

Dissertation Process Guide

Doctor of Business Administration in Management



AMERICAN BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

American Business Management
and
Technology College, Switzerland

ABMTC DISSERTATION PROCESS GUIDE

PART I. OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION PROCESS

This brief Dissertation Process Guide, which complements and builds on the ABMTC DISSERTATION HANDBOOK, provides an overview of the dissertation process.

It details the milestones or steps by which the prospective DBA student fulfills the academic and administrative requirements for the awarding of the Doctor of Business Administration degree from ABMTC.

Furthermore, this Dissertation Process Guide delineates the roles and responsibilities of the DBA student, the pre-dissertation faculty guide/the dissertation guide, dissertation chair and the committee. The awarding of the ABMTC DBA credential implies that the DBA candidate has completely mastered a specific subject area and is capable of extending the body of knowledge by:

- 1) *Conducting independent, thorough scholarly applied business research;*
- 2) *Exhibiting high-level critical thinking; and*
- 3) *Writing at a scholarly level.*

Every dissertation is unique, but the dissertation process moves through a similar sequence of steps for all dissertation students. ABMTC refers to these steps as milestones. Progress, and to some degree grading, is measured by completion of a milestone or a series of milestones. Each milestone and/or a series of milestones is not only associated with a specific assignment but also with who is responsible. The DBA student works first with a faculty guide to improve his/her draft dissertation research proposal/plan and then with both his/her dissertation guide and dissertation chair/committee to develop a realistic time management plan to accomplish each milestone leading to the completion and acceptance of the dissertation manuscript.

PART 2. PRE-DISSERTATION STAGE MILESTONES

The following milestones of the *Pre-Dissertation stage* of the entire dissertation process should be completed in the sequence given below.

MILESTONE 1: COMPLETE PREREQUISITES

The completion of the ABMTC DBA program requires approximately 36 credit hours of specific business area didactic coursework; 9 credit hours of a suite of 3 courses for completing of the embedded Qualifying Comprehensive Exam, also known as (aka) the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan, and 15 credit hours for the dissertation. The didactic coursework helps the DBA student becomes familiar with the literature and theories in the business management field. The suite of 9 credit hours (taken in Term IV) helps the DBA student to develop advanced competencies in research skills, literature review skills, scholarly writing and critical thinking skills areas. These skill sets are necessary and fundamental for producing the draft research proposal.

Before being admitted to DBA candidacy stage and the writing of the dissertation, the DBA students must complete the following:

- a. **Completion of the required 15 courses/45 credit hours** with a **cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 with all courses passed with at least a grade of "C" higher;**
- b. **Completion of a draft Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan that should be started in Term IV during the student's enrollment in the suite of 9-credit interlocking courses of DBA 1013, 1014 and 1015.** In the draft Pre-dissertation research proposal/plan, the DBA student:
 - c.
 1. *synthesizes and applies business theory and theoretical concepts;*
 2. *Reviews and uses Scholarly business literature; and*
 3. *Understands and applies statistical and related tools and methodologies in scholarly research and writing.*
 - d. **Payment of all required tuition and fees** as verified by ABMTC Admissions and Records Office.

The purpose of the qualifying comprehensive exam, aka the draft research proposal/plan, is to directly assess the DBA student's preparedness to design, implement, analyze and report, and to do independent and scholarly dissertation research.

The draft dissertation research proposal/plan, aka the qualifying comprehensive exam is designed to challenge the DBA student to step back from the special deliverables expected in the 12 didactic courses and to reflect critically on his/her abilities to synthesis, integrate ,apply and use of his/her knowledge, skills and experiences across significant topics in his/her academic discipline of business management.

The DBA Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan draft, (aka the qualifying comprehensive exam), is began during the 9-credit hour suite of DBA interlocking courses-1013, 1014 and 1015 - which are taken by TERM IV students. This suite of 3 DBA courses focuses on essential research related skills, including such areas as the research topic and proposal, literature review, qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods, case methodology, statistical tools and techniques, and therefore serves as the foundation for producing the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan. Please refer to the online ABMTC Dissertation Handbook for details for developing, refining and formulating your research topic and for outlining your dissertation research proposal/plan.

Successful completion of the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan signals the DBA student's transition to DBA candidacy and is a significant achievement.

Please be mindful and note that the Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan has been deliberately crafted to produce a detailed outline of Chapters 1 and 2, and partially Chapter 3 for the said chapters of the dissertation manuscript.

MILESTONE 2: INDEPENDENT REVIEW of the DRAFT DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL/PLAN

An independent ABMTC faculty member(s) and/or administrator may be assigned to thoroughly read and review the draft Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan on the basis of the satisfactorily/unsatisfactorily institutional grading scale with constructive feedback for improvements to the DBA student with a copy to the CAO or designee.

MILESTONE 3: DBA STUDENT WORKS WITH ASSIGNED FACULTY GUIDE

The student is assigned a faculty guide to assist in the DBA process.

- a. A faculty guide is appointed by the Chief Academic Officer or designee.
- b. A one-month pre-dissertation classis created via *CANVAS* (the College's Learning Management System (LMS) platform) and those DBA student candidates will be enrolled and who have met the 3 prerequisite requirements detailed in Milestone 1.
- c. The assigned faculty guide will work with and guide the DBA student with the goal of improving his/her draft Pre-Dissertation Research Proposal/Plan and will certify that the DBA student's draft research proposal is in compliance with APA and ABMTC formatting and scholarly writing guidelines. Please consult the ABMTC Doctoral Dissertation Handbook, Appendix A that is posted online.
- d. The faculty guide works with the DBA student candidate in a process of analyzing, reviewing and fine-tuning the dissertation research proposal/plan in preparation for its submission to the dissertation committee. The dissertation guide and dissertation committee need to ensure that the approved research proposal/plan specifically addresses all aspects of the proposed study and functions as the working outline of the dissertation research study.

MILESTONE 4: FINAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL/PLAN REVIEW BY DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The dissertation committee will be appointed for DBA student candidates and should be composed of three members namely the dissertation chair, dissertation guide and an outside member. The chair shall be American-based, the guide shall be India-based and the third member maybe American-based, India-based or International-based.

- a. A list of the duties and responsibilities of the dissertation chair, guide and the outside member is detailed in **ATTACHMENT2019/002 and 003**.
- b. In extenuating circumstances with the approval of the Chief Academic Officer, the dissertation chair and dissertation guide may co-chair the dissertation committee.
- c. The dissertation committee reviews and if necessary, gives feedback and comments for improvements and finalization. Please be mindful that the draft dissertation research proposal/plan may require multiple iterations before receiving final approval. The dissertation committee needs to ensure that the approved research proposal/plan advances knowledge in the field of business management, contributes to theory, and meets requirements for sound research methodology.

Please see Attachment 2019/001/002/003 for a LIST of the DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES of the Dissertation Committee Chair, Guide and Member.

Please be mindful of the DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL.

MILESTONE 5: APPROVED DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL/PLAN

Once the dissertation committee has given its final approval, the DBA student candidate and dissertation guide submit the approved research proposal/plan to ABMTC Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review to ensure safeguards for Human Research Subjects Protections. ***PLEASE SEE ABMTC ONLINE HANDBOOK and POLICY on the use of HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS.*** The ABMTC INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ensures that the rights of human research participants are respected.

- a. The IRB ensures that the approved research plan is aligned with current ethical standards of the *BELMONT REPORT, THE CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS 45 PART 46 (45CFR46) and ABMTC ONLINE HANDBOOK and POLICY on HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTIONS*. Please see the posted online ABMTC Doctoral Dissertation Handbook's three (3) appendices on the use of Human Subject Research, IRB application and Informed Consent form.
- b. The approval of the dissertation research proposal/plan completes **MILESTONE 5** and provides an opportunity for the dissertation guide and dissertation chair/committee to do an In-Progress Assessment of the DBA candidate using the **In-Progress Grading Policy** of a “S” for **SATISFACTORY** or “U” for **UNSATISFACTORY** progress.

PART 3: THE DISSERTATION STAGE MILESTONES

The following milestones of the *Dissertation Manuscript/Dissertation Course stage* of the dissertation process, when successfully completed in the sequence given below, will result in the

awarding of the degree of Doctor of Business Administration in Management.

MILESTONE 6 (a): WRITING the DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPT.

Successful completion of the dissertation manuscript requires a number of crucial skills that together help the DBA candidate develop independent thought, judgment and critical thinking. The dissertation requires the candidate to research and evaluate relevant reference materials to formulate pertinent questions and hypotheses, design an appropriate research study to contribute to the theory or practice of the discipline or field of study and present findings in the form of a coherent, scholarly oral presentation and scholarly written manuscript which contributes to existing scholarship.

The typical ABMTC doctoral dissertation is divided into five chapters. The five chapters are as follows:

- Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION
- Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW
- Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY
- Chapter 4: RESULTS/FINDINGS
- Chapter 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

It is strongly advised that the DBA candidate be very familiar with the *PUBLICATION MANUAL of the AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (6th/7th editions, the latter typically referred to as APA 7).* Please also consult APA's *STYLE BLOG* which addresses specific elements of APA formatting "APA Style" and please readily use Turnitin/Safe Assign for creating originality scholarly writing.

MILESTONE 6 (b): WRITING DISSERTATION CHAPTERS 1 and 2

Using the formally approved draft dissertation research proposal/plan as an outline, the candidate begins writing the dissertation.

- a. DBA candidate submits Chapters 1 and 2 (*The Introduction and The Review of Literature*, respectively) to the dissertation guide and then upload to CANVAS. The full background of the dissertation study comprises Chapter 1. Chapter 2 is a comprehensive literature review supporting the research.
- b. The dissertation guide reviews, provides guidance and feedback on Chapters 1 and 2 prior to giving his/her approval to submit to the dissertation committee.
- c. The dissertation guide submits the reviewed chapters to the dissertation chair/committee for review, comments and feedback. Again, the candidate should be prepared for multiple iterations.
- d. *The dissertation chair/committee's approval of Chapters 1 and 2 represents completion of Milestone 6 and In-Progress grading of the DBA candidate's progress.*

MILESTONE 7: WRITING DISSERTATION CHAPTERS 3 and 4

On the basis of the approved draft dissertation research proposal/plan the method for research is applied and results are gathered and analyzed.

- a. The DBA candidate completes and submits chapters 3 and 4 (*Methodology and Results and Findings*, respectively) to the dissertation guide and then upload to CANVAS. In Chapter 3 the DBA candidate explains the methodology used and justifies the choice of research design, data collection and analysis and details the steps of his/her research design. In Chapter 4, the DBA candidate presents his/her data analyses and results.
- b. The dissertation guide reviews, provides guidance and feedback on Chapters 3 and 4 prior to given his/her approval for submission to the dissertation chair/committee.
- c. The dissertation guide submits the approved chapters to the dissertation chair/committee for review, comments and feedback. Again, the candidate should be prepared for multiple iterations.
- d. *The dissertation chair/committee's approval of Chapters 3 and 4 represents completion of Milestone 7 and In-Progress grading of the DBA candidate's progress.*

MILESTONE 8: WRITING DISSERTATION CHAPTER 5

After analyzing finding and results of the research the candidate discusses the findings, draws implications based on his/her analysis of the data/information gathered and makes recommendations.

- a. The DBA candidate completes and submits Chapter 5 (Discussion, Implications and Recommendations) on his/her results, findings and recommendations to the dissertation guide. In Chapter 5, the candidate specifically, evaluates his/her research, providing insights into and interpret of the results of the study.
- b. The dissertation guide reviews, provides guidance and feedback on Chapter 5 prior to submission to the dissertation chair/committee.
- c. The dissertation guide submits the reviewed chapter 5 to the dissertation chair/committee for review, comments and feedback. Again, the candidate should be prepared for multiple iterations
- d. The dissertation chair/committee's approval of Chapter 5 represents completion of Milestone Eight and In-Progress grading of the DBA candidate's progress.

MILESTONE 9: SUBMIT DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPT FOR APPROVAL

The candidate no longer has a series of chapters, but a cohesive document that identifies an area of research, exhibits scholarly investigation, documents added knowledge to a field of study, and provides recommendations for the future improvement in the area studied.

- a. The DBA candidate submits via the dissertation guide his/her dissertation manuscript to the dissertation chair/committee.
- b. The dissertation manuscript should display the candidate's research sophistication, critical thinking skills, and mastery of the content of the dissertation.
- c. The dissertation chair/committee gives tentative approval and permission to plan for the DBA candidate's defense of the dissertation.

MILESTONE 10: DEFEND THE DISSERTATION

The candidate has developed unique knowledge and expertise in the subject area studied and is ready to defend the dissertation.

- a. The dissertation guide works with the DBA candidate and the dissertation chair/committee to schedule the defense of the dissertation study.
- b. The dissertation guide arranges the conference call with all parties. This video conference call provides opportunities for the DBA candidate to present his/her research and for the dissertation committee members to raise questions or require additions to the dissertation. Any committee member's suggestions and feedback regarding revisions must be incorporated into the final manuscript.

MILESTONE 11: SUBMIT FINAL MANUSCRIPT FOR APPROVAL

- a. Under the guidance of the dissertation guide, the DBA candidate makes corrections and changes based on the recommendations of the dissertation chair/committee.
- b. The dissertation guide reviews and gives his/her approval for forwarding the manuscript to the dissertation committee for final approval before the dissertation is sent to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or designee for review and approval on behalf of the institution.

MILESTONE 12: CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER'S FINAL MANUSCRIPT APPROVAL

- a. The CAO approves the final dissertation manuscripts on behalf of ABMTC.

MILESTONE 13: MANUSCRIPT SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION

- a. The DBA candidate under the guidance of the dissertation guide submits the final approved dissertation manuscript for publication.
- b. The DBA candidate and guide review and follow ABMTC institutional **DOCTORAL PUBLICATION FORMATTING GUIDELINES** as detailed in the **ABMTC DISSERTATION HANDBOOK**.
- c. **The DBA candidate forwards THREE COPIES of the approved dissertation to the CAO or DESIGNEE for DISTRIBUTION.**

MILESTONE 14: FINAL GRADE and the AWARDING of DBA DEGREE

- a. The completion of Milestone 14 represents the final grading of the DBA candidate by the dissertation chair and guide using the institutional In-Progress Grading Policy.
- b. The ABMTC Administration will plan and develop the Graduation Ceremonies for the official awarding/conferring of the DBA degree in Management.