

Open University of Mauritius

Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA)-OUdb001

1. Introduction

Businesses are increasingly confronted by novel situations that cannot always be solved using past practices and strategies. As change, fuelled by globalisation, continues to accelerate, leaders have to develop organisations where knowledge informs practice and policy especially through the conduct of work related research. This Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) has been designed to offer individuals the opportunity to improve business performance by combining experience acquired as a professional and the academic research techniques learnt at the university while producing an original doctoral-level research project. Therefore, people in employment can pursue practised-based research within an organisation to tackle real workplace challenges. As part of the DBA, students are taught the use of research techniques that enable them to understand and reflect upon their ability to utilise and apply theory in order to improve workplace practices. Thus, they develop doctoral-level thinking, a superior capacity to investigate, and research skills as they work through the issues of corporate concern. The synthesis of practical experience and theoretical frameworks together with effective methodological approaches also empower individuals and organizations with new perspectives that add value.

The DBA differs from a Ph.D. The DBA is a professional doctorate that focuses on business issues and makes contribution to workplace practice, policies and strategies through research carried out in the context of professional practice. Ph.D. aims at making significant contribution to an area of knowledge.

After completing the DBA successfully, the students are expected to acquire several skills including:

- Demonstrating expertise in one or more subject disciplines;
- Identifying vital and novel business issues;
- Searching and reviewing literature;
- Developing business research questions;
- Using research methods effectively;
- Mastery of techniques to collect, analyze and present data;
- Creating knowledge that is of theoretical and practical significance;
- Demonstrating an ethical attitude when designing and conducting research;
- Writing skills required to present the ideas in a coherent way; and
- Presentation skills required to disseminate work.

2. Aim

The DBA course aims at empowering learners to extend and build upon their professional experience through:

- (a) A thorough grounding in research methodology, methods and techniques;
- (b) Development of vital skills including critical thinking, conducting research, writing, synthesising, and analysing, that are necessary to produce an original research-based thesis as well as to contribute significantly to the relevant literature and professional practice;
- (c) Preparation of a substantial and original thesis emanating from an in-depth investigation and analysis of a particular corporate issue or set of issues;
- (d) Bridging the gap between theory and practice by establishing solid links between the University and the world of business; and
- (e) Development of professional excellence through a programme of study that is both academically challenging and professionally relevant.

3. Entry Requirements

Applicants must have the following:

1. A masters-level degree, either an MBA or a specialist MA or M.Sc. in a related area; and
2. Evidence of substantial management or professional work experience, including within the academic profession.

Prior Learning and Prior Experiential Learning may be considered by the Open University of Mauritius for admission to this programme. Applicants may be asked to pass an entry test. Applicants with undergraduate degrees and professional experience can elect to complete an MBA degree while pursuing their doctorate. The MBA degree comprises 15 modules.

4. Programme Duration

	Minimum	Maximum
DBA	3 years	6 years

5. Course Structure

The structure consists of six courses aimed at developing learners' expertise in the use of research in order to explore professional practice.

Course Stage

Year 1-Semester I

OUDb001111: Research Issues and Professional Practice

OUdb001112: Systematic Literature Review

OUdb001113: Quantitative Methods for Business

Year 1-Semester II

OUdb001121: Research Methods I: Quantitative Research Methods for Business

OUdb001122: Research Methods II: Qualitative Research Methods for Business

Mentored Stage

Year 2-Semester I

OUdb001211: Business Specialisation Research

Supervised Stage

Year 2 – Semester II

Year 3 – Semester I and II

OUdb001311: DBA Thesis

6. Assessment

Each module carries 100 marks and will be assessed as follows:

OUdb001111: Research Issues and Professional Practice

This element will require a written submission of 3,000 words.

OUdb001112: Systematic Literature Review

This element will require a written submission of 5,000 words.

OUdb001113: Quantitative Methods for Business.

Students will be a given set of data that they have to analyse. The assignment will consist of writing a report on the data analysis.

OUdb001121: Research Methods I: Quantitative Research Methods for Business

This element will require a written submission of 2,500 words.

OUdb001122: Research Methods II: Qualitative Research Methods for Business

This element will require a written submission of 2,500 words.

OUdb001211: Business Specialisation Research

The element will require the submission of a research proposal.

For a student to pass a module, an overall total of 40% for combined continuous assessment

OUdb001311: DBA Thesis

The element will require the submission of a thesis of 50,000 words.

The thesis is then submitted formally to the University. Assessment takes the form of a review followed by an oral 'defence' of the thesis, usually referred to as the 'viva voce' which is Latin for 'with the living voice'. The examination is conducted in person or by live video link at the University's discretion. The DBA degree is awarded to successful students.

7. Course Outline

OUdb001111: Research Issues and Professional Practice

This course gives student a basic understanding of what research is and how it is done. It also introduces some of the key issues associated with doctoral research and writing. Attention is given to the nature of the research process, including the steps to be followed in planning and designing a research project and this leads to the consideration of the philosophy of research and the means by which researchers identify issues and acquire knowledge.

The topics covered include: the concept of research; philosophy of research in business and management; demonstrate understanding of philosophical assumptions and different underpinning research approaches and strategies; understanding the specifics of management and business research; choosing a research topic and research focus; evaluating topic feasibility; research process; qualitative and quantitative research; overview of research methods; application to business research; writing a research proposal; ethics in research; and developing a research timetable. Professional Practice provides students with a critical awareness of business issues and methods that will allow exploration of how they occur in practice and enable reflection; discussion of business research case studies; identify the role of research in their chosen area; and identify relevant management issues.

OUdb001112: Systematic Literature Review

The course allows students to understand the methods to conduct literature review systematically; students will learn how to describe and critically analyse the work of other people. Students also undertake a program of directed, in depth reading to an advanced level in the field of research in which they wish to specialise for their dissertation.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of the field of research to be studied and the interrelationship of the topic areas within the field; they should be able to thoroughly analyse and evaluate a range of

critical and controversial issues drawn from the literature of the field of research as well as critically discuss the key debates within the chosen field of research. Students are also expected to develop the research problem with reference to relevant ideas in their discipline while synthesizing ideas at a high level of understanding; this would allow them to start creating new knowledge through the development of a relevant conceptual framework.

The topics covered include: the concept of a literature review; analysis and synthesis of academic literature; theory development; sources of information and search techniques; the structure and format of a business literature review.

OUdb001113: Quantitative Methods for Business.

This course gives an opportunity to the students to understand the various quantitative techniques.

The topics covered include: descriptive statistics; probability and basic mathematical statistics; sampling; confidence intervals; hypothesis testing; ANOVA; Multiple Regression analysis; Categorical data analysis; Non-parametric statistics; Logistic Regression Discriminant analysis; Cluster analysis; and Factor analysis

OUdb001121: Research Methods I: Quantitative Research Methods for Business

This course gives an opportunity to the students to understand the various quantitative research methods.

The topics covered include: quantitative data production techniques and collection; quantitative data analysis; questionnaire design; reliability and validity issues; and generalisations.

OUdb001122: Research Methods II: Qualitative Research Methods for Business

This course gives an opportunity to the students to understand the various qualitative research methods.

In this course, students explore qualitative research approaches such as Grounded theory, case-based research, action research and the use of software like N-Vivo.

Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.

OUdb001211: Business Specialisation Research

With the help of a mentor, students must prepare a comprehensive research proposal that will form the basis of his/her thesis.

After exploring the key issues and critically reflecting on relevant aspects of practice and their relationship with theory, students must finalise the topic of the thesis. They must assess the appropriateness of research paradigms; finalise the research framework that will guide their investigation; develop a thorough knowledge of the paradigms and methodologies by which knowledge in the field of their enquiry has been advanced and develop and robustly defend their chosen research approach. Thus, they must critically examine the use of different research methodologies employed by researchers in the chosen field of research (This will help to write the Research Methods chapter). They must demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of research activity and issues within the field of research and the interrelationship of research results among the topic areas as well as a thorough understanding of the research problems in the particular area chosen for the thesis. They must master the techniques and methodologies that are likely to be productive in addressing the chosen research problem.

The research proposal must be submitted to the Open University Research Committee for review and approval. Once the research proposal is accepted, students will be allocated a supervisor.

OUdb001311: DBA Thesis

The student, under the direction of the appointed supervisor(s), will work on the thesis. They have to identify, analyse and propose solutions to the selected problem(s) through the application of knowledge, thereby improving professional practice or understanding.