

A Guide to Professional Doctorates in Business and Management

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Interest in management research and education has grown significantly over past few decades. Businesses around the world have become more demanding from managers in terms of skill sets to focus more deeply and critically on the work that they do. To match up to the demands of the businesses, managers have started taking interest in pursuing professional doctorate programmes. This is more so for the reason of creation of actionable knowledge through the use of action modes of research. Managers with a professional doctorate degree are expected to showcase increased understanding and knowledge of today's complex world. Professional doctorates in business and management or what is commonly known as the Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) is still new both as a degree and as a set of practices. This newness of the degree and set of practices leaves a significant scope of experimentation in terms of formats, structures, outcomes and philosophical underpinnings. *A Guide to Professional Doctorates in Business and Management* is positioned as a guide to understand how a DBA programme should work and what its key objectives and outcomes should be. Editors and contributors to the book see DBA as an award for practicing managers who are interested in researching practice within their own context in order to develop new understandings and insights about the phenomenon under scrutiny.

A Guide to Professional Doctorates in Business and Management is organized in 12 chapters divided into four major sections. The opening chapter is aimed at setting the stage for developing an understanding of meaning of DBA and tries to address the rigour vs relevance debate in doctoral education. It also offers an overview of historical perspectives in practice-based research that can address issues in both academia and practice. Section A consisting of four chapters talks about action orientation of work carried out in organizational settings. Chapter 2 offers an important link between research philosophy and research design. This is crucial for practicing managers pursuing DBA as it will help them in writing research questions, linking them to an appropriate literature and informing methodological decisions. Chapter 3 of the book examines inductive, deductive and abductive approaches to theory building. This chapter also tries to clear the debate between Mode 1 and Mode 2 concepts of knowledge creation. Mode 1 refers to the knowledge produced by scientific theory alone and which is of fundamental rather than applied nature. In contrast, Mode 2 highlights the collaboration with and between practitioners. The engagement with and between practitioners should be enacted at four stages of problem formation, theory building, research design and problem solving. In Chapter 4 on "Action modes of research", Joe Raelin highlights that focus of professional doctorates is usually on conducting systematic enquiry into group and organizational phenomenon.



The author also makes a mention of action modes underscoring the value of planned engagement and collective reflection on experiences. Some of the alternative action modes described by the author in the chapter are action research, action learning, action science, appreciative enquiry, cooperative enquiry, cultural-historical activity theory, developmental action enquiry and participatory action research. In Chapter 5, the last of Section A, the authors follow up on the action modes of research mentioned in Chapter 4. Here, the authors provide some practical examples of putting action modes in practice. This chapter also is unique in terms of suggesting some resources to guide the practitioners in selecting the action modes by proving links to the online resources.

Section B of the guide is designed to enable the thinking of students in terms of their development. Three chapters in this section are also aimed to act as a handbook to help both students and supervisors. In Chapter 6, "Becoming a scholar practitioner", the authors are suggesting a scholar of DBA programme to wear lens of a researcher at workplace and ask questions which could be provocative in nature making co-workers to look at themselves and their work in a different way. Reflexive research is also something which scholars should continue to practice even after they have completed their doctoral dissertation. While it seems little difficult to imagine working and researching both in and with organizations, scholars of professional doctorate programmes are expected to execute this dual role, in Chapter 7, Author Paul Ellword suggests how two roles can be donned together. This chapter with the help of six stories from the field illustrates the experiences of recent DBA researchers clearly making a mention of their professional context, practical objective of their doctoral work and conceptual framing. Importance of ethics and scholarly practices cannot be undermined in any research work. Simon Robinson in Chapter 8 emphasizes upon three interrelated modes of responsibility, attributability, accountability and liability and also how they can act as a bridge between theory, values and practice.

Advice on how a practitioner dissertation (thesis) can be written and how to publish its outcome in academic and practitioner journals is limited. Section C of the book focus on the writing and publication part of a dissertation. In Chapter 9, "The dissertation: contributing to practical knowledge", the authors remind the readers of contributions that practitioner doctoral dissertations should be making keeping in mind four factors of context, quality of relationships, quality of action research and outcomes. Concluding the chapter, the authors suggest some of the practical tips for examining the practitioner dissertations. Questions are presented which can be asked by the examiners in viva voce. These questions will attempt to uncover the practical aspect and applicability of practitioner doctoral dissertations. Chapter 10 takes the readers to the post-DBA stage into the realm of publishing out of one's dissertation. While in case of traditional doctoral degree process publication could be an outcome of compulsion attached to the assessment, in case of professional doctorates motivation to publish could be informing the larger audience or engaging into conversation and dialogue with other practicing managers outside the organization. This chapter also presents a step-by-step guide to writing starting from drafting, feedback and redrafting.

For supervisors and programme directors in DBA programmes, it is difficult to find a direction on administration and supervision. Section D of the book emphasizes on this aspect. Chapter 11 compares DBA with PhD programmes, providing a brief historical account on PhD degree, the author discusses its common features with the professional doctorates. In the last chapter on supervising, John Taylor draws upon the experiences of students and supervisors on DBA programmes in three universities. Two key factors which influence the nature of supervision in DBA programmes are the strength of professional identity and regulation and institutional culture.

This guide is a remarkable work in the domain of DBA and professional doctorates. Developing a guide on subject like DBA with very little guidance from the past literature is a huge challenge which the editors and authors of chapters have dealt in a significant manner.

This book has identified and aptly presented some of the most pressing issues that the professional doctorates face at the early stage of their research work like framing a research problem, identifying theory, action modes of research and impact that their work can have on practice. It also makes institutional and supervisory recommendations. This guide is a recommended read for a multitude of audiences, including practicing managers who can take up DBA programmes, current DBA scholars, supervisors, programme directors and researchers in the field of DBA. The most significant feature is the organization of chapters and the coverage under each section which covers the entire range of topics that would be of interest to multitude of audiences as stated above. Experiences and stories of DBA scholars and programme administrators make this book a very handy guide to have if the reader is planning to pursue a DBA. The length of the handbook is 248 pages which is very reasonable considering the amount of literature, experiences, examples and explanations packed in it.

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Researching Organisations: The Practice of Organizational Fieldwork

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The author states that the book is about the “practical issues that may arise when carrying out research fieldwork in organizational settings and what can be done to try and address them”. Going through the book and carefully examining its contents, I found that the book indeed addresses practical issues related to doing organisational research and gives practical advice to novice researchers from gaining access to reporting on the research.

The first part of the book focusses on the basics of research such as the research process. A whole chapter is dedicated to ethics in organisational research. This is very useful. Although similar to ethics in any other type of research, what is beneficial about the ethics chapter is the discussion on the historical roots of ethics in research. The author presents a balanced debate on the importance of ethics and takes cognisance of the constraints that ethical regulations can place on the researcher. A section of the book is dedicated to issues of getting in: seeking and negotiating access. During my own organisational research, seeking and negotiating access was the most difficult part of the research project. It often determines whether the research will proceed as planned or whether a change of course will need to be initiated. The book offers invaluable advice to researchers on how to negotiate access. After getting access, the researcher then wants to know how to conduct the research in the organisation. Issues of relationship building, trust, organisational politics and ethics are discussed in the section on getting on in the organisation. The final section discusses issues of getting out of the organisation and reporting on the research. In the last section, the last chapter, “Emerging issues in research in organisations” considers how recent developments in data gathering techniques and the character of organisations are posing new challenges for organisational fieldwork. Four recent developments are focussed on: technology and