



Quick Handbook

Executive DBA

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ABOUT PROGRAM

The Executive Doctor of Business Administration (Executive DBA) is a professional postgraduate program focusing on applied research and practical problem-solving in management and business administration.

The program is designed to accommodate full-time professionals and offers a flexible structure that combines distance work with an assigned supervisor, along with a minimum of three core modules in the form of short seminars / workshops, in addition to recommended participation in relevant symposiums or conferences. The conclusion of the program involves the completion of a professional thesis dissertation and its oral defense before a jury panel.

It prioritizes real-world impact and practical solutions over purely theoretical contributions. It emphasizes demonstrating independent thinking and making a meaningful contribution to professional practice, ensuring practical relevance to the candidate's context.

TARGETED ACTIVITIES

Executive DBA graduates are well-prepared for a wide range of high-level professional roles. Thanks to their advanced skills and practical knowledge, they often move into senior executive positions, consulting, policymaking, or engage in teaching, training, and business research; areas where their expertise helps shape future practices.

Depending on their interests and specializations, they may also launch their own ventures, support business development, work in non-profits, or serve as corporate trainers. The Executive DBA program provides a foundation that opens doors across industries and sectors, both locally and internationally...

ADMISSION CRITERIA

The Executive DBA program is designed for professionals with significant experience in their respective fields. Candidates must hold a master's degree (or equivalent) and demonstrate a competent level of English. Additionally, they must provide recommendation letter(s) from a professor or employer, a comprehensive Resume/CV, and submit a Preliminary Research Proposal (1000 words) outlining the topic and main theme they intend to explore during their studies, including their initial objectives, proposed methodology, and expected outcomes.

DIPLOMA AWARDED

The Executive DBA program awards an institutional-diploma issued by Ascencia Business School, a private educational organization registered in France, a founding member of the Collège de Paris group and a member of [AACSB](#), [BGA](#) and [EFMD Global](#).

The program leads to a professional postgraduate diploma, distinct from, and not equivalent to, a state-issued academic doctorate (such as a "Doctorat" or "PhD").

Graduates also have the option, for an additional fee, to apply for a dual-diploma issued by our UK-based partner, classified as EQF Level 8 and endorsed by OTHM Qualifications.

INTEGRATION IN RESEARCH

The Center for Applied Business and Management Research (CABMR) is an affiliated research center of Ascencia Business School, focused on applied-research in management and business administration. Its primary goals are to promote professional research that better addresses practical real-world business challenges, and to provide a supportive environment for Executive DBA candidates. This includes:

Access to Scholarly Sources: Candidates gain access to a leading academic database with thousands of full-text journals and eBooks, supporting their professional thesis research.

Participation in Research Events: Candidates receive complimentary access to all CABMR-organized symposiums, colloquiums, conferences; helping them better integrate into the research community and engage with experts. **While not mandatory, participation is recommended, and candidates are encouraged to attend at least two relevant scientific events throughout their program.**

Global DBA Community & Networking: CABMR facilitates a global DBA Community, enabling candidates to connect with peers from other partners schools to potentially collaborate on research projects, and expand their professional network.

Dedicated Workspace in Paris: A dedicated function room in Collège de Paris International campus, offering candidates a private workspace, computer access, and a meeting area for research and collaboration.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The following section outlines the main elements of the program structure, including its duration, language of instruction, progression phases, options for withdrawal or exit, core module topics, and expectations for the dissertation and oral defense.

Program Duration

The Executive DBA program follows a structured framework designed to be completed within **three years**. Candidates who demonstrate exceptional progress and meet specific criteria may be allowed to complete the program within two years, subject to their supervisor's approval.

Language of Instruction

While the program is primarily intended to be delivered in English, localized adjustments may be implemented to better accommodate candidates need – provided these remain aligned with the program's structure and academic standards.

Progression Phases

The program is divided into 3 key phases, each with defined milestones and evaluation points:

Phase 1 – Research Foundation

This phase builds the academic groundwork through core modules and teaching faculty guidance, culminating in the development of a solid research proposal. Key milestones within this phase include:

- Completion of three core modules/seminars
- Assignment of a research supervisor
- Submission of a final revised Research Proposal

*At the end of this phase, candidates are assessed by the modules/seminars instructors on their overall engagement, academic rigor, and research proposal potential. Those who meet the standards continue; others will be required to exit the program with a **Certificate in Applied Business Research**.*

Phase 2 – Dissertation Development

In this phase, candidates begin conducting applied research and drafting their professional thesis with ongoing supervisor support. Key milestones within this phase include:

- Start drafting the professional thesis manuscript.
- Regular meetings with the supervisor to refine their work.

*If a candidate's progress falls short of expectations, as determined by their supervisor, they may be placed on probation and must justify their continuation. Those who demonstrate improvement and renewed commitment may proceed; others will be required to exit the program with a **Certificate in Applied Business Research**.*

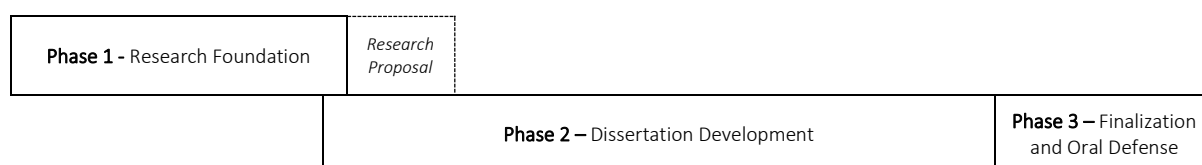
Phase 3 – Finalization & Defense

The final phase involves completing the dissertation and defending the research before an academic jury. Key milestones within this phase include:

- Completion and submission of the professional thesis dissertation.
- Preparation and participation in an oral jury defense

The candidate's final work is assessed by the jury based on clarity, depth of analysis, originality, critical thinking, contribution to the field, and the quality of discussion. Possible outcomes include approval, minor revisions (the most common), major revisions, or, in some cases, a second defense.

Only candidates who successfully complete all three phases of the program will be awarded the Executive DBA diploma. The following diagram visualizes the program progression phases:



Withdrawal or Exit

Candidates are evaluated at key points throughout the program. At the end of Phase 1, their engagement, academic rigor, and research proposal quality are assessed. In Phase 2, those whose progress is unsatisfactory may be placed on probation and must justify their continuation. Candidates showing improvement may proceed, while others will exit the program with a Certificate in Applied Business Research.

Candidates may also choose to voluntarily withdraw from the program. Those who exit before completing the first phase will not receive any certification. However, candidates who withdraw after successfully completing the first phase are eligible to receive the Certificate in Applied Business Research.

Core Modules

The Executive DBA includes three core course modules, delivered as intensive 3 to 4-day seminars or workshops, designed to build essential research capabilities for professional thesis development:

Module 1 – Writing the Dissertation and Literature Review provides guidance on structuring the research proposal, drafting the literature review, formulating research questions, choosing appropriate methodologies, presenting analyzed data and findings.

Module 2 – Qualitative Methods for Business Research focuses on qualitative research and data collection techniques, including interviews, focus groups, and methods like thematic or content analysis, etc.

Module 3 – Quantitative Methods for Business Research covers quantitative research and statistical techniques, such as survey design, hypothesis testing, regression analysis, and data visualization.

** The courses syllabi for the three core modules - including Learning Objectives, Key Topics, Assessment Methods, Grading Structure, and Suggested Readings - are provided in the appendices section.*

Dissertation

Executive DBA candidates are required to complete a professional thesis dissertation that focuses on applied research with practical relevance to the candidate's professional context. Unlike a traditional academic thesis, the professional dissertation prioritizes real-world impact and practical solutions over purely theoretical contributions. While academic rigor is still required, the emphasis is on demonstrating independent thinking, problem-solving abilities, and a meaningful contribution to professional practice.

Candidates are expected to engage in months of dedicated work, employing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods based on the research question. The dissertation must demonstrate a solid methodology and meaningful conclusions, along with a clear understanding of the topic's practical implications.

The dissertation should follow the standard Monograph format, typically including a Title Page, Abstract, Table of Contents, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, References, and Appendices.

** A guide to the expected formatting and structure of the dissertation is provided in the appendices section.*

Oral Defense

Upon submission of the dissertation, candidates must participate in a formal oral defense before a jury panel composed of faculty members and, when relevant, external experts. The defense serves as a final evaluation of the candidate's ability to clearly present and justify their research process, findings, and practical implications.

The session typically includes a presentation of the dissertation (30 – 40minutes), followed by a structured Q&A, during which the jury evaluates the candidate's understanding of their topic, ability to critically engage with feedback, and the originality and coherence of their work

The final decision rests with the jury panel and will be communicated to the candidate a few weeks after the presentation. Possible outcomes include full approval, approval with minor revisions (the most common outcome), major revisions requiring resubmission, and in some cases, a second defense.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Executive DBA candidates are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of academic integrity throughout their studies. This includes full compliance with ethical research guidelines, ensuring transparency, informed consent, and responsible data collection.

All sources must be properly cited and acknowledged to avoid plagiarism. The use of AI-generated content should be limited and will be evaluated to preserve the originality and academic value of the work.

Any form of academic misconduct – such as excessive plagiarism, full reliance on AI-generated content, cheating, unapproved third-party assistance, data fabrication, or unauthorized access to information, is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

APPENDICES

Module 1: Writing the Dissertation and Literature Review

Module 2: Qualitative Methods for Business Research

Module 3: Quantitative Methods for Business Research

Guidelines for Formatting Your Dissertation

Open Memo to Candidates: Expectations and Process of the Executive DBA

Syllabus Module 1: Writing the Dissertation and Literature Review

This module guides students through the process of writing and defending a comprehensive dissertation. It covers the essential elements of academic writing, including structuring a research proposal, conducting a literature review, formulating research questions, selecting appropriate methodologies, analyzing and interpreting data, and presenting research findings. Students receive guidance on crafting a well-structured and scholarly dissertation that contributes to the existing knowledge in the field of study.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the process of writing a comprehensive dissertation in the field of business administration.
- Develop effective strategies for conducting literature reviews and synthesizing existing research.
- Acquire skills in structuring and organizing a dissertation, including formulating research questions, developing arguments, and presenting findings.
- Prepare for defending the dissertation through effective oral communication and critical thinking.

Content:

- Overview of the dissertation writing process and its significance in the field of business administration.
- Techniques for conducting literature reviews, including searching for relevant sources, evaluating research articles, and identifying research gaps.
- Structuring the dissertation: formulating research questions, developing hypotheses, and designing a research framework.
- Interpreting and presenting research findings through clear and concise academic writing.
- Preparing for the defense of the dissertation, including oral presentation skills and responding to questions from the dissertation committee.

Assessment Method(s):

- Submission of a partial literature review demonstrating the candidate's ability to synthesize relevant research and identify research gaps.
- Submission of a dissertation proposal outlining the research objectives, methodology, and expected outcomes.

Grading Structure:

- PASS (attended and fulfilled requirements) or FAIL (did not attend or did not complete expected requirements)

Suggested Readings:

- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2016). *The Craft of Research* (4th ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Bryman, A. (2021). *Social Research Methods* (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Felix, M. S., & Smith, I. (2019). *A Practical Guide to Dissertation and Thesis Writing*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Ridley, D. (2012). *The Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Syllabus Module 2: Qualitative Methods for Business Research

This course module focuses on qualitative research methodologies and techniques relevant to business investigations. It covers topics such as research design, data collection methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups), data analysis (e.g., thematic analysis, content analysis), and the interpretation of qualitative findings. Students learn how to conduct rigorous qualitative research and gain a deep understanding of the principles and applications of qualitative methods in the business context.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the principles and concepts of qualitative research in the context of business investigations.
- Acquire knowledge of various qualitative research methodologies and techniques.
- Develop skills in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting qualitative data.
- Apply ethical considerations in qualitative research practices.

Content:

- Introduction to qualitative research: its nature, philosophy, and role in business investigations.
- Data collection methods in qualitative research, including interviews, observations, and focus groups.
- Techniques for analyzing qualitative data, such as thematic analysis, content analysis, and grounded theory.
- Ethical considerations in qualitative research, including informed consent, confidentiality, and participant anonymity.
- Validity and reliability issues in qualitative research.
- Reporting and presenting qualitative research findings.

Assessment Method(s):

- Conducting a small-scale qualitative research project, including data collection and analysis.
- Participation in group discussions or presentations based on qualitative research topics.

Grading Structure:

- PASS (attended and fulfilled requirements) or FAIL (did not attend or did not complete expected requirements)

Suggested Readings:

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*. SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Eriksson, P., & Kovalainen, A. (2015). *Qualitative Methods in Business Research* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Myers, M. D. (2020). *Qualitative Research in Business & Management* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Silverman, D. (2020). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Syllabus Module 3: Quantitative Methods for Business Research

In this module, students delve into quantitative research methods and statistical analysis techniques applicable to business research. The course covers topics such as hypothesis testing, survey design, sampling techniques, descriptive and inferential statistics, regression analysis, and data visualization. Students acquire the skills necessary to conduct quantitative research, analyze data, and draw meaningful conclusions to inform business decision-making.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the fundamental concepts of quantitative research in the context of business studies.
- Gain proficiency in using quantitative research methods and statistical analysis techniques.
- Apply quantitative research tools to analyze and interpret business-related data.
- Develop critical thinking skills in evaluating quantitative research studies.

Content:

- Introduction to quantitative research: its purpose, benefits, and limitations in business research.
- Research design and sampling techniques in quantitative studies.
- Statistical analysis methods, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, hypothesis testing, and regression analysis.
- Interpreting and presenting quantitative data using appropriate graphical representations.
- Validity and reliability issues in quantitative research.
- Using statistical software for data analysis, such as SPSS or Excel.

Assessment Method(s):

- Conducting a small-scale quantitative research project, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
- Application of statistical analysis techniques to real-world business scenarios through case studies or practical assignments.

Grading Structure:

- PASS (attended and fulfilled requirements) or FAIL (did not attend or did not complete expected requirements)

Suggested Readings:

- Anderson, D. R., Sweeney, D. J., Williams, T. A., Camm, J. D., & Cochran, J. J. (2015). *Quantitative Methods for Business* (13th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Brandimarte, P. (2011). *Quantitative Methods: An Introduction for Business Management*. Wiley.
- Cleff, T. (2013). *Exploratory data analysis in business and economics: An introduction using SPSS, Stata, and Excel*. Springer.
- Duignan, J. (2014). *Quantitative Methods for Business Research Using Microsoft Excel*. Cengage Learning.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Guidelines for Formatting the Dissertation

When preparing the dissertation for submission, adherence to strict formatting requirements is imperative. Deviating from these requirements may result in the rejection of the dissertation and delays in completing the program.

Language of the Dissertation: The dissertation should be generally written in English.

Length: The length of a dissertation varies but typically falls within the range of 30,000 to 50,000 words or more. A dissertation document must be at least 100 pages, yet it should not exceed 300 pages in length. Longer dissertations may need to include chapters, main divisions, and subdivisions.

Page and Text Requirements: Page and text requirements are essential aspects of formatting your dissertation to meet the specified guidelines.

Page Size: A4 paper format (210 mm × 297 mm).

Margins: Maintain a minimum margin of at least 2.54 cm (1 inch) on all sides.

Spacing: Body of text should be double-spaced. Block quotations, footnotes, and bibliographies should have single spacing within each entry but double spacing between each entry. For lengthy tables, a single spacing may be used.

Fonts and Point Size: Utilize a 10 - 12-point size. Recommended fonts are Arial (10 pt), Century (11 pt), Courier New (10 pt), Garamond (12 pt), Georgia (11 pt), Lucida Bright (10 pt), Microsoft Sans Serif (10 pt), Tahoma (10 pt), Times New Roman (12 pt), Trebuchet MS (10 pt), and Verdana (10 pt).

Body of Text, Tables, Figures, and Captions: Maintain consistency in font usage within the body of text, headers, page numbers, and footnotes. Tables and figures should be positioned as close as possible to their first mention in the text, either on a page with no text above or below or directly within the text.

Figure and table numbering should be continuous throughout the dissertation or by chapter (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, etc.). Each page should receive a separate page number, including headers. Figures created with software are acceptable if they are clear and legible. Original illustrations, photographs, and fine arts prints may be scanned and included, centered between the margins on a page with no text above or below.

Landscape orientation figures and tables should be correctly positioned and bound at the top, with headings/captions in portrait orientation on a separate page.

Pagination: Pages should be numbered, with preliminary pages using small Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, etc.) and the body of text employing Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) starting with page 1. Page numbers should be centered at the top or bottom of each page, with the exception of the page containing a chapter heading.

Outline: The structure of the dissertation may vary depending on the type of research conducted and the candidate's individual contributions. However, it typically should follow the ***standard Monograph format*** including the following fundamental chapters/sections.

Title Page: The dissertation begins with the title page, with the title concise and accurate. Do not include a page number on the title page.

Copyright Statement: A copyright notice should follow the title page, including the copyright symbol ©, year of first publication, and the author's name. Do not include a page number on the copyright page.

Abstract: The abstract, numbered as page iii, should immediately follow the copyright page. It should provide a concise summary of the problem, methods, and the main results or conclusions of the research. There is no maximum word count for the abstract, but it should not exceed one page.

Table of Contents: Dissertations divided into sections should include a table of contents, listing major headings in the following order:

Front Matter: Front matter may include acknowledgments, dedications, lists of illustrations or tables, glossaries, and epigraphs.

Body of Text: This is the main section of the dissertation, typically structured into five main chapters, though variations may occur based on the research approach and requirements.

- The *Introduction* chapter, which presents the research background, problem statement, objectives, significance, and structure.
- The *Literature Review* chapter, which covers key theories, concepts, relevant studies, and research gaps.
- The *Methodology* chapter, which outlines the research approach, data collection, and analysis methods with justifications.
- The *Results and Analysis* chapter, which presents data, key insights and findings.
- *Discussion* chapter, which interprets the results, connects them to the existing literature, explores implications, and addresses limitations.
- The *Conclusion and Recommendations* chapter, which summarizes findings, discusses business implications, and suggests directions for future research.

Back Matter: Back matter includes references / bibliographies, and may also include appendices, indexes, and supplemental materials. Additional figures and tables should ideally be placed in an appendix at the end of the dissertation, not within or at the end of a chapter.

Sample "Executive DBA" diploma

ASCENCIA
BUSINESS SCHOOL

COLLEGE
DE PARIS

Executive DBA

Delivered to :
Mr. Yann Davin

born : *March 1st 2000* in : *Paris*

Delivered on Paris - La Défense, on March 22nd 2023 Record number : XXXXXX

Signature of the graduate

Signature of the President
of graduation Jury



Ascencia Business School Paris - La Défense - 1 parvis de La Défense - La Grande Arche - Paroi Nord - 92044 Paris - La Défense
Private higher education institution, member of Collège de Paris

OPEN MEMO TO CANDIDATES

Expectations and Process of the Executive DBA

Dear Candidates,

Thank you for your interest in our *Executive Doctor of Business Administration* program!

This program is aimed at experienced professionals who wish to advance their careers through applied research in management and business administration.

By enrolling in this program, you would be joining the globally connected Collège de Paris International network, maintaining the program's standards while benefiting from localized support provided by your institution.

You begin this journey by completing a set of core modules delivered through short seminars and workshops, designed to equip you with essential research skills and practical knowledge. These modules provide the foundation for your dissertation development.

The culmination of the Executive DBA journey involves the completion of your dissertation and its defense. For most candidates, this represents the most extensive, challenging, and significant task undertaken throughout their educational journey. Preparing for this endeavor demands months of dedicated effort, but it should also be a fulfilling experience, particularly because you have chosen a subject that genuinely interests you.

The dissertation serves as an applied research project that constitutes a fundamental component of the Executive DBA program. It allows you to present your findings in response to research questions that you have carefully selected. The primary objective of this project is to evaluate your capacity for independent research, which you have honed over the years of your education. Your final assessment is determined through an evaluation that gauges the relative contribution of your work. While your supervisor provides guidance, the dissertation is a testament to your ability to work autonomously on a project deemed significant by your supervisor.

The specific research type or methodology employed in your research may vary depending on your subject matter. Generally, reference is made to quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Quantitative dissertations involve delineating a research design, gathering data, applying statistical methods for analysis, and not only reporting but also interpreting your results. When collecting data from the public, it is imperative to adhere to professional and ethical guidelines. While laboratory work is common in natural and life science subjects, it is not typically a feature of Executive DBA dissertations.

Qualitative dissertations often center on interviews with experts, focus groups of users, or observation techniques. Some of your findings may be derived from existing data and arguments in the work of others. Regardless, you will dedicate a substantial amount of time to collecting pertinent information and aligning it with your subject and research questions. It is essential to move beyond mere description and engage in critical analysis, exploring the practical applications of the work.

In some cases, you may find it appropriate to use both quantitative and qualitative methods, known as Mixed Methods of research. In such instances, you should be prepared to harmonize your results between the qualitative and quantitative aspects.

Irrespective of your chosen topic and methodological approach, you will need to demonstrate the following skills:

- *Defining and delineating a research area with well-defined questions.*
- *Understanding the key issues pertinent to your research.*
- *Identifying sources of relevant information (data).*
- *Employing well-described methods for data collection.*
- *Evaluating the reliability and validity of data.*
- *Assessing evidence based on clear hypotheses and sound methodologies.*
- *Formulating a well-supported conclusion.*

Organizing and presenting your research outcomes in a critical, persuasive, and articulate manner. While highlighting the contributions and originality of your work, it is also essential to acknowledge its limitations, serving as a guide for your future research and that of others.

The length of a dissertation varies but typically falls within the range of 30,000 to 50,000 words or more, adhering to APA guidelines and school requirements. A dissertation document is ideally not less than 100 pages, considering the extensive research and understanding invested in your area of interest. Your supervisor may even anticipate a more comprehensive document.

Lastly, you will be required to present your work during an oral examination. This typically begins with a presentation to three professors, wherein you will elucidate your subject area, specific topic, showcase your command of relevant literature, demonstrate your grasp of research methodology and methods, elucidate your methodological application, and articulate your interpretation of results. During the subsequent question-and-answer session, which may extend up to two hours, you will have the opportunity to engage with inquiries and provide clarifications.

We wish you great success in your Executive DBA journey and look forward to seeing your research contribute meaningfully to the field.

Stay committed, stay curious, and make the most of this opportunity.

Best of luck!