Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

www.wit.ie/dba

Your Questions Answered
on the WIT DBA

Issued: 14.4.2020
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Is the DBA for me?

What is a DBA?
A DBA is a Doctor of Business Administration. It is primarily designed to enable a significant contribution to the enhancement of professional practice in the business area through the application and development of theoretical frameworks (Association of Business Schools, 2005). The qualification at doctoral-level places an emphasis on “relevance, engagement and development” (Anderson et al., 2015). A DBA is an equivalent qualification to that of a PhD, and is awarded by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). On successful completion of the programme, you will be entitled to use the title ‘Doctor’.

What is the programme focus?
The DBA focuses on the application of theoretical knowledge to the advancement of management and business practice. It is designed to improve business and managerial practice through the development of the professional, intellectual and academic skills of each participant. It is focused on: enhancing enterprise leadership and development skills; assimilating knowledge; honing analytical, conceptual and critical thinking skills and developing advanced research skills.

How does a DBA differ from a PhD?
The DBA is a professional practice research degree where the field of study is within the management discipline, and the application of theory is to field-based research in pursuit of innovative executive and professional practice. It allows participants to develop their ability to conduct empirical research on managerial areas of interest, often within their own organisation. Most PhD graduates lead careers as academics or as senior researchers in business. The DBA and PhD are academically equivalent in that both entail a rigorous course of study and typically culminate in the defence of a doctoral dissertation.

How does a DBA differ from an MBA or equivalent executive Masters?
The DBA provides a logical intellectual growth path for an executive master’s graduate, who has a broad set of business skills, and knowledge in traditional management areas as a result of his/her previous studies. The Doctorate has a stronger research orientation than the master’s and allows participants to study a particular management challenge in great detail through an in-depth study.
Is the DBA for me?

The DBA is aimed at mid-career individuals who have already established themselves as business leaders or are on track to being appointed to executive positions and are supported in their academic ambition by their employing organisation. The programme combines workplace and professional engagement with the scholarly rigour of the academic institution. The DBA aims to develop the participant’s ability to undertake independent research at an advanced level and make a significant contribution to knowledge and professional practice through the evaluation of business management structures, contexts and processes.

What qualifications do I need?

Standard applicants will have an MBA (or equivalent master’s degree in the field of business and management or organisation studies) and a minimum of five years management experience, ideally at senior level. Applicants should also display a competence in solving problems analytically and in separating opportunities and challenges in terms of cause and effect, as well as the potential to conduct research. Applicants will also be required to have a proficiency in English and for international applications, non-native English speakers will be required to provide certification of English language competence as part of the application process.

In exceptional circumstances, in the absence of a business master’s qualification, an appropriate professional qualification or significant senior management experience may be considered.

Is the DBA open to all international applicants?

Yes. We are delighted to welcome international applicants to the programme, and our DBA programmes have had participants living in a range of countries (within and outside the EU). Because of the nature of the DBA, participants are not required to move to Ireland to participate, as they are only required to be on campus for a maximum of 7 days per academic year, with online access to the programme content and supports. Therefore, please note that, as the programme is part-time, it is not eligible for consideration for an entry visa for international applicants from countries which require an entry visa from the Irish government.

What is the value of a DBA?

This qualification is increasingly recognised by international business and management schools as the most appropriate post-MBA (or equivalent master’s degree) route to combining academic research on management and business with further personal and professional development.
What is the benefit of the programme to my career?

The DBA focuses on the skills required to contribute to the enrichment of trans-disciplinary professional practice in management. There is strong demand for professionals who have completed a high level of training in management and business-related areas, and who possess highly developed skills in undertaking research.

What will I learn?

The programme allows participants to understand prevailing practices in the subject area of their field of research; to acquire the necessary understanding and expertise in appropriate research design, data-collection methods and data-analysis techniques; to conduct, write-up and disseminate high-quality research of doctoral standard; and to achieve a greater level of effectiveness in managing business innovation and change.

What is the benefit of the programme to my organisation/business?

Sponsoring organisations will benefit from a substantial body of work through the DBA thesis. As well as meeting the requirements of doctoral education, the thesis also provides a valuable opportunity to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice through a major research study that adds value and contributes new knowledge that is immediately applicable to managerial practice. Through the application of research to business problems and issues, the DBA deliverables can also help organisations facing a complex global business environment. The DBA seeks to enhance professional practice by:

- Focusing on professional development;
- Enhancing enterprise leadership and development skills;
- Assimilating knowledge;
- Honing analytical, conceptual and critical thinking skills; and
- Developing advanced research skills.

What opportunities does the WIT DBA provide for its graduates?

Based on the evidence to date, WIT DBA graduates have advanced career opportunities in their own organisations and some have leveraged the DBA as a means to broaden career opportunities. As participants have come from a range of sectors and professional practices the outcomes are specific to context e.g. senior consultants, public service executives, and multinational firm managers. Whilst the PhD is typically the qualification of choice for those pursuing a career in academia, some participants have used the DBA qualification as means to pursue academic career opportunities. Participants on the programme have engaged in scholarly dissemination of their practice-based
research which involves international conference presentations, journal and book publications - please see some examples on our DBA website at: https://www.wit.ie/schools/business/research/doctorate_in_business_administration#tab=panel-5

What are completion rates like on the DBA?

The WIT DBA has an extremely strong record for DBA completions which measures very favourably against international benchmarks. WIT invests substantial resources in the programme to support participants through the process.

What supports are available to the DBA student?

A range of supports is available to the DBA participant, at a number of levels:

Institute: Access to WIT electronic databases and off campus library resources, institutional research events, researcher networking, library workshops on topics such as Endnote, counselling/support.

Department: Dedicated programme Coordinator team working with each participant, Postgraduate Administrator, Head of Department of Graduate Business.

Programme specific: Customised workshops on core researcher development strategy and skills, online forums and programme specific resources, special guest lectures, dedicated research supervisory team appointed in Year 2 until programme completion, research paper series with international examiner team.

How is the DBA recognised?

Our programme is recognised as part of the Executive DBA Council (EDBAC), a global network of DBA providers fostering excellence and innovation in global executive DBA programmes worldwide - http://www.executivedba.org

The DBA is accredited by the national accrediting body Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Further information can be viewed at: https://www.qqi.ie/
How do I apply?

A DBA cohort commenced in January, 2020. We typically have two-year cycles of the programme. As we commenced on a programme this Spring term, in the natural cycle following past practices we would be commencing potentially in January 2022 however September has been a commencement period also, so we do review the situation. It should be noted that there has been a consistently strong demand for the programme and it is advised that prospective candidates register their interest at an early stage so that they can be advised of dates for Open Events and other opportunities to meet with the programme directors, head of department and faculty teaching on the programme.

How do I register my future interest in the programme now?

You can register your interest at graduatebusiness@wit.ie inserting "DBA Next Intake" in the subject line, and include in the main body of the message: your full name, organisation and position, and telephone and email contact details. We will then contact you in due course to let you know the date of our next open evening for the programme together with full details of the application process.

How are applications to the programme made?

Applications for this programme are made online by going to www.pac.ie

Please note that PAC is not at this point open for applications for the next DBA recruitment cycle.

1. You will first need to register with PAC.
2. Click on Waterford Institute of Technology icon under Institutions.
3. Click on ‘Taught Programme Listing.’
4. Type in ‘WD560’ (or ‘doctorate’) into search box, and then click on ‘Apply’.
Will I need to upload documents to the PAC site?

Yes – the Registrar’s Office will require that all examination transcripts are uploaded to your PAC application, as these are required for assessment of your application.

Please note, that if English is not your first language, you are required to upload certified evidence to your PAC application of English language competency. Please refer to this link for details of requirements: https://www.wit.ie/about_wit/documents_and_policies/english_language_requirements#tab=panel-2

As part of the screening for the programme, candidates will be required to detail in their application: (1) professional career goals (2) planned research ideas and (3) outline how participation in the DBA programme will support own personal development. These are then discussed with candidates in greater detail during their first DBA workshop.

Is there an application fee?

Yes – there is a non-refundable application fee of €50, payable to PAC (the central national postgraduate processing facility), by credit card/debit card.

Once payment is received you can then proceed to upload your documentation.

For general questions on the PAC application process (including scanning of transcripts etc.), please refer to FAQ at: http://www.pac.ie/faq.php?inst=home&ln=e

What is the closing date for applications?

The PAC system will accept applications for the DBA up to two months before the start of the programme. Subject to demand and the limited places available, the programme may fill before this date, in which case PAC will close for applications.

What happens after my PAC application?

All applications will be reviewed, for eligibility. An interview is part of the application process, and applications may be shortlisted for interview.

Therefore, please ensure that you meet the requirements, as defined above, as ineligible candidates will not be interviewed. If you need any clarification on this in advance of your PAC application, please contact us.
Are there a limited number of places on the programme?

Yes – the programme has a limited number of places available on it and securing an offer of a place on the programme is based upon successfully meeting the requirements of the application and interviewing process within the constraint of the places available. Based on previous recruitment cycles the average number of participants is about 12 for a programme cohort.

When will the interviews happen?

These will take place usually one month before the commencement of the course and will be scheduled over a two-day period at times agreed with prospective students. Full details will be provided to all applicants nearer the time.

Do I require professional referees?

Yes. You will need to provide details of academic and professional referees as part of the application process.
How much does the DBA cost? (Jan 2020 programme)

The total fee for the DBA commencing January 2020, payable over four years, is €35,000*. The fee payment provides access to our online learning environment (Moodle) which is a critical element of the blended learning approach in the DBA programme.

When do I pay the fees?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Payment 1 on Registration (by January 31st latest)</th>
<th>Payment 2 (October latest)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>€5,000</td>
<td>€5,500</td>
<td>€11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>€5,500</td>
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<td>€11,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>€3,250</td>
<td>€3,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>€3,250</td>
<td>€3,250</td>
<td>€6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>€35,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If the DBA extends into the fifth academic year and the DBA candidate is writing up the DBA thesis there are no fees attached for that academic year. If the work and its examination continues into the following 6th academic year there are additional fees applied. Within the middle part of the DBA (Phase II section, Cumulative Paper Series – see details below), if any of the four paper examinations are not completed within that cycle phase, there are additional fees applied for any special examination sittings that are necessitated due to being out of cycle and the additional resources required to facilitate this process.

Are there any government rebates/deductions available in relation to fees?

Tax relief at the standard rate is available for fees up to a certain limit, which changes from year to year. Full details available at: [http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/leaflets/it31.html](http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/leaflets/it31.html)
How is the programme delivered?

How long is the DBA programme?
The DBA is a part-time programme, completed over a minimum four-year period.

How much time will I need to commit to the programme?
The amount of time required varies with each participant; however, you can expect to spend approximately 15-20 hours per week on the programme work and related reading.

What is a workshop?
A workshop is a brief intensive course for a small focused group of participants, with an emphasis on problem solving, research skill development and professional skill development.

What is the structure of the DBA?
Each phase incorporates a number of 1-3* day workshops and independent research, maintaining a balance between peer-learning and self-led learning within the programme. The DBA has been designed based on an innovative three-phase model: Phase one (year 1 and 2 - workshop series) accounts for 60 credits of the programme, Phase two (year 3 and 4 - cumulative research paper series) accounts for 100 credits of the programme, and the DBA thesis submission and defence accounts for the 80 credits of the programme.

* One event, the Workshop 4/Doctoral Colloquium is a four-day event

What is the content of each phase of the DBA programme?
Phase one focuses on supporting the research design and application through examining current and topical methodological questions and debates. Through a series of intensive workshops, provided by the School’s leading academics, participants develop advanced research skills to be applied in Phase two of the research process, when they carry out an extended study under the tutelage of a trained professional and in interaction with their peers through a cumulative ‘research paper’ series. In Phase three, participants will present and defend their thesis, amalgamating their paper series (from Phase 2), and adding in introduction and context, discussion, conclusions and recommendations and reflections.
**Why is the DBA broken into phases?**

The DBA is broken into phases to allow participants to develop their research skills prior to embarking on the research journey, and to offer participants continued support through the research process.

**Can I progress if I do not finish all workshops in phase 1 or a paper in Phase 2?**

No. Each phase’s workshops and related assessments must be successfully completed before progressing to a subsequent phase. In the Phase 2 paper series, it is not possible to progress to a subsequent paper until the preceding paper examination has been successfully completed. If this happens, you will then be outside of the ‘research paper cycle’ for that cohort which will require additional time and cost to complete the programme.

**How are workshops delivered?**

Workshops are delivered in two to three* day blocks to allow for immersion in the subject material. *One event, the Workshop 4/Doctoral Colloquium is a four-day event

**Who delivers the workshop(s)?**

Workshops are facilitated by the School faculty and well-established researchers, along with visiting professors and senior management professionals.

**When do the workshops take place?**

A series of five workshops incorporating twelve modules and the doctoral colloquium will be held over a 30-month period (averaging one per semester). A series of research paper presentations and examinations will be held over the subsequent 18 months prior to submission of the thesis. Below, you will see the schedule for all workshops and research paper presentations, over the duration of the programme.

**Please note:**

All workshop and paper series dates once fixed do not change and attendance is mandatory.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date / Days</th>
<th>Workshop (5)/Modules (12)/Papers (4)/DBA Thesis &amp; Viva</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2020 | Mar 12\textsuperscript{th} – 13\textsuperscript{th} (2 days) | \textit{Professional Skill Development [Incl. Induction]} \textbf{1}  
Professional Skills Development 1  
Professional Skills Development 2 | 10 |
| 2020 | Oct 1\textsuperscript{st} – 2\textsuperscript{nd} (2 days) | \textit{Business Theory Development and Application} \textbf{2}  
Business Theory Development and Application 1  
Business Theory Development and Application 2 | 10 |
| 2021 | Mar 25\textsuperscript{th} – 27\textsuperscript{th} (3 days) | \textit{Research Design} \textbf{3}  
Developing Research Ideas  
Research Philosophy  
Research Techniques | 15 |
| 2021 | Nov 3\textsuperscript{rd} – 4\textsuperscript{th} (4 days)  
Nov 5\textsuperscript{th}–6\textsuperscript{th} | \textit{Research Paper – Preparation & Delivery} \textbf{4}  
Critical Inquiry Techniques  
Research Paper Preparation and Review  
Reflective Research Practice  
Research Paper 1*: Conceptual Paper | 15 |
| 2022 | Apr 7\textsuperscript{th} – 8\textsuperscript{th} (2 days) | \textit{Data Analysis} \textbf{5}  
Advanced Statistical Analysis  
Qualitative Data Analysis | 10 |
| 2022 | Oct 13\textsuperscript{th} – 14\textsuperscript{th} (2 days) | \textit{Research Paper 2: Methodology} | 25 |
| 2023 | Apr 20\textsuperscript{th} – 21\textsuperscript{st} (2 days) | \textit{Research Paper 3: Design/ Initial findings} | 25 |
| 2023 | Oct 26\textsuperscript{th} – 27\textsuperscript{th} (2 days) | \textit{Research Paper 4: Findings and Discussion} | 25 |
| 2024 | | \textit{DBA Thesis/viva voce} | 80 |

What happens between the on-campus workshop/paper series days?

The programme is designed and delivered as a continuously running set of workshops, paper examinations and final thesis and viva preparations. While the table above indicates the brief on-campus commitments, there is significant independent and workshop tutor or supervisor supported work completed by participants over the intervening periods. The intervening periods are also
facilitated by our virtual learning platform, Moodle. The Moodle site for each workshop is opened about 10 weeks in advance of the event to facilitate pre-workshop engagement with resources. Looking at a workshop as an example, there is a need in the months in advance of the workshop to read and critique readings provided by workshop tutors, to continue to read more deeply on your own chosen topic area and write about it, and to prepare pre-workshop assignments as set by the workshop tutor. Following the workshop there is typically a substantial piece of assessment to be completed over the months following. A detailed DBA Time Planner is provided to all participants which indicates the particular week that one workshop’s activities close and the next workshop’s activities commence. Tutors on each workshop provide the specific timelines for workshop assessments and deliverables.

Where do the workshops take place?

The workshops will take place in the dedicated School of Business Executive Suite D01 on the Cork Road (R680), Main Campus and please see campus directions on our WIT website at:

https://www.wit.ie/about_wit/contact_us/campus-locations

What is a ‘doctoral colloquium’?

A colloquium is an academic seminar covering a specific field of study, where research is presented across a wide range of topics, in this case within the business management discipline. On the DBA it represents the official transfer from Phase 1 workshops to Phase 2 cumulative paper series of the programme. The first paper of the paper series is presented at this event is the Conceptual Paper. As it is an official transfer process, success in this paper is required to transfer into Phase 2 of the programme.
How will my work be assessed?

What is involved in workshop assessment and presenting a research paper?

For the workshops, assessment is set in line with the learning outcomes of each module within the workshop and generally includes a mix of desk research and written assignments conducted in a blended learning environment.

You will present your relevant research paper at the colloquium or subsequent research paper seminars to a group consisting of your DBA peers, and a review panel.

What is a ‘review panel’?

You will present each paper at the relevant ‘research paper’ event to an academic panel (examination board) made up of External and Internal Examiners. This panel is equipped to provide collective feedback, and assess the overall quality of the work. Our current external examiner for the programme is from the University of Liverpool Management School.

What is involved in the research process?

The participant, under the direction of the appointed supervisor(s)/tutor(s), will identify, analyse and propose solutions to current problems confronting professional practice in business through the application of knowledge, thereby improving professional practice or understanding. The resultant thesis will be based on the participant’s research and is expected to make a contribution to his or her field of study.

What is a ‘contribution’ to the field of study?

The contribution to knowledge in a DBA thesis may include one or more of the following: a demonstration of specialist research skills that enhance problem identification and resolution in a business discipline, or an exploration/examination of the interaction between research and practice in a business field. Alternatively, it may seek to enhance knowledge or its application in business or professional practice, or study the impact of change in this regard.

Will I have access to academic literature?

Participants will also have full on-site and remote access to the library’s online academic database subscriptions which includes all of the major business databases (including Business Source Premier, ABI Inform, JSTOR, and Emerald). Through the online virtual learning environment, Moodle, participants will also have access to number of valuable resources supporting learning and development over the DBA programme.
Who will be my research tutor/supervisor?

You will have two research supervisors who will be drawn from WIT’s complement of highly qualified faculty. While based in Waterford, academic supervisors are available via telephone or email, and regular paper series presentations and examinations will be conducted in Phase 2 of the DBA programme. Participants will have built up a comprehensive research proposal as part of the Phase 1 deliverables, and will be matched to a tutor with expertise in the research interest area. Supervisors are allocated to DBA projects in advance of the Doctoral Colloquium: Conceptual Paper (Paper 1).

How are the different phases of the DBA examined?

Whilst there are no formal ‘examinations’ relating to this programme, there are examination processes for each of the phases of the DBA programme as detailed below.

Phase 1: Workshops – you will complete workshop assessments, focused on developing professional, critical thinking and academic writing skills. These assessments combine group and individual contributions, and are cumulative in nature, in order to provide a basis for Phase 2 deliverables.

Phase 2: Participants will review, research and write up a cumulative series of four academic papers (focusing on: Conceptual Paper, Methodology, Design/Initial Findings and Findings and Discussion) and will present each of these to an academic review panel.

Phase 3: Participants will integrate the research paper series of Phase 2 and add in sections for introduction and context, discussions, conclusions and recommendations, reflections and produce a thesis. The candidate then defends this document at a formal presentation (known as a viva).

Will there be group assessments?

Yes. In phase 1 of the programme, some assignments are group based.

How will the assessments be marked?

Participants will be assessed using a matrix relating to comprehension and professional development criteria.
What if I miss an assessment?
Any requested extension regarding assignment submission will follow normal School guidelines.

What if I fail an assessment?
If a participant fails an assignment in Phase 1 of the DBA programme, resubmission will follow normal School guidelines, and one assignment can be ‘carried’ within the phase. Should the student be unable to submit within revised deadlines, the student will be encouraged to take the ‘Post Graduate Diploma in Business Research Methods’ track. Further non-submission of module assessments or failure to meet a pass grade will result in an ‘incomplete’ record and no award will be received. If a student is unsuccessful in the Doctoral Colloquium transfer process (where Paper 1 Conceptual Paper is presented for examination) they will also be encouraged to take the ‘Post Graduate Diploma in Business Research Methods’ track.

In Phase 2 and 3 of the DBA programme, failure to meet the standard required will require resubmission, under the normal School guidelines. There are additional repeat fees incurred regarding any failed component of the DBA programme. The fees are currently determined by the number of attached credits. Currently at the time of writing this is set at €200 per 5 credits. This would mean an additional cost of €400 for a workshop with 10 credits and €1,000 for a repeat paper (25 credits attached) within the paper series. Further information at:


Will there be a thesis?
Yes. The thesis is an assimilation of the academic papers produced through the research paper series of Phase 2, and introduction and context, discussion, conclusions and recommendations, and reflections of Phase 3, integrated into a comprehensive document.

What is a thesis?
A thesis is a document outlining the advancement of an original point of view as a result of rigorous research. It represents a contribution to professional knowledge and theory in context.

What is a viva?
A viva is an oral examination in which you will be asked to defend your thesis contents and research approach to an examination panel. Following submission of the thesis after Phase 2, participants will orally defend their thesis in Phase 3 of the programme.
Is there an interim qualification?

Participants will move to the DBA register following successful completion of Phase 1 of the programme. Alternatively, participants will attain a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Research Methods.