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Success criteria – Developing the Southern Cross University International Centre for Professional Doctorates

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Chapter 2
Success Criteria – Developing the Southern Cross University International Centre for Professional Doctorates

Peter Miller

Abstract

The establishment of the International Centre for Professional Doctorates (ICPD) was the culmination of Southern Cross University’s emergence as a major provider of professional doctorate education in Australia. Professional doctorates in this country have significantly increased in numbers and diversity since 1989 when the then Higher Education Council (NBEET 1989) gave its approval for professional doctorates to be offered. Chapter one of this book provided an overview of professional doctorates in Australia and the current state of play so it will not be repeated here. While the Doctor of Education (EdD) was among the first of the professional doctorates offered by universities in Australia, Southern Cross University (SCU) decided to first develop and launch a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program in 1996 under the guidance of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith. The SCU DBA was one of the first business-related professional doctorate programs offered in Australia and its emergence as the dominant DBA program in Australia set the foundations for the academic structure and quality of other professional doctorates to be developed and offered by SCU. This chapter outlines the development of the DBA program as the foundation for the adoption of the generic structure for professional doctorate programs at SCU and maps the subsequent development of other professional doctorate programs and ultimately, the establishment of the ICPD. It outlines the candidate and supervisor support systems implemented for the doctoral programs, establishing a sub-culture suitable for research along with the external recognition given to the program over the last five years.

Key words

Professional doctorate, research programs, research culture

I acknowledge the input of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith, AM, PhD in the development of this chapter.
Introduction

SCU was established on 1 January, 1994 following the dismantling of the University of New England (UNE) which had been established as a network university in 1989. The Lismore campus in that network was known as The University of New England Northern Rivers.

Originally, the tertiary institution in Lismore was the Lismore Teachers’ College founded in 1971 and this institution was expanded and renamed the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education in 1973. The Commonwealth Government of the day produced a White Paper on Higher Education in 1988 with an emphasis on developing larger institutions. The Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education agreed to an association with UNE and became a network member under legislation brought down in 1989.

During 1992, an Advisory Group was established to consider the possibility of the network (University of New England) being dismantled and the Advisory Group recommended that a new university be established in the North Coast region of New South Wales as an academically integrated institution incorporating the current UNE network centres at Northern Rives and Coffs Harbour, with the potential for establishing additional sites at other North Coast centres as required. In June 1993, the Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training and the NSW State Minister for Education and Youth Affairs announced that a new University would be established in Northern NSW incorporating campuses at Lismore and Coffs Harbour and appropriate legislation was passed by both houses of the NSW Parliament in October 1993, and received Royal Ascent on November 1993 leading to the establishment of SCU from 1 January, 1994.

Business studies were introduced at the College of Advanced Education in 1973 and over the iterations of the college to a College of Advanced Education and finally to a stand alone university, the Business Faculty developed to the point of offer postgraduate programs including higher research degrees.

Now, SCU is a dynamic Australian university situated on the North Coast of New South Wales. Its campuses are located at the Tweed Gold Coast, Lismore and Coffs Harbour, with a new campus currently being developed at the southern end of the Gold Coast. SCU has around 16,000 students and offers a diverse range of educational courses and programs, with a choice of delivery modes. There are currently around 200 professional doctorate students enrolled and around 450 PhD students. The professional doctorate programs have successfully graduated over 230 DBA and EdD candidates.

Graduate College of Management

The Graduate College of Management (GCM) at SCU offers a range of postgraduate business courses and programs, including an MBA, DBA and a number of specialist masters degrees. The courses are delivered by highly qualified staff who possess both academic and industry relevant qualifications, skills and experience.

The courses offered combine professional relevance and academic quality with convenience, flexibility, and timeliness. The package of quality study materials and excellent student support, and competitive fees represents real value to those contemplating a major investment in their future. The lecturers and student support team are dedicated to helping students.
providing personal attention and a level of service that is often not provided at other universities.

The large distance education program in Australia, and the personalised on-campus program, attracts students from around the world. The demand for our courses and programs has resulted in them being offered in a number of locations in the Asia-Pacific region, enriching curriculum development and adding to the study experience.

Graduates are successful professionals who report a high level of satisfaction with their study experience. Courses are rated five stars for getting a job and are rated highly for graduate satisfaction (Good Universities Guide Postgraduate Guide, 2009) and the DBA is consistently rated in the top three Australian universities for overall satisfaction in research experience (Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire, 2006).

The DBA as the predecessor to other professional doctorate programs

The Business faculty decided to first develop and launch a DBA program in 1996 under the guidance of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Meredith. The DBA was one of the first business-related professional doctorate programs offered in Australia and its emergence as the dominant DBA program in Australia set the foundation for the academic structure and quality of other professional doctorates to be developed and offered by SCU.

The need for a professional doctorate such as the DBA was emphasised in a discussion paper prepared for Australia’s Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Research) which identified the extent and range of professional doctorate programs available in Australia at universities during the early 1990s. Twenty-two Australian universities at the time were awarding professional doctorates and of the remaining fifteen universities responding to a survey, nine indicated that they were in the process of formulating policies to introduce these awards. Support for professional doctorates including a DBA was stated in the following terms:

1. To provide extended and advanced training in a professional field with projects and investigations applied in nature and oriented to practice in the professions and where the setting might be industry-based rather than campus-based.
2. DBAs serve different consumer markets to PhDs, keeping in mind that at the time, Australia had several thousand executive managers with a completed coursework Masters degree (including MBA) which would not qualify for admission to candidature in PhD programs.
3. There was an immediate demand for a DBA in the field of management consulting and for senior executives within public and private sector entities who had an internal consultant role in their organisations.
4. Many senior personnel who had completed a Masters degree which had complemented their first degree with a broad program of course units and often a minor project and these executives now wished to focus specifically on areas of importance for Australia and Asia with the opportunity of converting knowledge gained through advanced course units with the production of publishable research papers and a thesis.
5. The DBA would provide qualified candidates with a credible terminal qualification – the DBA would have relevance for senior executives in private and public sectors and also would have relevance in educational institutions.
6. Through the proposed specialist program in key cities in South East Asia, SCU had the opportunity of meeting the demand for a terminal award at Doctoral level with hundreds
of senior public and private sector graduates who would see the DBA as an attractive terminal qualification.

7. In general terms, the DBA would meet a need in the field of business and related professional areas by providing post-graduate opportunities for candidates with appropriate background experience, providing extended and advanced training in professional fields associated with the faculty of business and computing, and furthering relationships between SCU and the business and professional communities to their mutual advantage.

DBA programs offered by Australian universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and advanced standing arrangements. The SCU DBA is classified by the Australian government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) as a doctoral research degree as the thesis component is a minimum of 66 percent of the program (that is 16 of 24 units of study). Most other Australian DBA programs are not considered to be research degrees as the coursework component of these degrees is much higher and in some cases candidates may submit portfolios of two research papers and are not required to undertake a major research project in the form of a thesis.

Comparisons between DBA programs are therefore difficult. However, the SCU DBA has been benchmarked against other Australian DBAs by the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM). Results show that the SCU DBA is the largest DBA program by enrolments and has the largest number of graduates when compared to other DBA programs (ANZAM 2005). Notwithstanding the difficulties in comparison, the following table illustrates the universities in Australia that currently offer a DBA.

**Table 1: Universities in Australia that offer DBA programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canberra University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Queensland University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Darwin University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtin University of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deakin University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibaran Business School South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monash University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdoch University</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Newcastle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cross University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swinburne University of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Southern Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Wollongong</td>
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Following the establishment of the SCU DBA in 1996, strong arguments were developed for a separate Graduate College of Management (GCM) and advantages were seen for the GCM to be established on the Tweed Coast with land made available adjacent to the Tweed City.
Council facilities at Tweed Heads. The then Director of the GCM and senior staff were located at the Tweed Campus although some administrative facilities, in particular organisation of distance learning programs, remained at the Lismore campus. The significant growth of the MBA since its establishment in 1990 and further growth in the number of Doctoral candidates with a launch of the DBA in 1996, provided sound justification for establishing a separate entity to cover the administration and delivery of all graduate programs in management and business including doctoral programs. When the GCM was formally established, it assumed administrative responsibility for the academic quality and delivery of the DBA program. The program has been reviewed many times since its establishment in 1996. It was originally established as a credit-based award and in 2006 had the structure shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Structure of the DBA program in 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 x MBA units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 x Research methods units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Qualitative Research Methods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Quantitative Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral supervisors are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appointed at the near</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completion of the units above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 x Preliminary units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Preliminary Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Research Proposal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 x Thesis units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total 24 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated previously, the SCU DBA is classified by DEEWR to be a doctoral research degree. Therefore candidates undertake and produce a major thesis, usually of between 60,000 and 85,000 words. Like all doctoral research programs, a large and rigorous research project is undertaken by the candidate under the supervision of an experienced academic who is appointed to supervise the project.

In 2006, an internal course review of the DBA was executed to consider re-accreditation of the degree for a further five years. The review provided an opportunity to consider the governance and structure of the other professional doctorate program then in existence, the Doctor of Education (EdD).

To take advantage of the opportunity provided by the DBA formal review, a number of committees and working groups were established to consider SCU’s professional doctorates and to decide the direction they might go forward into the future.

**The need for cultural change**

The need for change leaders to understand the culture and climate of the organisation and the difficulties involved in change program implementation is well known (Dubrin, Dalglish & Miller 2006). Organisational culture has been defined as a system of widely shared and strongly held values and beliefs (Robbins et al. 2008). All change management programs are undertaken in a particular context and organisation culture. The change leader needs to be aware of the shared beliefs and values of existing staff. By 2004, the organisational culture of the GCM was predominantly anti-research and publication and dominated by full time academic staff that did not have doctorates, were not research active and did not engage in scholarship. There was a perception that ‘research took resources from teaching’ and this perception permeated the shared beliefs of the majority of the then staff. The then Director of
the GCM reinforced this culture by making yearly academic appointments to the GCM of junior academic staff who did not have doctorates and/or who were not research trained or research active. Such actions also diluted the pool of senior research staff available to supervise doctorates in the GCM and lowered the average publication output per academic staff member: a critical measurement factor for performance of the GCM and for benchmarking in SCU and with other institutions outside the university.

It was evident that a change in the overall culture of the GCM was not possible without the support of the then Director of the GCM who, in the author’s opinion, did not appear to appreciate the need for a change and seemed unwilling to make it. Therefore, it was necessary to create a sub-culture in the GCM around the DBA program: a culture where research and scholarship were highly valued and pursued. This involved setting new academic standards and values in the DBA for research and scholarship that needed to be role modelled by the doctorally qualified staff involved in the program.

Inevitably, the two sub-cultures caused conflict and tension in the GCM and this tension continued throughout the change program due to the different academic standards in the two groups. The implications of poor academic standards at SCU was noted by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA 2008, p. 4) in its 2008 Audit Report when it listed ‘a comparatively low proportion of academic staff with doctoral qualifications’ as a factor that may affect academic standards at the university. In addition, Professor Brian Stoddart (2008, p. 23), former Vice Chancellor of La Trobe University, in his review of the GCM DBA program noted:

Any entity entitled the Graduate College of Management might be expected to have a strong research culture with good research output. ……. In future, the strength of the research reputation is likely to influence research student choice, so further research strengthening will be beneficial for GCM. In the period 2001-2007 inclusive, staff in the Graduate College of Management that hosts the DBA averaged 12.4% of Business and Law weighted publications, with a median production of 12.5%. Directly or indirectly, then, the DBA contributes to the research publication output component of RTS/IGS within SCU……Closer data examination suggests that a very small staff group provides most GCM production. With adjunct and emeritus staff largely out of consideration in calculations of official outputs, that puts considerable pressure on the relatively low number of GCM fulltime and equivalent staff.

The cultural change program was successful in lifting academic standards in the DBA program while, as reflected in the AUQA and Stoddard reports, academic standards in the GCM outside the DBA program remained unchanged. However, the doctoral sub-culture provided the necessary basis for establishing the ICPD.

**The International Centre for Professional Doctorates**

The genesis of the ICPD originated in discussions during 2005 between the then Director of the Doctor of Education program, Associate Professor John Hammond and the Director of the DBA program, Associate Professor Peter Miller. Both Directors thought it desirable that the two professional doctorates be administered by one organisational unit. However, the then Deans of Education and Business could not agree on the financial model to be adopted and the matter was put on hold.
In April 2006, the Executive of SCU approved in principal a proposal from the then Executive Dean of Business, Professor Neal Ryan to establish a new centre attached to the Graduate College of Management. This was to be known as the International Centre for Professional Doctorates and would be achieved by renaming the existing DBA administration team. The Vice Chancellor provided $20,372 in Strategic Initiatives funding to Associate Professors Peter Miller and Allan Ellis to research the expansion of the SCU professional doctorates program.

In May 2006 Associate Professor Miller established an Administrative Review Group to investigate whether changing the current DBA structure to another structural option was feasible and practical and to consider an option of changing the structure of the program from its credit-based structure to a mixed time-based structure similar to the PhD program. The Administrative Review Group (ARG) was chaired by Ms Sue White. The ARG recommended a time-based structure for the thesis component of the program and this was adopted. Subsequently, the Academic Board in June 2006 established a working party chaired by Associate Professor Allan Ellis to investigate the expansion of professional doctorate programs at SCU. The working party delivered its report in April 2007 making the following recommendations to Academic Board:

1. That the current DBA and EdD program rules (as revised post the recent review of the DBA program) form the basis of a generic set of rules for all professional doctorate programs. It was agreed that a course change submission rather than a new course proposal was the best and most expeditious way to proceed.
2. That the DBA and the EdD programs change their schedule of units to a new three stage structure recommended by the Doctor of Business Administration Review Panel and share core generic coursework units.
3. That the two existing DBA research units (Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods) be adopted as the generic research units for all professional doctorate programs.
4. That a new exit point be established in the generic rules to enable students to exit the program with an award titled Graduate Certificate in Research Methods after successful completion of the Qualitative Research Methods unit (single unit), the Quantitative Research Methods unit (single unit) and Professional Doctorate Research Proposal (double weighted unit).
5. That the current GCM DBA staff form the basis for the proposed ICPD to be located at the Tweed Gold Coast campus.
6. That the proposed ICPD be responsible for co-ordinating the development of professional doctorate programs across SCU to meet the strategies outlined in SCU’s Strategic Plan 2005-2010.
7. That the proposed ICPD work with academic organisational units to research areas for new professional doctorates and allow for co-ordinated marketing both nationally and internationally.
8. That a new sub-committee of Academic Board be established to be called the Professional Doctorates Committee (PDC) with responsibility to be the principal advisory and working committee of the Academic Board on issues relating to professional doctorates across SCU and the ICPD.
9. That the course change submission for the DBA and EdD currently being considered by the School of Education Board of Studies and the GCM Board of Studies be endorsed by Academic Board.
10. That a new category to be termed Adjunct Professional Doctorate Supervisor be established under the policy for Adjunct, Visiting and Conjoint Appointments to recognise the contribution of academics engaged as contracted professional doctorate supervisors. Adjunct Professional Doctorate Supervisors would normally be senior persons in their field and possess academic qualifications and expertise comparable with those expected of a University employee at this level.

The ICPD was to be responsible for professional doctorates across SCU, and to be oversighted by a sub-committee of Academic Board, the PDC, equivalent to the Higher Degrees Committee (HDC) of the Research and Research Training Committee which is itself a sub-committee of the Academic Board. The HDC has responsibility for research masters and PhD programs across SCU. The PDC was to include members of the HDC and oversight the development and quality control of professional doctorates for SCU and report on a regular basis to Academic Board.

The Chair of the DBA Review Committee, Professor Martin Hayden was also the Chair of Programs Committee of Academic Board, with three external members. The outcome of the review was a recommendation to Academic Board that the DBA be reaccredited for a further five years and this was accepted by SCU Council in 2007. The review report included a number of recommendations:

1. That the DBA be more strongly promoted as a research higher degree qualification and that the focus of this promotion be upon its suitability as a qualification for tertiary level teaching and for problem-solving across a wide range of fields in business and management.
2. That a proposal for there to be three examiners for a DBA thesis be rejected.
3. That an intention to develop a Centre for Professional Doctorates be supported.
4. That an intention to apply a set of generic rules to all professional doctorates be supported.
5. That a policy of limiting to a maximum of ten the number of doctoral candidates per supervisor be supported.
6. That an intention to embed the two units: Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods, in all Masters degree programs that articulate with the DBA be supported.
7. That the DBA and fee paying PhD’s be the principal focus of the Graduate College of Management’s Higher Degree by Research activity.
8. That an intention to develop a Graduate Attribute to apply to the DBA program be supported.
9. That an intention for the GCM to embrace its alumni more pro-actively be supported.
10. That an intention to make the action research approach a significant vehicle for DBA theses be supported.
11. That an intention for the GCM to seek more research and development grants from large companies be supported.
12. That an intention for the GCM to explore industry partnership possibilities that would support DBA and MBA research be supported.
13. That the GCM investigate further the progression and attrition data and address this issue based on the findings.

The DBA Review Committee report concluded with a strong statement of support:
The SCU DBA Program is one of the largest and most successful programs of its type in Australia. It has a current enrolment of 180 students all full fee paying. It enjoys strong market demand from across Australia and the Asia/Pacific region. The program is making a significant contribution to SCU’s strategic priorities. It is held in high esteem among business management educators across Australia. It is distinctive for its focus on the development of research skills, it’s high levels of candidate satisfaction, the quality of supervision, its vastly superior completion rates and its high overall quality standards.

In making its recommendations for reaccreditation for a further five years, the report commended the GCM for the following achievements:

1. The extraordinary market success, as evidenced by the strong demand for the program, its remarkable retention and completion rates and the high peer esteem in which it is held.
2. Its impressive commitment to continuous quality improvement as evidenced by numerous initiatives to provide better forms of support for candidates and supervisors, the decision to raise the International English Language Test Score (IELTS) required for admission to the DBA to 7 and the activities of the Course Advisory Committee in implementing internal course review procedures.
3. Its willingness to support a proposed Professional Doctorate Centre, which is likely to have benefits for other schools across SCU.
4. The uncompromising approach to the maintenance of high quality standards in the approach to the assessment of candidate performance in the DBA program.

Accordingly, the finalisation of the formal DBA review presented the opportunity to change the rules of the DBA program to introduce the time-based structure and apply it to the approved EdD program, so that the revised structure became the generic structure for all present and future professional doctorates. The revised structure adopted for all professional doctorates is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Generic Structure for all SCU professional doctorate programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 x Postgraduate units relevant to the proposed research project</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 x Research methods units (Qualitative Research Methods and Quantitative Research Methods).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral supervisors are appointed at the near completion of the units above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x Professional Doctorate Research Proposal (2 unit equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 x Thesis units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 24 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A new Doctor of Indigenous Philosophies (DIP) was introduced using the generic structure in 2007. A number of other new professional doctorate programs are proposed. The ICPD assumed administration of the DBA, EdD and DIP programs from 1 January, 2008 with Associate Professor Peter Miller appointed as the foundation Director of the ICPD. The University Council formally approved the establishment of the ICPD in its minutes of 15th February, 2008.

The rationale for the current GCM DBA staff to form the basis for the ICPD and to be located at the Tweed Gold Coast campus included the excellent world-class administrative support
systems the team had developed. It also made available to all professional doctorate candidates and their supervisors significant learning infrastructure to support the amalgamated programs.

**Candidate and supervisor support systems**

Up until 2004, most of the DBA candidates worked on their own, with a supervisor with whom they shared and created new knowledge as they pursued the research project. The rapid increase in enrolments over the early years of the program and the concentration on admission and student growth meant that the administrative systems and infrastructure to support the program were a secondary consideration to the priority of the program’s establishment and growth. As a result, the future success of the program and the ability of the program to sustain additional candidates were potentially restricted.

Accordingly, in early 2005, the then Director of the DBA program, Associate Professor Peter Miller developed and established a number of knowledge sharing technologies, techniques and practices, including an online Doctoral Candidates Centre, online Doctoral Supervisors Centre, doctoral symposia, and later in 2007, an online professional development program for supervisors. The cost of underwriting this project was provided by Professor Peter Baverstock from SCU’s Graduate Research College. The infrastructure encouraged collaborative knowledge creation and sharing of doctoral research and supervision by the use of electronic networks permitting asynchronous distance learning in a real-time collaborative environment. Included in the initiatives was the Doctor of Business Information System (DoBi) which included a full client relationship management module and management of enquiries system. Self-service was also introduced, as all paper-based forms were web mounted and a new six monthly web-based reporting system for both candidates and supervisors was developed and implemented.

**Doctoral candidates centre** – the doctoral candidates centre was established where the candidates could locate relevant information and academic resources, network with other candidates, complete their progress reports and also get a better understanding of the processes, procedures and practices of the doctoral programs.

**Doctoral supervisors centre** – the doctoral supervisors centre was established as an online knowledge repository for doctoral supervisors to share their knowledge and experiences of supervision and locate required information and resources. The centre also aimed to facilitate supervisors’ understanding of the processes, procedures and practices of doctoral programs which have an impact on both supervisors and candidates. All of the content areas in the supervisors centre are identical to those in the candidates centre, in order to provide supervisors with an appreciation of the resources available to candidates.

**Research symposia** - half-yearly doctoral symposia were held for both DBA and PhD students at the Tweed Gold Coast campus of SCU. Up to 85 candidates attend the symposia together with their supervisors and academic staff from the GCM. Similar but smaller symposia are also delivered at each overseas partner location. The main purpose is knowledge sharing between candidates and their supervisors, as well as with peers and other academics. The symposia were extended to include EdD and DIP candidates from 2007. Candidates are encouraged to present their research at each symposium and other candidates and supervisors critique the research in progress presentations giving the candidates the opportunity to learn from questions asked by peers and academics.
External recognition

DBA programs offered by Australian universities are diverse in terms of both curriculum and advanced standing arrangements. As mentioned previously, the SCU DBA is a doctoral research degree and not a course work program. Most other Australian DBA programs are not considered to be research degrees as the coursework component of these degrees are much higher and in some cases candidates may submit portfolios of two research papers and are not required to undertake a major research project in the form of a thesis. As noted above, results show that the SCU DBA is the largest DBA program by enrolments and has the largest number of graduates when compared to other DBA programs (ANZAM 2005).

In 2005, the DBA leadership team consisting of Associate Professor Peter Miller, Director of DBA, Ms Sue White, DBA Administrator, Ms Chantelle Howse, DBA Administrative Officer and Ms Susan Riordan, DBA Administrative Officer was awarded the Vice Chancellor’s Award for Excellence and Achievement in the Improvement in Process category for the development and establishment of the web-based candidates’ and supervisors’ centres and the customer service management software developed specifically for the program.

In terms of candidates’ recognition of the program, each year graduates from Australian universities are asked to complete an independent government initiated Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire (PREQ). A report is released by Graduate Careers Australia and provides a national picture of selected aspects of graduates’ research experience to allow national comparisons of education quality among the 39 Australian universities.

The 2005 report showed that in respect of our post graduate research candidates (both DBA and PhD graduates), SCU achieved the following rankings:

- number 1 - Overall Satisfaction
- number 1 - Goals and Expectations
- number 1 - Intellectual Climate
- number 2 - Skill Development
- number 2 - Thesis Examination

The 2006 report also showed a number 3 rating for overall satisfaction.

Further external recognition came from the Melbourne Institute, which was formed in 1962 under the leadership of Professor Ronald Henderson. It was the first economics research institute in an Australian university. The Melbourne Institute aims to be a major institute of applied economic and social research that is nationally and internationally renowned in academia, government, business and community groups. In November 2006, the Institute released its report titled Rating Major Disciplines in Australian Universities: Perceptions and Reality. In that report, SCU was listed as having the highest number of doctoral completions (principally DBAs) in Business and Economics over the period. Monash was ranked second and the UNSW third (Williams & Van Dyke 2006).

In April 2008, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications reaccredited the DBA for five years after an exhaustive review process that involved senior professorial staff from a number of overseas universities. In October, 2008, the Malaysian Qualification Agency and the Ministry of Higher Education approved the SCU
DBA: the first for a foreign university DBA in Malaysia. Equally significant was that the accreditation was accorded a Category A approval which is usually reserved for PhD programs.

As noted earlier, in November 2008, Professor Brian Stoddart, presented his independent report ‘An investigation into the structure, range of activities, performance and supervisory arrangements concerning SCU’s DBA program’. The investigation coincided with the then Director, Associate Professor Peter Miller, stepping down from the position. The report concluded that:

Broadly, SCU may be satisfied that the DBA program is fundamentally sound. It consistently attracts good numbers of quality students from Australia and New Zealand as well as overseas, specifically in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. The program is conducted through a structured supervisory system that ensures students receive consistently high levels of supervision. The student support systems are excellent, with exemplary customer service readily available. Academic standards are high as attested by the time taken to complete, and by the evidence that a reasonable number of students are admitted to but do not complete the program. There is a strong process of continuous improvement imposed on the program (p. 2)

In addition, the Stoddart (2008) report made four commendations:

Commendation 1 - GCM is commended for the construction of a professional development program for doctoral supervisors.
Commendation 2 - GCM is commended for the consistently high customer service provided to students by both academic and administrative staff.
Commendation 3 - GCM is commended for having created such a stimulating learning environment for students.
Commendation 4 - GCM is commended for the high level of continuous improvement shown throughout the life of the DBA program.

The independent report was acknowledged by numerous academic committees at SCU as a tribute to the leadership and administration of the program over the previous five years.

Conclusion

The establishment of the ICPD was the culmination of SCU’s emergence as a major provider of professional doctorate education in Australia. The ICPD emerged and was built on the foundations of a successful and globally significant DBA program that set the benchmark for student and supervisor infrastructure and support systems.

This chapter has outlined the development of the DBA program as the foundation for the adoption of the generic structure for professional doctorate programs at SCU and mapped the subsequent development of the other professional doctorate programs and ultimately, the establishment of the ICPD.

The process utilised for establishing the ICDP can be a model for other universities wishing to develop a suite of professional doctorate programs. The model of first establishing one program and ensuring that it is well supported with appropriate educational infrastructure,
suitable research culture, excellent administrative support systems and a solid record of graduates, enabled the university to leverage off the foundation and successfully move into other professional doctorate areas.
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