

# THE DBA IN AUSTRALIA AND THE ASIA PACIFIC: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

This paper explores the nature of the DBA in Australia, its development, and associated issues. It then examines Australian institutions that deliver the DBA in Asia, specifically Hong Kong, Singapore, China, and Kuala Lumpur from the perspective of deliverers, programs, costs, and projections of the sustainability/demand of the DBA in the region. A series of recommendations for deliverers of the DBA both domestically and off-shore is provided.

**Key words:** DBA in Australia, DBA in Asia Pacific, cross-cultural issues, delivery of DBA degree, professional doctorates, higher education, graduate supervision, doctoral degrees, business administration, management education

## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of our paper is to examine the nature of the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree in Australia and the Asia Pacific basin. Our paper is restricted to the Doctor of Business Administration as a relative newcomer in the field of professional doctorate education as other studies have examined other professional doctorate degrees in some detail (e.g., Chapman 1991; Lakomski 1991; Maxwell & Shanahan 1996).

Because the field of graduate education is in a constant state of flux, the data presented in this paper can only be indicative of DBA programs at the time of publication. Our paper is restricted to the field of graduate research degrees as distinct from graduate course-based degrees. As discussed in this paper, the research focus of professional doctorates like the DBA is 'concerned with researching the real business and managerial issues via the critical review and systematic application of appropriate theories and research to professional practice' (ABS 1997: 2).

Business administration is defined as the management and administration of enterprises across fields as diverse as corporate finance, accounting, economics and law, management, marketing, engineering and information technology and including industries in the private and public sectors, not-for-profit organisations, higher education, and hospital and school systems.

The first section of this paper in large measure reports on the study by Sarros, Willis and Fisher (2002), and the second section outlining the inroads made by Australian institutions delivering the DBA in Asia is new information.

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## THE DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION—AN OVERVIEW AND COMPARISON WITH THE PHD

The DBA degree was introduced into American graduate business education around 20 years ago (Northeastern University archives 2003), and into the UK from the early 1990s (Bareham, Bourner & Ruggeri-Stevens 2000; Bourner, Bowden & Laing 2001; Bourner, Ruggeri-Stevens & Bareham 2000). It has only recently appeared in the professional doctorate offerings in Australia (Maxwell & Shanahan 1996, 1997; Sarros, Willis & Fisher, 2002), largely the result of the suggestion by the Australian Higher Education Council (1990) that universities consider the development of professional doctoral degrees, and as an initiative of business faculties to differentiate themselves and offer an alternative higher research degree to the traditional Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Recent research by Neumann and Goldstein (2002: 34) identifies the DBA as a rapidly growing alternative graduate qualification to the traditional PhD and with a focus relevant to the needs of both practitioners and academics.

The major difference between the DBA and the PhD is the degree structure that allows (and indeed even leads the candidate to) more applied outcomes for the DBA. Many DBA programs offer a portfolio of course work, seminar presentations, and industry-relevant research reports that contribute in a meaningful and current fashion to the ever-increasing demand for credentialism (Maxwell 2001). However, it is important to note that there is a great diversity of designs for the DBA given its nascent stage of development compared with the well-preserved PhD. It is because of these and associated differences between traditional and professional doctorates that more knowledge of the relative strengths and weaknesses of professional doctorates is warranted. Additionally, more information about how professional doctorates ‘work’ in the context of traditional university hierarchies and traditions is now becoming overdue.

As a result, misconceptions and misunderstandings of what constitutes a professional doctorate compared with a PhD frustrate the ready acceptance of professional doctorates as an appropriate alternative to the PhD. For instance, McWilliam (2002: vii) asserts that:

We are witnessing...massive changes in modes of ‘scientific’ knowledge production...[which] are no longer sufficient to develop capacities and skills for use in professional and industrial settings...Little wonder then that the professional doctorate as a ‘hybrid’ development in higher education research is of so much interest.

However, because professional doctorates in large measure ‘break the mould’, they often are ‘discouraged by internal university concerns that rigour is bound to be a casualty of hybridity’ (McWilliam 2002: vii). These comments indicate that originality and scholarship in research are expected in the PhD, but are a serendipitous outcome of the DBA. In fact, there should be no distinction in the academic rigour associated with either the DBA or PhD.

The DBA is designed to make a significant contribution to the enhancement of professional practice in business administration (public and private sectors, education, hospital, professional, and general management) through the application and development of theoretical frameworks. In comparison, the PhD places more emphasis on the development of new knowledge and innovative theoretical perspectives. The DBA is therefore a ‘professional

practice' doctorate focused on researching real business and managerial issues through a critical review and systematic application of appropriate theories and research. O'Neill and McMullen (2002: 78) assert that the DBA 'aims to develop researching professionals' while the PhD 'is principally intended to develop academic researchers', a point first highlighted by Bourner et al. (2001: 71). Sekhon (1989) and Trigwell, Shannon and Maurizi (1997: 6, Ch 3) advocated that doctoral programs need to become more industry-oriented and include personal relationship training, practical problem solving, and a strengthened relationship between industry and higher education institutions. Professional doctorates like the DBA achieve most, if not all, of these imperatives, as has been shown to exist in other countries offering the DBA, such as the UK (Bourner, Ruggeri-Stevens and Bareham, 2000). As Bourner et al. (2000: 494) assert, '[the DBA] is a programme of research-based management development aimed at developing the capacity to make a significant original contribution to management practice'. In Australia, Palmer (2002: 136) claims that the DBA is focused on 'the application of received knowledge and theory to practical problems of managerial and business significance'. It is important to note that the above observations may represent the key differences between the DBA and PhD, and that there also exists significant similarities in the two degrees.

A recent report by McWilliam, Taylor, Thomson, Green, Maxwell, Wildy and Simons (2002) has reviewed the growing field of professional doctorate education in Australia. Key recommendations of this review accentuate the strengths of the professional doctorate compared with the PhD. In particular, recommendation seven (McWilliam et al. 2002: 104) asserts that 'industry, government and universities revise their assumptions about research training in higher degrees, in order to acknowledge and take advantage of the different contributions and outcomes of all doctoral programs and their participants'. Recommendation eight (McWilliam et al. 2002, 1104) also suggests that 'categories used for reporting and monitoring research training be adjusted to acknowledge the professional doctorates as "differently rigorous" doctorates in their own right'.

Professional or research-coursework doctorates are seen as being more flexible than research-only PhDs, and they attract a wider variety of candidates with varying interests and work backgrounds when compared to PhD candidates (Trigwell et al. 1997: 7, Ch 3). Maxwell and Shanahan (1997: 33) claimed that 'the professional doctorate has been conceived as an in-service or professional development award, concerned with production of knowledge in the professions'. The DBA in particular provides opportunities for students to network with their cohort that most often includes candidates from all walks of life. Additionally, graduate programs in business administration have shown exponential growth in the last decade, indicating the burgeoning interest of students and the market place in degrees that offer practical and relevant outcomes. For example, coursework Masters enrolments alone grew a massive 311 percent between 1990 and 2000 in Australia (Marginson 2002, p 23). Across the social sciences, management and administration was the field of study with the highest growth in graduate degree offerings for international students.

In 2003 there were 38 public and two private universities in Australia, with 20 (53%) of these universities offering a Doctor of Business Administration degree as part of their graduate course programs (an additional institution not in the university sector, Gibran Management Institute Australia, also offers the DBA). The first university to offer the DBA in Australia was Victoria University of Technology in 1993, followed by Murdoch University (1994), and a number of others in 1996 (Curtin, University of Western Australia, RMIT, Charles Sturt)

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and the remainder since 1996. Two of the universities offering the DBA are part of the prestige group of eight research universities (Monash, UWA), four are universities of technology (Curtin, RMIT, Swinburne, Victoria), and the remainder comprising large second-tier research universities (e.g., Macquarie, Deakin) to small regional institutions (e.g., SCU, Charles Sturt), in addition to the Gibran Management Institute.

As shown in Table 1, most DBAs are offered by the regional and second-tier universities (33% each), followed by universities of technology (19%). The top research universities comprise the smallest portion offering the DBA degree (10%).

## **STRUCTURE OF THE DBA IN AUSTRALIA**

### **Enrolment status (FT/PT) and Length of Course**

In Australia, 16 universities offer a full-time DBA degree ranging from one to four years in duration (mean=2.4 years, mode=3.0 years), and 18 offer a part-time degree of between three to eight years (mean=5.2 years, mode=6 years).

### **Course work/Thesis mix**

Without exception, every DBA program in Australia contains a major research component, ranging from 50% of the course requirements in five (25%) universities to 66% or greater in 14 (70%) universities. Federal government legislation stipulates that universities offering graduate research degrees that include a research component equal to or greater than 66% of the course requirements are eligible for full-funded research places for these degrees (DEST 2002a: 5).

### **Mode of Study**

The DBA is primarily delivered internally (63%, or n=10/16, with four institutions not providing details about delivery mode). The six universities that provide the option for on-line and distance mode completions of the degree are generally the second-tier and regional institutions.

**Table 1**  
**Australian Universities offering the DBA Degree Classified by Type**

Type	University	f	%
<b>Group of Eight</b>		2	10.0
	Monash University		
	University of Western Australia		
<b>University of Technology</b>		4	19.0
	Curtin University of Technology		
	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology		
	Swinburne University of Technology		
	Victoria University of Technology		
<b>Second-tier</b>		7	33.0
	Deakin University		
	Edith Cowan University		
	Flinders University		
	Macquarie University		
	Murdoch University		
	University of Canberra		
	University of South Australia (GSM)		
<b>Regionals</b>		7	33.0
	Charles Sturt University		
	Northern Territory University		
	Southern Cross University		
	University of Ballarat		
	University of Southern Queensland		
	University of the Sunshine Coast		
	University of Western Sydney/Hawkesbury		
<b>Other</b>		1	5.0
	Gibran Management Institute Australia (SA)		
<b>Totals</b>		21	100.0

### Assessment

The majority of universities appear to offer DBAs with a mixture of internal and external assessment modes, with many opting for external assessment of the research component of the degree—research on this issue by Sarros, Willis, Fisher & Storen (2003) is currently under review.

### ADMISSION CRITERIA

#### Formal Qualifications

The admission criteria for entry into the DBA vary from the requirements of an undergraduate degree in a business-related area (UWA) to an honours degree, Masters degree, or MBA

(Monash). In most cases, students who have not completed these qualifications in an English-speaking institution must provide evidence of an IELTS score of 6.5 or greater.

### **Years Work Experience Required**

Generally, admission criteria for most DBA programs require some work experience at a management level, usually for a minimum of two years, but up to 10 years in some cases. The average is 4.8 years of management or work experience (mode=5 years).

### **PROFILES OF ENROLMENTS**

It is difficult to obtain firm data regarding numbers of students enrolled in DBA degrees in Australia, due to various forms of data collection employed by the federal government's Department of Employment, Science and Training. The best we can do is identify that in 2001 there were 358 students (equivalent full time) enrolled in doctorate by coursework degrees, and 1,160 enrolled in doctorate by research degrees in management and commerce (DEST 2002b). Of the coursework students, 164 (46%) were international students. Of the doctorate by research students, 212 (18%) were international students. These data suggest that doctoral programs with coursework components in management and commerce are more attractive to offshore students than are the traditional research doctorates. However, because the DBA is a combination of research and coursework, it is difficult to assert that these findings indicate the DBA is more successful in catering to international students than is the PhD. Obviously we need to explore why students select the DBA ahead of the PhD, both from a domestic and international perspective.

### **SUMMARY—KEY FEATURES OF THE DBA IN AUSTRALIA**

A number of features identify the DBA degree:

- The DBA in Australia is a relative newcomer in graduate research-coursework offerings, with the first DBA degree commencing in 1993 at Victoria University (previously Victoria University of Technology).
- The majority of universities offer a full-time degree of around three years duration, and these degrees contain a major research component, ranging from 50% of the course requirements in five (25%) universities to 66% or greater in 14 (70%) universities.
- The DBA is primarily delivered internally (63% of cases).
- Most universities use external assessment of the research component of the degree.
- The number of units required for completion of the DBA ranges from five to 24, and the credit points associated with these units varies considerably across universities.
- The admission criteria generally require completion of an undergraduate degree in a business-related area, or an honours degree, Masters degree, or MBA. Most DBA programs require around four years of management or work experience.
- The average cost of a DBA is around AUD\$35,000-40,000.
- There were 1518 students enrolled in research and coursework doctorates in management and commerce in Australia in 2001, of which 376 (25%) were international students. DBA programs with coursework components in management and commerce appeared to attract more international students than the traditional research doctorates.

## THE DBA IN ASIA

The DBA degree is regarded as something of an unknown quantity by the Asian market. For example, it is not formally recognized in China, and all of the offerings into Asian countries are offered by non-Asian universities either using on-line distance learning or via a partnership with a local university or private education provider.

Thus there appear to be no distinctive features of the DBA for an Asian market. Instead, the DBA in Asia appears to be an extension of the home product delivered either in Australia, the United Kingdom, or the USA, and taught to the same standards and assessed to the same criteria that apply to the DBA programs in those countries.

This situation does lead to some confusion about what the DBA is intended to achieve in Asia. For instance, some deliverers see the DBA in Asia as an opportunity to make money from a new base of international students. In other cases it is seen as an extension to the MBA degree. Whatever the reason, the anecdotal evidence suggests the need for a PhD equivalent that is suited to the Asian market. Such a degree offering would be part time, business focused, and not requiring research experience for entry. Potential DBA candidates could be the large numbers of Polytechnic lecturers in Asia—particularly in Thailand and Indonesia—who wish to upgrade their qualifications to PhD level but who currently possess only a coursework masters degree. These academics are often precluded from entering PhD programs that require research experience. Further, the business communities of Malaysia and Singapore, although quite price sensitive, are extremely interested in a practical, but top level, research degree that can be completed while remaining fully employed. These imperatives indicate the need for increased due care and diligence in the delivery and maintenance of DBA programs offshore if they are to be recognized as the equivalent degree delivered in Australia in terms of quality and prestige.

### Costs of DBA Delivery in Asia

When beginning a new overseas program it is imperative to set goals for the program's accountability (governance, quality control) and viability (costs and overall profitability) including timelines, personnel resources, and institution goals (Hardie 2005). In the area of international education, viability measurement of programs by Australian institutions has been tested and found to be inadequate (Back & Rathore 2003).

Firstenberg (1991: 33) noted that institutions must incorporate a 'new way of thinking about how to set budgetary priorities' in order to run educational programs efficiently. Establishing clear priorities requires the knowledge of current and future demand on scarce resources. To achieve this outcome administrators must make an economic choice (Waud, Maxwell, Hocking, Bonnici & Ward 1996). That is, decisions must be made to ensure that scarce resources (funds) are allocated as efficiently as possible in the offshore delivery of educational programs (Joint Costing and Pricing Steering Group [JCPSG] 2000).

It is important to briefly outline the types of costs involved in delivering any good or service. A list of commonly used (and misused) costing terms ([www.investorwords.com](http://www.investorwords.com), 2004) follows.

- Total cost—in accounting terms, total cost refers to the sum of fixed costs, variable costs, and semi-variable costs.

- Fixed cost—a cost that does not vary depending on production or sales levels, such as rent, property tax, insurance, or interest expense that an institution must pay regardless of whether any students are recruited.
- Variable cost—a unit cost which depends on total volume, such as the cost of additional printed materials for an additional DBA candidate.
- Direct cost—a cost directly attributable to the manufacturing of a product (the opposite of indirect cost), such as marketing costs directed at recruiting DBA candidates.
- Indirect cost—the cost not directly attributable to the manufacturing of a product, (the opposite of direct cost), such as DBA program staff salaries.
- Marginal cost—the cost associated with one additional unit of production, also called incremental cost, such as the cost of adding one additional student to a DBA program.

Program administrators are advised to isolate the costs of each program, as well as the domestic and international elements of the program, to identify the direct cost (Back & Rathore 2003). If revenue exceeds a program's direct costs then the program will be profitable; if not, it is a loss-making venture.

The new standard employed by the United Kingdom regarding the method by which costs are being accounted for in education is known as Activity Based Costing (or ABC) (JCPSG 1999). This system has recently been introduced into the Australian university network.

The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (Back & Rathore 2003: 3) defines Activity Based Costing (ABC) in the following terms:

[Activity based costing is] an approach to the costing and monitoring of activities which involves tracing resource consumption and costing final outputs. Resources assigned to activities and activities to cost objects based on consumption estimates. The latter utilize cost drivers to attach activities cost to outputs.

While accounting jargon may be difficult for many administrators to understand, the United Kingdom's 'Joint Costing and Pricing Steering Group' has created a comprehensive source of modules for higher educational institution administrators which are available at [www.jcpsg.ac.uk](http://www.jcpsg.ac.uk).

### **Projected Demand and Sustainability of the DBA in Asia**

The DBA degree is often seen as 'the newest and least traditional doctoral [program]' currently on offer (Palmer 2002:135). Because of its comparative 'newness', a measure of student demand and program sustainability is difficult to quantify. For example, should demand for the DBA be compared to the demand for a PhD in business? Is the market for DBA candidates drawn primarily from high-end MBA, or from Master by Research students? Beyond the program itself, should positions requiring research skill (e.g., consulting, forecasting) be used to estimate the number of potential employers soliciting DBA graduates?

An equally valid consideration is the potential sustainability of the DBA. Should the number of MBA graduates be seen as the potential market for a DBA program? Should future demand (or projected shortfalls) of business academics be used to assess the demand for DBA degrees and therefore its long term longevity? These other questions are facing DBA administrators as they attempt to properly position their programs.

**The Supply Side—MBA Students as a Source of DBA Candidates**

MBA graduates face limited continuing education opportunities after graduation. Palmer (2002:135) notes that ‘...the MBA is often not seen as appropriate academic training for entry to a traditional PhD program’, which could lead MBA graduates to look for an option such as the DBA. In this way, the DBA is inclusive in that it provides an option for those who wish to complete doctoral work, but who are not eligible for PhD candidacy.

From a marketing perspective, the DBA can also be seen as exclusionary. For instance, potential candidates must have significant work experience—which may eliminate many career academics from admission into the program. Palmer (2002:136) notes that ‘like the MBA, the entry qualifications to DBA study relate as much to work experience as to traditional academic qualifications for a higher degree’, thereby creating a space for MBA graduates to gain doctoral qualifications.

It is important to contrast the Australian and Asian supplies for DBA students (similar considerations apply in the UK context).

***Domestic Supply***

The number of new MBA students in Australia is approximately 683 per year (Priest and Moran 2003:70), theoretically providing a ready supply of potential DBA candidates.

***Asian Supply***

The number of MBA programs in Asia is large and growing. When combined with various delivery techniques, the number of MBA graduates per year in Asia is increasing exponentially also. Combining this fact with the population of Asia, Palmer (2002:137) noted that ‘...Australian universities sought to attract students from the South East Asian markets of Singapore, Hong Kong [SAR] and Malaysia’. The population of these regions alone is 29.59 million people—approximately one-third greater than that of Australia itself (Asian Development Bank 2001:5), making Asia attractive to DBA providers.

**The Demand Side—DBA Graduates as a Cross-disciplinary Research Group*****Domestic Demand***

Palmer (2002:141) notes that:

The current challenge for universities is to demonstrate their ability to produce the research and research training that will bring the new, cross-disciplinary fields of management and business studies to greater academic and intellectual maturity.

This approach calls for an increase in the number of doctoral graduates, which may be achieved through DBA programs, many of which encourage candidates to conduct research in cross-disciplinary areas (Palmer 2002:131). This multidisciplinary approach assists the DBA in filling the research void in graduate study programs.

***Asian Demand***

Significant offshore market research must be undertaken to assess potential demand for the DBA degree. However, knowing that ‘credentials are widely recognized as the most valid indicator of a person’s skill level’ (McWilliam, Taylor, Thomson, Green, Maxwell, Wildy, & Simons 2002:44), and recognizing the allure of these credentials in Asian communities, then the prospects of a successful DBA in Asia appear positive.

### Proposed strategy for delivery of the DBA in Asia

The universities currently offering DBAs in Asia are shown in Table 2 (in no particular order):

**Table 2**  
**Universities offering the DBA Degree in Asia**

Institution	Institution Location	Delivery Location(s)
Curtin University	Australia	Hong Kong, Bangkok
Vancouver University	Canada	Singapore
Southern Cross University	Australia	Malaysia, Singapore
University of Canberra	Australia	Singapore
University of South Australia	Australia	Bangkok, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Shanghai, Taipei
Macquarie University	Australia	Hong Kong
University of Newcastle	U.K.	Hong Kong
Charles Sturt University	Australia	Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia
Monash University	Australia	Malaysia (proposed), China (proposed)

(Source: university websites)

Universities which provide the DBA online are Charles Sturt, Newcastle, Canberra and Southern Cross, and they all appear to provide local support for the foreign-delivery students. Those universities not offering online programs provide face-to-face teaching at local centres and remote support for thesis/dissertation supervision. Claims of ‘substantial face-to-face contact’ can be misleading however, and for quality reasons it is almost certain that the intellectual power and control for these DBAs comes from the non-Asian campus—although visits to the Asian partners can be quite frequent.

### Quality Considerations

There are various quality considerations for any educational program. The most important issues requiring consideration are academic integrity, service quality, cost effectiveness, student demand, staffing constraints, administration/budget constraints, recruitment/marketing strategy, first-to-market advantage, and brand positioning.

#### *Academic integrity*

Any institution offering a program must take full responsibility for academic integrity. If foreign personnel are involved in program delivery, then arrangements must be made for training and support. Doctoral level programs require additional monitoring to ensure compliance in terms of ethics and proper referencing.

#### *Service quality*

Students demand a high level of service from the parent organization, the local organization (if available), their research supervisor, and from their course instructors (regardless of location). These must be accounted for if the DBA program is offered in Asia.

#### *Cost effectiveness*

As outlined previously in the discussion on costs, offshore operations must not be a long-term financial burden on domestic operations. All direct costs must be calculated accurately to ensure the financial viability of the offshore project.

*Meeting student demand*

Adequate resources must be allocated to provide the level of service demanded by the number of students recruited (or expected).

*Staffing constraints*

Part of the planning/feasibility process should include resource requirements. Staff must be available and willing to participate in the delivery of an offshore project. This is particularly important for research supervisors who will work closely with students over multiple years.

*Administration/budget constraints*

Adequate funds must be secured to ensure the offshore project is not under funded. Poor funding could sacrifice service quality or academic integrity.

*Recruitment/marketing strategy*

A marketing plan must be developed for each target market. It is strongly advisable to conduct a feasibility study (including market research) prior to beginning the marketing of any program.

*First-to-market advantage*

Establishing the standard in a particular area can have advantages including brand positioning, pricing, and most effective delivery method.

*Brand positioning*

By marketing an institution's name along with a program, significant barriers to entry can be erected in order to protect market share.

**Modes of Delivery**

Modes of delivery include method, enrolment status, and personnel requirements.

The method of delivery may be: 100% onshore; split between onshore and offshore; 100% offshore; and through distance education.

Enrolment status includes: 100% part-time; 100% full-time; full-time changing to part-time; part-time changing to full-time.

Various personnel requirements or configurations for delivery are: local instructors; foreign instructors; and a combination of local and foreign instructors.

The DBA lends itself to remote support with local supervision. The course work components can be taught in 'block mode' by staff travelling from the accrediting institution, and a body of suitably qualified local supervisors can be sourced for the day-to-day student requirements. The flexibility of the DBA makes arrangements quite straightforward, but also adds a price component. Nevertheless, it is cheaper for foreign students to undertake the DBA offshore in block mode rather than travelling to and living in another country. This method also enables projects to be more relevant based in the student's home country and city.

The following example outlines the potential considerations involved in each of the three methods of delivery outlined above.

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**100% Onshore***Student Considerations*

1. Timeline—students require release from job/career in order to travel to Australia.
2. Family—cost of living, housing considerations, loss of income.

*Institution Considerations*

1. Short-term room and board facilitation.
2. Timeline of courses provided.

**Split between onshore and offshore***Student Considerations*

1. Cost.
2. Away from work/family.
3. Logistics—short-term accommodation facilitated or not.
4. Effectiveness of contact with home institution.
5. Effectiveness of contact with research supervisor.

*Institution Considerations*

1. Decision about time onshore vs. offshore.
2. Students will resist coming onshore for extended periods or too frequently due to costs and time away from work.
3. Distance supervisor issues.

**100% Offshore***Student Considerations*

1. Adequate foreign instruction.
2. Adequate research supervision.
3. Cost.
4. Adequate program management.

*Institution Considerations*

1. Local vs. home institution instructors.
2. Local vs. home institution research supervisors.
3. Management of student progress.
4. Maintenance and monitoring of quality and academic integrity.

**SUMMARY—KEY FEATURES OF THE DBA IN ASIA**

A number of features identify the DBA degree in Asia:

- The DBA in Asia is in the early stages of development and delivery.
- The academic imperatives driving demand for a DBA may be different to those for a PhD—a DBA would likely be delivered part-time, have a business focus, and not require extensive research experience prior to admission.
- Costs associated with delivery of the DBA in Asia must be clearly identified.
- Activity based costing may be a suitable cost accounting system for the purposes of offshore DBA delivery.
- Sustainability of the DBA in Asia is problematic at this stage.
- Demand is multifaceted, includes MBA as well as other graduate students, and could also target academics with credentials not eligible for admission into a PhD but relevant for DBA candidature.

- Demand for the DBA in Asia looks promising on the basis of current graduate students enrolled, as well as graduands from MBA and other programs who want to extend their formal qualifications.
- Quality issues that must be considered in offshore delivery are academic integrity, service quality, cost effectiveness, student demand, staffing constraints, administration/budget constraints, recruitment/marketing strategy, first-to-market advantage, and brand positioning.
- Modes of delivery include method (onshore vs. offshore), enrolment status, and personnel requirements (particularly the need for supervisors of DBA theses).

### **Implications for Australia**

Australian universities are well positioned to offer DBA programs to Asian students due to the established quality and academic integrity of Australian programs. Geographically, Australia is uniquely positioned to host students after only one day of travel in the same time zone. The added attractiveness of a moderate climate and First World amenities provide additional incentives for the Asian student in pursuit of a DBA.

### **Future Research**

Ongoing research at Monash University is attempting to evaluate MBA candidate knowledge of the DBA program, potential MBA graduate applicants to the DBA, and general attitudes toward the DBA degree. Additional research is needed in Asia and the United Kingdom to profile DBA candidates, evaluate different marketing techniques to communicate with these potential candidates, and to understand the pricing, program duration, and delivery method most desired by this large market of potential students.

While many institutions world-wide have already established DBA programs, knowledge of the characteristics of the 'typical' or 'ideal' DBA candidate is relatively limited. The marketing question 'Who is your customer?' rings true in this regard. Market research must be done to determine who is in the market for a DBA degree and after this has been established for each market, programs can be designed for these markets.

It is important to restate that institution and program integrity cannot be compromised. By increasing the rigor of the admission process and through variations in program length, the DBA can be adapted for different markets while keeping overall integrity prominent. Future research will test how to best do this with the goal of establishing a global standard for the DBA.

As most business schools place the DBA at the top (or near the top) in the program hierarchy, these programs are naturally seen as elite. The branding and marketing of elite products in the education market is, in itself a specialized business with advertising, pricing and customer service considerations, and this is another area in need of further research and discourse.

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