



**Doctor of
Business Administration
Program**

COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY & BUSINESS

Doctor of Business Administration

**Program and
Dissertation Handbook
2025-2026**

**Johnson & Wales
University**

PREFACE

Welcome to the Johnson & Wales University (JWU) Doctor of Business Administration Program and Dissertation Handbook.

This Handbook, along with the generally applicable [JWU Student Handbook](#) and [JWU Catalog](#), is a resource for DBA students in all phases of their doctoral program. This Handbook includes a program overview, program outcomes and requirements, program policies and procedures, academic writing information, and dissertation standards specific to the Doctor of Business Administration program. A Microsoft Word® version of this document is also available in ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)) for access to, and downloading of, appendix items and other useful resources and links. ***In the event that this handbook conflicts with and/or is more restrictive or specific than the JWU Catalog or Student Handbook, the provisions in this handbook shall apply.***

It is important to note that each annual update to the DBA Dissertation Handbook outlines the policies and academic writing specifications to which DBA students and faculty must adhere for the current academic year. The APA Manual, 7th Edition (2020), remains the final determinant for manuscript and academic writing specifications, except for the doctoral program 'local rules' noted in this Handbook.

On behalf of JWU's College of Hospitality and Business, JWU Online, and faculty and staff, I welcome you to the DBA program. We wish you all the best as you progress through your academic journey.

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By enrolling at and attending Johnson & Wales University, students agree to abide by all university catalogs, codes of conduct, handbooks, manuals, policies, procedures, regulations, and rules applicable to students. The university may, at any time and without prior notice, add to, amend, change, modify, revise, or supersede any of its university catalogs, codes of conduct, handbooks, manuals, policies, procedures, regulations, and rules and may, at any time and without prior notice, change, modify, revise, supersede, cancel, or postpone any class, course, activity, event, and program.

Nothing herein (or anywhere else) creates or shall be construed to create any sort of contract or contractual obligation by JWU to students to offer any particular program, and nothing herein prevents JWU from altering, changing, or modifying any particular program for any reason deemed appropriate by the university. For example, health or safety concerns could result in certain programs being cancelled, postponed, or terminated. Solely for avoidance of doubt, the tuition and fees students pay JWU will not be discounted, irrespective of any changes in the manner or mode of learning or changes to any program (including revision, postponement, or cancellation of same) at any time during the academic year; the manner or mode of learning could include on-ground learning, remote learning, or a combination of the two; it could include fewer classes or restructured classes; and it could include changes mid-semester (as just a few examples of possible changes).

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INTRODUCTION

The Johnson & Wales DBA program is an intersection of academia and industry. Students take 14 traditional doctoral-level business and research courses with a concentration in Organizational Development or Hospitality Leadership. Each course allows students the opportunity to dive deeper into a topic by exploring scholarly literature and applying the information to their professional environments. Prior to Year 3, students complete a prospectus to guide them into the proposal phase of the dissertation. Year 3 begins with the first of four dissertation courses and launches the official proposal and dissertation phase of the program.

The dissertation portion of the program primarily consists of individual research, under the supervision of a fully qualified major advisor who brings a broad range of expertise to the student's research topic. Each DBA dissertation should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship of high standard and be applicable to practice. Candidates defend their dissertation to their committee and College designees.

Designing and conducting research and preparing the dissertation are complex and difficult tasks that require careful planning, precise execution, persistence, and time. Working within the DBA framework, students are expected to produce a body of research that will improve practice while broadening and deepening the base of knowledge in business.

The purpose of this Program and Dissertation Handbook is two-fold:

- to provide comprehensive program information for DBA doctoral students; and
- to guide students through the dissertation processes (prospectus, proposal, manuscript, and defense).

MISSION, PRINCIPLES, AND OUTCOMES

Program Delivery

The online Doctor of Business Administration degree program is developed and assessed by the College of Hospitality and Business and delivered through JWU Online.

College of Hospitality and Business

The College of Hospitality and Business curriculum fully supports JWU outcomes by educating our students through a focused and engaging academic curriculum combined with experiential learning opportunities integrating general education, professional skills and career-focused education. The college carefully links the most current skill requirements of employers with academic programs created and taught by faculty with relevant and continuous industry experience. This integrated approach serves to prepare students to attain personal and career success in an ever-changing global business environment.

JWU Online

The purpose of JWU Online is to deliver strategically selected university academic programs in an online format to working adult professionals across the U.S. while ensuring achievement of programmatic learning outcomes. To accomplish its purpose, JWU Online effectively leverages technology and other creative delivery approaches to offer an exceptional education and enhanced professional success for students in alignment with the university's mission.

THE DBA PROGRAM

DBA Program Description

The Doctor of Business Administration program equips senior business practitioners and high-potential individuals with both the applied and research skills needed to become executive-level organizational leaders, industry innovators, consultants, and policy makers. Students ethically address complex and practical business challenges and learn how to transform business practices to create organizational optimization, growth, and sustainability.

Individuals will advance communication, analytical and critical-thinking skills through the study of business theory, core business functions, applied research, and contemporary strategic and operational business challenges. Students prepare to add increased value to their organization or industry through new approaches to the development of strategy, processes, people, and metrics.

Program Structure

The 54-credit online DBA program includes eight core courses, three concentration courses, three research courses, and four dissertation terms. A required, no-credit online orientation is the first step in assuring a smooth transition to doctoral study, online learning, and Johnson & Wales University. There is a five-year timeclock for completing the DBA. While the program is often completed in three years some students require more time (additional fees apply). Under extenuating circumstances, the Dean may approve an extension request for additional time. Students may transfer up to three courses (nine credits), which are reviewed on an individual basis; dissertation and research methods courses are excluded.

Faculty

Johnson & Wales University has a long history of hiring and working with high-quality faculty members with industry experience and who are actively engaged in effective teaching to ensure student learning, as well as in scholarly activities to continually enhance their own knowledge and skills.

The DBA faculty have professional expertise in their field of study, strong academic credentials, and extensive experience in online course development and delivery. They know how to engage with and connect students through our online platforms, providing an enhanced, robust, and encouraging learning environment. Furthermore, they act as faculty advisers, supporting and guiding students through to dissertation completion.

DBA Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the program, graduates are expected to:

- Design, conduct and present applied research that addresses practical business problems.

- Employ advanced communication skills to share complex information, organizational vision and actionable guidelines within business environments.
- Apply contemporary business leadership theories, knowledge of core business functions and evidenced-based practice to address issues faced by senior leadership.

Organization Development Concentration:

- Apply organization development theory to improve organizational capacity for strategic change through systematic interventions.

Hospitality Leadership Concentration:

- Apply contemporary business theories, models and practices to improve the preparedness for solving current and future hospitality business challenges

DBA Program Goals

The JWU DBA program has been expressly designed to meet the following goals:

- Provide business leaders with the research, analytical, critical-thinking and decision- making skills to:
 - Conceptualize, investigate and solve complex and practical business problems
 - Transform from leader to thought leader and innovator
 - Expand organizational capacity for innovation and change
 - Use new tools, insights, and perspectives in strategy development and evidence- based practice
 - Advance knowledge within their industry through a completed dissertation

Advantages of JWU's DBA Program

- Relevant nature of curriculum that is comprehensive and career-focused
- Qualifications, experience, and expertise of the faculty
- Flexibility and convenience of fully online program, no residency requirements
- Cohort model
- Students focus on one course at a time
- Courses are seven weeks, giving students the ability to move quickly through content
- Expected three-year completion
- Lock-step dissertation model designed to guide students through the dissertation process

DBA Program Requirements

To earn the Johnson & Wales DBA degree, each student must successfully fulfill all prescribed requirements:

- Complete 54 credit hours (42 hours of coursework and 12 hours of dissertation work leading to dissertation completion).

- Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- Complete all program requirements within five years from initial matriculation.
- The complete [student handbook](#), which contains the rules, policies and codes that DBA students are expected to adhere to, as well as [academic policies](#) including grading and student standing, can be found online.

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION COURSE SEQUENCE

Organizational Development Concentration

YEAR 1	#	Course Number	Course Titles	Credits
	1	MGMT7000	Organizational Strategy and Design	3
	2	RSCH7110	Research Design	3
	3	MGMT7010	Organizational Behavior	3
	4	MGMT7030	Innovation and Change	3
	5	RSCH7130	Quantitative Research Methods	3
	6	RSCH7150	Qualitative Research Methods	3
YEAR 2	#	Course Number	Course Titles	Credits
	7	MGMT7050	Contemporary Leadership Issues	3
	8	MGMT7070	Business Analytics and Intelligence	3
	9	FISV7005	Contemporary Issues in Finance and Accounting	3
	10	MGMT7120	Advanced Strategies in Organization Development	3
	11	MRKT7100	Problems and Methods in Marketing Management	3
	12	MGMT7090	Executive Decision-Making **	3
YEAR 3	#	Course Number	Course Titles	Credits
	13	RSCH9008	Dissertation Research and Writing	3
	14	MGMT8120	Organizational Interventions – Disruption and Change	3
	15	MGMT9120	Leading and Managing Large Scale Transformation **	3
	16	RSCH9008	Dissertation Research and Writing	3
	17	RSCH9008	Dissertation Research and Writing	3
	18	RSCH9010	Dissertation Completion	3

** Outcome Capture Course

Concentration Course Highlighted in Yellow

Refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for dates.

Hospitality Leadership Concentration

YEAR 1	#	Course Number	Course Titles	Credits
	1	MGMT7000	Organizational Strategy and Design	3
	2	RSCH7110	Research Design	3
	3	MGMT7010	Organizational Behavior	3
	4	MGMT7030	Innovation and Change	3
	5	RSCH7130	Quantitative Research Methods	3
	6	RSCH7150	Qualitative Research Methods	3

YEAR 2	#	Course Number	Course Titles	Credits
	7	MGMT7050	Contemporary Leadership Issues	3
	8	MGMT7070	Business Analytics and Intelligence	3
	9	FISV7005	Contemporary Issues in Finance and Accounting	3
	10	HOSP7120	Advanced People Management and Strategic Growth in Hospitality	3
	11	MRKT7100	Problems and Methods in Marketing Management	3
	12	MGMT7090	Executive Decision-Making **	3

YEAR 3	#	Course Number	Course Titles	Credits
	13	RSCH9008	Dissertation Research and Writing	3
	14	HOSP8120	Executive Business Strategies and Innovation in the Hospitality Industry	3
	15	HOSP9120	Strategic Issues and Integrated Leadership in Hospitality**	3
	16	RSCH9008	Dissertation Research and Writing	3
	17	RSCH9008	Dissertation Research and Writing	3
	18	RSCH9010	Dissertation Completion	3

** Outcome Capture Course

Concentration Courses Highlighted in Yellow

Refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for dates.

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Throughout coursework, students are encouraged to explore dissertation topics through continuous and developing work from course to course; however, students should fulfill each assignment with new and original content. Building on previous work and including previously submitted content on a limited basis when applicable, is appropriate, but using previous work to fulfill an entire assignment is not permitted. Students must also adhere to university [academic integrity](#) standards and [honor code](#) explained in the Student Handbook.

Enrollment Policies

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree is designed to be completed in three years. Continuous enrollment is encouraged to fulfill program requirements in a timely manner and to maintain consistent cohort enrollment. Each student must meet the DBA student requirements within five years after the date when the student is first enrolled as a DBA student at Johnson & Wales University (JWU) and attends the first DBA class.

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Student Leave Policy

To learn about taking a personal leave from the DBA program/JWU, and to fill out the required form, please visit the [Personal Leave from JWU](#) section of the Student Handbook. The Personal Leave section is part of the University Withdrawal section. An approved personal leave will effectively “stop the clock” for the leave period.

To return to the DBA program/JWU, please visit the [Readmittance Policy](#) section of the Student Handbook.

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Program Time-Extension Policy

Whether due to a Leave of Absence (LOA) or not, students seeking a time extension to complete program requirements, must submit a written request to their dissertation advisor (if applicable), the DBA program director, and the dean of the College of Hospitality and Business. This request must be sufficiently specific to enable the university to determine whether the extension is warranted. Students may request an extension of one year beyond the five-year maximum program clock. An extension will be granted only for sufficient reason. The extension may be renewed for a maximum of one additional year if circumstances warrant.

ROLES OF THE MAJOR ADVISOR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Major Advisor (Chair)

The major advisor serves as the coordinator for the advising process and the primary contact person for the committee. Furthermore, the major advisor retains the final determination and approval for the prospectus, proposal, and dissertation, including the dissertation manuscript and the research procedures. The major advisor is a faculty member or administrator associated with Johnson & Wales University and assigned by the program director at the end of Year 2.

- If at any time, a major advisor's full-time status with the university is discontinued, the advising assignment will be managed on a case-by-case basis.

Second Reader

The second reader is brought onto the committee before the end of the proposal phase. A qualified second reader holds an earned doctorate in their field of expertise. Often this person has expertise in the problem of practice area or specific methodology. The second reader is selected by the student and may be internal or external to JWU but must be approved by the major advisor and program director.

Methodologist

The methodologist will be assigned to the committee before the end of the proposal phase. This role supports the student and advisor by guiding methods and aiding in the development of a general research plan that is fully aligned with the theoretical foundations of the student's work.

Each member of a dissertation committee is expected to read and to constructively critique drafts of the student's work. The dissertation committee members can complete much of the work individually, however, in some circumstances it may be necessary or desirable to meet as a full committee. The responsibilities of dissertation committee members include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Reviewing and approving dissertation problem of practice and research design.
- Providing guidance in the preparation of the dissertation prospectus and proposal.
- Approving the dissertation proposal.
- Assessing (in a timely fashion) work completed on the dissertation.
- Attending and participating in the dissertation defense.
- Assisting in the final assessment of the dissertation process and product.
- Signing the dissertation signature page to signify approval of the work.

All committee members are expected to review and submit feedback in a timely manner, generally within a two-week timeframe, but often much sooner. The major advisor works with the student to engage committee members who contribute specific expertise, knowledge, or

methodological support to the research project; in some cases, committee members may only be asked to review certain chapters or sections of the manuscript, or to advise the major advisor/student on a particular subject.

Additional Reader – (if requested)

In some instances, an additional reader may be added to the committee. This reader is typically included for a specialized review of specific sections of the dissertation. Candidates may request an additional reader for several reasons; most often it is done to include someone connected with the candidate's work site (a supervisor, mentor, etc.). Additional readers are not required to sign off on the dissertation manuscript or on the defense assessment; their role represents one of a professional courtesy in support of the student's research, applying their specific content or methodological expertise to the student's topic area.

The additional committee member may be selected from inside or outside the university, provided that the person holds an earned doctorate in their field of expertise, is approved by the major advisor and by the DBA director and has expertise in the problem of practice area or methodology. The major advisor and the student consult regarding the selection of the additional committee member.

Once the student has discussed the external reader with the major advisor, the student should request final approval of the reader, by sending name and current resume of external candidate to the program director (copy major advisor), and include a justification for including this person onto your committee.

Central Reader(s)/Program Review – (may be utilized)

The Central Reader is not a member of the dissertation committee. This reader may be deployed by the program director to review dissertation work across a cohort to ensure proper and consistent compliance in:

- Formatting (APA and DBA dissertation-specific)
- DBA guidelines
- Quality, rigor, substance, and scope of research proposal reflecting research objectives
- Relevance of the context for the research problem
- Appropriateness of methods to conduct the study
- Quality of the written work and research

Organizational Reviewer

In addition to readers, students should consider if an organizational reviewer is necessary. Organizational reviewers represent the organization from which data is collected and/or on which the dissertation is at least partially based. They may be consulted to assess the organization's comfort with the level of potentially revealing information included in the dissertation. Organizational reviewers are at the discretion of the organization and review the work strictly from an organizational perspective and do not provide guidance or direction of an

academic research nature. They are not members of the dissertation committee. If the participating organization(s) does not have an IRB, students might refer to the organization's Human Resource department to ensure the person selected as the organizational reviewer has the permission and authority to serve in this role for the specific business entity.

Students should work with the organization early in the proposal process to determine if an organizational reviewer is necessary and keep the reviewer apprised of any areas of potential interest so issues can be uncovered and handled as early as possible. The need for organizational review should be discussed with the dissertation advisor.

It is the student's responsibility to obtain any appropriate review of their dissertation in a timely fashion and in accordance with applicable organizational policy and law governing confidentiality and privacy.

In addition to the above stated roles, it is recommended that students also employ a third-party editor to assist with adherence to proper grammatical rules, and APA formatting.

ACADEMIC WRITING GUIDELINES AND DBA PROGRAM LOCAL RULES

Written work submitted in the DBA is generally expected to take the form of scholarly or academic writing, which, for most doctoral students, is a relatively new form. Like anything new, it takes practice. As the scope of reading includes more scholarly articles, it is important to take some time to notice the construction and cadence of the writing. Becoming metacognitive and reflective about the genre will help to improve academic writing over time. Look for and accept feedback!

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition* (American Psychological Association, 2020) is **the final determinant** of specifications for program work and dissertation preparation with the exception of **local program rules** for the DBA program noted in this handbook. The [APA Style Guide website](#) provides a summary of popular style guides for quick reference, however, we encourage students to review the Manual in order to become familiar with the style and format guidelines required for manuscript preparation.

Documents should be submitted in Microsoft Word, which is available to students free of charge through Johnson & Wales by visiting the [Student Software](#) page in jwuLink.

Technical Specifications for Dissertation Publication

For ProQuest publication, students must follow the specifications and format requirements to produce an acceptable dissertation. These specifications are primarily in accord with the most recent guidelines from University Microfilms, Inc. (UMI) and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. The UMI requirements are endorsed so that students may accurately prepare their dissertations for publication ([Appendix E](#)).

Revisions

When submitting revised work, unless otherwise noted, please send a version with track changes showing all revisions and notes, and a clean version with accepted changes if requested.

General Writing

Do not use contractions.

Dissertation work should be written in third person, not first – this contrasts APA Manual 7th ed. p.120.

Spacing

Only one space should follow punctuation at the end of sentences and in the references. In general, all text should be double-spaced (including table of contents, and references); however, listed and bulleted points should be single-spaced.

Margins

One-inch margins should be used on all sides. Paragraphs should be indented 1/2 inch (.5 is the default tab setting in Word) from the left margin. Additional information can be found in the APA Manual:

Indent the first line of every paragraph 0.5 in. For consistency, use the tab key or the automatic paragraph-formatting function of your word-processing program. The default settings in most word-processing programs are acceptable. The remaining lines of the paragraph should be left-aligned (Exceptions to these paragraph indentation requirements include: (a) the abstract, (b) block quotations, (c) titles and headings, (d) table titles and notes, (e) figure captions, and (f) reference list). (APA, 2020, p. 45)

Numerals

For numbers presented within writing content, refer to pages 178-181 in the APA Manual 7th ed.; local rules apply for chapter headings. You will see both Arabic and Roman chapter number labeling used through the handbook. Chapter titles should be in all caps (the word CHAPTER is optional), but numbers may be Arabic, upper case Roman numerals, or numbers written out as words (e.g., CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW, CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW, or CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW).

Block Quotation Formats

Direct Quotations:

Refer to APA Manual 7th ed. Sections 8.25-8.36 (pp. 270-278). However, for block (long) quotations (≥ 40 words) follow APA guidelines with the exception of spacing – single space block quotes.

Accuracy of all quotations is paramount. Check and recheck. When adapting a very long quote to fit in the manuscript, you may remove/omit some of the content by using “three spaced ellipsis points” (APA, 2020, p. 275). If you remove content between two sentences, use four points, to indicate the end of one sentence and the omitted content.

Fonts

Use the same style font for all text and references. Acceptable fonts include:

12-point type Times New Roman

11-point type Calibri, Arial, or Georgia

10-point type Lucida Sans Unicode

* For chapter titles only, increase font by 2-points and use all upper-case letters.

**Within tables, reduced point font size may be used, as necessary.

Use of Copyrighted Material

If copyrighted material in excess of 150-word passages is used, written permission from the copyright owner to include the material in question must be submitted with the dissertation and included as an appendix. This also applies to use of data collection instruments ([Appendix B](#)).

Running Head

The APA Manual 7th ed. (page 37) indicates that running heads should be used for work that will be published; dissertations will be published in ProQuest and should include a running head.

Headings

All heading levels follow the APA Manual 7th ed. (page 47), but the chapter headings will be formatted in the following manner, and will not count as a heading level:

I. CHAPTER TITLE EXAMPLE

For chapter titles only, increase font by 2-points and use centered, bold, all upper-case letters. All headings thereafter should follow appropriate APA guidelines shown below from APA Manual 7th ed., 2020. pp. 47-49.

Level 1 Heading Example

Text begins with a paragraph.

Level 2 Heading Example

Text begins with a paragraph.

Level 3 Heading Example

Text begins with a paragraph.

Level 4 Heading Example. Text begins here.

Level 5 Heading Example. Text begins here.

Review pages 47-49 of the APA Manual 7th ed. for additional examples.

DISSERTATION SEQUENCE

The doctoral dissertation is an integral component of the program and serves as a demonstration of academic excellence and expertise in applying the science of business, with all its expected rigor. The dissertation process focuses on an applied research project, placing value on the relevance of findings to the researcher. It is designed to make a positive difference in an organization setting, specific to the author's employer or industry, but is not intended to just be a typical work project. The research will address an authentic problem, issue, or concern, based on theory, and supported by appropriate methodological and statistical applications.

The dissertation process for the DBA is comprised of a series of lock-step courses specifically designed to guide doctoral students from the proposal stage through chapter completion, which culminates in the dissertation defense. This approach creates a schedule intended to make on-time completion manageable. The dissertation defense will be facilitated remotely through an online platform. Students will have a three-person dissertation advisement committee comprised of faculty and external professionals (when appropriate). The major advisor becomes a partner in advising and supporting the student. The second dissertation reader joins the team during the proposal process and may be selected from internal faculty/administration, or outside individuals with specific expertise (with approval). In addition, a Methodologist will support and guide the research.

Dissertation Work Timeline

This is a general timeline designed to keep students on track for three-year completion, however, the timeline is flexible within the maximum timeframe to best meet student needs. **Please note, the timeline may be altered if cohorts are combined, or students are off track from their original cohort due to a leave of absence.**

Year 2 Term 5	Year 2 Term 6	Year 3 Term 1	Year 3 Term 2	Year 3 Term 3	Year 3 Term 4	Year 3 Term 5	Year 3 Term 6	Finish Line
MRKT7100	MGMT7090	RSCH9008	MGMT8120 or HOSP8120	MGMT9120 or HOSP9120	RSCH9008	RSCH9008	RSCH9010	Defense
Major Advisor Assigned	Advising Begins	Committee Assigned	Proposal Review/ Revisions	IRB Submission and/or	Writing	Writing	Final Draft	Finalize Manuscript
Dissertation Summit	Prospectus Completed	Proposal Work/Due	IRB Submission	Writing	Data Collection Launch	Wrap Up Data Collection	Full Revisions	

All rubrics, for prospectus, proposal, chapters and full manuscript, can be found in ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)).

RESEARCH PROSPECTUS

Nearing the end of Year 2, students will develop a research prospectus, which serves as an initial plan for conducting a study using the prospectus outline worksheet. The research prospectus should be thoughtful, reflective, and present a balanced view of the proposed study – both its problems and its opportunities. It should serve as a formal communication with the major advisor about the kind of thinking done on an anticipated area of inquiry that will lead dissertation work.

Students will receive initial prospectus information in MGMT7090. During this term, students will be guided by their major advisor and the faculty member teaching MGMT7090. The prospectus is not a detailed research proposal, but in essence a complete proposal outline. The prospectus should follow the format provided in MGMT7090 (prospectus outline worksheet – sections detailed below).

Introduction (1-2 paragraphs):

Provide a short and yet concise introduction to explain your idea. You should identify the general area and aspects of your study and why you want to undertake the research. This should be general and yet capture attention. It should include 2-3 references, with at least one scholarly and others maybe more trade/manager based.

Research Problem and Support (1 paragraph):

This subsection should build the foundation for the problem/purpose of your research. Tell us ‘why’ this is needed and use research (1-2 scholarly articles) for support. What is the research problem you are trying to solve (A problem is a situation that, left untreated, produces a negative consequence for a group, organization, or individuals)? What makes it a problem? For whom? Who says so (in the literature)? The role of this section is to clearly identify the problem and to provide current, trustworthy evidence by researchers/experts in the field that the problem is worthy of a scholarly research study.

Literature Review (2-3 paragraphs):

So far in your investigation of your research ideas (purpose/problem) what is found in the literature (what are authors saying)? Use 4-6 scholarly articles to cover and support your work thus far. The purpose of this section is to establish a foundation for the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation Manuscript Chapter 2, Literature Review.

Methods: Please answer all of the following in non-paragraph form as explained below.

Research Purpose – In one sentence please explain the reasoning and expectations for your work.

The purpose of this proposed research is to

Research Questions – Establish 2-3 guiding questions which you would use to complete your purpose.

RQ1.

RQ2.

RQ3

If applicable, add more.

Notes on developing your research questions:

The research questions should flow from the purpose and problem statements; what are the research questions to be answered through this research? Why and how will answering these questions contribute to solving the research problem? A research question can only be answered with data or information. Note: Do not include specific interview or survey question/items here. Brief information/explanations may be provided in paragraph form, but RQs and hypotheses if applicable, should be presented in bullet format.

Quantitative research questions are followed by a corresponding list of the null and alternative proposed hypotheses. A null hypothesis is a general statement that indicates that the phenomena under investigation are unrelated and/or non-causal. An alternative hypothesis is a version of the null that is an affirmative statement that describes associations between variables in the study. The research questions and hypotheses must be directly answerable, specific, and testable based on the data collected. Typically, quantitative research questions begin with how, what, or why. The [DBA Stats Primer](#) (in ulearn) is a helpful resource to guide quantitative methodology and analysis.

Qualitative research questions must be related to the phenomenon stated in the problem statement. Qualitative research questions should be open-ended and reflect the nature of the proposed qualitative design. Typically, qualitative research questions begin with how or what.

Research Concept – Visual Model – Create some type of visual guide to explain (in visual, picture terms) your concept (RQs/Hypos). This may be simple boxes and arrows or other type of figure (*I.e. Eating Better + Exercise = Probably Weight Loss Achievement*).

Data Collection and Tool(s) – What will you do to obtain data (survey, observations, interviews)? Specifically what tool/s will you utilize to do so?

Type of research:

If applicable, instruments to be used (include name and in-text cite info):

Study Sample – (1-2 sentences per) Who is the targeted sample of your study (ex: female factory workers with a minimum of three years of experience located in the New England states) and how will you reach them (in-person via paper questionnaire or use my work contacts and industry organization or pay for a third-party collection as in Qualtrics or Centiment)?

Sample:

Reach (How will you?):

References: Please include all references utilized in this prospectus outline in APA format.

Prospectus Completion – Next Steps

Through MGMT7090, the prospectus will be reviewed for APA compliance and other technical formatting. Students will receive content feedback from multiple viewpoints, which may include the major advisor, the MGMT7090 instructor and an additional reader/s. After approval from the major advisor is granted, students move forward with the proposal.

Note: The literature (background) section of the proposal begins in MGMT7090 prior to the proposal term.

Dissertation Courses

RSCH9008 represents a 7-week period in which students are working on their proposal and then dissertation advancement. Students will take RSCH9008 three times. In each dissertation course, advisors will guide students through various milestones, but students drive the pace of their work. Students actively working towards dissertation milestones will receive a grade of Satisfactory (S) for course completion. Proposal work will begin in the first term of RSCH9008.

RSCH9010 also represents a 7-week advising period but is intended for final completion of the dissertation manuscript and defense. If students are actively working towards, but do not complete program requirements in RSCH9010, a Grade Pending (GP) will be issued and students will be registered for RSCH9011, a dissertation extension course for up to 12 terms until program requirements are fulfilled or the student's program timeclock expires.

THE PROPOSAL

The proposal must be approved by the major advisor and committee members.

Purpose of the Proposal

Preparation of the proposal, which is a plan for engaging in systematic inquiry, is the next required step in the dissertation process. The research proposal presents a comprehensive justification for undertaking the research and the dissertation. The proposal explains the study so that non-experts in the field can understand the rationale for undertaking the research and the justification for using the selected approach. The proposal also provides the dissertation committee with more detail than provided in the prospectus, but still a concise description of the study and a basis on which to render further advice to the student.

Proposals typically address many questions, including but not limited to the following:

- What is already known on this topic?
- What is to be learned from the proposed study?
- Why is the proposed study worth doing?
- Why was the method of investigation selected?
- How valid will the conclusions of the proposed study be?

A complete and thoughtful proposal is often possible only after some preliminary review has begun. The research focus often changes as the study matures, and the content and organization of the conceptual framework within which the project is situated may require redefinition.

While a proposal may be construed as an agreement between the student and the dissertation committee, that agreement may have to be amended as the work proceeds. The proposal should be considered as an early draft and plan for the dissertation, with the major advisor assuming the ongoing role of mentor and critic as the study progresses.

Components of the Proposal

The proposal is a detailed overview of dissertation Chapters 2 and 3. After Chapter 5 is complete, it is helpful to tweak and add to your proposal to turn it into Chapter 1, however, it is important to note, that preparation of the proposal differs from preparation of the dissertation with regards to the **Definition of Terms** section (included as a separate appendix in the Proposal, but is included within Chapter 1 in the Dissertation), and the use of heading levels differs between the two documents as well.

Proposal Parts

Front Matter

Proposal Sections

Title Page

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures (if appropriate, and separated by tables then figures)

Body Sections

- I. Introduction
- II. Problem and Purpose Statements
- III. Research Questions and Hypotheses (for Quantitative studies)
- IV. Background of the Study
- V. Methodology
 1. Research Design
 2. Sample/Participants
 3. Instrumentation
 4. Data Collection and Pilot Studies (if applicable)
 5. Data Analysis
 6. Trustworthiness (as applicable)
- VI. Limitations and Delimitations
- VII. Resulting Actions

End Matter

References

Appendices

Dissertation proposals may not exceed **17 pages** of content, which includes only the body sections; front matter and end matter sections are not included in the page limits. *Note:* Proposals in excess of the page limit may be returned. The following sections, including approximate page lengths, outline the structure of a proposal.

Title page (1 page)

Many computer compiled bibliographies include only the first five words of the title; therefore, the first five words of the selected title should adequately identify the topic. The title page should be dated with the submission date for the proposal; otherwise the same format as dissertation title page should be followed ([see Descriptions of Front Matter Sections](#)), except to add the word Proposal, as in - *Dissertation Proposal*.

Table of Contents

The ToC should follow APA Manual 7th ed. Formatting. Check out this [site](#) or the JWU CPS Writing Resources [Style Guides](#) for more information. Also Microsoft offers a great [resource page](#) that explains how to easily insert and format a ToC into your work.

List of Tables and Figures

This section is not required, but if included, the list of the tables and figures contains the titles of the included tables and figures, followed by page numbers. The format for this list is similar to that used for the table of contents. All tables should be listed, then all figures.

Introduction (approximately 1-2 pages)

The introduction frames the entire work by providing an overview of the circumstances, issues, and background of the problem the proposed study will address. The introduction includes an explanation of the problem area, and the relationship between the problem area and prior studies. Relevant personal background factors, including biases and motivation, are to be addressed.

Problem and Purpose Statements (approximately 1-2 pages)

The problem statement concisely defines the topic to be studied, describes its origins, and establishes its importance. This section addresses the current state of uncertainty surrounding the problem, the need for change, any relevant cause and effect relationships, and the insufficiency of current knowledge or practice. The problem statement section concludes with a purpose statement, which states the reason for the study and may briefly summarize the research objectives, the target population under study, the methodological approach, and theory/theoretical frameworks, if appropriate.

Research Question (1 paragraph/bullets)

This section lists clearly stated research question or questions, or in some cases hypotheses, to be addressed in the study. Brief information/explanations may be provided in paragraph form, but RQs and hypotheses if applicable, should be presented in a bulleted format.

Quantitative research questions are followed by a corresponding list of the null and alternative proposed hypotheses. A null hypothesis is a general statement that indicates that the phenomena under investigation are unrelated and/or non-causal. An alternative hypothesis is a version of the null that is an affirmative statement that describes associations between variables in the study. The research questions and hypotheses must be directly answerable, specific, and testable based on the data collected. Typically, quantitative research questions begin with how, what, or why. The [DBA Stats Primer](#) (in ulearn) is a helpful resource to guide quantitative methodology and analysis.

Qualitative research questions must be related to the phenomenon stated in the problem statement. Qualitative research questions should be open-ended and reflect the nature of the qualitative design. Typically, qualitative research questions begin with how or what.

Background of Study (approximately 6 pages)

The background of the study is a literature review that describes previous research, perspectives, actions, or theoretical frameworks related to the study. This section reviews the literature to establish the body of knowledge on which the study is based and from which it derives its intellectual moorings. The purpose of the review is to ground the study in the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underlying the problem. The discussion includes the

status of knowledge on the problem, and notes gaps due to methodological difficulties, lack of studies, or inconclusive results.

The review critically assesses the major contributions of prior research related to the problem and integrates these into a coherent whole. Typically, the literature framing a problem can be divided into domains of inquiry related to the problem. Each domain reads like an essay on that topic. The conclusion pulls together the domains and indicates their relationship to the problem.

The review must use primary sources, not secondary sources, although secondary sources may be used as starting points; must be critical, not merely descriptive, by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of existing knowledge; and must be integrative, not iterative, by synthesizing knowledge into a cohesive whole. While there are different literature review prototypes used in social science research, the DBA promotes the use of the integrative and deficiency model to establish the research gap for the student's study.

Methodology (approximately 4-5 pages)

This section describes the rationale for the research design, the types and origins of the data, and the appropriateness of the methods and procedures proposed for the study. The methodology includes, as appropriate, in marked separate sub-sections in the following order: research design, sample and/or participants*, and/or data sources, instrumentation, data collection and pilot studies** procedures, and data analysis. A section on trustworthiness strategies follows the data analysis section when appropriate (e.g. in studies that are entirely or partially qualitative).

An *a priori* power analysis should be conducted for all quantitative studies. Information on how to conduct a power analysis can be found in the [Statistics Primer](#) – Additional Resources folder. Students conducting qualitative research are encouraged to review *A Call for Qualitative Power Analyses*, also located in the Additional Resources folder.

*Students should not plan to use JWU as a population sample, etc.

**Completed instrumentation must be included as an appendix (e.g., survey questions, questionnaires, etc.). A template for permission to use content/instrumentation is available in [Appendix B](#).

*** Organization permission to collect data must be included as an appendix (if applicable)

****Pilot studies are only required if the instrument is newly developed by the researcher for the dissertation study, or if the instrument has not been previously validated.

The Methodology section will be of particular interest to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). It would be helpful to review the [IRB FAQs](#) while developing this section.

Limitations/Delimitations (approximately 1 page)

This section describes the threats/challenges of the study that are most likely to affect its internal validity or rigor (limitations) and its external validity and scope of the study

(delimitations).

Limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control, but that might affect methodology and conclusions.

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher that impact the scope of the study.

Resulting Actions (approximately .5-1 page)

This section describes the intended impact of the research, and how this will improve policy or practice.

References

The reference list includes all materials cited in the proposal. APA formats are required. (See the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition*.)

Appendices

The appendices begin with the **Definition of Terms**, as Appendix A, which provides the research-based or operational definitions of all key terms used in the proposal. The appendices continue with additional materials pertinent to the study, e.g., drafts of collection instruments and consent forms, research site requests and approvals, database components, and other items helpful in understanding the study. Appendices are ordered by appearance in the text and labeled in sequential order: Appendix A is first, followed by Appendix B, etc.

Required appendices for DBA proposals include:

- Definition of Terms
- Instrumentation (completed draft)
- Permission to use the instrument (if applicable)
- Consent form or language included on instrument
- Research site approval(s)
- Other relevant documents and information as applicable

It is helpful to refer to the [JWU IRB Forms](#) section for the Consent Form Template. The IRB template is approximately six pages. You should condense this information by selecting relevant information and language for the needs of your research. Necessary consent may be achieved in one paragraph or one page depending on the nature and design of the research.

Work Plan

Students should work with their advisor to develop a work plan that includes the following information:

- Major stages of the dissertation work as a proposed timeline
- Any required technology and physical resources needed
- Plan for making interim reports and contact with major advisor, associate advisors, and personnel at research site

A sample Dissertation Process Flow checklist is located in [Appendix A](#) and a sample work plan is available in [Dissertation Essentials Resource](#) in ulearn.

Proposal Completion – Next Steps

Once the completed proposal is approved by the major advisor and committee members IRB applications may be submitted.

Institutional Review Board Application and Assurances Process

IRB applications are submitted only after proposals have been granted committee approval; however, it is helpful to consult the IRB guidelines while writing the proposal. Students must comply with the University's [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) process, which requires a [Research Proposal Application \(RPA\)](#) and a human subjects and informed consent training ([CITI Training](#)). A step-by-step guide for RPA completion is available in [Appendix C](#).

For more information, please contact institutionalreviewboard@jwu.edu.

CITI Program Training

The [Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative \(CITI Program\)](#) provides “high quality, peer reviewed, web-based educational courses in research, ethics, regulatory oversight, responsible conduct of research, research administration, and other topics.”

JWU requires principal investigators (PIs) to complete CITI Program training prior to proceeding with their research to help prepare them to conduct research activities according to the highest ethical standards and promote a culture of trust and accountability. Advisors are also required to complete CITI training. You must complete CITI Training before sending your proposal to IRB. Note that this training will take several hours to complete; it is a good idea to work towards CITI training completion prior to or during the proposal process.

After clicking the link above, register using Johnson & Wales University as your organization. Once you are registered, complete the trainings for “Social & Behavioral Research” (specific required courses listed below). You will find this module under Johnson & Wales University courses. Full instructions are in the [CITI Program User Guide \(pdf\)](#).

Students and Advisors must complete the following modules:

- Human Subjects Research: Social & Behavioral Research Investigators
- Responsible Conduct Research: Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct Research

Data collection may only begin after IRB approval is granted. Students and major advisor should determine an appropriate data collection schedule.

THE DISSERTATION

The Purpose of the Dissertation

The dissertation serves as a published record that the student has attained the expertise needed to design and to conduct research that will improve practice and advance the state of knowledge in business.

Essentially, the dissertation addresses the following questions:

- What was the problem being investigated?
- Why was it investigated?
- How was the investigation conducted?
- What were the results?
- How does this research advance knowledge in the area?
- What action(s) will result from this research and how will this proposed action(s) resolve the problem?

Answering these questions requires a well-defined problem, a thorough review and analysis of the current state of knowledge, a sound research design, a thoughtful interpretation of results, and realistic recommendations for addressing the problem. The DBA dissertation should be between 100-225 **pages**, not including Front Matter and End Matter sections. Page number ranges are provided for each chapter as a guideline. For additional resources and further details, refer to the [Dissertation Essentials Resource](#) site in ulearn.

Components of the Dissertation

Dissertation Parts

Front Matter

Dissertation Sections

Title Page

Signature Page (to be inserted after defense)

Acknowledgements

Copyright Page

Abstract

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures (if appropriate, and separated by tables then figures)

Body Sections

I. Introduction

II. Literature Review

III. Methodology

IV. Findings

V. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

End Matter

References

Appendices

Descriptions of Front Matter Sections

Title Page

Many computer-compiled bibliographies include only the first five words of the title; therefore, the first five words of the selected title should adequately identify the topic. The title page should be dated with the submission date of the final manuscript (see template).

Signature Page

The signature page records the acceptance of the dissertation by the dissertation committee members. A signature page does not need to be included for manuscript submission prior to defense. After a successful defense or revisions, the student provides a single document signature page ([Appendix E](#)) and requests the signatures of each committee member. The signed page is then inserted into the final manuscript. The final manuscript with signatures is then uploaded to ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#), submitted to ProQuest, and sent to all committee members and the program director. Click on the provided link for tips on how to combine PDF files: [How to Combine PDF Files | PCMag](#).

Acknowledgments

The acknowledgments, limited to **no more than 1 page**, permit the author to recognize individuals who contributed to the success of the study; acknowledgments are optional.

Copyright Page

The formal notice of copyright must be included, however, officially registering your copyright is optional. Copyright protection automatically exists from the time the work is created in fixed form and the copyright immediately becomes the property of the author and should be signaled at the beginning of the dissertation. Registration with the United States Copyright Office is not required to secure copyright; it is a legal formality to place on public record the basic facts of a particular copyright. Although not a condition of copyright protection itself, registering the copyright is ordinarily necessary before any infringement suits can be filed in court.

You may authorize ProQuest to file, on your behalf, an application for copyright registration. This option will be presented to you as part of the submission process or you may register your work on your own: [register online](#) or download [printable forms](#). You may also request forms by mail from the Information Section, U.S. Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559, or contact them by telephone at 202-707-3000.

Abstract

The abstract is a highly condensed, precise summary of the dissertation with an absolute maximum of **350 words**. The abstract addresses the same questions and points covered in the dissertation, but in summarized form. The purpose of an abstract is to summarize all aspects of the study by explaining what problem initiated the research, why the problem

was worthy of investigation, what specific questions were addressed, which methods were used, what was found, and what potential actions might result.

In adherence with DBA local rules, the abstract format is in a three-four-paragraph, single-spaced, block format (left justified) with a space between each paragraph (please note that this format differs from APA Manual 7th ed. guidelines for crafting an abstract). In-text citation should be included as applicable. Please see [Appendix D](#) for the specific guidelines on how to prepare the abstract.

Each of the following elements should be covered in the abstract:

- Problem and background
- Purpose statement, perspectives, or theoretical framework
- Research question(s)
- Research methods: sample, instruments, data collection, data analysis
- Findings and conclusions
- Potential actions stemming from research

NOTE: A separate abstract is required for UMI, but in a format different from DBA Local Rules or from standard APA guidelines (See Section [Electronically Publishing the Dissertation](#)).

Table of Contents

The ToC should follow APA Manual 7th ed. formatting. Check out this [site](#) or the JWU CPS Writing Resources [Style Guides](#) for more information. Also Microsoft offers a great [resource page](#) that explains how to easily insert and format a ToC into your work.

List of Tables and Figures

This section is not required, but if included, the list of the tables and figures contains the titles of the included tables and figures, followed by page numbers. The format for this list is similar to that used for the table of contents. All tables should be listed, then all figures.

Description of Chapters

During the remaining terms of RSCH9008 and RSCH9010, with the guidance of their Committee, students will progress through the development and completion of their doctoral dissertation.

I. Introduction (Approximately 18-25 pages)

With the completion of the proposal, Chapter I is basically written. Often, after completing the proposal, students find it easier to begin dissertation work with Chapter II and come back to the proposal as Chapter I as the last chapter they prepare, that way any minor changes made along the way are captured in the first chapter, as opposed to

having to change it multiple times.

Chapter I begins with a description of the scope of the investigation and how it fits within the research framework, including seminal research to support the argument as a preview to greater discussion in Chapter II. The introduction builds the case for the importance of doing the research and indicates what can be gleaned from the results.

Clearly state the problem of practice under investigation and establish the importance of the problem as a subject of doctoral level study. Enumerate the research goals and describe any background helpful to understanding the problem and the research. Identify the level of uncertainty surrounding the problem, the need for change, the level of dissatisfaction with current knowledge or practice, and the gaps or controversies in existing knowledge that surround scholarly discussion of the problem. Link the problem definition in the specific investigation to relevant areas of research.

Where appropriate, address relevant personal background factors, including biases and motivations, which generated an interest in the problem.

Include the definition of terms used in the study (note that this differs from the proposal).

Prepare a background of the study (abbreviated literature review), typically highlighting the key studies or scholars related to the problem of practice under exploration/investigation. A comprehensive discussion of the extant research in the problem area comprises Chapter II.

Next, as an overview of the methodology, which is described in greater detail in Chapter III, all elements of the methodology are briefly described in Chapter I, consisting of: research design, sampling strategies, instrumentation, data collection, pilot studies, reliability and validity, data analysis and trustworthiness, where appropriate. Limitations, delimitations and resulting actions are also to be included in this section.

Conclude Chapter I by summarizing the problem and its importance, and provide a preview of the remaining contents of the dissertation.

The main sections of Chapter I are as follows:

- Introduction to the problem
- Problem statement and purpose statement
- Definition of terms
- Research questions
- Background of the study
- Methodology
 - Research design (and researcher's positionality, where appropriate)
 - Sampling/Participants/Data Sources
 - Instrumentation

- Data Collection/Pilot Studies
- Data Analysis
- Trustworthiness (where appropriate)
- Limitations and delimitations
- Resulting actions
- Summary

II. Literature Review (Approximately 35-75 pages)

Prior to writing Chapter II, some students find it helpful to use their proposal to outline the chapter, and bring in any relevant language, then put the proposal aside and craft Chapter

II. The proposal content can be saved for Chapter I; this reduces complete repetition and additional writing needs for the first chapter.

The literature review establishes that the research is rigorously and comprehensively grounded, and is based on a body of published information, theoretical and empirical, relevant to the study. The literature review should demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the field, and an awareness of important substantive and methodological developments related to the field. The literature review must use primary sources, in addition to relevant, but limited, secondary sources; must be critical, not merely descriptive; and must be integrative, not iterative.

The literature review should cover topics related to all research questions.

Organize the literature review around a set of domains of inquiry germane to the problem of practice. Headings and subheadings should be used that relate to the areas of study. Identify the gaps or shortcomings in the current knowledge that justify the research.

Summarize the body of existing knowledge and articulate how that knowledge provides an intellectual basis for the research. Conclude the literature review with a summary of how the research is grounded in existing knowledge, flows from that knowledge, and extends that knowledge.

(*Note:* In a qualitative study there may be two reviews of the literature: a macro review to frame the problem and a micro review in Chapter V, against which to compare the present findings. Quantitative studies usually have only one review.)

Next, students will design an evidence-based research methodology approach to investigate the problem identified and approved in the proposal stage. Students will complete the data collection process, based on previously obtained permission and IRB approval, and perform data analysis. [The DBA Stats Primer](#) (in ulearn) is a helpful resource to guide quantitative methodology and analysis.

III. Methodology (Approximately 15-25 pages)

Prior to writing Chapter III, some students find it helpful to use their proposal to outline the chapter, and bring in any relevant language, then put the proposal aside and craft Chapter III. The proposal content can be saved for Chapter I; this reduces complete repetition and additional writing needs for the first chapter.

The methodology chapter describes the investigation and/or exploration in sufficient detail to assess the research process and, ideally, to make it possible for other researchers to replicate the study.

Show that the methods used are related to and appropriate for the study's purpose and to answer the research questions. Segregate the investigation into meaningful stages and the steps performed in each stage, including the preparatory stages, such as pilot testing if applicable. Include descriptions of the procedures and techniques used in sampling, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

As appropriate, identify and describe the cautions and limitations associated with the methodology employed. Explain any unusual procedures. Use flow or process diagrams, as appropriate, to explain the process (particularly important in mixed methods designs). If an experimental, or quasi-experimental design is employed, explain exact procedures used for the treatment of the experimental and the comparison groups.

Note: Once approved by IRB, the methodology should not be altered. Any necessary alterations need to be approved by the advisor, DBA Director, and re-submitted to the IRB.

Recommended Subheadings and Sequence of Sections in Chapter III

- Introduction and Purpose

- Research Questions

 - Hypotheses (for QN, MM studies)

- Methodology

 - Research Design

 - Sample/Participants

 - Instrumentation (including validity, reliability for QN, MM studies)

 - Data Collection and Pilot Studies (if applicable)

 - Data Analysis

 - Trustworthiness (for QL and MM studies)

- Limitations/Delimitations

- Resulting

- Actions

- Summary

IV. Findings (Approximately 15-30 pages)

The study's findings are presented in Chapter IV. Develop an organizational strategy for presenting the results; often this can be accomplished by responding to each research question, or, in the case of a qualitative study, themes should be discussed based on the emergent findings. Summarize the findings to connect the words and data to the research questions or phenomenon. Discuss any evident patterns or relationships that emerge, and any surprises or anomalies in the data.

The appropriate format for reporting research findings differs according to the study's research design. Each paradigm, and accordingly, each research design, follows a specific format for the findings (qualitative research findings, quantitative research findings, and mixed methods findings). Consult ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)) for DBA Dissertation Courses (RSCH9+ > Chapter 4: Findings) for further resources.

Results may be presented in tables within Chapter IV, however more detailed results, such as extensive data tables, should be placed at the end of the section or in an appendix, particularly if the volume of this information interrupts the flow of the text.

Report and present the key findings generated by the research; however, reserve the interpretations of the findings for Chapter V. Supplemental findings are also included in Chapter IV, but should be limited to 1-2 additional findings that are not directly related to the research question(s) but are sufficiently important to support interpretation and recommendations noted in Chapter V.

This is the final stage of dissertation development and completion. Students will formulate and explain the implications and value of the research findings for management practice and make specific recommendations to improve management practice. This dissertation process concludes with a successful defense and publication of the student's dissertation research.

V. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations (Approximately 12-25 pages)

The final chapter places the research findings in context. Interpret and summarize the results with regard to the objectives and the intentions of the research. Contrast and compare the findings with those of previous research and literature and seek reasons to explain the similarities or differences. This summary leads to the conclusions for the study, which flow from and are consistent with the interpretation of the findings.

Based upon the conclusions, formulate the recommendations for practice, policy, and further research. The recommendations may appear as a list beginning with the principal points and addressing policy and practice, as appropriate. Depending upon the topic, include a detailed action plan for the stakeholders in the research problem of practice.

The format appropriate for reporting research interpretations and implications differs according to the study's research design. Each paradigm, and accordingly, each research

design, follows a specific format for the findings (qualitative research findings, quantitative research findings, and mixed methods findings). Consult ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)) for DBA Dissertation Courses (RSCH9+ > Chapter 4: Findings and Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations) for further resources.

Descriptions of End Matter Sections

References

The reference list includes all materials cited in the chapters. APA formats are required (review the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition*). All in-text citations should be cross-checked to be sure they are included in the reference list, and vice versa; all sources must appear in both places.

Appendices

The appendices include additional information needed to comprehend, support, and evaluate the dissertation. Information is placed in the appendices because the material is otherwise a distraction to the narrative flow of the text.

Include in the appendices all data collection materials, such as interview guides, questionnaires, informed consent forms, and cover letters. List the contents of the appendices and title each appendix item separately. Appendices are ordered by appearance in the text and labeled in sequential order: Appendix A is first, followed by Appendix B, etc.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Purpose of the Defense

As the culminating step in the dissertation process, students make an oral presentation to their dissertation committee to present the results of their research. The defense is an academic exercise, and this oral presentation is a formal discussion of the scholarly content of the dissertation. The defense may not commence until the complete dissertation manuscript has been finished, reviewed, and approved by the major advisor, and all other members of the dissertation committee. If the committee agrees that the student is ready to present their study, the major advisor and program director will consult to schedule the defense.

Prior to the Defense

To schedule a dissertation defense, the major advisor notifies the program director that pending successful review of all five chapters and program approval, the student is ready to defend. Once the defense date is secured, the director notifies appropriate members of the university community including the student's name, dissertation title, and an invitation to the defense.

At least two (2) weeks prior to the proposed defense date, the student submits the defense manuscript to the committee and all other parties listed on the defense invite distribution list. *This manuscript does not need to be a final version of the dissertation; changes will typically be made to the dissertation manuscript after the defense, based on feedback from the committee and the major advisor.* The distributed defense manuscript will serve as the reference document for committee members during the virtual presentation.

In addition, within 3 days prior to the defense date, the student should distribute the defense slide deck to the same list of attendees.

Defense Presentation

The dissertation defense will be conducted remotely via an online platform (such as Zoom). The defending student must be present on camera during the introduction and Q&A session and in speaker view during the slide presentation.

The dissertation defenses are considered to be public presentations within the university and are attended by the major advisor and the student's committee; DBA faculty, and the DBA program director. Other university representatives may also choose to attend. Other DBA students may attend, and the defending student may invite external guests. The entire defense meeting lasts approximately 60-90 minutes; the focus of the defense rests with the student's oral presentation, which lasts no more than 30 minutes. Dissertation defenses are recorded.

The defense session generally follows the sequence outlined below:

- The program director or major advisor opens the defense session with opening remarks and a review of the session sequence of events (1-2 minutes);
- The student presents the results of their research (25-30 minutes, see details below for specific breakdown of defense presentation components);
- The major advisor invites the committee to ask their questions, followed by the major advisor (approximately 15 minutes). All non-committee guests attend the defense presentations as observers and do not ask any questions of the student.
- After the Q&A ends, the committee is placed in a breakout room to deliberate the final grade for the dissertation process and product, including the defense. Once the deliberations are complete, the major advisor shares the results of those deliberations with the student (approximately 5-10 minutes);

The Dissertation Defense rubric is used to guide the committee's evaluation of the student's work on the dissertation and during the oral presentation. All rubrics can be reviewed in the [Dissertation Essentials Resources](#) ulearn site.

Oral Presentation Guidelines

During the defense, the student should use personal notes and speak directly to the audience. This is a professional face-to-face scholarly presentation; the emphasis is on the ability of the student to convey the essence of their study.

Therefore, the student should address the key features of the research and note the approximate time allotted for each part of the presentation:

- An overview of the major focus of the research is presented along with the student's personal and professional interest in the specific research problem of practice (up to 2 minutes)
- Next, the student relates the purpose of the study and the research questions (up to 2 minutes)
- The student provides a brief overview of the research method(s): the sample or participants consisted of... the instrument(s) was (were) . . . the data collection process(s) was (were) . . . the data analysis process was . . . (up to 3 minutes)
- The majority of time is spent on presenting and discussing the study's major findings combined with the implications/interpretations (up to 17 minutes)

- Select recommendations for practice and further study are shared (be selective! You only need to share 2-3 from each category) (up to 4 minutes)
- In closing, provide a brief summative closing statement (2 minutes)

The defense presentation by the student should last no longer than 25-30 minutes.

The student should use a slide deck presentation to relay and address the presentation points as appropriate including relevant charts, tables, and other visuals related to the dissertation. After the student completes their presentation, the defense is open for questions from dissertation committee members.

All dissertation committee members participate in the oral defense. Should circumstances prevent participation by committee members, the defense may be rescheduled.

Questions to Consider

Questions that might be asked of the student by committee members include, but are not limited to:

- If you were to conduct this study again, what might you do differently in terms of methods? Subjects?
- Can you explain why you selected the research design and methods for this study? Why were your choices the most appropriate for your problem of practice/focus?
- What are some alternative interpretations of your research findings? Why?
- What was the most challenging aspect of your research? Why?
- What specific aspects of your findings can be applied to the field? To practice? To policy?
- What do you think is the most significant contribution your study can make to the field or profession?
- How will your research change current thinking in your field?
- How will you communicate your findings with other practitioners? Scholars?
- What are your plans to disseminate your findings through presentations? Conferences? Publications?
- How has this program and your dissertation work changed you as an individual? As a scholar? As a practitioner?

Defense Outcomes and Post-Defense

There are three potential outcomes for a defense:

- **Pass:** no revisions are required, student moves straight to post-defense actions
- **Pass with Revisions:** During the oral defense, committee members may determine that additional revisions to the dissertation manuscript are needed. *The major advisor will oversee the modifications and assist the student in making the stipulated changes. After the requested changes have been made, the major advisor authorizes the student to forward the manuscript to the committee for final review and approval.*
- **Fail:** It is always the intent to only move students to a defense when their work is strong enough to pass, however, during the defense, if it becomes apparent that the student is not able to confidently walk through their dissertation and provide accurate and relevant details, then failing the defense is possible. Failing the defense means that the student has not completed the final requirements of RSCH9010 and the program. The student will meet with the major advisor to determine next steps.

Post-Defense/Revisions

Advisors:

- Send Outcomes Assessments scores to the DBA Director who will enter them into TaskStream.
- Once student submits final manuscript:
 - Confirm ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)) submissions of final slide deck and manuscript.
 - Submit all necessary grade changes to close out student's program work.
 - Notify the program director that the students work is closed out.

Students:

- Prepare single document signature page ([Appendix L](#)) and initiate committee signing with major advisor.
- Be sure final defense presentation slide deck is submitted in ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)).
- Incorporate the final signature page into the manuscript; it should be placed immediately following the title page. How to combine PDF files: [How to Combine PDF Files | PCMag](#)
- Submit final manuscript to ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)) and send a copy to all committee members and the program director.
- Submit final manuscript to ProQuest ([Appendix M](#)).

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APPENDICES

All templates and forms are available in MS Word format, in ulearn ([Dissertation Essentials Resources](#)), for student downloads and use.

- A. [Dissertation Process Flow Checklist](#)
- B. [Content Permission Request Template](#)
- C. [Institutional Review Board Application Guide](#)
- D. [Guidelines for Writing an Abstract](#)
- E. [Dissertation Signature Page Template](#)
- F. [UMI Publishing Guidelines](#)

Appendix A: Dissertation Process Flow

Research Prospectus, Proposal and Dissertation Task(s) Completion Checklist	Date Initiated	Date Finished
Student completes prospectus		
Advisor provides feedback and guides student to complete prospectus.		
Student submits final prospectus for Program Review.		
Once prospectus is approved, student completes proposal.		
Advisor provides feedback and guides student to complete proposal.		
Student submits final proposal to ulearn (Dissertation Essentials Resources).		
Committee review occurs.		
Once revisions are complete/approved, student submits IRB application.		
Once IRB approval is granted, data collection should be scheduled and started.		
Student can use approved proposal to develop an outline for Chapter II.		
Student writes Chapter II while meeting often with the Advisor for feedback and progress checks.		
Advisor provides feedback on “final” draft.		
Advisor forwards “final” draft (Chapter II) to second reader for review and feedback.		
Student completes Chapter III.		
Advisor provides feedback on “final” draft (Chapter III).		
Advisor forwards “final” chapter draft to committee for review and feedback.		
Data collection should be wrapping up or completed.		
Student conducts data analysis and meets with the methodologist if necessary to be sure analysis is on track.		
Student completes Chapter IV.		
Advisor provides feedback on “final” draft (Chapter IV).		
Advisor forwards “final” chapter draft to committee for review and feedback.		
While Chapter IV is being reviewed, student should complete Chapters V and I. Reminder: the proposal can now be expanded and tweaked to be used as Chapter I.		
Advisor provides feedback on “final” drafts (Chapters IV and V).		
Advisor forwards “final” chapter drafts to committee for review and feedback.		
Once all chapters are approved, student should compile work into one manuscript.		
Advisor conducts final review of complete manuscript.		
Advisor forwards “final” manuscript to committee for review and feedback.		
While committee is reviewing the manuscript, student should submit the latest version approved by major advisor to ulearn (Dissertation Essentials Resources) and notify the program director of submission (CC major advisor). This submission can be adjusted if necessary, after second reader review.		
Defense is scheduled upon committee review.		
Student prepares defense slide deck.		
Student defends dissertation.		
Advisor guides student through final revisions (if applicable) and signature page.		
Student uploads dissertation manuscript to UMI and approved by Dean of Libraries within 30 days of defense		
*Note that some steps may occur simultaneously or out of order if necessary.		

Appendix B: Permission Request for Use of Content, Instruments, and other Material - Template

Johnson & Wales University Doctor of Business Administration

Date: **[Enter Date]**
[Enter Full Name of Rightsholder]
[Enter Address of Rightsholder]

Dear **[Enter Name of Rightsholder]**:

I hereby request your permission to reprint the following material (the “material”):

Title: **[Enter Title of Source Material]**

Author/Editor: **[Enter Name of Author/Ed]**

Volume/Issue: **[Enter Volume/Issue]**

Title of Selection: **[Enter Title of Selection]**

Type of Excerpt: **[Enter Type of Excerpt]**

Excerpt length: **[Enter Excerpt Length]**

This material is to potentially appear in the forthcoming product dissertation other (the “Work”):

Title:

Authored/Edited by:

To be published by:

- Scheduled Publication/Completion Date:
- Estimated Page Length:

I request nonexclusive distribution rights to include the Material in the current and all future editions of the Work, including customized editions and derivative products, password-protected ancillary materials, and promotional use in support of the Work, in all languages and formats now known or later developed, throughout the world. These rights in no way

restrict republication of the Material in any form by you or others authorized by you. If you do not control the rights in the Material in their entirety, please inform me of others to whom I should write.

A credit line with the above information will be included in the Work, unless you specify otherwise.

With appreciation of your time and cooperation,

NAME of author _____

Author's email _____

Author's phone number _____

I hereby affirm that I own or control all rights in the Material described above, and grant permission for the use of the Material as described herein.

Signed _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Appendix C: JWU Institutional Review Board Application Guide

Once you receive program approval on your DBA Dissertation Proposal, you may proceed to the IRB application. The information below will help you walk through the process.

1. Visit the [JWU IRB site](#) and scroll to **Forms**, then click the down arrow to see the **Research Proposal Application (RPA)**.
2. Sections of the application: You will want to have your approved DBA Proposal open so you can copy and paste much of the required information into the application.
 - a. **Submission:** first-time submissions = Original submission
 - b. **Title and Abstract** should be copied directly from your DBA Proposal
 - c. **Summarize all aspects of the proposed study:** You may paste in the introduction to your proposal provided it includes the listed criteria.
 - d. **Contact Information**
 - i. You are the PI
 - ii. Position: DBA Student
 - iii. Office/Department/College: DBA/COB
 - iv. Email: You must use your JWU student email
 - v. Cell Phone (Skip Office Extension)
 - vi. Short biography/CV/Resume – upload document
 - vii. **CITI Training Certification:** If you have completed your CITI Training, upload the certificate at the time of application.
 - viii. **Are you working with a Co-PI?** – Answer No
 - e. **Funding Information:** most of you will by-pass this section. If you plan to fund your dissertation with external funds, please review the IRB procedures regarding funding before completing this section. In addition, be sure to let your advisor know.
 - f. **Study Information:** Choose whether your study does or does not include human subjects. For example, if you are interviewing or surveying people, then your study includes human subjects.
 - g. **Rationale**
 - i. **Justification:** copy information from your DBA Proposal
 - ii. **How will this study contribute to existing knowledge in the field?:** copy information from your DBA Proposal
 - h. **Methodology**
 - i. **Research Design:** copy Research Design section from your DBA Proposal; include Trustworthiness if applicable.
 - ii. **Participant Expectations:** copy Sample/Participants section from your DBA Proposal; include Trustworthiness if applicable.
 - iii. **Web Links for Instrumentation:** paste instrument links and include permission of use (if applicable)
 - iv. **Data Collection Procedures:** copy Data Collection section from your DBA Proposal.
 - v. **Instruments for Data Collection:** upload document (directly from your approved DBA Proposal)

- vi. **Additional Methodology Information:** include any relevant information not already referenced.
- vii. **Will this study be completed at a host site where permission is required to use space/facilities?** If yes, upload site/organization permission. Click yes, even if data collection will be conducted remotely.
- viii. **Will this study be completed within 12 calendar months, following IRB approval?:** Yes
- i. **Other Documents (as applicable):** be sure to submit at least the following:
 - i. Consent/assent documents
 - ii. Confidentiality Statement (if applicable)
 - iii. Any additional documents you think will enhance your IRB application

Please do not upload your proposal in its entirety as one document. Various sections of your proposal are to be copied and pasted into the relevant RPA sections, and elements of your proposal, such as instrumentation and consent forms, should be saved as separate documents and uploaded as appropriate.

- j. **Attestation:** Check the box, but **DO NOT SUBMIT your RPA yet – move to number 3.**
- 3. **Before submitting the application,** click on *Save and Resume Later* and a link will be provided. Send this link to your advisor so s/he can review your RPA. Once the advisor reviews the RPA s/he will give you the green light to submit it for IRB review.
 - a. Your advisor will also complete the Faculty Authorization form at this time.
- 4. Once the advisor gives their approval, be sure to submit the RPA on [JWU IRB site](#).

After all the above steps are completed, the IRB Committee will review your application, and they will send a memo assigning a review type. Review types explain the level of review that will take place; however, it does not approve, deny, or modify your study.

IRB will reach out to you with any questions, or if further information is necessary. Otherwise, you **will wait for final IRB approval before collecting your data**. In the meantime, you should work with your advisor to determine a work progress schedule.

For further and more complete information, please visit the [JWU IRB site](#). You will find helpful documents on this site as well. In addition, you can visit the IRB folder in the [DBA Dissertation Summit ulearn site](#) for helpful videos and other details.

Appendix D: Guidelines for Writing an Abstract

Purpose of an Abstract

The purpose of an abstract is to summarize all aspects of the study by explaining what problem initiated the research, why the problem was worthy of investigation, what specific questions were addressed, which methods were used, what was found, and what potential actions might result.

Abstracts should be single-spaced, and paragraphs should be separated by a single line – no indentation.

The length of the dissertation abstract must not exceed 350 words.

Thus, the abstract must be written in very precise language to represent the study within the word count limitation. **Citations must be included in the abstract.**

Refer to the dissertation section outline in the proposal section of this handbook for abstract placement.

Content of an Abstract

Each of the following elements should be covered in the abstract: Paragraph

#1:

- Problem and background of the study

Paragraph #2:

- Perspectives or theoretical framework, if applicable
- Research questions

Paragraph #3:

- Research methods
 - Sample/participants (N=X)
 - Instrumentation
 - Data collection procedures
 - Data analysis strategies

Paragraph #4:

- Findings, key statistics, if appropriate, and conclusions
- Potential actions stemming from the research

Appendix E: Dissertation Signature Page



Doctor of Business Administration Program
COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY & BUSINESS



Johnson & Wales University
College of Hospitality and Business

Doctor of Business Administration

Candidate: Student First and Last

Dissertation Title: **Paste Dissertation Title Here**

Defense Date: X/X/20XX

Committee members sign this page to indicate that the student has successfully completed and passed the Dissertation and Defense.

Major Advisor: _____
Major Advisor, XXX.

Second Reader: _____
Second Reader, XXX

Methodologist: _____
Methodologist, XXX

Appendix F: UMI Formatting Requirements and Final Manuscript Preparation

Electronically Publishing the Dissertation

After major advisor approval, the student initiates electronic publication of the dissertation manuscript. **Students are urged to complete the upload process within 30 days of their defense.** This process is guided by the Johnson & Wales University Dean of Libraries, who serves as the local JWU Library doctoral dissertation administrator. In order for the manuscript to be acceptable, the format, printing, and UMI specifications must be followed (see the table for UMI formatting requirements).

UMI Formatting Requirements DIGITAL MANUSCRIPT

File Format: Manuscript	Adobe PDF required. NO compression; NO password protection; NO digital Signature. You are responsible for the appearance of your manuscript in PDF. It will appear and may be downloaded exactly as you submit it.
Multimedia files and formats	Digital preservation best practices typically recommend including multimedia content as supplemental files, rather than embedding multimedia in PDFs. ProQuest will accept multimedia content of all file types. File types listed below will be migrated by ProQuest. File types other than those listed below are not guaranteed to be migrated.
Images	GIF (.gif); JPEG (.jpeg); TIFF (.tif)
Video	Apple Quick Time (.mov); Microsoft Audio Video Interleaved (.avi); MPEG (.mpeg)
Audio	AIF (.aif); CD-DA; CD-ROM/XA; MIDI (.midi); MPEG-2; SND (.snd); WAV (.wav)
Margins	"Left" "Right" "Top" "Bottom" Applies to all material except page numbers, including figures, headers/footers, footnotes/endnotes, and full-page images. Page numbers: at least ¾" from edge of page.
Fonts	Embedded fonts REQUIRED. PostScript Type 1 fonts required. Any legible font except script, italic, or ornamental fonts equivalent in scale to 10pt. Arial or 12pt. Times New Roman accepted. Italicized font may be used for non-English words and quotations. Applies to all text including captions, footnotes/endnotes, citations, etc.
Line spacing	Double-space: abstract, dedication, acknowledgements, table of contents, and body of the manuscript; except for quotations as paragraphs, captions, items in tables, lists, graphs, charts. Single-space: footnotes/endnotes, bibliographic entries, lists in appendices.
Color	PDF and Print reproductions will include all color material. Microfilm reproductions will NOT preserve color; colors will appear in shades of gray.

For complete details for submitting a dissertation to UMI, review or download: [Preparing Your Manuscript for Submission.](#)

NOTE: UMI does not accept signed signature pages with the electronic upload.

Final Dissertation Manuscript Preparation for Uploading to UMI

The Johnson & Wales University Dean of Libraries serves as the JWU Library doctoral dissertation administrator. In order for the manuscript to be acceptable, the format, printing, and UMI specifications must be followed (see Section [UMI Formatting Requirements](#)).

When the manuscript is completed, the student should check the copy against the UMI Formatting Requirements before uploading to the UMI site.

Once the dissertation is submitted by the student, the JWU Dean of Libraries reviews the manuscript and returns notes and comments, if necessary. Any required changes to the manuscript will be made by the student, who then resubmits the revised manuscript through the same site. When the manuscript is accepted, the JWU Dean of Libraries finalizes online delivery to UMI. As part of the upload process, students may order bound copies directly from UMI for personal use. Students are required to share a copy of their final document (in PDF format) with the DBA Director to maintain a copy of the dissertation on file.

For its collection, JWU Library purchases one bound copy of every published JWU dissertation. While students may select options that result in publishing their dissertation through UMI at no cost to them, any costs associated with copyright registration, publishing under an open access license, and the purchase of bound copies are assumed by the student. Payment of all fees is made directly online by credit card to UMI via the web. (See [JWU library Dissertation Publishing Guide](#) for information on fee- based options.)