Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

	Basic Course Information
1.	Awarding Institution: Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus: Nottingham Business School
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study: Doctor of Business Administration, Part-time
4.	Normal Duration: 4 years
5.	UCAS Code:

6. **Overview and general educational aims of the programme**

The primary goal of the DBA programme is to enable you, the student, to earn a DBA degree that will help you to leverage your careers and/ or make a transition into the highest levels of academia. Through our programme, we offer senior managers, independent consultants and senior academics the chance to gain new, relevant insights that will inform and develop your own career profile and make a contribution towards the enhancement of business and/or professional practice.

You will conduct a major academic research project that is highly relevant to management practice and based on up-to-date, evidence-based knowledge. Your research will make academically recognised contributions to your chosen fields, thus providing private and public sector organisations with doctoral-level research outputs that make an impact in terms of policy and practice.

You have the option of submitting your work in the form of conventional documents (Route A) or in the style of academic papers (Route B). The course team will explain the options to you during Induction (Workshop 1) and support you in coming to an informed decision about which Route you wish to pursue based on your career aspirations and interests. The course team will work to ensure that the supervisory team are experienced and able to support your chosen Route (A or B). All students submit Document 1 in the same format. After successful completion of Document 1, you will be able to choose between Route A and B, opting to complete either Document 2 or Paper 2. On successful completion of Document/Paper 2, you will then be required to decide which Route (A or B) you wish to continue on, which you will be expected to follow for Documents/Papers 3 and 4.

Only in exceptional circumstances, with the agreement of the supervisory team and the programme leader(s), will a transfer between Routes A and B be allowed after Document/Paper 2. Exceptional circumstances might include a change in career direction or a lack of appropriate outlets for the research, but cannot be due to the ability to progress on that route. Therefore, decisions regarding transfers will be dependent upon your skills in academic writing and the extent to which your topic is deemed appropriate for writing up in that format. The issue of progression and whether or not such a transfer would cause a delay should also be taken into account. Decisions regarding transfer will be subject to ratification by the Progression Board.

The four-year DBA programme consists of two main phases:

1. Phase 1, 24 months: 'Training in Doctoral Research in Reviewing Literature, Philosophy and Methods'. During this part of the programme, you will attend a series of workshops relating to scoping the DBA project, reviewing literature and methodology. These constitute 81 hours of face-to-face workshops. In parallel, with your supervisory team, you will formulate the research questions driving your DBA thesis, developing and submitting 3 Documents/Papers. The first involves scoping the DBA project; the second explores the relevant literature (for the paper based DBA, this will be presented in the form of a conceptual paper), while the third details the methodology to be adopted in the research (for the paper based DBA, this will be presented in the form of a developmental conference paper). In all three assessments you will be expected to assess the impact of your research on academic, non-academic audiences and your critically evaluate your own personal development. Successful completion of all three documents and a satisfactory annual monitoring report from your supervisory team means that you are allowed to progress to the second phase.

2. Phase 2, 24 months. Writing, submitting and defending the DBA thesis. For this phase of the DBA, you must finalise your data collection and analysis, complete your writing, submit, and defend your work. For the document-based DBA (Route A), the final thesis will be a single document in the range of 50-60,000 words. For the paper-based DBA (Route B), the final thesis will take the form of two academic papers, with a wrap-around narrative that will comprise of an introductory chapter, a methodology chapter, conclusions and supporting data/evidence in appendices, where applicable.

7.	**Programme outcomes**

Knowledge and understanding
By the end of the programme you should be able to:

CLO1 - Develop, design and implement an original, ethical and creative piece of work that contributes to scholarly thinking as well as organizational policy and practice and is worthy of publication.

CLO3 - Make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and adopt an innovative approach to solving problems which will have an impact on the business and key stakeholders and, where relevant, wider society and the economy.

CLO5 - Identify, evaluate and criticise the academic and professional literature relevant to the selected research topic at a level commensurate with advanced academic enquiry

CLO6- Demonstrate a high level of conceptual thinking and academic writing commensurate with the award of a doctorate.

Skills, qualities and attributes
By the end of the programme you should be able to:

	CLO2 - Critically reflect upon practice as a professional doctoral researcher and consider how future career and development plans might apply research to practice. CLO4 - Exhibit a deep understanding of methodological and epistemological issues and acquire advanced research skills to undertake an independent doctoral level project CLO7 - Analyse and construct arguments that are insightfully and fluently written as commensurate with doctoral-level study.
8.	**Teaching and learning methods**

The taught workshops

Phase 1: 'Training in Doctoral Research in Reviewing Literature, Philosophy and Methods'

During Phase 1 of the DBA, you must attend a series of events given during the training workshops. The workshops represent 81 hours of face-to-face time. The workshops embrace the following themes:

1. Introductory Workshop
2. Literature Review/ Designing a Conceptual Framework
3. Research Methodology and Impact Planning

Phase 2: 'The Thesis'
During Phase 2, you are required to attend three workshops, as follows:

1. Advanced Literature Review/ Conceptual Framework
2. Advanced Research Methodology
3. Advanced Writing Skills and Impact Evaluation

Programme attendance

During both phases of the DBA programme, attendance at workshops is compulsory. You cannot submit Phase 1 assessments or defend your thesis unless you have participated in all the workshops. In case of exceptional circumstances, you may request to attend the same workshop with another cohort from the NBS DBA portfolio. You must send a formal letter stating the reason for the request to the programme leader, who will make a decision together with the programme team. If this substitution is not possible, you must attend the particular workshop the following year.

Research supervision

Supervisors are allocated in line with the University's Common Assessment Regulations.

You are expected to keep in regular contact with your supervisory team and initiate contact at a minimum of once per month through the duration of the programme.

Once you have commenced Phase 2 of the programme, annual monitoring

forms must be completed. You are required to submit your part of the form, which will be further completed by your supervisory team and considered by the DBA Progression Board.

Disagreements between the supervisor and the student may arise. If those disagreements cannot be resolved by the two parties, either the student or the supervisor may inform the programme leader who will serve as a mediator by meeting with both parties, determining a solution and making necessary decisions. If the issue cannot be resolved, the programme director may decide to assign a new supervisor, in which case the programme leader will notify both you and the supervisor of the change.

Students are encouraged to obtain additional feedback on their work by participating in events such as research conferences, discussions with workshop leaders and interactions with academics worldwide. For the students on the paper-based DBA (Route B), participation in research conferences is strongly encouraged for completion.

9. **Assessment methods**

The assessment criteria for Routes A and B are the same and are explicitly linked to the module learning outcomes, which are mapped directly onto the programme learning outcomes. The difference between the assessments on Routes A and B relates to style in which the assessments are written to be appropriate for the chosen audience. Successful completion of Phase 1 involves three elements of assessment: Phase 1: Training in Doctoral Research in Reviewing Literature, Philosophy and Methods:

Here, you are required to submit three deliverables:

1. The scoping document (5,000-7000 words) must include:
   A brief introduction and problem statement
   The organisational, managerial, professional & policy context
   The research question and its justification (from both managerial and academic perspectives)
   Discussion of relevant literature
   Proposed design
   Ethical & access issues
   Anticipated impact of the work on personal development and organisational/professional practice
   - For the Paper-based DBA (Route B): This document must include the above, but will also provide information relating to the potential research outlet(s) in terms of conferences or journals the student will be aiming for.

2. A literature review Document (Route A) or Paper (Route B) (6,000-8,000 words) must:
   Offer a critical analysis of evidence-based knowledge in a pertinent research field and a preliminary conceptual framework.
   Highlight existing research gaps, include a revised set of research questions and suggestions on how completing the document has impacted on personal development and organisational/professional practice
   - For the paper-based (Route B): This document must include the above, but will be structured as a conceptual paper, or structured literature review consistent with the requirements of

a journal that accepts such papers.

3. A methodology Document (Route A) or Paper (Route B) (8,000-10,000 words). This must include:

A brief introduction and problem statement
The definitive research question and its justification (taking into account management practice and academia)
A justified case for the selected methodology
An impact plan
Access and ethical issues
A detailed statement of timescales for gathering data, analysis and writing up (as required for Phase 2)
Details of data collection and initial analysis, including a reflection of the suitable to the initial data collection tools.
- For the paper-based DBA (Route B): This document must include the above, but also be structured as a development paper, presenting initial findings.

The above 3 documents will be assessed by students' supervisory teams and successful completion, together with the necessary annual monitoring documentation, will allow progression to Phase 2- the thesis.

Phase 2:

For the thesis (Phase 2), you will conduct the empirical work as set out in the preceding documents. You will further extend the literature review and theoretical framing for your work, analyse the data and draw appropriate and informed conclusions based on your analysis. You will need to clarify your contribution to scholarly literature and conduct an impact evaluation, that assesses the extent to which the impact plan set out in the third document of Phase 1 has been delivered. For the document-based DBA (Route A), the final thesis should be between 50-60,000 words. For the paper-based DBA (Route B), the final thesis should consist of at least two empirical papers, with an overarching introduction, methodology and conclusion chapters, with appropriate appendices for data/evidence.

For the paper-based thesis (Route B): This will include the above evidence-based research project, but will be structured in the form of two separate academic papers (or in exceptional circumstances, one larger paper), that address the main research project from two distinct perspectives. The final thesis will also include introductory, methodology and concluding chapters with research and managerial implications and an impact evaluation chapter for the whole project. The thesis will also include relevant appendices that include relevant data/evidence. N.B., submission to, or acceptance of, papers within a journal are not a prerequisite for submission of the thesis.

When the thesis is complete, it will be examined in line with the Common Assessment Regulations for Professional Doctorate degree (NTU Quality Handbook Section 16E).

Assessment results are submitted to the programme administrator and are ratified at the Progression Board. All assessed documentation are assessed against the module learning outcomes (which reflect the course

learning outcomes) and are reflected in the assessment matrices.

To clarify and simplify the assessment process in Phase 1 leading up to the thesis, Document 1 and Documents/Papers 2 and 3 are given either a Pass or Fail and Refer. A third marker will be appointed in cases where supervisors fail to agree a pass or fail on Document 1 and Paper/Document 2 and 3. Students are entitled to two attempts at each Document/Paper. One third and exceptional attempt at one Document/Paper only will be allowed if mitigating circumstances are presented (such as excessive work commitments, ill health etc.) and are subject to the support of the supervisory team and agreement of the course management team. All pass/fail decisions are provisional until ratified by the Progression Board.

| 10. | **Programme structure and curriculum** |

540 credits are awarded for doctoral completion. We offer APL for 120 credits. In sum, the credit envelope is as follows:

APL	120 credits (level 7)
Introductory phase:	120 credits (level 8)
Thesis Phase:	300 credits (level 8)

DBA students complete the programme over a four-year time-frame; the first 18 months are the introductory phase, while the following two and a half years represent the thesis itself. However, as part-time students, you have up to 8 years to complete your studies. DBA students, as they are working on a professional doctorate, are required to research issues relevant to their job or industry. It is expected that some of your academic work can be legitimately done as part of your employed work.

Curriculum Design

Phase 1: Training in Doctoral Research in in Reviewing Literature, Philosophy and Methods:

Document 1:
As is currently the case, Document 1 is a scoping document that sets out the student's research objectives, includes a short, preliminary review of the literature, a brief discussion of the planned methodology and methods and a plan outlining the potential impact of the research in terms of professional practice and academic knowledge. The document is worth 20 credit points and is 5,000 words in length and is supported by a three-day workshop containing 21 hours of class contact.

Document 2:
The overall purpose is to enable the student to critically review the theoretical underpinnings in the chosen field of research, to develop an understanding of the principles of doing a literature review, and to acquire the skills to conduct a critical literature review. Document 2 can be written as either a standard DBA document (2a) OR as a structured literature review paper to be submitted to peer-reviewed conferences or journals (2b). The choice needs to be made between the student and his/her supervision team. The choice of this learning and assessment

format is highly contingent on topic, the nature of the extant literature and the academic orientation of the individual student. Specific workshops and example materials will be presented to inform the decision. The credit point weighting and word limit on this document is 40 credit points and 6,000-8,000 words in length.

Document 3:
This includes the requirement of collecting and analysing pilot data, subject to the students obtaining the requisite ethical approval. To account for the additional work required, the credit point weighting is 60 cps and the word length is 8,000-10,000 words.

Document 3 can be written as either a standard DBA document (3a) OR a developmental paper to be submitted to peer-reviewed conferences or journals (3b). The choice needs to be made between the student and his/her supervision team.

Three compulsory workshops will address your learning needs for each area identified above. All three documents or papers need to be successfully completed before you can progress onto Phase 2 of the Programme.

Phase 2: The thesis (Document 4)
The thesis is worth 300 credit points and is 50-60,000 words in length.
The option to complete a standard thesis will remain (4a). Alternatively, students may choose to complete the thesis that incorporates two papers and an overarching narrative which summarises and links the two papers with an overall conclusion and details of further work (4b). The assessment format of thesis 4a and 4b would be as follows:
For Route 4a this will continue to be assessed by viva voce following submission of the thesis.
For Route 4b this will be assessed by viva voce following submission of the thesis containing –
1.   Abstract
2.   Introductory chapter – subject, context relevant, research focus
3.   Updated critical literature review
4.   Global methodology and a linking narrative to 5 below.
5.   Two single author paper formatted documents.
6.   Conclusions, recommendations and limitations
7.   Impact – academic/managerial/professional

To support this phase, students are required to attend three compulsory workshops exploring:
1.   The thesis phase and advanced literature review
2.   Advanced methodology
3.   Reflection, impact, academic writing, submission & the Viva.

11.	**Admission to the programme**
	This is governed by the Quality Handbook Section 11: Research Degrees and Section 13: Admissions
12.	**Support for learning**
	Supervisors are allocated in line with the University's Common

	Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16E of the Quality Handbook). Programme leaders provide further guidance and support especially around academic and pastoral issues. The Doctoral School takes responsibility for managing day-to-day contact including assessments submitted by students, the organisation of Course Committees and Progression Boards. As with all students, DBA students will have full access to NOW, to the library resources and to the Student Support Services team who can provide guidance on a wide range of issues.
13.	**Graduate destinations/employability**
	DBA students are normally in employment throughout the programme of their studies.
14.	**Programme standards and quality**
	All programme related matters, including student progression, are reviewed and discussed at Programme Committees (at least 3 per year) and Progression Boards (at least 2 per year and include external examiners). On an annual basis, the programme team are required to submit a Course Standards Quality Report, which is reviewed at University level. The programme is also subject to the Regulations for Professional Doctorates set by the University (see NTU Quality Handbook Section 16E).
15.	**Assessment regulations** This programme is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16E of the Quality Handbook).
	This is governed by the Quality Handbook Section 16E – Common Assessment Regulations for Professional Doctorates.
16.	**Additional Information** Collaborative partner(s): Course referenced to national QAA Benchmark Statements: **QAA Doctoral Characteristic Statement (September 2015)** Programme recognised by: Date this programme specification approved: **June 2018** Any additional information: