DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The doctor of philosophy in business administration is a highly-specialized research degree designed to prepare students who wish to pursue academic and research careers in a particular field of business.

The minimum admission requirement is a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university, although most applicants have completed a master’s degree in an appropriate field. Applicants whose degrees are in fields other than their proposed area of focus are expected to obtain the necessary background either before or soon after admission to the program. Scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) are required; scores may not be more than five years old. Students from countries where English is not the official language and non-native English speakers are required to take either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Exceptions may be made for applicants who hold a degree from a university located in a country in which English is the official language and also the language of instruction at the university. Minimum acceptable scores for the TOEFL are 600 or above (paper exam) or 100 or above (Internet exam); for IELTS, an overall band score of 7.0 with no individual band score below 6.0. The doctoral committee does not use specific cutoff points for grade averages and test scores; in making admission decisions it carefully reviews each applicant’s entire record and makes its selection on a competitive basis in keeping with enrollment limitations.

The doctoral program consists of two major parts: the pre-dissertation stage and the dissertation stage. The pre-dissertation stage normally involves two years of studies described in an individual study plan developed by the student under the guidance of a committee of at least three faculty advisors. The objective of the dissertation stage is to have the student apply the obtained theoretical and practical knowledge and analytical methods to the resolution of a research problem. The research should be original and result in a contribution, either applied or theoretical, to the existing body of knowledge.

Curriculum requirements

The doctoral curriculum involves two years of formal courses established by each department and approved by the doctoral committee. Students take a minimum of 45 credits during their program (including core courses and a summer paper). Students should consult their faculty advisory group about the required courses and electives for which they should register.

The following 30 credits constitute the core requirements for the degree:

- Four required courses in research methods and quantitative analysis (12 credits).
- Four required doctoral seminars that cover important studies in the student’s field (12 credits).
- An additional doctoral level seminar from outside the student’s field of study (3 credits).
- A summer research paper during the first or first and second summer, as required by the student’s field (3 credits).

The remaining 15 elective credits are chosen in consultation with the student’s faculty advisory group. Students should complete at least 39 credits within the first two years from matriculation, and the remaining 6 credits should be completed during the third year.

Policies for core courses

In general, all core courses should be doctoral courses, i.e., those at the 8000 level.

All courses must be taken for a letter grades. Requesting an Incomplete to extend the due date for a research paper or any other work product beyond the end of the semester is strongly discouraged. The work for any course for which an Incomplete has been granted must be completed by the end of the immediately following semester or summer session.

Required courses cannot be waived without substitution except in unusual circumstances as determined on a case-by-case basis. Examples of unusual circumstances include students holding a specialized master’s or doctoral degree where equivalent core courses were taken in a particular area (such as statistics or mathematics). Students may petition the Associate Dean of Research and Doctoral Programs to substitute up to 12 credits of required courses with alternative courses approved by the faculty advisory group.

All course work, other educational activities, and required comprehensive evaluations must be completed within five years of matriculation. All program requirements must be completed within seven years of the date of matriculation.

The doctoral program is administered and supervised by the Associate Dean and the committee on doctoral studies. For more detailed information on the program, see the Handbook on the Doctoral Programs, available in the GWSB Doctoral Program Office.

Visit the program website (https://business.gwu.edu/academics/programs/doctoral) for additional information.