

# 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       |   |                |                        |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|------------------------|
| <b>Programme Title</b>       | Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)                        |                |                        |
| <b>Final Award</b>           | Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)                        |                |                        |
| <b>Awarding Body</b>         | Glasgow Caledonian University                                     |                |                        |
| <b>School</b>                | Glasgow School for Business and Society                           |                |                        |
| <b>Department</b>            | Management  |                |                        |
| <b>Mode of Study</b>         | Full-time - London campus<br>Part-time - Online Distance Learning |                |                        |
| <b>Location of Delivery</b>  | London Campus<br>On-line (Glasgow)                                |                |                        |
| <b>UCAS Code</b>             | N/A   |                |                        |
| <b>Accreditations (PSRB)</b> | N/A   |                |                        |
| <b>Period of Approval</b>    | <b>From:</b>  | September 2023 | <b>To:</b> August 2029 |

| 2. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME   |
|--|
| <p>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.</p> <p>The aim of the Doctorate of Business Administration is to provide middle/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.</p> <p>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,</p> |

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 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 in 2 different modes: full-time on-campus and part-time distance-learning modes. Students studying full-time normally undertake 60 credits per trimester. Students studying distance-learning part-time normally undertake a minimum of 30 credits per Trimester delivered. Modules are delivered in all three trimesters. The Full-time programme starts in Trimester A, the Part-time 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, 1 and 2.

**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).

For the distance learning mode of delivery, this 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.

For the full-time mode of delivery, modules are structured to utilise blended learning and are normally comprised of mostly face-to-face on campus sessions with some online live sessions. This includes online contact to enhance the student experience via the Programme Team, Graduate School and taught modules. Teaching delivery methods will include face to face/online Lectures, Seminars, Workshops, Simulations etc. Face-to-face teaching is structured around the workplace and real-life experience. It is presented as either front-loaded teaching or in a flipped classroom approach. The remaining hours of notional student effort are allocated to online directive activities and assessment.

**Stage 2** focuses on the development of the professional doctorate thesis, building upon stage 1 upon completion of taught modules. Upon transitioning to stage 2, there is a shift in the teaching/learning pedagogy adopted towards independent learning supported by an experienced supervisory team of Director of Studies (DOS) and 2nd Supervisor. Students are expected to submit records and minutes of meetings and an annual report during stage 2 and are expected to meet with their supervisor(s) on a regular basis. This is supported by academic skills workshops delivered by the Graduate School, attendance at GSBS research group seminar series and attendance at conferences or other activities which support the doctoral learning experience.

The programme is designed to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Common Good ethos which is demonstrated via taught modules and selected topics for research. Stage 2 of the programme aligns with the GCU 'Inclusive Societies' research stream and research interests of GSBS staff, and research centres and units (WISE, Yunus and SPIRU). The specialist content is underpinned and delivered by researchers and Professors researching in the areas of socially responsible business practices, social innovation and public policy; social justice, equalities and communities; and people, management and organisations, and supported by guest lectures from practitioners working in these fields. Areas of research are aligned with the 8 GSBS research groups: Risk, Society & Governance; Media & Culture; Societal, Criminal and

Legal Justice; Gender; Sports & Physical Activity; Responsible Business; and Consumer Lifestyles and Experiences.

Across the programme the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Practical classes
- Placements
- Simulation experiences
- Groupwork
- Flipped classroom approaches
- Online learning

The above approaches will be delivered either in person (Full-time) or online (Part-time) as and are determined at module level by the Module Leader.

## **5. ASSESSMENT METHODS**

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 professional doctorate, undertaken in stage 2. During stage 2 of the programme, students are continually assessed by their supervisory teams and gain feedback as they progress through their professional doctorate. Students are expected to submit records of supervisory meetings to demonstrate progression.

## **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](http://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](#).

Entry to the programme will normally be on the basis of a candidate having a United Kingdom (UK) Honours degree or equivalent in a relevant subject, normally at grade 2.1 or above and/or MSc or MBA.

Applicants must normally have a minimum of three to five years' professional experience at a senior management level.

All students whose first language is not English should meet the minimum language proficiency as stipulated by the wider GCU admissions policy of IELTS 6.5 (no element less than 6.0).

**Flexible Entry - Credit Transfer and RPL:**

An applicant can seek entry to the programme if they do not have the normal entry requirements but can demonstrate that they have achieved the prerequisite skills and knowledge through their experience, or informal learning (Recognition of Prior Learning). Applicants may be granted entry with advanced standing, if they can demonstrate equivalence to the learning outcomes of a module. A student can gain credit towards an award through a combination of prior informal and prior certificated learning.

***Entry with Advanced Standing***

Glasgow Caledonian University leads the way in widening access to higher education. As part of the University's mission to promote the common good, we work with schools, children and families in the local community to raise educational aspirations in young people and their families. The Contextualised Admissions Policy aims to build on this work and recognise the different student learner journeys. The policy aims to recognise and acknowledge that not all applicants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full academic potential and will take into consideration the context and circumstance in which a student has achieved his/her academic grades. For details please access the policy here:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aes/documentsandpolicies/>

## 7. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE AND FINAL EXIT AWARDS<sup>1</sup>

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 (DL)<br>MMN230231 (London) | Strategic Management                           | Option           | 11         | 15          | 100          |               |
| MML430208                            | Public Policy Analysis                         | Option           | 11         | 15          | 50           | 50            |
| MMN430220 (DL)<br>MMN430180 (London) | Ethics, Sustainability and Governance          | Core             | 11         | 15          | 30/70        |               |
| MMN121381                            | Introduction to Qualitative Methods            | Core             | 11         | 15          | 100          |               |
| MMX225607                            | Introduction to Quantitative Methods           | Core             | 11         | 15          | 100          |               |
| MMN121382                            | Applied Skills in Qualitative Research Methods | Core             | 11         | 15          | 100          |               |
| MMX224423                            | 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 programme<sup>2</sup>:

### **Doctorate of Business Administration**

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**

To be eligible for the exit award of the Professional Masters 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.

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

[www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures/changesandcancellationtoprogrammes](http://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures/changesandcancellationtoprogrammes)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

### **Postgraduate Diploma**

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**

To be eligible for the exit award of the Postgraduate Diploma 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/supportservices/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             |
|                       |  |                                  |                            |