

ABMTC DISSERTATION PROCESS GUIDE

I. INTRODUCTION

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 fulfill the academic and administrative requirements for the awarding of the doctorate of Business Administration degree from ABMTC.

Furthermore, this Dissertation Process Guide delineates the roles and responsibilities of the DBA student, 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 with 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.

II. DISSERTATION MILESTONES

The following milestones of the Dissertation Process should be completed in the sequence given below.

1. MILESTONE One: 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 in the form of a research paper/capstone project 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.

Before being admitted to DBA candidacy 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" or higher;**
- b. **Within the 45 credit hours, the last 9 credit hours is focused on Completing the embedded qualifying comprehensive exam in the form of a research paper/capstone project in which the DBA student**
 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 writing.*

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

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 qualifying comprehensive exam in the form of a research paper/capstone project is to be produced in 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 which focuses on such areas as the research topic and proposal; literature review; qualitative, quantitative and mixed research methods; case methodology; statistical tools and techniques; etc...will serve as the foundation for producing the qualifying comprehensive exam research paper/capstone project. 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 qualifying comprehensive exam signals the DBA student's transition to DBA candidacy and is a significant achievement.

2.MILESTONE Two: INDEPENDENT REVIEW of the DBA QUALIFYING EXAM

An independent ABMTC faculty member(s) maybe assigned to thoroughly read and review the DBA Qualifying Comprehensive Exam Research paper/capstone project on a satisfactorily/unsatisfactorily basis with constructive feedback for improvements to the DBA student with a copy to the CAO or designee.

3.MILESTONE Three: ADMISSION to DBA CANDIDACY

The DBA student complete and submit his/her application form for admission to DBA candidacy to the Admissions and Records Office by the stated deadline.

- a. *The Admissions and Records Office reviews the DBA student candidate's transcripts and related required documents for completeness and for the results to the Chief Academic Officer or designee for decision-making.*
- b. *Upon approval, the DBA student is admitted to DBA candidacy.*
- c. *DBA student is given a list of duties and responsibilities of a DBA candidate.*

Please see Attachment 2019/001 for a LIST of the DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES of the DBA student candidate.

4.MILESTONE Four (a): APPOINTMENT of DISSERTATION GUIDE

- a. A dissertation guide is appointed by the Chief Academic Officer or designee

- b. A list of duties and responsibilities of the dissertation guide is shared with the DBA candidate.
- c. The DBA candidate and the dissertation guide are strongly encourage to contact each other, review the duties and responsibilities of each other, and to work on a plan of action and a timeline, for getting the work done. A good and positive working relationship is of utmost importance for getting the work output.
- d. The dissertation guide works with the DBA student candidate on reviewing and fine-tuning his/her dissertation research proposal/plan.for submission to the dissertation committee. The dissertation guide and dissertation committee need to ensure that the approved research proposal/plan specially addresses all aspects of the proposed study and functions as the working outline of the dissertation research study.

Please see Attachment 2019/002 for a LIST of the DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES of the Dissertation Guide

Please be mindful of the DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING THE DISSERTATION.

4.MILESTONE Four (b): APPOINTMENT and COMPOSITION of the DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The dissertation committee 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 and the outside member is detailed in **ATTACHMENT 2019/003**
- 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, give feedback and comments for improvements and finalization.Please be mindful that the research proposal/plan may require multiple iterations before receiving final approval.The dissertation committee need 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.

5.MILESTONE FIVE:APPROVAL of 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 safeguard for Human Research Subjects Protections. **PLEASE SEE ABMTC ONLINE HANDBOOK and POLICY on the use of HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS. 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.*
- 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.

6. MILESTONE Six (a): WRITING the DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPTS.

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 contribution 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**
- *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 (7 edition) typically referred to as APA 7. Please also consult APA's STYPE BLOG which addresses specific elements of APA formatting "APA Style" and please readily use Turnitin/Safe Assign for creating originality scholarly writing.*

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

- a. DBA candidate submits Chapters 1 and 2 to the dissertation guide. 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 Eight and In-Progress grading of the DBA candidate's progress.

7.MILESTONE Seven: WRITING of DISSERTATION CONTINUES with CHAPTERS 3 and 4

- a. The DBA candidate completes and submits chapters 3 and 4 to the dissertation guide. In Chapter 3,the methodology chapter,the DBA candidate explains 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 Seven and In-Progress grading of the DBA candidate's progress.

8.MILESTONE Eight: WRITING of DISSERTATION CONTINUES with CHAPTER 5

- a. The DBA candidate completes and submits Chapter 5 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.

9.MILESTONE Nine: APPROVAL of the DISSERTATION MANUSCRIPTS

- 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.

10.MILESTONE Ten: DISSERTATION DEFENSE

- 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.

11.MILESTONE Eleven: FINAL MANUSCRIPTS 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 review before forwarding the manuscript to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) or designee for review and approval on behalf of the institution.

12.MILESTONE Twelve: CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER'S FINAL MANUSCRIPT APPROVAL

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

13.MILESTONE THIRTEEN: 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 reviews and follows ABMTC institutional **DOCTORAL PUBLICATION FORMATTING GUIDELINES** as detailed in the **ABMTC DISSERTATION HANDBOOK**.
- c. **THREE COPIES ARE FORWARDED to the CAO or DESIGNEE for DISTRIBUTION**

14. MILESTONE Fourteen: 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.**

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ATTACHMENT 2019/003 Duties and Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee Chair and Member (Dissertation Process Guide)

The Dissertation Chair, who is American-based, will be selected on the basis of content expertise and/or subject matter expertise and experience in working with and has a known record of successful guiding dissertation student candidates. The Chair has the overall responsibilities for guiding the student candidate to produce a doctoral level, original scholarship in the proposed topic area. The Chair must be a recognized professor who has the experience and know-how to lead and guide the dissertation committee.

The dissertation is the hardest part of any doctoral program because it forces the dissertation student candidate to leave his/ her comfort zone and embark on what many will call a voyage of self-discovery. At the center of the student candidate's experience is the dissertation chair who wears a number of hats. A great Chair is one that has the ability to assume a role appropriate for the situation.

Most of the roles and responsibilities a dissertation chair plays fall into four categories as follow:

1. The Advocate...as an advocate, the dissertation chair is a champion of the student's cause. Since the dissertation is a social process and there are people and circumstances pushing the student off track, the chair protects and advocates on behalf of the student to keep him/ her on-track, motivated and in-tuned with the original goals set forth in the approved dissertation proposal.

2. The Manager...as a manager and facilitator of people and processes, the dissertation chair keeps track of mistakes, set realistic timelines, charts progress via the milestones completion and In-Progress grading and engages in harmoniously transactional relationships in initiating and following a clear path from start to finish in assisting and guiding the dissertation guide, members and especially the student candidate to producing his/her dissertation study and manuscript.

3. The Leader...as a leader, the dissertation chair knows the difference between being a manager and being a leader as the situation dictates. There is a fine line between managers and leaders, but the difference lies in how the chair motivates the student to do his/her best. Whereas the manager initiates structure and drives within it, the leader inspires the student candidate through intellectual stimulation and practical help and guidance as the situation dictates.

4. The Judge...a dissertation chair is a judge, a gatekeeper who ensures that the student candidate meets personal, institutional and universal standards in adhering to, following and achieving high levels of data collection and analysis, ethical quality in research and scholarly writing. As a judge, the dissertation chair ensures that the student's professional behaviors and dissertation outcomes are those befitting someone who will soon be regarded as an independent thinker and creator of knowledge.

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The Roles of the Dissertation Committee Member

All members of the dissertation committee share the roles and responsibilities of ensuring that the student candidate produce a high-quality manuscript and scholarship. Committee members are responsible for critical reading manuscripts within the agreed-upon minimum 14 day time frame, suggesting substantive editorial changes, and providing rationale for their support and critiques.

The committee member's roles and responsibilities include:

1. Advise via the dissertation chair and guide, the student candidate from the dissertation proposal stage through the final defense of the dissertation;
2. provide subject matter expertise as requested by the chair and guide;
3. critical read proofread drafts and provide meaningful feedback at appropriate milestone stages;
4. guide via the dissertation chair and guide the student candidate in the selection of methods/procedures for data collection and analysis;
5. correspond via the dissertation chair and guide with the student candidate as needed for clarification/ resolution of methodological issues during the dissertation process.

Attachment 2019/002 Duties and Responsibilities of Dissertation Guide (Dissertation Process Guide)

The culminating experience of the DBA degree program at ABMTC is the completion of the dissertation manuscript and the awarding of the doctorate in Business Administration. While the intent and content of the dissertation varies by program areas and/or institution, its' supervision is universally handled by faculty comprising the dissertation committee. At ABMTC, there are some subtle and important differences. Those differences include a dissertation chair, a dissertation guide and an outside member comprising the Dissertation Committee.

At ABMTC, the dissertation guide plays a pivotal role in the entire dissertation process ranging from working with the DBA candidate in the refinement of his/her research topic and research dissertation proposal/Plan which were formulated and produced as an integral part of qualifying comprehensive exam in the 9 credit suite of 3 interlocking courses (DBA 1013,1014 and 1015) to guiding the candidate in the writing of the dissertation manuscripts and its defense.

An equally important role is servicing as a liaison between and among the candidate, the dissertation committee and the ABMTC administration as well as being a member of the dissertation committee. Specifically, the dissertation guide shall be an India-based recognized business administration professor with direct experience in guiding and directing successful dissertation students. The dissertation student should find his/her guide interested, available, critical, supportive, inspiring and encouraging.

The duties and responsibilities of the guide include:

1. providing timely and thorough guidance to the DBA student on the various elements necessary for planning and executing of the dissertation study by:
 - a. Working with and guiding the DBA student in the refinement of his/her research topic and dissertation research proposal/plan and for submitting of the said documents to the dissertation

committee for its review, feedback and comments and for final approval. Please refer to the ABMTC Dissertation Handbook and Dissertation Process Guide.

2. providing a framework and a timeframe within which the dissertation study and related academic and administrative work can take place by:
 - a. Setting up a regular schedule of meetings with the DBA student and with the dissertation chair to allow for interaction and information flow;
 - b. Ensuring that an appropriate timeframe and time table for the completion of each milestone of the dissertation manuscript is established and followed;
 - c. Reaching agreement with the student and the dissertation chair on milestones completion as indicators for measuring and submitting in-progress grading; and
 - d. Providing regular and prompt feedback on progress to the DBA student from the guide and the dissertation chair/committee (including written feedback on written work within two weeks (14 days) unless the written work is extensive).
3. Providing academic and administrative guidance by:
 - a. Providing scholarly advice and directions:
 - b. Ensuring that the DBA student is given timely advice and instructions about APA style requirements and about the mechanics of originality and scholarly writing and presentation and defense of a research proposal and the dissertation study;
 - c. Ensuring compliance with any legal, professional, ethical or safety guidelines associated with the dissertation study. Please be mindful of and familiarization with the Dissertation Process Guide, Dissertation Handbook, Human Subjects Participants Rights, etc.; and
 - d. Helping the DBA student make contacts with other scholars in his specialty/field, encouraging the student to participate in seminar and doing conference presentations as well helping the dissertation candidate publish his/her study etc..
4. providing support and arranging the Dissertation candidate's defense of his/her dissertation study by:
 - a. preparing the candidate with the mechanics of dissertation defense;
 - b. ensuring that issues related to copyright, originality of the dissertation candidate manuscript and compliance with ABMTC Dissertation Handbook and Dissertation Process Guide are adhered to and followed;
 - c. convening the dissertation committee for the final viva voce defense;
 - d. ensuring that the Report of the final viva voce is duly signed by all three members of the dissertation committee;
 - e. submitting of a letter of completion confirming that all comments by the members of the dissertation committee have been incorporated by the dissertation candidate;
 - f. ensuring that three hard copies, a one page abstract along with a soft copy are submitted to the Chief Academic Officer or designee; and
 - g. Ensuring a Demand draft dissertation evaluation and processing fee ofdollars is submitted to the Office of the Registrar.



ATTACHMENT 2019/001:Duties and Responsibilities of the Dissertation Student Candidate (Dissertation Process Guide)

As the chief architect and author of the dissertation study, you as the student are ultimately responsible for executing the dissertation through all of its milestones including the completion of the final manuscript. The dissertation guide, dissertation chair/committee and ABMTC staff are there to assist and support you. You must ensure that your final manuscript has been properly edited and follows all the expected conventions described in the Institutional Dissertation Handbook, Dissertation Process Guide, the Catalog and related ABMTC regulations and guidelines. In addition, you are expected to:

1. Use the dissertation guide as one of two central points for guidance in refinement of your research topic and your research proposal/plan, data collection and analysis, development of early proofread drafts, etc.; the approval point for submitting of materials to the dissertation chair/committee is the dissertation guide; and the dissertation guide is one of the final gatekeepers in the submission of your final dissertation manuscript. Since the dissertation guide plays a pivotal role, please be mindful to establish an harmoniously working relationship with your dissertation guide and dissertation chair/committee.
2. Schedule regular meetings with the dissertation guide who in turn will schedule periodic meetings with the dissertation chair/committee to discuss milestones, milestones completion, In-Progress grading, etc...Be aware of and accountable to established defense date and manuscript submission deadline. Please contact the guide/dissertation chair in the event of any significant extenuating circumstances which may interfere with your dissertation study completion.
3. Submit your own, original work and as appropriate to the conduct of research, properly cite the works of others that inform your dissertation study. You should be familiar with policies on academic dishonesty and plagiarism, etc., Misconduct in these areas is treated seriously and can result in a range of penalties up to and including academic dismissal.
4. Be Familiar with and if applicable obtain and maintain Human Subjects research approval from ABMTC Institutional Research Board(IRB).
5. Be intimately familiar with materials found in the Dissertation Handbook, Dissertation Process Guide, the Catalog and related core documents that describe what is expected in a dissertation study and manuscript including ABMTC conventions.
6. Recognize that doing and writing a dissertation study and manuscript is an iterative process between and among you, the dissertation guide and the dissertation chair/committee. As such, you are expected to be responsive to feedback provided in a timely manner if you are to expect the same from the guide, chair/committee. Usually appropriately two weeks (14 days) unless there is extensive drafts, etc.,

You need to also be respectful of the fact that the guide, chair and committee members have many other duties pressing on their time. Thus realistic expectations around holidays and vacation times as well as busy periods (such as the start and end of the Terms) are necessary. Always maintain a respectful and professional attitude.