DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The doctor of philosophy in business administration is designed to prepare students who wish to pursue academic careers in business. The program consists of two major stages: the pre-candidacy stage and the dissertation stage. During the pre-candidacy stage, students complete coursework and a comprehensive examination, under the guidance of a committee of three faculty members (faculty advisory group). Upon admission to candidacy, students prepare, submit, and defend a dissertation.

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 area of interest (12 credits).
- An additional doctoral level seminar from outside the student’s area of interest (3 credits).
- A summer research paper during the first or first and second summer, as required by the student’s area of interest (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 letter grades. 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.

Comprehensive examination
After the student completes the coursework and the summer paper requirements, the faculty advisory group and department faculty administer a comprehensive examination. The format of the comprehensive examination is at the discretion of the advisory committee, subject to approval by the doctoral committee when evaluating the study plan. The comprehensive examination establishes the student’s mastery of the current and classic literature. The comprehensive exam can be written, in-class or take-home, and may include an oral component. Failure to pass the comprehensive examination in two attempts leads to termination from the program.

Dissertation
Following successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the student is considered a doctoral candidate, and may form a dissertation committee, and develop a dissertation proposal. During this stage, students prepare, submit, and defend a dissertation.

Other policies
All course work and required comprehensive examination 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, please see the Doctoral Program Handbook, available in the GWSB Doctoral Program Office.

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