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**Westcliff University**  
College of Business

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**Doctor of Business Administration**  
**Program Handbook**

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Fall 2021  
College of Business

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# Welcome to the Doctor of Business Administration



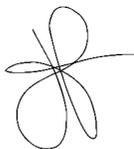
Future doctoral graduates,

Westcliff University understands that you are taking a road that is not often traveled and takes great pride in supporting you with both the information and academic guidance you will need to be successful in your studies.

The College of Business aims to provide you with a meaningful and impactful learning experience in the classroom, so that you may take the knowledge, skills, and abilities you

acquire and turn them into practical experiences in the field. Our esteemed faculty, administrators, and leadership teams in the DBA program are uniquely qualified in every aspect of the doctoral process and will guide you towards the completion of your degree. Completing a doctoral degree is a life-changing experience, a labor of love that enhances your career in a way no other degree can.

At Westcliff University, we live our mission to educate, inspire, and empower our students from around the world every day. Your success is our success. We look forward to joining you in your academic journey, supporting you, and learning from you in a collaborative effort to realize your dreams. I look forward to meeting you and to shaking your hand as you accept your doctorate degree at graduation!



**Dr. Jannette E. Flores**

Dean, College of Business

Westcliff University

## **Program Introduction**

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program's mission is to present advanced business concepts to doctorate students by exploring and discovering new knowledge. The program creates meaningful learning experiences that develop practitioner-based scholars who, from a leadership perspective, can apply creative and innovative concepts pragmatically to complex and diverse business problems. It promotes leaders who contribute to the field of business by using sustainable practices in an ethical and professional manner.

The DBA is designed for candidates who have already completed a master's program and are looking to further develop their practical and theoretical knowledge of the principles that govern global business. The Westcliff University DBA program emphasizes advanced decision-making and leadership skills and in-depth knowledge of theory and applied research. Students have the opportunity to explore challenges facing business today, including corporate social responsibility, globalization, and managing change. The performance outcomes required for the program's completion include class participation, discussion question responses, research papers, group assignments, case study analyses, quizzes, mid term and final examinations (Comprehensive Learning Assessments - CLAs), a doctoral dissertation and a successful defense of the dissertation.

## **Program Requirements & Prerequisites**

To be fully accepted into the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at Westcliff University, students must have a completed master's-level degree in business or a related field. If an applicant does not hold an appropriate master's-level degree, they must complete the three (3) master's level courses listed below. If they do not pass the Doctoral Writing Assessment then they must take the English writing course, EDU 701 Advanced Academic Study and Writing, before starting the DBA program. The prerequisite courses must be taken and completed with a *73% or higher* in each course. Prerequisites do not count as credits towards the DBA program credits; however, the grades earned do count towards the student's cumulative GAP. Students may complete these courses at Westcliff University or transfer them in from another university. After a DBA program applicant has successfully completed or transferred the

prerequisites (per an initial transcript evaluation), they will enroll in the 700-level core courses.

The prerequisite courses for their related doctoral-level courses are listed below:

Master's Level Prerequisite	Doctoral Course	Credits
<a href="#">BUS 505 Managerial Economics</a>	<a href="#">BUS 731 Global Economics &amp; Business Initiatives</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 535 Managerial Accounting</a>	<a href="#">BUS 731 Global Economics &amp; Business Initiatives</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 550 Financial Management</a>	<a href="#">BUS 710 Financial Risk in Business</a>	3

### Writing Course Requirements

Students who fail the initial writing assessment will be required to take the EDU 701 Writing Class. Students who fail RES 721 will be required to take EDU 780, and those who fail RES 751 will be required to take EDU 781. Students may opt to repeat these courses as often as they wish until proficiency is reached.

Failed Course	Writing Course	Credits
RES 721	EDU 780	3
RES 751	EDU 781	3

### Transferred Credits

Students may transfer credit hours for some BUS 700-level courses into Westcliff University's DBA program per the university's Transfer Credit Policy.

**Note:** Students entering the DBA program *must* complete the RES 721 Doctoral Prospectus and RES 751 Doctoral Literature Review/Candidacy Review at Westcliff University with a grade of 73% or greater; students may not transfer them in or have them waived.

## **Internship Courses**

### **INT 701 Doctoral Internships**

*(1 credit hour)*

The primary objective of the internship course is to align the graduate business program with job experience. The internship course allows students the opportunity to gain practical training and real-life experience pertaining to their current program of study. Engaging in an internship provides students with networking, educational, and career advancement opportunities. The university does not have a direct internship placement service but works with services in the community to alert students of available placements and job openings at outside businesses. The internship course offers the student active engagement in skills related to their professional development. At least one full 16-week term of an internship is required for all students to complete prior to graduation.

## **Legacy Courses**

For those students still in the former program sequence, known as the legacy program, a limited number of courses will remain available until no longer needed. Students can identify whether they are a legacy or new student in three ways:

1. They chose to move to the new program after being offered the option by their academic advisor and/or
2. Their program does not include RES 721 and RES 751 and/or
3. They started their program after Fall 2019.

## **Concentrations**

The DBA Program offers four (4) concentrations:

- Business Intelligence and Data Analytics (BIDA)
- Strategic Leadership for the 21st Century,
- Information Technology Management (ITM), and
- Applied Computer Science (ACS).

*The BIDA, ITM, and ACS concentrations are Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) concentrations.*

## Business Intelligence and Data Analytics (BIDA)

The concentration in Business Intelligence and Data Analytics (BIDA) prepares business executives with the knowledge and acumen to solve complex business problems, enabling organizations to remain competitive in the 21st-century globalized economy. Through data analytics and Business Intelligence (BI) tools, doctoral students gain valuable insights about customers, competitors, internal operations, and external variables that influence organizational strategy and enhance their ability to make better strategic decisions. Doctoral students analyze business data, allowing them to improve business operations' efficiency and effectiveness and become fastidious about future predictions and strategic implementation. This concentration builds a strong foundation in executive analytics that enables doctoral students to utilize business intelligence tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), predictive and prescriptive analytics, and decision support systems. The courses in the BIDA concentration are:

Course Code	Course Name	Credits
<a href="#">BUS 800</a>	Foundations in Analytics for Executives*	3
<a href="#">BUS 801</a>	BI, Analytics, & Decision Support	3
<a href="#">BUS 802</a>	Time Series & Predictive Analysis for Business	3
<a href="#">BUS 803</a>	Artificial Intelligence and Prescriptive Analytics	3

\* Prerequisite course to BUS 801

## Strategic Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Expectations are high for the changes this decade is likely to bring to the workplace. Influencers are forecasting challenges that leaders will face as a new level of workplace transformation continues to be shaped by accelerating technology changes, increasing consumer expectations, and hyper-connectivity. This concentration aims to prepare students to meet these challenges by introducing the concepts of Artificial Intelligence (AI), work culture, employee experience, data, change, analytics, diversity, productivity, automation, and well-being. The courses in the Strategic Leadership concentration are:

Course Code	Course Name	Credits
BUS 810	Building Positive Relationships in a Multigenerational Workforce	3

BUS 811	Emotional Intelligence in Transformational Leadership	3
BUS 812	Emerging Technology for Effective Leadership*	3
BUS 814	Global Leadership	3

### Information Technology Management (ITM)

The DBA Concentration in Information Technology Management (ITM) prepares business and IT executives with the knowledge and acumen to solve complex business and IT problems, manage IT initiatives, ensure digital assets security, and implement governance and management of the enterprise IT infrastructure. Doctoral students will gain valuable insights into the strategic frameworks needed to sustain competitive advantage through IT and other emerging technologies. This concentration has its design roots in the Project Management Institute (PMI) Guide to the Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) and the Information Systems Audit and Control Association’s (ISACA) accepted Information Systems Knowledge and Practice platform. The courses in the ITM concentration are:

Course Code	Course Name	Credits
<a href="#">BUS 820</a>	Business Intelligence & Information Systems	3
<a href="#">BUS 821</a>	Management Information Systems & Advanced IT	3
<a href="#">BUS 822</a>	Information Technology Project & Portfolio Management	3
<a href="#">BUS 823</a>	Governance of Enterprise IT Initiatives	3

### Applied Computer Science (ACS)

The DBA Concentration in Applied Computer Science (ACS) prepares doctoral students with the knowledge and acumen to lead computer science and software initiatives that incorporate relevant, current, and emerging technologies to sustain competitive advantage in a computer science framework. This concentration delves into software engineering concepts, Business Intelligence (BI), analytical tools to support

organizational decisions, software security design principles, and Human Computer Interaction (HCI). The courses in the ACS concentration are:

Course Code	Course Name	Credits
<a href="#">BUS 801</a>	BI, Analytics, & Decision Support	3
<a href="#">BUS 830</a>	Software Engineering Concepts	3
<a href="#">BUS 831</a>	Security in Software Design & Development	3
<a href="#">BUS 832</a>	Human Computer Interaction (HCI) Design	3

## Program Breakdown

### Year 1

*(19.5 credits, 48 weeks, 6 Courses)*

Course	Credits
<a href="#">BUS 700 Leadership and Creative Solutions Implementation</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 705 Management Strategy, Planning, and Implementation</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 710 Financial Decision Making &amp; Risk Management</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 720 Marketing Strategy &amp; Consumer Behavior</a>	3
<a href="#">RES 711 Research Methods I</a>	4.5
<a href="#">RES 721 Doctoral Prospectus</a>	3

### Year 2

*(19.5 credits, 48 weeks, 6 courses)*

Course	Credits
Concentration: CHOICE	3

<a href="#">BUS 731 Global Economics &amp; Business Initiatives</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 732 Corporate Social Responsibility in Organizational Development</a>	3
Concentration: CHOICE	3
<a href="#">RES 741 Research Methods II</a>	4.5
<a href="#">RES 751 Doctoral Literature Review /Candidacy Review</a>	3

**Note:** Students who do not pass RES 721 or RES 751 will immediately retake the failed course with EDU 780 (with RES 721) or EDU 781 (with RES 751) Advanced Academic Study & Writing I/II.

### Year 3/Dissertation

(21 credits, 48 weeks, 7 courses)

Course	Credits
Concentration: CHOICE	3
Concentration: CHOICE	3
<a href="#">BUS 900 Dissertation Course I</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 901 Dissertation Course II/Preliminary Defense</a>	4.5
<a href="#">BUS 902 Dissertation Course III</a>	3
<a href="#">BUS 903 Dissertation Course IV/Final Defense</a>	4.5

**Note:** Candidates who do not initially pass their dissertation courses may only retake the course two (2) times. Legacy students are permitted three (3) attempts.

# Program Policies

The Doctor of Business Administration program follows the general College of Business policies. Some notable policies are linked here for your convenience:

- [DBA Institutional Learning Outcomes](#)
- [DBA Program Outcomes](#)
- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [ADA Accommodations](#)
- [Attendance](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Grades](#) and [Grading Scale](#)
- [Library Resources](#)
- [Rubrics](#)
- [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\) and Retake Policy](#)

## Dissertation Courses Grading Protocol

Students receive a grade of [CR \(Credit\)](#) or [NC \(No Credit\)](#). The dissertation courses are pass or fail (P/F). If students fail, they will have two opportunities to retake the course. For the first course retake students are charged 50% of the total tuition fee; if they need to retake it a second time, they will be charged 100% of the tuition fee.

The initial and final oral defenses of the doctoral candidate will follow other [specific grading criteria](#) as described under "The Doctoral Oral Defense" section.

### Grade Definitions:

**CR (Credit)** = A grade of CR indicates that the doctoral candidate is progressing toward completing the doctoral research and has received a passing grade for a dissertation course. The dissertation chair assigns a CR grade when the doctoral candidate has completed all of the course requirements. Subsequently, the student is permitted to continue to the next dissertation course. Doctoral candidates will receive the appropriate number of credit hours allocated to a course when a grade of CR is earned.

**NC (No Credit)** = If a grade of "NC" is issued, then the doctoral candidate must repeat the course in its entirety. Doctoral candidates who fail to meet attendance requirements or the course objectives will receive a grade of "NC" for the course. In a dissertation course, a grade of "NC" will be assigned when 67% or less of the course objectives were successfully completed. In a repeated dissertation course, a grade of "NC" will be assigned when less than 100% of course objectives are achieved. Doctoral candidates must repeat the course in its entirety and successfully before proceeding to the next course. Doctoral candidates will receive zero (0) credit hours for a course that has received a grade of "NC". Dissertation courses can be repeated twice.

# Candidacy and the Dissertation

## Doctoral Candidates

Students in the doctor of business administration program are considered doctoral candidates upon successfully completing all required coursework, and being in good academic and financial standing with the university.

## Responsibilities of the Doctoral Candidate

The doctoral candidate's responsibility in the dissertation research process includes the following:

1. Proposing a viable dissertation topic that has collectible data to support conclusions
2. Managing the doctoral research process, including initiation and continuation of communications with the dissertation chair and the dissertation committee members
3. Completing weekly progress reports in GAP and bi-weekly meetings with the dissertation chair
4. Meeting and abiding by the deadlines in the written and approved work plan
5. Completing a successful preliminary defense
6. Conducting ethical research that adheres to the approved written methodology received by the Institutional Review Board (IRB)
7. Completing a successful final defense
8. Incorporating any feedback and recommendations from the dissertation chair and the dissertation committee members
9. Having a deliverable, scholarly written, edited, and properly formatted final draft of the dissertation research that meets the university's content and quality standards. (This is the completed dissertation that must be successfully defended.)
10. Keeping the dissertation chair and the dissertation committee members informed of developments as the research study is conceptualized, designed, conducted, and written. A doctoral candidate may consult with a statistician or other methodologist and a writing consultant, but in no case should any person other than the doctoral candidate conduct

the work associated with the dissertation research.

If an event occurs that prohibits the dissertation research progression and completion, the doctoral candidate must communicate with the dissertation chair to obtain advice, service, or assistance. If any significant modifications need to be made to the timeline, the doctoral candidate must seek approval from the dissertation chair and the dissertation director.

### **Communication with Chair and Committee**

Communications between the doctoral candidate, dissertation chair, and committee should be conducted via Zoom teleconference or in-person when possible. This is to ensure that no ambiguity exists in the communication. Email and other forms of communication may be used as needed for updates.

### **Attendance Requirements**

Students must communicate with the dissertation chair and the other dissertation committee members by posting weekly progress in GAP and holding a minimum of biweekly Zoom meetings. Every academic week, doctoral candidates are tracked to ensure that the university's attendance requirements have been met. Doctoral candidates who fail to post within the first seven days of a term or who miss two consecutive weeks of posting are at risk of being dropped from the program.

### **Time to Completion**

All DBA students must complete the DBA program, including all prerequisites, core coursework, a completed dissertation, and a successful dissertation defense, within 150% of the published course timeframe. For this three-year program, this equates to a maximum of 4.5 years.

# Doctoral Dissertation

In support and pursuit of candidacy for the DBA degree, doctoral students submit a dissertation with original research. This dissertation is indicative of high academic integrity and rigor, congruent with doctorate-level studies. Students achieve doctoral candidacy when they pass RES 751 and progress into their first dissertation course. Legacy students will be required to pass BUS 785B.

Throughout the program, students will produce multiple deliverables in the form of exploratory assignments. It is prudent to remember this throughout the DBA program, as there is potential for DBA assignments to support dissertation research if carefully planned and research topics are considered early on.

Below are the 15 deliverables and the courses associated with those deliverables.

## Dissertation Deliverables & Associated Courses

Artifact	Course
1. <a href="#">Prospectus</a>	RES 721 Doctoral Prospectus
2. Chapter 2 - <a href="#">Literature Review</a>	RES 751 Doctoral Literature Review/Candidacy Review
3. <a href="#">Select Dissertation Committee</a>	
4. <a href="#">CITI Training (for IRB)</a>	
5. <a href="#">Chapter 2 – Literature Review</a>	BUS 900 Dissertation Course I
6. Submit Prospectus	
7. <a href="#">Complete Proposal</a>	BUS 901 Dissertation Course II
8. <a href="#">Submit IRB application</a>	
9. Obtain IRB Approval	BUS 902 Dissertation Course III/Preliminary Defense
10. <a href="#">Preliminary Defense</a>	
11. <a href="#">Data Collection &amp; Analysis</a>	
12. <a href="#">Completing Findings</a>	BUS 903 Dissertation Course IV/Final Defense
13. <a href="#">Final Defense</a>	
14. <a href="#">Final Edits</a>	
15. <a href="#">Final Graduation Documents</a>	

## The Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation [prospectus](#) outlines the proposed investigation in an APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition formatted paper, no longer than fifteen pages, which describes the proposed dissertation research. The prospectus should provide enough information to help prospective dissertation committee members determine if their interests and backgrounds would be appropriate for serving on the dissertation committee.

The components of the [prospectus](#) include the following:

1. Problem Background
2. Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study
3. Theoretical and/Conceptual Framework and Research Questions
4. Nature of the Study
5. Significance of the Study

## **Dissertation Committee Selection**

A dissertation coach will be assigned to each doctoral candidate at the end of Year 1 of the program. The dissertation coach will guide the student through discussions aimed at preparing the student for the dissertation process. Students select their dissertation chair as they enter the final dissertation courses (BUS 900-903). The chair will act as the main advisor and work closely with the student to develop the dissertation. Additional committee members will act as readers for both the preliminary and final defense. Committee members' academic credentials and expertise should relate to the research focus of the dissertation.

## **Dissertation Chair and Committee Member Responsibilities**

The dissertation committee provides guidance and expertise on the doctoral candidate's content and serves as content and subject matter experts (SME). The dissertation committee members serve as the support structure in several areas, including content and methodology, and guiding the doctoral process.

The chair will be selected by the dissertation student on the basis of research interest expertise. Faculty biographies for those who have been approved to

serve as chairs are provided in the ["Dissertation Chairs for DBA"](#) section of Westcliff University's Writing Center website. The chair is responsible for guiding the candidate towards producing doctoral level original scholarship in the proposed topic area.

All members of the candidate's committee share responsibility in ensuring that the candidate produces high-quality scholarship. The committee chair plays a unique advising role, guiding the students through their topic selection beginning the second year of doctoral studies. All committee members are responsible for reading manuscripts within the agreed-upon time frame, suggesting substantive editorial changes, and providing rationale for their support and critiques.

### **Using Non-Active or External Faculty on the Dissertation Committee**

The dissertation chair and at least one of the dissertation committee members must be Westcliff University faculty members. The use of a committee member external to Westcliff University is permitted; however, it must first be approved via a petitioning process that goes through the dissertation director. Students should contact their dissertation chair to initiate this process.

### **Documenting Dissertation Progress: Weekly Progress Reports**

Each week, the doctoral candidate will submit a progress report to GAP based upon the work plan developed in each dissertation course. Throughout the dissertation and data collection process, the doctoral candidate should revise the dissertation draft's various sections. Doctoral candidates must meet weekly with their dissertation chair (and the dissertation committee members, if needed).

### **Dissertation Format and Requirements**

The format will vary depending on the type of [dissertation](#) that will be written. The organization of the [dissertation](#) typically is divided into the following sections:

1. Title, signature, dedication, acknowledgments, and table of contents pages
2. [Abstract](#)
3. [Introduction](#) (Chapter 1)

4. [Review of the Literature](#) (Chapter 2)
5. [Methodology](#) (Chapter 3)
6. [Data Analysis and Results](#) (Chapter 4)
7. [Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations](#) (Chapter 5)
8. [Reference List](#)
9. Appendices (e.g., survey instruments, interview guides, consent forms)

High-quality dissertations likely exceed 150 pages in length. Dissertation chairs ensure that only high-quality dissertations move forward to the final defense.

## **Writing Style and the APA Manual**

The dissertation research study's required writing style is the latest APA version found in the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association \(APA Manual\)](#).

## **The Abstract**

The abstract should be at least 150 words, not to exceed 250, reflect an accurate and complete dissertation summary, and represent the research study's facts.

An example of the abstract's content can include a problem statement related to the dissertation's nature and purpose, the methodology employed with the accompanying procedures, the results and conclusions, and the recommendations for future research in the same or related subject area.

## **The Introduction (Chapter 1)**

Chapter 1 introduces the main aspects of the project. It should include the topic of study (clearly delineated), the statement of the problem or purpose of the study, research question(s) or research hypotheses, definitions of terms, identification of the limitations and delimitations, and an explanation as to the significance or a justification of the study that depicts worthiness of doctoral research.

## **Literature Review and Methodology (Chapters 2 and 3)**

The information contained in each of these chapters varies based on the dissertation topic and the methodology used. The dissertation candidate discusses each of these sections' specific aspects with the dissertation chair and other dissertation committee members. [Chapter 2](#) addresses the current and historical treatment of the topic through scholarly literature, the implications of the proposed research for the body of literature, and any theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks used in the study. [Chapter 3](#) delineates the study's research design, population and sampling, any human participants, measurement/instrumentation (surveys), assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

## **Results and Discussion (Chapters 4 and 5)**

The student collaborates primarily with their dissertation chair on their data analysis in Chapter 4, which outlines and discusses the results of the study. Results are written in a comprehensive and comprehensible manner. Data collected is discussed, highlighting the most significant results. Chapter 5 is a continuation of the discussion of the results by providing interpretation of the data discussed as well as conclusions and recommendations resulting from the data. The student works in concert with the entire committee to produce their conclusions and recommendations.

## **Reference List**

Doctoral candidates are expected to provide a complete reference section of all sources cited within the dissertation. It is not uncommon for reference lists to be longer than 10 pages by the time the dissertation is completed.

## **Submission of Research Proposal to the Dissertation Committee**

During BUS 900 Dissertation Final Project Course I, the doctoral candidate submits chapters 1, 2, and 3 ([research proposal](#)) to the dissertation committee for approval. Upon approval, the doctoral candidate may complete the approved research for their study. The proposal must be submitted to *Turnitin*®.

## **The IRB Process and Conducting Research**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is an independent entity housed in the university for the purposes of ensuring ethical conduct in research with human

participants. All research conducted for the dissertation process, no matter how informal, must be reviewed and sanctioned by the IRB. Before beginning any research, all primary investigators (PIs) must complete CITI certification requirements set forth by the IRB. After completing these requirements, the doctoral candidate must complete the IRB application and file both the application and certificate of CITI training completion with their dissertation chair. The dissertation chair thoroughly reviews the completed application and accompanying documents before submitting them to the IRB. The doctoral candidate conducts and completes the research by strictly adhering to the methodology described in the research application, which is reflected in the chapter on methodology (chapter 3) of the dissertation.

The dissertation chair evaluates the scientific merit and the project's conformity to IRB requirements and standards for all research projects undertaken as part of a student's academic work. The dissertation chair provides feedback and suggestions to the student as the principal investigator regarding changes needed to improve the dissertation's research design. Such feedback is aimed at helping the principal investigator comply with the certification standards of the IRB. Once the dissertation chair has confirmed the application is thorough, clearly written, and complete, the application is sent to the IRB and the review process begins. The application is considered "approved" only after the student has complied with any modifications pertaining to the study required by the IRB.

To access and download the IRB application and to learn more about IRB processes and expectations, please visit Westcliff University's IRB website at <https://writingcenter.westcliff.edu/westcliff-irb/>.

### **The Doctoral Final Draft, TurnItIn, and PowerPoint Presentation**

Doctoral candidates must prepare and submit a complete dissertation draft to the dissertation committee for final review and comment. Dissertation candidates work with the dissertation chair to schedule the [final oral defense](#).

As a final step in the dissertation process, the doctoral candidate must submit the entire dissertation document to *Turnitin*® and send a confirmation report to

the dissertation committee.

## **The Oral Defense Process**

Following are the key steps involved in the oral defense process:

### **Preliminary Oral Defense**

The preliminary oral defense of the dissertation proposal is conducted in Dissertation Course II. This is an informal proceeding and includes chapters 1, 2, and 3. This defense is not open to the public. DBA students must complete the preliminary oral defense *before* submitting their IRB application.

### **Final Oral Defense**

The dissertation's final oral defense is performed after the program, all research, and submission of the dissertation draft. This is a formal proceeding and is the culmination of the doctoral candidate's doctoral degree program. The defense is open to the public.

At the oral defense, the doctoral candidate presents the dissertation research study in its entirety. The deliverables (in both hard-copy and digital form) that must be presented at the final defense are the written dissertation (chapters 1 through 5) and the dissertation's explanation via a PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint supports the oral defense.

During the defense, the doctoral candidate must present all major key points:

1. Background and purpose of the study
2. Literature review
3. Research methodology
4. Data collection process
5. Results and analysis
6. Discussions, conclusions, and recommendations

The doctoral candidate is expected to respond fully to questions on any aspect of the research conducted. Questions are asked by the dissertation chair, the dissertation committee members, other DBA students or candidates, and the public audience. Each attendee, apart from the dissertation chair and committee, may ask only one question if time permits.

If the doctoral program has been conducted entirely online, doctoral candidates may present their oral defense by either commuting to campus or conducting their oral defense online. In an online oral defense, the doctoral candidate uses the approved teleconferencing software. The teleconferencing software can be accessed through the student portal. Both video and audio are required for the online oral defense. The doctoral candidate presents their defense to the dissertation chair and the dissertation committee members present on-campus in a room designated and equipped with teleconferencing software and hardware.

After the oral defense, the doctoral candidate and any audience members are excused while the dissertation chair confers with the dissertation committee members to reach a consensus on the outcome of the defense. If there is disagreement and/or no consensus, the dissertation chair's decision supersedes that of any other dissertation committee member. Following this closed-door discussion, the doctoral candidate and any other audience members return for the announcement of the decision determined by the dissertation chair and dissertation committee.

### **Oral Defense Grading Criteria**

**Pass:** The dissertation committee (with the dissertation chair superseding) approves the dissertation in its entirety (omitting any minor editorial changes in formatting for publication purposes).

**Pass with Revisions:** The dissertation committee (with the dissertation chair superseding) approves the dissertation, contingent on specific revisions. Doctoral candidates must make the required revisions and then re-submit to the dissertation committee for final review and approval within two weeks.

**Fail:** The dissertation committee (with the dissertation chair superseding) concludes that fatal flaws in the dissertation exist. Failure to execute or develop one or more chapters is the basis for this decision. This means that the doctoral candidate has failed to defend the dissertation successfully, and the degree may not be conferred. As such, the doctoral candidate may not assume the title of *Doctor*, nor attempt to disseminate or publish the dissertation as written.

## Final Submission of Doctoral Research Checklist

After the successful final defense of the doctoral research, the candidate makes all required revisions and resubmits the document to the dissertation chair for approval. The final dissertation is then submitted to the Registrar and Librarian as part of the graduation process.

Candidates must work with their dissertation chair and dissertation director to meet any quality control or editing requirements identified. In some cases, instruments used in the study may be removed before final publication. In other cases, permissions to publish may need to be obtained. All concerns must be addressed before submitting the final doctoral research product to the university library.

Once all final documents have been completed with all necessary digital signatures and approvals, the candidate submits the following documents.

### Step 1:

\_\_\_\_\_ **To the IRB Chair:** The candidate emails the completed and signed [IRB Project Completion Report](#) and the [Doctoral Research Approval Form](#) to the IRB Chair at [IRB@westcliff.edu](mailto:IRB@westcliff.edu). **The email should say – “Attached is the IRB Project Completion Report and Dissertation Approval Form for [insert your name]. Please confirm receipt.”** An email confirming receipt of the document is returned to the candidate. Save a digital copy of this email for submission in Step 3.

### Step 2:

\_\_\_\_\_ **To the WU library:** ([WUDissertation@westcliff.edu](mailto:WUDissertation@westcliff.edu)): The candidate emails the following documents to the university library at the above email address.

- a) A copy of the final doctoral research product (with signatures) on the cover page
- b) A signed copy of the [Statement of Copyright Release](#)
- c) A three-to-four sentence abstract describing the study

**The email should say: “Attached are: the final dissertation with signatures, the copyright release, and a three-to-four sentence abstract for [insert your name]. Please confirm receipt.”** An email confirming receipt of the documents is

returned to the candidate. Save a digital copy of this email for submission in Step 3.

**Step 3:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **To the Registrar's Office at [registrar@westcliff.edu](mailto:registrar@westcliff.edu):** After the dissertation chair has confirmed the accuracy and completion of the documents listed below, the student must email the documents to the registrar office.

- a) [Statement of Copyright Release](#) (signed by student)
- b) [Doctoral Dissertation Research Approval Form](#) (sections A-E complete with digital signatures)
- c) Copy of final *TurnItIn* originality report
- d) Email receipt from the IRB chair verifying submission of the IRB Project Completion Report (refer to Step 1).
- e) Email receipt from the university library verifying submission of a doctoral research dissertation, copyright release, and a 3-to-4 sentence abstract (refer to Step 2).

The doctoral candidate will be contacted by the registrar when the degree has been conferred.