

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, DBA

Degree: Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Program Overview

Business leadership is increasingly required to integrate multiple sources of knowledge, understand the perceptions of diverse parties and put human values into action. Executives are challenged to create social, intellectual and economic value for their organizations and for society at large based on rigorous and sound evidence. Recognizing these challenges, Weatherhead offers two doctoral degrees in management for working professionals: the DBA and the PhD in Management: Designing Sustainable Systems.

The DBA is based on the expectation that the practitioner-scholar will develop the ability to think intensely and critically about problems confronting an organization, a community, a nation and the world. Students are afforded the opportunities to conceptually model these "wicked" problems, challenge existing assumptions and test new ideas. This is accomplished in a cross-disciplinary fashion with relevant contributions to both management theory and practice.

The PhD in Management: Designing Sustainable Systems is focused on preparing interdisciplinary practitioner-scholars for successful research and academic careers. Students develop the ability to approach problems of practice rigorously from multiple disciplinary angles and to produce sound evidence and theoretical frames to address those problems and communicate them to academic and practitioner audiences. The DBA program also includes preparations for successful teaching in academic settings.

Curricula and coursework in these programs provide a foundation for conducting rigorous research and practicing evidence-based management. Courses are interrelated theoretically and methodologically and prepare students to bring academic, theoretical and data-driven perspectives to bear on problems that they may encounter in their organizations or in public policy advocacy.

Learning Outcomes

- Students are competent researchers.
- Students are effective scholarly communicators in print and in presentations.
- Students are scholarly practitioners and practical scholars.
- Students are change agents that bring evidence-based management to businesses and society.

Program Requirements

The DBA is a 60-credit-hour, three-year, lock-step program with an option to pursue the Designing Sustainable Systems track in the PhD in Management Program. DBA students' research projects are evaluated by a faculty review committee over the course of the program at critical research milestones.

Curriculum

Research Requirements and Deliverables

The DBA dissertation consists of the Qualitative Research Paper, Quantitative Research Paper and an Integrative Paper that organizes the research into a coherent thesis.

Research Proposal Paper

The first research requirement is a Qualitative Research Proposal that frames the student's research problem and question. Additionally, the proposal specifies a design for the fieldwork portion of the qualitative research project. An inductive qualitative research proposal is developed that synthesizes a substantial body of scholarly literature (theoretical and empirical) in a fashion that creates a conceptual framework and model that provides insight into a significant problem of practice reflecting the lived experiences of a specific group of practitioners. The proposal outlines a broad research question to guide the qualitative research and specifies a design for the fieldwork to be carried out in the study. Students develop individual skills of conceptualizing (including modeling), creating ethnographic/phenomenological interview protocols, conducting semi-structured interviews and interpretively analyzing qualitative interview data.

Qualitative Research Paper

The Qualitative Research Paper presents findings and explanatory concepts from the student's qualitative fieldwork project. It identifies and frames a potent "phenomenological practice gap" where current practitioner and academic knowledge guide effective practice. The research synthesizes significant scholarly literature into a coherent conceptual framework and an understandable model of relationships among theoretical constructs. Students learn to frame effective questions for practitioner-scholarship research that embodies inquiry and openness, to align the conceptual framework and research question to the chosen problem of practice and to write scholarly papers that are clear and that present a logical flow of well-supported arguments. By understanding the development of grounded theory and understanding ethnographic observation and field notes, students formally and rigorously analyze qualitative data in an interpretive fashion.

Capstone

The Capstone integrates the analytical approaches the student has learned in DBAP 643 Measuring Business Behaviors and Structures, DBAP 648 Causal Analysis of Business Problems I and DBAP 649 Causal Analysis of Business Problems II. The Capstone exercise is intended to allow students to demonstrate their independent competence in quantitative inquiry skills and, based on a satisfactory assessment, to progress toward the completion of the quantitative inquiry project, which is a requirement for both the DBA and the PhD in Management: Designing Sustainable Systems.

Quantitative Research Paper

At the end of the Fall semester of the third year, students complete a Quantitative Research Paper. The objective of the quantitative research project is to generate a rigorous and valid quantitative empirical study that is guided by a hypothesized model of the student's phenomena of interest. The study must be framed by current theoretical and empirical work within the area of interest. A robust research design is utilized that follows the material covered in the quantitative research courses including collecting and validating data in a way that mitigates biases. The student completes a systematic and rigorous quantitative analysis and interprets the analysis in a way that provides novel insight into the phenomena of interest. The quantitative research paper details the project and is written in a manner that meets high scholarly standards to merit publication in top-rated journals and outlets.

Integrative Paper

As a final requirement for the DBA dissertation, each student writes an overview statement introducing his or her Qualitative and Quantitative Research Papers, making substantive observations and conclusions about each project, and presenting a personal reflective statement about each project's significance to the author. The Research Proposal frames the dissertation overview in a preliminary way, but in light of the student's experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative studies, the synthesis is rewritten, revised and critically evaluated to become the Integrative Paper. The approved Integrative Paper, Qualitative Research Paper and Quantitative Research Paper serve as the dissertation requirement of the DBA program.

DBAP 664	Knowledge Dissemination to Influence Managerial Practice	3
DBAP 616	Global Economic Systems and Issues	3
Hours		9
Total Hours		60

Sample Plan of Study

First Year

Fall		Hours
DBAP 611	Theory and Practice of Collective Action	3
DBAP 613	Leading Change	3
DBAP 665	Introduction to Research Inquiry	3
Hours		9
Spring		
DBAP 638	Qualitative Inquiry I	3
DBAP 672	Flourishing Enterprise: Creating Sustainable Value for Business and World Benefit	3
DBAP 673	Understanding, Designing, Managing Complex Systems	3
DBAP 642	Directed Studies Seminar	1.5
Hours		10.5

Second Year

Fall		
DBAP 680	Conflict & Cooperation in the Global Arena	3
DBAP 641	Qualitative Inquiry II	3
DBAP 648	Causal Analysis of Business Problems I	3
DBAP 642	Directed Studies Seminar	1.5
Hours		10.5
Spring		
DBAP 617	Technology and Social System Design	3
DBAP 643	Measuring Business Behaviors and Structures	3
DBAP 649	Causal Analysis of Business Problems II	3
DBAP 642	Directed Studies Seminar	1.5
Hours		10.5

Third Year

Fall		
DBAP 614	Business as an Evolving Complex System	3
DBAP 645	Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Inquiry	3
DBAP 677	Designing Sustainable Systems	3
DBAP 642	Directed Studies Seminar	1.5
Hours		10.5
Spring		
DBAP 640	Social Ethics: Contemporary Issues	3