

Doctor of Cultural Research (DCR)



Rationale and Objectives

This document outlines the specific course requirements of the Doctor of Cultural Research (DCR) at UWS. It should be read in conjunction with the UWS Professional Doctorate Rule and UWS policies relating to Higher Degrees by Research and specific College requirements and guidelines for candidates.

Full Award Title: Doctor of Cultural Research

Abbreviated Title: DCR

AIMS OF THE COURSE

The program targets future professional leaders in workplaces in a range of industrial settings where 'culture' is an important dimension of the typical issues and problems faced by that organization. 'Professional' here refers not to a specific industry but to a configuration of abilities and responsibilities at a common level, HEW8 and above in the public sector, and the equivalent in private sector.

'Cultural research' designates a new field of study that is broader than any one discipline, crossing expertise in humanities and social sciences that uses a range of methodologies (from anthropology, qualitative and quantitative sociology, textual disciplines including English Studies and Art History, Communication Studies, Philosophy and Linguistics), especially applied to themes and problems in complex contemporary societies.

'Culture' refers to ways of life, patterns, values and meanings of any group, large or small, in what they do or communicate, in speech or writing or any other media. Cultural Research investigates any or all of these dimensions in a wide variety of contexts, addressing a rich set of real-life problems. One hallmark of Cultural Research is its way of managing complexity – not reducing or denying it but seeking to understand it in its own terms, to find creative, inclusive solutions.

The Doctorate of Cultural Research will appeal to candidates who deal in their workplace practice with questions of:

- Cultural diversity and community relations
- Urban development, planning and place management
- Art, culture and heritage
- Cultural impacts of technology and globalisation
- Creativity and innovation
- Transnational connections and local cultures
- Cultures of organisational change

The settings from which prospective candidates might come include 'cultural industries' (those involved in producing cultural products). They also include

agencies, government at all levels and in the private sector, whose field of operations involves dealing with a range of different groups and a diversity of perspectives, whether 'multicultural' in a conventional sense or involving other differences which operate in comparable ways. Finally it includes situations within organizations involving differences between groups which affect what can be termed the 'culture' of the workplace: differences in power, gender, age and ethnicity.

The DCR aims to produce graduates who can:

- Identify the cultural dimension in a range of specific problems and issues to do with social relations, culture and communication.
- Draw on and integrate concepts and methods from a range of disciplines relevant to particular problems
- Understand the complexity and richness of the different perspectives intersecting in given situations or locations.
- Explicate these understandings across a range of audiences, academic and professional
- Focus these understandings in pieces of writing of a suitable standard to warrant publication in refereed journals recognized by DEST.
- Bridge the differences between academic culture and its values, and the culture and values of a given work location, by producing work that combines scholarly depth and proficiency with clear relevance to industry issues and problems.

RATIONALE

In the course of its successful efforts to foster research partnerships with locally based industries and community organizations, the CCR has identified a large set of problems, often not labelled 'cultural', which in practice had issues of complexity and diversity at their centre, where the expertise of the CCR came to be seen by industries in that area as highly relevant and valuable.

The DCR is not intended to replace the PhD, which remains the primary qualification for those seeking to work in academic institutions or research agencies. The PhD involves a single thesis based on a single, sustained research project which is primarily oriented to the academic community. The DCR in contrast is embedded in professional practice, consisting of a number of related pieces of research which are of value in the area of application as well as academically.

For organizations, it would provide staff development for more senior staff, whose needs go beyond short courses, but for whom a research PhD is not so relevant to the organization. An embedded professional degree, consisting of shorter, focused projects on issues relevant to the organization, with tangible outcomes over a manageable time frame is a more appropriate course of study.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The DCR program at UWS requires candidates to:

- carry out 4 individual projects, each of which should lead to a written report of up to 10,000 words
- produce 4 scholarly articles, of at least 7000 words in length, **drawn from the projects**, presented in the form of articles **suitable** for refereed publications
- compile a portfolio giving evidence of scholarship and research output that includes the six reports, the four articles or professional reports, plus an overarching statement that integrates the different elements of the portfolio
- undertake external examination of the portfolio.

As specified in the UWS professional doctorate rules 18-21, the minimum period of candidature shall be two years full time, the maximum four years full time, and the equivalent part time. The standard enrolment pattern and course structure is based on 3 years full-time or 6 years part time. *The two-year rule would normally only apply in exceptional circumstances.*

The course structure will be based on the pattern for the standard 3 year candidature. Candidates may vary from this progression, provided that they conform to the over-all time limits specified by rules.

The DCR program at UWS will provide an integrated set of experiences for candidates to enable them to demonstrate through research and scholarship a set of outcomes reflecting the qualities listed under “Aims of the Course”. Where it is appropriate the research aims will be embedded in the professional practice of the candidate. Research topics may be negotiated as appropriate between candidates and their supervision panel, with due cognizance of the value of the topic to employers and the relevant industry or sector. The topics will be ones where research and the concept of ‘culture’ are perceived as vital and able to contribute directly to the solution of a problem, the development of a product or program, the enhancement of a strategy, the planning of future policies and so on.

The framework for projects will include consultation and collaboration with a relevant employer or participating organisation, but in the first place this degree will cater for individuals applying through the normal processes of the University. Ethics approval will have to be applied for to the University Human Ethics Committee, in the same way as all other research candidates. Where there are intellectual property issues, these will be addressed at the outset of the program and resolved on a case by case basis.

The first project might involve foundation work in contemporary issues and theoretical literature of relevance to the candidate's work environment, with an emphasis on broad, critical perspectives. At this stage, the candidate engages in library research, writing reviews or analysis or conducting surveys of current practice. Later projects will be particular studies, mainly generated from the candidate's workplace, addressing specific problems or issues in that context. Data may be collected from primary or secondary sources. There may be overlap between the topics for different projects, given that they will all come from a common field of interest, but the resulting reports should bring out the differences in

emphasis and conclusions. As a totality these topics should be sufficiently complementary, so that the total research endeavour is a cumulative one, though in some circumstances where the evidence dictates, some later conclusions may challenge ones from an earlier stage. The task of the final over-arching statement in the portfolio for examination will be to bring out the relations between the various projects, and the overall motivation for the sequence and selection of topics.

The program also expects attendance at a series of seminars, conferences and workshops to develop the other qualities needed of educational leaders and to provide a critical audience for presentation of research results. The precise nature of these events is specified on an annual basis. On some occasions, candidates will be able to use conferences of professional associations or similar bodies to present findings. On other occasions, the seminar program will be arranged by the CCR or a relevant contributing School. The portfolio will provide a record of participation for each candidate.

Candidates for the award are required to submit a portfolio. The portfolio will consist of written work associated with the candidate's particular professional practice. It should be a compilation of material and documentation relative to the practice of the candidate during the period of their doctorate research. The portfolio should give evidence of significant conceptual development. It should also demonstrate the professional capacity of candidates through their ability to focus academic work of a high level of competence with practical relevance leading to the better understanding of significant problems in local practice.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions criteria will be as specified under Rules 8, 9 and 10 governing admissions for Professional Doctorates. Given the intention of this professional doctorate to recruit candidates who have followed a non-academic track after their initial degree but developed a high level of relevant expertise in post, some rules will be especially relevant for admissions purposes. In addition to requirements for a degree equivalent at least to a Bachelor Honours with Class II, Division 1, Rule 8 (d) refers to 'professional qualifications deemed by the UWS Research Studies Committee to be equivalent to the requirements set out [in paragraphs 8 a-c]'. Note that with likely applicants, qualifications that are of the requisite level but no longer current may be still relevant for purposes of admission to this degree. In the case of likely candidates for this degree, there may be cases of professional qualification with a substantial research component that may be deemed equivalent. Employment level/position in the organization (HEW 8 or above, or equivalent) may be taken into account. Rule 10 indicates that 'in exceptional circumstances' a candidate may be admitted having demonstrated 'in an appropriate Discipline a capacity for the research'. This demonstration should always include demonstrated capacity to initiate, plan, carry out and write up original research. An admissions interview, supplemented by written work of the applicant, may sometimes be appropriate for some cases.

Given the targeting of this degree for candidates with professional experience, Rule 9 should apply, specifying that *applicants should normally have at least 3 years experience working in the relevant industry or sector*. The normal expectation will be that candidates will come from a particular employer and the program will be designed to connect with issues relevant to that employer. However, candidates may change their employment during the course of the degree without jeopardizing their enrolment, re-negotiating their program accordingly.

Within this general rubric, there are some course work masters degrees that may be especially relevant, which will be viewed favourably for purposes of admissions. For instance, CDM currently have a coursework Master of Professional Communication for communication and information and design studies, which is aimed at candidates with a range of professional backgrounds who may wish to build on this qualification to professional doctorate level.

ADMINISTRATION OF DEGREE

As a doctorate of the University the degree will be administered by the Office of the Academic Registrar, with the College of Arts taking a particular responsibility as specified under Rule 18. The Centre for Cultural Research would be the natural home for candidates taking this degree, since it has the reputation and resources for carrying out cultural research between the University and industry which are central to the quality control for this degree, including staff resources and an appropriate seminar program. However, this is a degree offered by the University, and candidates may be admitted to it, and assigned supervision, wholly or partly in any School or Centre judged by the UWS Research Studies Committee to be able to supply adequate supervision and other resources, providing always that the quality of the degree and the degree experience for candidates not be jeopardized.

This professional doctorate is primarily designed for full fee paying candidates, as its main appeal is envisaged as being for candidates already in employment who would not otherwise be seen as qualified or appropriate to carry out doctoral level studies. However, there is no reason to exclude candidates whose formal qualifications would earn them a RTS place or scholarship, provided that they have the professional experience indicated above.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION

Candidates are required to undergo external examination as required by the UWS Professional Doctorate Rule. The material for examination shall comprise: a portfolio of evidence of sustained activity, as above, and scholarly research and publication output within a defined area conducted during the period of candidature. It will consist of:

- Four (4) research projects incorporated into a Portfolio. The portfolio would include an overarching statement that explains the four research projects in terms of their temporal sequence and interdependence, and their contribution to the candidate's personal and professional development, and to the field of scholarship.
- Four (4) scholarly research papers or studies in context, drawn from the 4 assessable research projects in which aspects of an area, problem, question or issue are investigated. Each paper will have a designated scholarly outlet from the list of DEST-accredited journals, or in refereed conference proceedings, and will be assessed by the standard relevant to publications in that outlet, providing that up to 2 of the designated journal publications can be substituted by substantial and significant research reports relevant to specific employers which are made available to a wider audience, via publication or as occasional papers. Note: it is **not** a requirement of the degree that the research papers have been accepted by a journal. The examiners will make the judgement on whether they have reached that standard.