UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Haskayne School of Business
Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Program:
Doctoral Candidacy Requirements

The University of Calgary Doctoral Candidacy Regulations ("the Regulations") govern the conduct of admission to doctoral candidacy at the University of Calgary. This document establishes program-specific requirements associated with the conduct of admission to DBA candidacy at the Haskayne School of Business (HSB) under those *Regulations.*

A. **Statement of purpose**

Admission into candidacy in the Haskayne School of Business (HSB) DBA Program requires that students have a solid foundation in bridging academic theory and management practice, research methods, and the relevant body of knowledge in strategic management, leadership, and related general management topics. It also requires that they have a well-developed plan for thesis research: a complete proposal with a well-motivated research question and potential to make a significant contribution to the applied management literature. Finally, students must demonstrate the necessary methodological skills and background preparation to be able to successfully carry out the proposed thesis research.

B. **All doctoral students in the Haskayne DBA Program must successfully complete the following candidacy components:**
   1. All course requirements as identified in the Calendar
   2. Written Field of Study (FoS) examination
   3. Thesis proposal
   4. Oral examination of thesis proposal

A student must pass each candidacy component. A failure on a second attempt of components 2 to 4 will result in a requirement to withdraw from the program, as stated in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar.

Candidacy component timing:

COMPONENT	PERIOD	EXPECTED TIME TO COMPLETION FROM PROGRAM START
Course work	January, Year 1- June, Year 2	18 months
Written Field of Study (FoS) examination	Summer - Fall, Year 2	18 to 24 months (June-December)
Thesis proposal	Fall, Year 2 - Winter, Year 3	22 to 28 months (October-April)
Oral examination of thesis proposal	Fall, Year 2 - Winter, Year 3	22 to 28 months (October- April)

Approved by HSB: December 4, 2020
Approved by FGS Policy Committee: December 14, 2020
Effective Date: December 14, 2020

1. COURSE WORK

DBA students in the Haskayne School of Business must complete the course requirements as outlined in the Graduate Calendar. With the January start date of the program, students will normally complete their course requirements by the end of the spring semester of their second year.

2. WRITTEN FIELD OF STUDY (FOS) EXAMINATION

Students in the HSB DBA Program must complete a written field of study examination that requires them to integrate knowledge from their course work, including research methodology.

Timing of the written FoS examination

As outlined in the **Candidacy Component Timing** table on page 1, students will normally write the FoS examination in Summer or Fall of their second year in the program (between the 18th and 24th month from the program start). A student's readiness to write the examination will be assessed by the Supervisor based on their discussions with the student and reading of the student's work. The Supervisor will determine the date for the exam in consultation with the student.

Setting of questions for and the format of the written FoS examination

The FoS written examination questions are coordinated by the Supervisor who solicits them from the Supervisory Committee and DBA core course instructors. The Supervisor selects the three questions in consultation with the Supervisory Committee. The format of the FoS examination is a 30-calendar day take-home consisting of three essays, each answering one question. The maximum length is 30 pages (double-spaced, size 12 font, 2 cm margins), for the entire exam, excluding all references, and any appendices and attachments. Responses to individual questions should not exceed 10 pages. Figures and tables are valuable but should be used judiciously.

Content of Written FoS Examination

Students are required to answer all three questions. One question will test integration of general field knowledge from the students' courses, a second question will test application to managerial practice, and a third question will test knowledge of research methodology.

Composition of Written FoS Examination Committee

The Supervisory Committee (Supervisor and a minimum of two additional members, one of whom may be external to the Haskayne School of Business) will serve as the written FoS Examining Committee.

Student preparation for the Written FoS examination

The student should discuss the content, process and timing of the written FoS examination with their Supervisor no later than at the end of the first semester of their second year in the

program (at 16 months).

Most Supervisory Committees do not provide standard reading lists, but the student should consult with their Supervisor, other Supervisory Committee members, and course instructors for suggested readings (to develop their own lists), the type of questions they might ask, and how to develop strategies for preparation. The student is also encouraged to consult doctoral candidates in the HSB for advice on preparing for the examination.

Submitting the Written FoS Examination answers

The student will submit their answers via email to their Supervisor, who will circulate them to the FoS Examining Committee within a day of receiving the document containing the answers.

Evaluation of the Written FoS Examination

Overall, a student's answers should be informed responses demonstrating integrated knowledge from the student's course work and related to their area of thesis research. The answer to the research methodology question must demonstrate a critical understanding of different methodologies. The student will be allowed to pass with significant deficiencies in only one question, but will be required to do written remedial work for that question, as described below in the last two paragraphs of this section.

The FoS Examining Committee will evaluate the written FoS examination within two weeks of receiving it from the Supervisor. The evaluation is done in a meeting, chaired by the Supervisor, where all members of the Committee (including the Supervisor) will start with a straw vote on the student's overall exam performance (with the options of 'pass,' 'pass with remedial work' or 'fail'). The Committee will then deliberate on the student's answers and vote on them question by question.

Students must pass all questions to pass the FOS examination. To pass a question, the votes on that question must not include more than one fail vote. If one or more questions are passed with 1) one 'fail' vote and one (or more) 'pass with remedial work' vote, or with 2) two or more 'pass with remedial work' votes, the overall evaluation of the written FoS examination is 'pass with remedial work.' With the 'pass with remedial work' judgment, no new written FoS examination will be required.

After the question-by-question deliberation and voting, the FoS Examining Committee will cast a final vote on the student's overall written FoS examination performance, with the same options as with the straw vote. After the final vote, each Committee member will sign the written FoS examination form (see Appendix A), which will be delivered to the DBA Program Director (DPD) within a day. The Supervisor will inform the student, also within a day.

The examiner(s) triggering the requirement of remedial work will convey within one business day the recommended additional work to the Supervisor in writing, who will inform the student and the DPD, also in writing. The student will conduct the remedial work, which normally is a written essay of a similar scope (e.g., should not exceed 10 pages, excluding references, any appendices or attachments) to the original exam question, within two months, and submit it to the Supervisor who shares it with the Supervisory Committee within a business day.

The Supervisor and the Supervisory Committee will evaluate the remedial work. The evaluation will be done via email voting within two weeks of receiving the student's remedial work. The student will pass the written FoS examination with no more than one 'fail' vote on the remedial work. If the Supervisor and the Supervisory Committee evaluate the remedial work as unsatisfactory (two or more 'fail' votes), the student fails the written FoS examination. The Supervisor will communicate the outcome of the evaluation of the remedial work to the student and the DPD in writing within a business day of the Supervisory Committee's email vote.

Failure and the appeal process for the Written FoS Examination

More than one 'fail' vote on one or more questions means that the Examining Committee's recommendation for the written FoS examination is a 'fail.' Each Examining Committee member will provide a brief report to the DBA Program Director (DPD) of the exam's strengths, shortcomings and the recommended preparation for retaking the written FoS examination, within a business day of the 'fail' vote. The DPD will forward the Examining Committee's reports to the student and the Supervisor within a business day of receiving them.

If the student passed with 'remedial work' but the remedial work is unsatisfactory to the majority of or the entire Supervisory Committee (including the Supervisor), their recommendation for the written FoS examination is also 'fail.'

In the case of a tie vote, the DPD determines the outcome of the written FoS examination. In instance of a potential of a conflict of interest, such as when the DPD is a member of the examining committee, the Associate Dean, Graduate Professional Programs or a designate will substitute for the DPD.

If the student fails the written FoS examination, they have the option of attempting it a second time, within two to six months of having been notified of the failure. The student who has failed the FoS examination must rewrite only the failed question(s) of the examination. If the student fails a second time, they will be required to withdraw from the program.

In the case of a 'fail' of the written FoS examination, students have the right to appeal. Students must appeal directly to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (see Academic Regulations, section on *Appeals).*

3. **THESIS PROPOSAL**

   DBA students must complete a written thesis proposal that must be approved by the Thesis Proposal Committee consisting of the Supervisory Committee.

   Timing of the thesis proposal

   As per the Faculty of Graduate Studies guidelines, thesis proposals must be examined by the end of the 28th month in the program. Students should begin working on their thesis proposal as early as possible. The guideline is to have the thesis proposal completed within

four months of passing the written FoS examination. The student must circulate the final proposal to the Supervisory Committee no later than two weeks prior to the Supervisory Committee's evaluation meeting.

Format and content of the thesis proposal

FGS policy stipulates that two formats of thesis are available to students: traditional thesis (monograph) and manuscript-based thesis. FGS thesis guidelines may be found <u>here</u>. It is recommended that DBA students will write a manuscript thesis that consists of three papers (an integrative paper, a case study, and an additional empirical research study) as well as an introduction and conclusions chapter. With permission from their supervisor(s), students may choose to compose their theses in the traditional thesis format.

Normally, for the manuscript-based thesis the thesis proposal will consist of a proposal for the third, empirical research paper and an explanation of how the three papers are related, presented as two sections within the thesis proposal. The empirical paper proposal should be detailed, while the relationship between the three thesis papers can be explained briefly. The empirical paper proposal consists of the research question and its significance to theory and practice, a brief literature review that situates the proposed topic within the field, a refinement of the research question into testable hypotheses (if a deductive study) or questions for investigation (if an inductive study), an outline of the methodology, and the sources and uses of data. The explanation of the relationship between the three thesis papers should justify how they complement each other.

Regardless of the format chosen (monograph or manuscript-based thesis) the maximum total length of the proposal is approximately 6,000 words, double-spaced, excluding references, tables, figures and appendices. The evaluation criteria for the proposal are outlined below under 'Evaluation' and described in more detail in Appendix B.

Evaluation of the thesis proposal

The Supervisory Committee members will individually evaluate a student's thesis proposal. The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that the thesis research can be carried out by the student in a reasonable time and meets the criteria outlined in the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Form (Appendix B). The expectation is that the student has a clearly defined and defensible research plan. The evaluation is based on the Committee's assessment of the proposal.

Successful completion of the thesis proposal requirement

The thesis proposal is approved by the Supervisory Committee at the evaluation meeting when a majority of the Committee judges the proposal to demonstrate in sufficient detail that the thesis research can be carried out by the student in a reasonable time, meets the criteria outlined in the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Form (Appendix B), and the thesis is likely to meet the quality requirements for doctoral theses set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (see *Academic Regulations,* section on *Theses - Quality of Thesis).*

After discussing their evaluations, the Supervisory Committee will make a final decision on the thesis proposal by voting and will indicate their votes on the Thesis Proposal Evaluation

form (Appendix B). This form will be delivered to the DBA Program Director (DPD) within a day. The supervisor will inform the student, also within a day. A majority is required for any of the three voting outcomes: "Approved without revisions," "Approved with revisions", and "Not approved."

Should the Supervisory Committee's vote be a tie, the DPD will decide the outcome of the thesis proposal. In instance of a potential of a conflict of interest, such as when the DPD is a member of the examining committee, the Associate Dean, Graduate Professional Programs or a designate will substitute for the DPD.

Should the overall vote be 'fail,' the oral thesis proposal examination will not be scheduled. The Supervisor will inform the student and the DPD about the outcome of the meeting within a business day of the Committee reaching its decision. The signed Thesis Proposal Evaluation form will be submitted to the DPD. The Supervisor will convey the Supervisory Committee's feedback on the shortcomings of the failed proposal and suggested corrections to the student.

If the Supervisory Committee requires revisions to the thesis proposal, each member will provide their written feedback to the Supervisor within a week of the meeting. Within a business day, the Supervisor will convey the feedback to the student in writing, who will incorporate it within two months, to the satisfaction of the Supervisory Committee that will meet to evaluate the revisions to the proposal and indicate their approval or disapproval again on the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Form. The Supervisor will inform the DPD in writing when the student's revisions have been satisfactorily completed. The oral examination of the thesis proposal will then be scheduled.

Failure and the appeal process for the thesis proposal

If the majority of the Supervisory Committee votes 'not approved', the Committee's recommendation to the DPD will be 'fail.' In the case of a failed thesis proposal, each Supervisory Committee member will provide a brief report about the strengths and shortcomings of the proposal and the suggested remedial work on the proposal for a second attempt for approval to the Supervisor and the DPD within a week of the Supervisory Committee's proposal evaluation meeting. The Supervisor will share the reports with the student within a business day.

In the case of a 'fail,' the student can re-submit the revised proposal once, no earlier than two and no later than six months of the failed thesis proposal. Another thesis proposal evaluation meeting will be required, scheduled at a minimum of two weeks after the student has re-submitted the thesis proposal.

The student will be required to withdraw from the program upon a second failed thesis proposal. In the case of a failed thesis proposal, students have the right to appeal. Students must appeal directly to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (see Academic Regulations, section on *Appeals).*

4. ORAL EXAMINATION OF THE THESIS PROPOSAL

Students in the HSB DBA Program must successfully pass an oral examination of their thesis proposal. The oral examination further tests their preparedness to complete the thesis requirement. Students are allowed to take their thesis proposal into the oral thesis proposal examination and are allowed to take notes during the questioning.

Timing of the oral thesis proposal examination

The oral thesis proposal examination will be scheduled one to two weeks after the student's passing of the written thesis proposal or after the successful completion of any required revisions to the thesis proposal.

The Committee and its Chair

The oral thesis proposal examination will be conducted by the Supervisory Committee that evaluated the written thesis proposal. The oral thesis proposal examination will be chaired by the Supervisor. *A Notice of Oral Examination* form must be completed prior to the start of the examination and kept on the student's file for record-keeping purposes.

Oral Examination Process

The oral thesis proposal examination shall not exceed two hours. This does not include the deliberation time of the Committee.

No one other than a member of the Thesis Proposal committee is allowed to question the student. All examiners should be given an opportunity to question the student during the early part of the examination, e.g., by rounds of questioning.

Questions to the student should be clear and succinct. The student should be given reasonable time to answer. If the student has understood the question and cannot answer, the examiner should pass to another question and not attempt to extract an answer by prolonged interrogation, or by leading the student. The Chair should guard against any tendency of examiners to interact with each other instead of concentrating on the examination of the student.

The Chair must stop the exam if one of the examiners needs to leave the room and will reconvene the exam when all examiners are present.

At the end of the examination, the student is asked to withdraw from the room. Before any discussion of the student's performance, all members of the Committee (including the Supervisor) will start with a straw vote on which recommendation (pass/fail) they favour. This provides the committee with a frame of opinion on which to base a discussion of the student's performance.

Outcomes

Passing the Oral examination
If the unanimous final decision is that the oral examination is acceptable, the recommendation regarding the oral examination is a pass. The Chair must inform the

student of the committee's recommendation immediately following the vote of the examination committee.

Failing the examination or Failure to Reach Unanimous Decision
The examination results must be unanimous. A lack of unanimity results in a fail. In the case of a fail,

- The Chair must inform the student of the committee's recommendation immediately following the vote of the examination committee.

- The examiners write brief memos to the DBA Program Director explaining the reasons for their votes and submit within five working days from the date of the examination.

- The DBA Program Director may uphold the fail in the case of a clear fail or refer to FGS for decision in the case of an unclear fail. If the DBA Program Director upholds the fail, the graduate program, within ten working days from the date of the examination, will:

    o Send a Notice of Failed Candidacy Component to the student.
    o Keep the Notice of Failed Candidacy Component and the post-exam memos, along with the Notice of Examination, on the student's file. If there is an appeal, all documentation should be submitted to FGS (gpoform@ucalgary.ca).

Appeals

If the outcome of any component of the Candidacy Requirements relating to the Thesis Proposal or Field of Study Examinations is a fail, the student has the right to appeal the decision. Students must appeal directly to the Faculty of Graduate Studies following the procedures described in the Graduate Calendar under Academic Regulations *-Appeals).*

RE-TAKE OF EXAMINATION

Only one re-take of each candidacy component will be permit ted. The re-take must take place no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the first examination. Normally, the composition of the committee and the examination process will remain the same.

The second failure on any candidacy component requires the student to withdraw from program. In this case, the graduate program must send the Recommendation of Required Withdrawal from Graduate Program for Failure to Maintain Academic Progress and all supporting documents to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

EXTENSION TO CANDIDACY REQUIREMENTS DEADLINE

Students who do not complete their candidacy requirements by the end of their 28th month in the program must have an extension request approved by the FGS. If a student needs longer than 28 months to complete the Candidacy requirements, an extension to program may be granted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies on the basis

of a recommendation from the DBA Program Director that specifies the grounds for the extension and provides a detailed schedule for the completion of the program. Forms can be found on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website at: [grad.ucalgary.ca/ current / managing -my-program/ registration](grad.ucalgary.ca/current/managing-my-program/registration).

The completed and signed form must be submitted to the GPA to be sent to FGS for approval. Please note that the form should be submitted by the end of the 27th month in the program to allow time for processing.

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
HASKAYNE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Report of Written Field of Study Examination

☐ This is a retake examination.

Date:

Candidate: ID:

Department/Faculty/Program: Haskayne School of Business

Degree: **DBA**

Date & Time of Examination:

Names of Supervisors (Examiners)	Final Individual Recommendation	Supervisory Committee Recommendation*	Supervisors' (Examiners') Initials
PASS/FAIL/PASS WITH REMEDIAL WORK			
Supervisor, Area			
Supervisory Committee, Area			
Supervisory Committee, Area			

Should the outcome of the Examining Committee vote include one negative vote, the candidate will pass. Should the outcome include two or more negative votes, the Committee recommendation will be 'fail.' Should the outcome be one 'fail' vote and one 'pass with remedial work' vote, or two or more 'pass with remedial work' votes, the recommendation will be 'pass with remedial work.'

Once the committee has made a decision, please complete the form and return to the DBA Office for signing by the Director and inclusion in the student file.

Date	*Graduate Program Director- Signature*	*Graduate Program Director- Print name*

Appendix B - Thesis Proposal Evaluation Form

Student name:_____   Meeting date: _____

The Committee uses the following criteria in evaluating the thesis proposal. The Committee will evaluate whether the student:

 • Understands the relevant literature
 • Has clearly defined research question(s) and research plan
 • Demonstrates knowledge of appropriate methods, and, where applicable, data
 • Understands the relationship of the research question and proposed research contribution to the existing literature in the field as well as to managerial practice
 • Demonstrates sufficient independence from supervisory input
 • Demonstrates competence as a writer and is able to present work and answer questions clearly

The three possible outcomes of the thesis proposal evaluation, determined by a majority vote, are: approve, approve with revisions, or do not approve.

If the outcome is 'approve with revisions,' each committee member will write a brief report outlining their concerns and recommendations and will send it to the student's primary Supervisor within one week of the thesis proposal evaluation meeting. The Supervisor will ensure the student addresses the concerns. No new thesis proposal evaluation meeting is required.

If the outcome is 'do not approve,' each committee member will write a brief report outlining their concerns and suggested remedial work and will send a copy to the student's primary Supervisor and the DBA Program Director within one week of the thesis proposal evaluation meeting. A second evaluation meeting will be scheduled after student has completed the revisions.

Please indicate your votes in the table below by placing your initials in the appropriate box and sign your names in the same order below the table. The Supervisor will submit the signed form to the DBA Program Director within a business day of the Meeting.

Names of Supervisors	Approve	Approve with revisions	Do not approve	Supervisors' (Examiners') signature
Supervisor, Area				
Supervisory Committee, Area				
Supervisory Committee, Area				

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