



DBA Course Information Booklet

About Leeds Business School

Leeds Metropolitan University is one of the largest in the UK. Within its mission there is a clear focus on lifelong learning and vocational and professional relevance.

Leeds Business School (LBS) forms part of the Faculty of Business and Law. The Faculty combines three Schools; LBS, Leeds Law School and Leeds School of Accountancy and Financial Services. The Policy Research Institute (PRI) is also part of the Faculty.

LBS is a significant provider of business and management education with over 4,500 students and approximately 200 academic and support staff. The School actively supports research and has recently recruited a number of Professors and Readers to enhance and build research capability. As well as five Professors and two Readers the School employs 16 academic staff who hold a PhD. The School has close links with the PRI and is currently collaborating with the Institute on two commissioned research projects. One of these is a major project for the Learning and Skills Council under its World Class Comparisons programme of research. The PRI itself conducts a wide range of research for local, national and international clients.

A recent development in LBS is recruitment of two Running Stream Professors of Human Resource Development with recent experience of designing and running DBA programmes in their previous institutions. These appointments, together with recent recruitment of other research active and experienced staff, make this an opportune time to offer a course leading to award of the DBA degree. In addition, FBL and the School have benefited from sharing in the Centenary Studentships with ten new PhD students. The DBA will add to this flourishing research culture.

What is the DBA?

The DBA is one of a number of what are referred to as professional doctorates which are gaining in standing and demand in the UK and elsewhere as a means of providing continuing professional development of practicing managers and other professionals who are generally in employment in high level and demanding roles.

The DBA is a research degree at the same level as a PhD. It is characterised by a range of support mechanisms which include that of a cohort experience. While individuals pursue a personal and original research project they are at the same time a member of a cohort and share the experience and receive the support of student colleagues. Other support mechanisms include the use of action learning sets within the cohort, regular contact through attendance at modules, networking with peers, use of electronic communication, engagement with Faculty and School research activities and culture and planned and scheduled tutorial with supervisors. These mechanisms have been demonstrated to provide the technical, social and emotional support necessary for busy professionals to complete a challenging course of study and research required to gain a doctoral level award.

Fundamental Principles and Design of the DBA

The basic rationale of professional doctorates including the DBA is to provide a route to research based doctoral qualification for mature professionals in employment. In order to achieve this a few basic design principles have been applied.

SUPPORT

Successful completion of a professional doctorate programme requires effective support. This is provided by three interrelated means. The first of these is recruitment of a cohort. The second is the use of Action Learning Sets (ALS) which consists of small groups of between 4 and 6 members. The third support mechanism is a defined and contracted entitlement to a specified number of hours of supervisory support.

STRUCTURE

TABLE 1-Overall design of the DBA programme

Year/Semester	Teaching Modules	Assessment
1	Module One DBA Introduction, Research Design and Proposal (3 days)	
1	Module Two Current Issues in Business and Management Research (2 days)	Draft Research Proposal (2k-P/F) Research Proposal (5k-P/F)
2	Module Three Research Philosophy And Doing a Literature Review (3 days)	Lit Review on Res. and Topic (10k-P/F)
2	Module Four Advanced Research Methods (3+2 days)	Research Report On Empirical Study (10k-P/F)
3	Module Five Planning and Preparing A Thesis (3 days)	Thesis (40-60k)
3	Module Six Planning and Preparing for a Viva Voce (2 days)	No Summative Assessment

As can be seen in Table 1 the DBA programme lasts 3 years with a block of teaching support in each semester of each year. This provides a structure which enables a

continuous learning experience as well as continuous support in various forms to facilitate successful completion.

DBA Programme Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate competence in academic writing at doctoral level and a standard which merits publication.
2. Write research proposals and plans designed to explore identified issues which extend a discipline or subject.
3. Specify and describe professional and managerial issues and problems in ways that have both practical and academic validity.
4. Demonstrate sophisticated methodological and epistemological understanding and of the use and application of advanced research techniques.
5. Search, source, select, evaluate and critique academic and professional literature to demonstrate sound understanding
6. Demonstrate skill in analysing and constructing arguments that weave together academic knowledge, research based findings, reflections from professional practice and managerial experience.
7. Demonstrate competence in conceptualising, designing and conducting research to generate new knowledge and/or applications.
8. Analyse, evaluate and interpret research findings to improve personal understanding and judgement and that of others through effective communication.
9. Display originality and creativity in applying the results of research to professional, managerial and organisational activities.
10. Make an original contribution to the enhancement of professional practice.

Skills Development

The programme will develop following skills.

- To think creatively and innovatively about organisational and managerial problems
- To design and implement advanced level research projects
- To collect, analyse and present data in academic and professional settings.
- To critically evaluate evidence, research findings and arguments
- To make informed, reasoned and well argued judgements on complex issues
- To act autonomously in ambiguous and uncertain circumstances

Course Structure, Content and Delivery

Structure

The programme is a three year part time period of study and research. A fourth year will be available if required by individual students. Entrants to the DBA, unlike typical full time PhD students, hold a masters rather than a first degree. This provides a greater amount of knowledge and academic and intellectual ability which facilitates quicker completion. Entrants are also experienced in handling challenging assignments and work. In addition, DBA projects focus on personal and professional practice and so are facilitated at and through work. Normal work activities are often part of the research process.

Taught modules are spaced over the three years with Modules 1 and 2 in the first year, Modules 3 and 4 in the second year and Modules 5 and 6 in the third year. There will be on average 4 to 6 months between each module. This may be varied for example in the case of full cohorts recruited from overseas in partnership with local agents and in these cases modules may be combined. Modules are also though sequential and interrelated and will in all cases be taken in the specified order. Entry qualifications, experience and the DBA modules will in most of not all cases meet the requirements of the Leeds Met University Research Training Programme. Any gaps in the case of particular individuals will be specified in and met by individual Learning Plans.

The structure also reflects the 'chunking' of a traditional PhD project and thesis. Students will complete an assessment associated with each of the modules. These too will be staged over the three years and the fourth year where necessary. Modules 1 and 2 will lead to a research proposal, Module 3 to a critical literature review, Module 4 to a small empirical project and, together with Module 5, to the final thesis. Both the critical literature review and the small empirical project will be focused on a common theme identified in the research proposal and this will also be the focus of the large empirical project. Thus, the DBA programme as a whole will be for each student around a single and personal focus. The focus will be relevant to organisational or managerial practice. In summary, the structure is as follows.

- The process begins with the student identifying and justifying a topic for their research and producing a research proposal and plan for assessment.
- The student then develops a deep knowledge of the appropriate literature and develops a conceptual framework that will shape their DBA project. The conceptual framework forms part of a critical literature review which is submitted for assessment.
- This is followed by a relatively small piece of research. This can adopt a qualitative or quantitative approach. It can also be regarded as an 'apprenticeship' task. The outcome is an assessed research report.
- The student then undertakes a major piece of research on the core theme of their project using whichever methodological stance they argue is justified. It is also expected that in this piece of work they will develop outcomes from their work for professional, managerial or organisational practice. This might include a range of things from changes to their own professional practice, items of intellectual property or change proposals and programmes. It culminates in the thesis which is submitted for assessment.

Curriculum Content

The major content will be the research project and associated assessments of individual students. The supporting teaching of research methods and meeting the requirements of the University RTP is provided in the modules. The content of each of these is at 'D' level and is specifically designed for the DBA. The primary and almost exclusive focus is research design and methods. Additional modules continue the focus on doctoral research and awards and prepare students for conducting a major project, writing a thesis and successfully defending their thesis in an oral examination.

Programme Delivery

As can be seen from Table 1 delivery of the programme will be through short teaching blocks of 5 days duration. This design has at least three advantages. First, it meets the needs of busy professionals who find it hard to commit to other forms of part time attendance, especially those in national and international markets. Second, it allows for intensive learning and teaching which again suits the general preferences of the busy professional manager. Finally, it supports the other design features of the DBA in allowing programmed time for meetings of ALS and scheduled meetings with supervisors.

It is intended that the general model will be as detailed in Table 1. However, the design has the added advantage of being flexible and modules can be combined. This may happen for specific cohorts recruited from particular sectors and/or geographic locations.

Assessment

Assessment, learning and teaching are closely linked on the DBA programme as individual modules are associated with and intended to be preparation for each of the assignments. Award of the qualification will require successful submission and assessment of each assignment as detailed below.

- **Assignment 1**-A draft research proposal of between 2000 and 2,500 words
- **Assignment 2**- A final research proposal of between 5000 and 6000 words
- **Assignment 3**-A critical literature review of between 10000 and 12000 words
- **Assignment 4**-A research report on a small project of between 10000 and 12000 words
- **Assignment 5**-A thesis on a major project of not less than 40000 and not more than 60000 words.

Assignments 1 to 4 inclusive will be assessed by the supervisors of each student and will be subject to internal moderation within the whole group of supervisors working on the programme. This process will be facilitated by supervisory teams rotating moderation of the work of students from other supervisory teams. Assessment of the thesis, Assignment 5, will be undertaken by an internal and external examiner independent of the student's supervisory team. This assessment will be of the written work and through a viva-voce examination. Assessment decisions on

Assignments 1-4 will be Pass, Pass with amendments or Fail and refer. Decisions on Assignment 5 will be similar. Criteria for assessment of Assignments 1-4 inclusive will be associated with the learning outcomes of the associated module. Criteria for Assignment 5 will be achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

Learning and Teaching

Study blocks are associated with each module and each will be supported by Module Handbooks. These handbooks will include pre-study block readings and activities, some of which will link also with ALS meetings. Each will also contain post-study block readings and activities. These will commonly include the assignment instructions. Thus, learning is guided and supported between occasions of class contact.

Students will receive guidance on the use of action learning during the first study block and sets will also be formed at that time. Recommendations on frequency and duration of set meetings between study blocks will also be given. Time will be allocated at each study block for set meetings. It is possible that in some cases 'meetings' between study blocks will be 'virtual' because of geographical separation. However, in all cases the work and focus of AL sets will be supported by pre and post study block activities provided in Module Handbooks.

The third main method of achieving continuous learning is through the support of the supervisory team. Time will be allocated in each study block for students to meet with their supervisors. It is though expected and intended that supervision will be provided between study blocks. In some cases, and for the same reason of geographic separation, supervision sessions may on occasions be 'virtual'. The main focus of supervision, as with other doctorate programmes, will be guidance and support in designing and implementing the research plan and process. Each student will have two named supervisors, at least one of which will have technical expertise in the subject and focus of the research and at least one of which will have experience of successfully supervising research students to completion. Each student will be entitled to a total of 50 hours of supervisors' time over the period of the programme.

The final element of the learning and teaching strategy is that to be adopted within study blocks. Most of these focus on 'teaching' research methods and developing research skills. There are though three elements of the strategy to be applied in each study block.

- **Concrete Focus**

Teaching utilises current examples from research projects of teaching staff and other examples drawn from the literature. It will also utilise the current projects and work of students themselves. As an example, students will commonly be required to prepare material for discussion in seminars and for syndicate work during class contact.

- **Participative**

Methods adopted will be participative and use will be made of for example group discussions, case studies, problem tasks and student presentations. Lectures will be utilised but will be interactive rather than formal. Methods will also utilise the pre and post work contained in the Module Handbooks.

- **Adult Learners**

The first two elements recognise that students on the DBA are experienced and capable adults who are likely to be independent learners. The overall approach on study blocks will seek to maximise the value of that experience and independence by facilitating and encouraging involvement and contributions from all students. Engaging in debate and examining different perspectives will be a feature of learning and teaching on each study block.

A final feature of the strategy is to recognise that responsibility rests with each student to engage with and utilise to best advantage the opportunities provided by the programme. It is though the responsibility of each individual student to deliver the requirements of the award. The assessment, learning and teaching strategy has been designed to facilitate successful completion of a demanding process of study and research but it cannot guarantee success.

How to apply for a DBA

Admissions Policy

The DBA will seek to recruit and admit applicants who can demonstrate that they will benefit from and contribute to the programme and can successfully complete it. This will be determined by academic judgement made within the admissions process.

Admissions Criteria

Candidates for admission to the programme will normally meet the following criteria.

- Hold an M.Phil, MBA or other Masters level award in the field of business and management or organisational studies. **MA's from Oxford or Cambridge universities are not appropriate as an entry qualification.**
- **and** hold, or have held, a post which includes managerial responsibilities or to have been in a position to be able to observe managerial and organisational practice.
- **and** to be in, or be able to place themselves in, circumstances that will allow them to conduct the necessary research.

In the case of non-native English speakers an additional criterion related to proficiency in use of the English language will be applied. Evidence of proficiency will normally be in the form of an IELTS or TOFEL certificate with a specified minimum determined by University regulations in force at particular times. This is currently an IELTS score of 6.5 and equivalent in other tests.

Candidates not meeting one or more of these criteria can apply through a process of Accreditation of Prior Learning or Prior Experiential Learning. It is envisaged that such candidates will hold potentially equivalent professional qualifications and/or have extensive managerial experience which has produced knowledge, skills and competence of similar standard to those holding masters degrees. Such candidates will be required to present evidence in the form of curriculum content in the case of alternative qualifications or in the form of a portfolio detailing learning gained from

managerial, professional or similar experience. They will also be interviewed by the Course Leader or designate where presented evidence will be discussed and assessed.

Admissions Process

The Equal Opportunities Policy of Leeds Metropolitan University will be applied in the admissions process.

The admissions process has three related purposes.

- To enable candidates to make an informed decision
- To establish and confirm motivation, aptitude and academic potential
- To provide equitable treatment for all candidates

The process will consist of completion of an application form detailing qualifications, work experience, reasons for application and outline of research interests and intended project. You will also be expected to supply the names of two referees, one academic and one professional. Interviews will not normally be conducted except in the case of APL/APEL candidates or other exceptional circumstances but all candidates will be offered the opportunity to meet with or have a telephone discussion with the Course Leader or designate to ensure their understanding of the demands of the programme. Where this happens, it will not form part of the selection and entry decision.

Full time members of the University's academic staff should constitute no more than 25% of any DBA cohort. If there are more internal candidates who meet the admission criteria than are allowed entry by this quota then the candidates will be admitted to the programme in order of the receipt of their applications until the maximum number is met. This criteria of order of receipt will also apply to external candidates should applications exceed the maximum number of 30 students set for any single cohort.

Counselling for Unsuccessful Candidates

Unsuccessful candidates will be counselled by the Course Leader or designate as to the reasons and may be permitted to reapply at a later date or guided on suitable alternative programmes.

Student Support and Guidance

As with any large university Leeds Metropolitan University provides a wide range of student support services including specialist services for international students. These services are available to all students of the university and so will be equally available to those on the DBA programme. The specific services provided for students on the DBA are listed below.

DBA Specific Support

There will be different forms of student support, including the following.

- Admission and induction arrangements
- Academic guidance and tutorial support
- Pastoral welfare support

The first of these will be provided primarily by the Course Leader. The first Module of the programme will include a detailed induction. This will cover the following.

- Meeting with programme staff and potential supervisors
- Information dissemination (Programme Handbook)
- Learning centre induction and meeting specialist Learning Adviser
- Team building activity
- Introduction to the programme
- Setting and meeting expectations
- Guidance on and formation of Action Learning Sets

The second form of support will be provided primarily by academic supervisors. As stated previously, each student will benefit from two allocated supervisors. The third form of support will be provided primarily by the Course Leader. Supervisors will share in this provision but the Course Leader will provide personal tutorial support to each student as and when needed.

Information For Students

Students will also be supported with a range of information sources. These will include a Student Programme Handbook which will provide the following information.

- Programme description and intended learning outcomes
- Programme timetable
- Staff and student responsibilities
- Assignment information including and assessment timetable
- Assessment regulations
- Process for submission of assignments
- Process for requesting extensions and other mitigation processes
- Policy on return of assignments and provision of feedback on performance
- University policies on plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice
- Policies on complaints and appeals
- Information on University student support services

Each module will also be supported by a Module Handbook which will provide detailed information on learning outcomes, timetable, teaching staff, reading list, suggested resources and pre and post work including detailed guidance on the associated assignment.

The course team are confident that these specific arrangements for student support will in complement with the wider University support services meet the needs of all students attracted to the programme and will also be effective in supporting their successful completion of the programme and achievement of the award.

Accommodation

Staff of LBS are situated in two buildings on Headingley Campus and benefit from good quality refurbished accommodation. The same buildings also provide teaching and study space of similar good quality. These comprise 29 teaching, seminar and interview rooms and three dedicated lecture theatres, all of which contain modern IT learning and teaching equipment and resources. The buildings also contain dedicated IT rooms which are supplemented by those in the Learning Centre in James Graham building. The campus enjoys excellent catering facilities.

The University has recently invested significantly in accommodation in a number of buildings on the City Campus and these will also be available to the DBA. It is also investing in a new facility, the Rose Bowl, in the centre of the city where LBS will relocate in 2009. This building will provide extensive and state of the art staff accommodation and learning and teaching facilities.

Learning Resources

The University's Learning Support Services provide extensive facilities to both staff and students. These comprise unified and integrated library, computing, reprographic, media and educational development services. The DBA will be associated primarily with the services located in James Graham building on the Headingley campus. Additional information and detail on these services is contained in the attached booklet.

What to do Next

For more information or to discuss the course please use the contact details below. To apply for a place on the DBA please complete the application form and send it with the names, contact details of two referees and their references to The Executive Business School Limited.

Contact Details

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