

Postgraduate Programme Specification

Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate where full advantage is taken of all learning opportunities offered. Further details on the learning, teaching and assessment approach for the programme and modules can be accessed on the University website and Virtual Learning Environment, GCU Learn. All programmes of the University are subject to the University's [Quality Assurance](#) processes.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION			
Programme Title	Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)		
Final Award	Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)		
Awarding Body	Glasgow Caledonian University		
School	Glasgow School for Business and Society		
Department	Management		
Mode of Study	Part-time - Online Distance Learning		
Location of Delivery	Online (Glasgow-led)		
UCAS Code	N/A		
Accreditations (PSRB)	N/A		
Period of Approval	From:	September 2023	To: August 2028

2. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME
The Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) aims to equip experienced business professionals with the advanced knowledge, critical thinking, and applied research skills needed to address complex business challenges. Through rigorous academic study and original research, the DBA programme fosters the development of innovative solutions that bridge theory and practice. Graduates are prepared to lead with impact, contribute to the advancement of business knowledge, and influence their own organisations transformation, as well as that of their industry, through evidence-based decision-making, strategic insight, and ethical leadership. The aim of the DBA is to provide senior professionals with an academic framework to question the complex relationships between professional practice, theory, policy and research. The doctoral journey supports the student to synthesise their professional knowledge in a body of work, most notably their doctoral thesis that will impact positively on their organisation and their profession in terms of practice and theory. Underpinning this aim is a set of research objectives. These objectives will enable learners through a rigorous academic taught programme to become scholarly practitioners capable of appropriate higher-level cognitive skills relevant to the participating organisation's goals and society more broadly, notably the ability to be an independent lifelong learner in a chosen field making an original and valuable contribution to knowledge and practice. The programme aims to deepen their professional knowledge to more effectively engage and lead within their chosen sector becoming a research expert. On completion students will be able to demonstrate professional strategic management skills, an understanding of ethics, sustainability and governance, an ability to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research, academic skills and reflective practice.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

3A: Knowledge and understanding;

- A1 Develop advanced skills relevant to professional practice, alongside learning achieved through applied research and service development
- A2 Critically evaluate both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and data in a variety of practice settings
- A3 Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry in their chosen area, and select appropriate methodologies for their study
- A4 Communicate at many different levels, for example through publication and transfer of knowledge and understanding in critical dialogue with others
- A5 Demonstrate reflective, self-critical, flexible and ethical working practices, challenging current professional policies and practice
- A6 Design and execute a major project (for example research, intervention, development, service redesign, change management) demonstrating leading edge knowledge and understanding in creative and original work, that is relevant and contributes to practice

3B: Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;

- B1 Critically evaluate both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and data in a variety of practice settings applied to professional practice.
- B2 Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry in their chosen area, and select appropriate methodologies for their study
- B3 Communicate at many different levels, for example through publication and transfer of knowledge and understanding in critical dialogue with others
- B4 Communicate the product of personal and group-based learning activities in effective and innovative ways
- B5 Design and execute a major project (for example research, intervention, development, service redesign, change management) demonstrating leading edge knowledge and understanding in creative and original work, that is relevant and contributes to practice.
- B6 Achieve personal excellence, and influence the way in which organisations achieve sustainable change

3C: Generic cognitive skills;

- C1 Develop advanced skills relevant to professional practice, alongside learning achieved through applied research and service development, creating critical thinkers through applied research.
- C2 Design an integrated approach to critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas, information and issues applied to a practical setting.
- C3 Demonstrate the ability to develop original and creative responses to complex problems in a work setting.
- C4 Create and manage new data and information in the execution of a major project.
- C5 Demonstrate reflective, self-critical, flexible and ethical working practices, challenging current professional policies and practice
- C6 Achieve personal excellence, and influence the way in which organisations achieve sustainable change.

3D: Communication, numeracy and ICT skills

- D1 Communicate at many different levels, for example through publication and transfer of knowledge and understanding in critical dialogue with others.
- D2 Communicate the product of personal and group based learning activities in effective and innovative ways to a range of audiences.
- D3 Demonstrate the ability to adapt communication to the context and purpose of the audience both academic and professional communities, verbal and written.
- D4 Evaluate networking, team building and partnership working as tools in the context of effective professional practice.
- D5 Critically evaluate numerical and graphical data through applied qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and ICT software
- D6 Communicate the product of personal and group based learning activities in effective and innovative ways.
- D7 Develop advanced skills relevant to professional practice, alongside learning achieved through applied research and service development.

3E: Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

- E1 Effective leadership and team working skills, including cross-cultural sensitivity, team building and project management in group work situations.
- E2 Planning and time-management: organising and planning work, self-management and independent working.
- E3 Inter-cultural awareness: understanding different perspectives, multi-cultural sensitivity and appreciation and development of a global mind-set.
- E4 Inter-personal skills including questioning and listening, influencing and persuading, advising others and giving feedback.
- E5 Manage complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements on issues not addressed by current professional and/or ethical codes or practices.
- E6 Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in professional and equivalent activities.

4. LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The programme provides a variety of learning and teaching methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the learning and teaching methods specific to each module. The Learning & Teaching Strategies underpinning the DBA programme are based around the GCU Strategy for Learning (SfL 2030).

The aim of the programme is to develop critical thinkers in business and society through combining taught modules (stage 1) and applied research with professional practice (stage 2). The philosophy underpinning the DBA programme is based on research-led teaching and learning delivered by a dedicated team of research active staff. The programme is delivered part-time via distance-learning mode of study with students normally undertaking a minimum of 30 credits per Trimester. Modules are delivered in all three trimesters (with one trimester C off studies). The programme starts in Trimester A or B.

As a research degree, independent learning is at the core of the DBA programme which is split into two stages; Stage 1 (Taught) and Stage 2 (Research).

Stage 1 focuses on building reflective skills, bridging the gap between theory and practice, students learn from their experience and develop critical thinking skills contextualised by the

workplace. Taught modules in applied research methodologies, theory and practice, emphasise the application of academic theory in the analysis of contemporary, complex business, social and policy problems. The teaching/learning pedagogy adopted are evidence-based, student-centred, practical, participative, and relevant to the needs of the student. Guest lecturers and practitioners from the public, private and third sectors, support module delivery combining theory and practice. This includes using 'live' case study materials and applied research to stimulate research ideas and methodologies. Taught modules are underpinned by the SDGs. The curriculum encourages an understanding of global environmental, ethical and sustainability challenges and investigates how business practice can impact upon society (connected to the SDGs).

The distance learning mode of delivery is based on online directed learning with a clear technology-led structure and a range of activities, supported by GCU Learn (GCU's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform) alongside optional live sessions at key touchpoints (which are recorded). The online mode of delivery maximises flexible access to materials, feedback and peer engagement throughout the entire programme. Each module requires student effort to participate in asynchronous online directed activities and assessments with assigned deadlines for each module (as mentioned in section 5. Assessment methods).

Across stage 1 the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Pre-recorded Lectures
- Online seminar activities
- Online Practical workshops
- Simulation experiences
- Flipped classroom approaches

The above approaches are delivered online (Part-time) and are determined at module level by the Module Leader.

Stage 2 - upon completion of the taught modules, stage 2 focuses on the development of the DBA thesis. Upon transitioning to stage 2, there is a shift in the teaching/learning pedagogy adopted towards further independent learning to becoming an independent researcher, supported by an experienced supervisory team of Director of Studies (DOS) and 2nd Supervisor. Students are required to meet with their supervisory team every two months (as a minimum), and provide timely submission of a supervisory meeting record for each meeting. An annual report is also required during stage 2. Further support is provided with academic skills workshops delivered by Researcher Development (part of Research and Knowledge Exchange Services) – RKES), attendance at GSBS research group seminar series, DBA Dialogues Talks and attendance at conferences or other activities which support the doctoral learning experience.

The programme is designed to reflect the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and embodies our Common Good ethos, which is embedded throughout the taught modules and in the selection of research topics. Stage 2 of the programme aligns with GCU's Inclusive Societies research theme, the School's areas of research excellence, and the impactful research undertaken by the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU), Women in Scotland's Economy (WiSE) Research, and our Research Centre, the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health.

The specialist content is developed and delivered by researchers and Professors with expertise in socially responsible business practices, social innovation and public policy; social justice,

equalities and communities; and people, management and organisations. Teaching is further enriched through guest lectures from practitioners working in these fields.

5. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Stage 1 (Taught)

The programme provides a variety of formative and summative assessment methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the assessment methods specific to each module.

The assessments for each module on the programme are designed around both formative and summative assignments which focuses on critical self-reflection, peer-review with other students via submission of assignments. Taught modules assess students on their understanding of applied research methodologies and the application of academic theory to professional practice. Module assessments include a mixture of essay-based assignments, a critically appraised topic, reflective journal blog, posts on a Padlet wall and reports. Students gain feedback over the course of the taught element of the programme which directly links to their DBA, undertaken in stage 2.

Stage 2 (Research)

During stage 2 of the programme, students are continually assessed by their supervisory teams and gain feedback as they progress through their DBA. Students are expected to submit records of supervisory meetings every two months to demonstrate engagement with their supervisory team and progression. Templates and forms can be found [here](#).

RDC2 Mini-Viva (Progression)

In stage 2, DBA students will also undergo a mini viva (RDC2) undertaken online, within 12 months following ratification of their final taught module at the Programme Assessment Board. Guidance on this progression event can be found in the doctoral hub [here](#).

The DBA Thesis

The DBA thesis should be a maximum of 60,000 words, comprising a 55,000 words thesis and 5,000 words self-reflective report as indicated in the Research Degree Regulations, section 17.13.1

The DBA Viva Voce Examination

Defence of the thesis and work by viva-voce examination or in exceptional cases an approved alternative form of examination (see 7.15 Special Arrangements for Examinations) in accordance with the Degree Regulations

6. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Specific entry requirements for this programme can be found on the prospectus and study pages on the GCU website at this location: www.gcu.ac.uk/study

The Course webpage specific to this Programme is:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate-doctorate-of-business-administration-glasgow>

All students entering the programme are required to adhere to the [GCU Code of Student Conduct](#).

7. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE AND FINAL EXIT AWARDS¹

The following modules are delivered as part of this programme:

Module Code	Module Title	Core or Optional	SCQF Level	Credit Size	Coursework %	Examination %
MMN930206	Academic Skills and Reflective Practice (ASRP)	Core	11	30	80 / 20	
MMN230696	Strategic Management	Core	11	15	100	
MMN430220	Ethics, Sustainability and Governance	Core	11	15	30/70	
MMN130804	Introduction to Qualitative Methods	Core	11	15	100	
MMX230805	Introduction to Quantitative Methods	Core	11	15	100	
MMN130806	Applied Skills in Qualitative Research Methods	Core	11	15	100	
MMX230807	Quantitative Data Analysis	Core	11	15	100	
MDN230207	Research Design and Management (RDM)	Core	12	60	100	
N/A	Doctoral Thesis	Core	12	360	100	

The following final and early Exit Awards are available from this programme²:

Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)

To be eligible for the exit award of the Doctor of Business Administration, students will require to achieve a total of 540 credits in line with the Programme Structure shown above which must include:

- Successful completion of Stage 1 of the programme and the achievement of all 180 credits of taught modules comprising of the 165 credits of core modules and 1 of the 2 optional modules at 15 credits from the modules listed above, and,
- Successful completion of Stage 2 of the programme and the achievement of a further 360 credits at SCQF 12 comprising of a Doctoral Thesis and Viva Assessment

Master of Professional Practice in Business Administration (MPP BA)

To be eligible for the exit award of the Master of Professional Practice in Business Administration, students will require to achieve a total of 180 credits in line with the Programme Structure shown above which must include successful completion of Stage 1 of the programme and the achievement of all 180 credits of taught modules comprising of the 165 credits of core modules and 1 of the 2 optional modules at 15 credits from the modules listed above.

Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration (PgD BA)

¹ Periodically, programmes and modules may be subject to change or cancellation. Further information on this can be found on the GCU website here:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures>

² Please refer to the [GCU Qualifications Framework](#) for the minimum credits required for each level of award and the Programme Handbook for requirements on any specified or prohibited module combinations for each award.

To be eligible for the exit award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration, students will require to achieve a total of 120 credits in line with the programme structure shown above

Postgraduate Certificate in Business Administration (PgC BA)

To be eligible for the exit award of the Postgraduate Certificate in Business Administration, students will require to achieve a total of 60 credits in line with the programme structure shown above

8. ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Students should expect to complete their programme of study under the GCU Assessment Regulations that were in place at the commencement of their studies on that programme, unless proposed changes to University Regulations are advantageous to students. These can be found at:
<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/services-and-facilities/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulations-and-policies>

The GCU Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes shall apply to all modules in Stage 1.

GCU Regulations for The [Award of Research Degrees](#) shall apply to Stage 2.

VERSION CONTROL (to be completed in line with AQPP processes)

Any changes to the PSP must be recorded below by the programme team to ensure accuracy of the programme of study being offered.

<i>Version Number</i>	<i>Changes/Updates</i>	<i>Date Changes/Updates made</i>	<i>Date Effective From</i>
1.0	PSP transferred to new template, and addition of early exit awards	June 2025	September 2025
2.0	Removal of FT delivery and optional modules	July 2026	September 2026