you can submit a self-certification medical form (found on Shuspace) as evidence.</p>
Illness of a close family member/dependent or friend	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the dates and nature of the illness.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup>; doctor's notes; hospital letter; hospital appointment letter; letter of confirmation from a relevant support organisation.</p>
Serious personal accident or injury of self or close family member/friend	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the date of the accident or injury.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> a copy of an accident report provided by a police officer, Magistrate or Magistrate's Clerk; a formal insurance claim; or a letter from a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup>. This must contain the name of the person concerned.</p>
Significant adverse personal or family circumstances	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the circumstances being reported, time when they occurred and whether they are continuing.</p>

	<p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from one or more of the following: a medical practitioner<sup>1</sup>, a social worker, a registered psychological therapist, a registered professional in a psychiatric practice, an officer of the law, a teacher outside of the University, a minister of religion.</p>
Impact of natural disaster (e.g. severe weather which prevents attendance or submission, major breakdown in transport system)	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the incidence in terms of its nature and severity.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from the police or other authority (depending on the nature of the incidence); newspaper article; evidence of flight cancellations or local conditions with supplementary evidence to link the delays to the disaster.</p>
Serious personal disruption (e.g. victim of crime, court attendance, breakdown of a long term relationship, service with reserve forces)	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the events reported.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter of confirmation from a relevant organisation; solicitor's letter; letter from courts; divorce petition; written evidence from: the police (including, but not limited to, a crime reference number), counsellor, social worker, victim support, etc. This must contain your name.</p>
Evidence of a requirement for reasonable adjustments provided too late to be taken into account in the delivery or assessment of a module.	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the situation regarding a recently disclosed medical condition/disability.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> statement from a SHU Disability or Wellbeing Advisor.</p>
Personal participation in activities at a national/international level (e.g. sport, drama, art and design, writing)	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the requirement for the student to be available on specified dates.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> official correspondence from the relevant organisation.</p>
Work commitments for a part time student	<p><u>Purpose:</u> to confirm the unexpected and higher than usual workload for the student which has reduced the time available for study.</p> <p><u>Evidence:</u> letter from employer on company headed paper.</p>

*Assessment, Awards and Regulations  
Registry Services*