

Doctor of Business Administration

MS151A

Business & Management



About the University

The University of Plymouth (UoP) is one of the UK's most prominent and dynamic universities with an educational history dating back to 1862. Their vision is to be “a broad-based, research-intensive university, open to all who can benefit from a University of Plymouth education, and delivering excellent interdisciplinary research, experiential education and civic engagement.

The University of Plymouth is ranked #69 of UK universities in the Guardian University Guide 2024.

About the Programme

The doctoral programme aims to provide candidates with the opportunity to reflect on the nature of their professional practice, the consideration of data collection approaches and the analysis of data that can influence policy, practice and business decision making processes.

This programme is relevant for current and future leaders interested in enhancing their professional standing and research capability.

The DBA is divided into two phases; the first taught phase of year 1 is focused on the development of research knowledge and year 2 is focused on the doctoral research proposal. In year 3, following the successful completion of the taught modules in year 1 and 2, students will work with a designated supervisor on the final thesis of about 45,000 words, equating to the research phase of 300 credits.

The minimum period of study is 4 years and the maximum is 6 years.



Why This Programme?

- DBA advisor / supervisor allocated upon acceptance to the DBA and will provide guidance to you through your DBA journey
- Assessment of each module is by written coursework, no examination
- Strong teaching support as you develop your research skills and thesis proposal in years 1 and 2.

Programme Aims

The DBA is divided into the following phases:

- year 1 is focused on research techniques and applications
- year 2 is focused on the doctoral research proposal
- year 3 onwards will be the development of the final thesis

The programme aims to develop DBA students in the following areas:

- search for, discover, access, retrieve, sift, interpret, analyse, evaluate, manage, conserve and communicate an ever-increasing volume of knowledge from a range of sources
- think critically about problems to produce innovative solutions and create new knowledge
- plan, manage and deliver projects, selecting and justifying appropriate methodological processes while recognising, evaluating and minimising the risks involved and impact on the environment
- exercise professional standards in research and research integrity, and engage in professional practice, including ethical, legal, and health and safety aspects, bringing enthusiasm, perseverance and integrity to bear on their work activities
- support, collaborate with and lead colleagues, using a range of teaching, communication and networking skills to influence practice and policy in diverse environments
- appreciate the need to engage in research with impact and to be able to communicate it to diverse audiences, including the public
- build relationships with peers, senior colleagues, students and stakeholders with sensitivity to equality, diversity and cultural issues.



Programme Structure

Year 1

Advanced Qualitative Research Methods for Doctoral Study
Advanced Quantitative Research Methods for Doctoral Study
Applying Theory to Professional Practice

40
credits

Having successfully completed the three modules, students will be able to exit the DBA programme with a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Research Theory and Practice for Business, or progress into the second year of the DBA.

Year 2

Doctoral Research Proposal

120
credits

Year 3 Upwards

Doctoral Thesis

300
credits

Following the submission of your Doctoral Thesis and oral examination, your examiners will make a recommendation in line with University of Plymouth Regulations for the award of your DBA.

Study Duration & Teaching Mode

Module Descriptions



The University of Plymouth DBA is a part-time programme. There will be teaching and tutorials in years 1 and 2 to facilitate student learning and preparation for the doctoral thesis. A research supervisor will be allocated upon acceptance into the DBA programme and will provide guidance throughout the DBA journey.

The minimum time to complete the DBA is four years and the maximum is six years. There are two intakes in a year and the medium of instruction is English.

Year 1: Research Modules

Module 1: Advanced Qualitative Research Methods for Doctoral Study

This course addresses the nature of qualitative research in the business and social sciences, with opportunities to discuss the implications of the choices made in designing, implementing and reporting the findings. Students will discover the complexities and opportunities associated with undertaking rigorous and comprehensive qualitative research that are applied to practice.

Module 2: Advanced Quantitative Research Methods for Doctoral Study

This course is designed to familiarise students to the applications of quantitative methods for business management analysis of which data-based decision making is a part. The focus throughout the course is about real-world data preparation and analysis using a statistical software package. The module provides a balance between the theoretical and practical application of quantitative design, data collection methods and a range of univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis techniques. It requires students to critically engage and apply techniques to real world business and/or social data.

Module 3: Applying Theory to Professional Practice

This module is designed to help students develop theoretical foundations, critically analysing their development and application as a practitioner in a globalised business environment. The student will reflect on how theory influence practice together with signposts for future development. This module identifies the correlation between perspectives of theory, paradigms of inquiry and methodological approaches. Consideration is given to future actions and applications within the professional context.

Year 2: Doctoral Research Proposal

This module requires students to plan and begin to implement a substantive doctoral research project in an attempt to create new knowledge. Students will develop and synthesise components of a research proposal and practice developing effective aims, hypotheses, background materials and analytic strategies. The module will also be dedicated to understanding the scope of the field and the many facets of becoming a professional researcher.

Year 3 onwards: Doctoral Thesis

From year 3 onwards, students will focus on the research and development of their thesis. The research supervisor will provide one-on-one guidance as you work through your thesis. Following the submission of your Doctoral Thesis, there will be an oral examination where you present your thesis to a panel from the Doctoral College.

Assessment & Awards

On successful completion and passing of the 4 taught modules and the doctoral thesis, students will be awarded the “Doctor of Business Administration” by the University of Plymouth.

Students may exit the DBA programme with a Postgraduate Diploma in Advanced Research Theory and Practice for Business upon completion of the 3 taught modules in year 1. These are modules 1, 2 and 3.

Entry Requirements

To be successful in the application, applicants must be able to demonstrate the following in their application form, personal statement and research idea:

- A master's degree awarded by a recognised institution (FHEQ level 7 equivalent), although candidates with strong professional experience may also be considered;
- Relevant middle to senior level management experience. Applicants without management experience but with appropriate and sufficient extensive experience in the business context may be considered at the discretion of the admissions tutors; and
- Strong commitment to educational enquiry and critical reflection on practice as a means of professional learning
- Ability to work collaboratively in exploring and developing experience
- Personal statement about the applicants' professional experience and commitment to take up the challenge of a DBA (800 words)
- Research idea to describe the research area applicants hope to investigate for their DBA (1,000 words)

International applicants will be required to provide evidence of their English language ability with a minimum overall IELTS score of 6.5 (with a minimum of 5.5 in each element); or equivalent.

For students studying at RQF 6 level and above, the University of Plymouth is permitted to accept other qualifications that is deemed to meet UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) requirement.

Application

Applicants are required to complete and return the application form with non-refundable application fee of HK\$500 to any of our enrolment centres. Applicants should bring along the following documents:

- Original and photocopy of your Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID)
- One set of certified true copy* of certificates and transcripts
- Testimonials or other documentary proof of the applicant's working experience
- Personal statement and research idea
- CV
- Two reference letters
- Evidence of English proficiency

* Original certificates and transcripts together with the copies are required to be presented to any HKU SPACE Learning Centre for verification.

Enquiries

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Non-Local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance

This is an exempted course under the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance. It is a matter of discretion for individual employers to recognize any qualification to which this course may lead.

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