



# **University of Plymouth**

Faculty of Social Science and Business

## **Programme Specification**

### **Doctorate in Business Administration**

(full title(s) as approved)

## Brief description of Programme

The Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) programme provides the basis for candidates to undertake an individual research project through the synthesis of practical experience and theoretical frameworks. Through the DBA and the interaction between theory and practice individual understanding is enhanced and practical solutions for organisational difficulties may be established. The interaction between theory and practice through precise methodological approaches give individuals and organisations new perspectives that add value in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and capability.

In the initial stages of the programme there is an emphasis on close direction through workshops, presentations and written papers. On the basis of the written papers and a research proposal the second phase involves the completion of a thesis. Individual tuition and supervision will be available for the duration of the programme. Candidates bring their own practical expertise to the programme consequently the tuition and supervision concentrate on areas new to candidates e.g. literature review, methodology, data collection, theory and analysis.

Candidates will be expected to concentrate on an issue directly related to their work place experiences; such a project could take the form of solving a problem or identifying new operational procedures. Before the thesis is started the area or research will be agreed by the University, individual student and any other participating organisations.

This scheme would enable the Business School to address the identified gap in the South West Peninsula market as well as the growing national and international markets by targeting three potential market facets:

- (a) Executive and senior level private, public sector and not for profit managers seeking awareness of leadership as a means of enhancing their strategic level performance
- (b) Middle level managers and clinicians seeking to enhance their approach to leadership skills and the management of professionals in the private and public sector
- (c) Entrepreneurs and managers looking for educational experience that will enhance their reflective practice, self-awareness and capability when dealing with complexity.

The programme involves special features such as placements, part-time, distance learning, fieldwork, typical careers, work-based learning. But primarily bloc delivery modules taught over two/three day sessions

The DBA will clearly illustrate how theory and practice interact in the process of research and enabling understanding.

### Distinctive features

The philosophy of the DBA at PBS considers that practice and theory have separate discourses. There exists a theory discourse, a practical discourse, and to link these distinct perspectives, a mediating discourse. Indeed, through methodological techniques and research strategies the DBA at PBS provides this mediating discourse. Distinctive features include:

- Cohort teaching and research environments
- Direct involvement with a research community
- Emphasis on action learning and research
- Interaction between theory and practice
- Reflexivity and reflective methodological approaches

### Entry requirements

Entry requirements will reflect the status of the programme and include work-place experience as well as postgraduate and (where appropriate) undergraduate qualifications. All prospective candidates will be interviewed and their capability to undertake the taught part of the programme established at this point. Progression onto the research element of the programme will depend on successful completion of six modules and research proposal.

### Progression routes

PGDip, M.Res; Research Proposal; Doctorate.

### Programme aims

The aims are to ensure programme participants will be able to:

- Develop knowledge of the paradigms of inquiry pertinent to doctoral research;
- Understand methodological approaches and methods of data collection in ensuring rigour, validity and reliability;
- Assess the validity of mediating discourses;
- Deal with information sources, and analytical tools pertinent to effective research and analysis in business and management studies;
- Reflect upon past experience and academic achievements as part of a carefully considered set of research activities;
- Understand the relationship between leadership, values and ethics;
- Become aware of reflexivity and utilise within the research process;
- Learn how to understand the relationship between theory and practice discourses;
- Develop an understanding of the nature and conceptual framework of business and management knowledge and innovation;
- Enhance consultancy, project management, teamwork, research,

leadership and organisational skills;

- Develop higher-level transferable and personal skills such as reasoning, report writing, independent learning, communication, critical thinking, personal management and presentation skills;

Intended programme learning outcomes

## **Knowledge and understanding**

On completion graduates should have developed:

Doctoral level knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

- A1. Possess expert knowledge and understanding of a subject area relevant to their work place QAA(ii)
- A2. Provide evidence for the creation and interpretation of new knowledge at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice. QAA(ii)
- A3. Display a critical understanding of complex and specialised research knowledge and skills through the development of research proposals that demonstrate a) the potential for the creation of new knowledge at the forefront of their academic discipline or their area of professional practice b) the use of appropriate techniques/methodologies in their research. QAA(ii)
- A4. Display an ability to apply theory to professional practice. QAA(iii)

Teaching and learning methods and strategies:

Reflective practice, reflexivity, action learning sets, action research (including participatory and non-participatory observations), focus groups, lectures, seminars, tutorials and self-directed study.

Reflective practice, reflexivity and in-depth understanding will be strongly encouraged. This will ensure the formulation and dissemination of valid knowledge of self and organisational situation.

Assessment strategies:

Coursework (Learning Agreement, investigative project reports, seminar presentations), examination (viva voce by external and internal examiners)


Participants will be encouraged to keep diaries and progression will be assessed by annual monitoring and a portfolio of course-work (3 written assignments). Assignment (a) will deal with literature relating to methodology, theory and practical situation; assignment (b) with methodology/methods; and assignment (c) with theory. The proposal should illustrate how the theory, methodology, methods and area of research link together.

Overall, students will be tracked through annual monitoring and the design of a log book to record student progression regarding research design, understanding of philosophical perspectives and methodology, data collection

	<p>procedures, formulation of theoretical frameworks. The log book will be kept by the student and through reflexivity and self diagnosis, in tandem with meetings with supervisors and specialist panels, personal development will be closely monitored. Progress will also be monitored through annual papers delivered to the Business School research seminars.)</p>
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<p><b>Cognitive and intellectual skills</b></p> <p>On completion graduates should have developed:</p> <p><b>B1. Display a critical understanding of complex and specialised research knowledge and techniques in relation to the specific research programme followed. QAA(iv)</b></p> <p><b>B2. Plan research work, which is original, coherent and significant to their professional area. QAA(iii)</b></p> <p><b>B3 Critically appraise research methods for their appropriateness to the area of enquiry. QAA(iv)</b></p>	<p>Teaching and learning methods and strategies:</p> <p>Reflective practice, reflexivity, action learning sets, action research including participatory and non-participatory observations, focus groups, seminars, tutorials, self-directed study and supervision sessions</p> <p>Reflective practice, reflexivity and in-depth understanding will be strongly encouraged. This will ensure the formulation and dissemination of valid knowledge of self and organisational situation.</p> <p>Assessment strategies:</p> <p>Coursework (Learning Agreement, investigative project reports, seminar presentations), examination (viva voce by external and internal examiners.</p> <p>Participants will be encouraged to keep diaries and progression will be assessed by annual monitoring and a portfolio of course-work (3 written assignments). Assignment (a) will deal with literature relating to methodology, theory and practical situation; assignment (b) with methodology/methods; and assignment (c) with theory. The proposal should illustrate how the theory, methodology, methods and</p>
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	<p>area of research link together.</p> <p>Overall, students will be tracked through annual monitoring and the design of a log book to record student progression regarding research design, understanding of philosophical perspectives and methodology, data collection procedures, formulation of theoretical frameworks. The log book will be kept by the student and through reflexivity and self diagnosis, in tandem with meetings with supervisors and specialist panels, personal development will be closely monitored. Progress will also be monitored through annual papers delivered to the Business School research seminars.)</p>
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<p><b>Key and transferable skills</b></p> <p>On completion graduates should have developed:</p> <p><b>C1. Apply and develop appropriate techniques/methods in research and scholarship. QAA(iv)</b></p> <p><b>C2. Communicate, discuss, evaluate and defend ideas and conclusions to the satisfaction of peers and to non-specialist audiences. QAA(i)</b></p> <p><b>C3 Present information/reports clearly and concisely at a level judged suitable for publication in refereed academic and professional journals. QAA(i)</b></p> <p><b>C4 Collect, record and interpret qualitative and/or quantitative data and demonstrate advance academic enquiry. QAA(iv)</b></p> <p><b>C5 Recognise, and describe problems in the work place, plan and implement solutions.</b></p>		<p>Teaching and learning methods and strategies:</p> <p>Peer presentation, action learning sets, critical friend feedback, supervision sessions, tutorials and self-directed study.</p> <p>Assessment strategies:</p> <p>Coursework (Learning Agreement, investigative project reports, which can be presented in a journal article format, seminar presentations), examination (viva voce by external and internal examiners)</p>
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**Employment related skills**

On completion graduates should have developed:

**D1. Display an ability to apply theory to professional practice. QAA(iii)**

**D2. To work independently dealing with complex and unpredictable situations in the work environment. QAA(iii)**

**D3. Provide evidence of original contribution to the development and/or implementation of new methods or system of practice. QAA(i)**

**D4. Provide implications for the further development of their specific professional practice in relation to their own work, its context, and the form future development would take. QAA(iii)**

The above should demonstrate the command of advanced research and professional skills.



Teaching and learning methods and strategies:  
Action learning sets, reflection seminars, critical friend feedback, supervision sessions and self-directed study.

Assessment strategies:  
Coursework (Learning Agreement, investigative project reports, which can be presented in a journal article format, seminar presentations), examination (viva voce by external and internal examiners)

**Practical skills**

On completion graduates should have developed:

**C1. Display an ability to apply theory to professional practice. QAA(iii)**

**C2. To work independently dealing with complex and unpredictable situations in the work environment. QAA(iii)**

**C3. Provide evidence of original contribution to the development and/or implementation of new methods or system of practice. QAA(i)**

**C4. Provide implications for the further development of their specific professional practice in**



Teaching and learning methods and strategies:  
Action learning sets, reflection seminars, critical friend feedback, supervision sessions and self-directed study.

Assessment strategies:  
Coursework (Learning Agreement, investigative project reports, which can be presented in a journal article format, seminar presentations), examination (viva voce by external and internal examiners)



<p>relation to their own work, its context, and the form future development would take.  <b>QAA(iii)</b>  The above should demonstrate the command of advanced research and professional skills.</p> <p><b>QAA National Qualifications Framework/UK Council for Graduate Education – Descriptor for qualifications at Doctoral level</b></p> <p><b>QAA (i) The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;</b>  <b>QAA (ii) A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;</b>  <b>QAA (iii) The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a investigative project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the investigative project design in the light of unforeseen problems;</b>  <b>QAA (iv) A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.</b></p>	
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<b>Programme structure and pathways</b>
(a diagram, including core and option modules, credits and levels)

<b>Exceptions/ special academic regulations</b>

Final award title	Indicate appropriate level from Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
Level	D
Intermediate award title(s)	
Level	
Awarding institution	University of Plymouth
Teaching institution	If different from University of Plymouth
Accrediting body	Where this is relevant
Appropriate benchmark(s)	
UCAS code	
JACS code	

**Appendix:**

**Mapping of intended programme learning outcomes**

Mapping document showing intended programme outcomes at each level of the award linked to FHEQ, subject benchmark and the core modules where these are primarily demonstrated. The [mapping proforma](#) is available from the EDaLT community under 'Designing your Programmes and Modules'.

(<http://staff.plymouth.ac.uk/edalt/learning/intranet.htm>)

This is needed for approval and programme modifications, but is not normally included in the programme specification itself.

**Date of production:**

**Date of most recent approval:**

**By (e.g. Approval Panel/ Faculty Board):**