

Professional Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA)

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

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Contents

Course Details	1
1. Named Awards.....	1
2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable).....	1
3. Awarding Body	1
4. Teaching Institution	1
5. Accrediting Body	1
6. QAA Benchmark Groups	1
7. Document Control Information.....	1
8. Effective Session.....	1
9. Author	1
10. Faculty.....	1
11. Subject Group	1
Curriculum	1
12. Educational Aims.....	1
13. Reference Points.....	2
14. General Learning Outcomes.....	2
15. Learning Outcomes	3
A. Knowledge and Understanding of:.....	3
B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:	3
C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:	3
D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:	4
16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods.....	4
17. Assessment Strategy.....	4
18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements.....	5
19. Employability Statement.....	5
Course Management	6
20. Support for Student Learning.....	6
21. Admissions Criteria.....	6
A. Academic Admissions Criteria	6
B. Disability	6
22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching	6
A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation	6
B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation.....	7
C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback	7
D. Staff Development Priorities.....	7
23. Assessment Regulations	7
24. Role of Externals	7
25. Indicators of Standards and Quality.....	8
A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition.....	8
B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent).....	8
C. Quality Assurance Agency	8
D. Others	8
26. Further Information	8

Course Details

1. Named Awards

Professional Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA)

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C2231P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

N/A

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

N/A

7. Document Control Information

Version 4, September 2017

8. Effective Session

2017/2018

9. Author

Sarah Turnbull

10. Faculty

Faculty of Business and Law

11. Subject Group

Marketing and Sales Management

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

The DBA Programme aims to:

- provide a vehicle for a high level of personal, professional and academic development for participants to achieve maximum levels of effectiveness as a professional practitioner or executive and contribute to the development of professional practice.
- enable practitioners involved in all aspects of business, an opportunity to explore their professional roles and implement research investigations in order to improve their contribution in a managerial, service, or educational, delivery setting;

- provide a research and professional development learning opportunity so that graduates can make practical decisions relevant to their profession and generate new knowledge through professional practice;
- provide an award of the highest academic level that is equivalent to, but distinct from, the PhD, and that is clearly relevant to the needs of the individual's professional working situation;
- enable graduates to enhance their practice through systematic enquiry and development and demonstrate the relevance of their learning to their own professional context;
- provide graduates with the cognitive, practical, professional and transferable skills to enable them to assume leadership roles within their professional field;
- enable graduates to disseminate their research and professional findings to a variety of audiences and via a range of media;
- enhance partnership between doctoral candidates, their employers and the University and in so doing, develop consultancy work and joint research,
- provide a model scheme for DBA upon which the University can build and in so doing extend its reputation for providing work based opportunities to the highest level.

13. Reference Points

- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Regulations for Professional Doctorates
- The scholarship, professional experience and research expertise of academic members of staff
- QAA Quality Code for Higher Education
- QAA framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 8

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- 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
- 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
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments

15. Learning Outcomes

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 current professional developments within their area of practice
- A.2 theoretical basis of academic and management research including a thorough understanding of “good practice” in research and its link with research ethics issues
- A.3 a range of advanced research techniques appropriate to business and management disciplines (including the research approach-specific research ethics issues that may arise with them)
- A.4 use of critical reflection in their own learning and professional practice
- A.5 academic writing skills and publication processes within the business and management field and specially within their own professional domain

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

- B.1 apply high level skills needed for advanced academic study such as in the testing of research hypotheses and evidence-based enquiry.
- B.2 research, analyse, synthesize and evaluate information and evidence so as to transfer new theoretical, research and professional understanding into areas of practice and beyond
- B.3 critically discuss the methodological, ethical and financial limitations of their proposed plan of investigation and be aware of the implications of such constraints
- B.4 critically appraise the value of the information collected and use it to effectively and logically challenge current concepts, thinking and approaches

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

- C.1 be aware of the changing professional context and manage the processes of change to enable solving of problematic situations as they arise
- C.2 use appropriate and well-reasoned methodology, and make a significant and original contribution to professional practice
- C.3 independently, critically challenge current assumptions relevant to the profession
- C.4 provide authoritative solutions when presented with practical, managerial, business, ethical and research problems within a professional context
- C.5 evaluate the various sources of information available and conduct effective library/information-based searches
- C.6 be able to select appropriate qualitative and quantitative methodological techniques and approaches to conduct research and professional development within their profession
- C.7 demonstrate the relevance and innovative approaches of their research and professional development to their area of theory and practice
- C.8 manage dilemmas and value conflicts in a way which takes forward wider professional practice
- C.9 attain critical and creative mastery of the latest available knowledge within their area of professional practice and theory.
- C.10 take responsibility as a leading practitioner, innovator and manager of others in a community of practice and beyond
- C.11 plan a research/professional development protocol and prepare an application for approval and demonstrate the likely relevance of the work to the area of practice and theory

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

- D.1 disseminate theoretical, research and professional understanding and recommendations to critical communities using a variety of formats
- D.2 manage and make professional use of resources (e.g. human, financial and physical) where appropriate
- D.3 manage information and research data
- D.4 manage change effectively, prioritise time and workloads and respond to changing professional demands
- D.5 command the attention and respect of others in providing professional and intellectual leadership, inspiration and motivation
- D.6 present articles for publication in an academic or professional journal or other media
- D.7 interact and network within a multidisciplinary team to conduct research and develop professionally
- D.8 identify learning needs and be autonomous in the planning and management of their own learning
- D.9 demonstrate a reflective and thoughtful approach to their research and professional development
- D.10 demonstrate a reflective and self-critical approach to the application of their learning to their professional practice

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

A1 to A5 are delivered through workshops; tutor-led tutorials; student-led and tutor-led seminars; personal critical reflection, problem based learning scenarios; advanced library study; oral presentations; independent research investigations; research presentations and publications in professional or peer reviewed journals. Students will also have access to a Moodle site which contains relevant links and resources and which will enable discussions to continue between formal workshops. Students will also be required to undertake independent study to supplement the formal teaching sessions, with appropriate guidance from a tutor or thesis supervisor.

B1 to B4 are developed through discussions, seminars and one to one interaction with tutors and the thesis supervisor. The preparation of work for assessment provides opportunities for students to develop these skills within the context of professional practice.

The underlying concepts relating to C1 to 11 are delivered through workshops and seminars when students will have the opportunity to acquire hands on experience with quantitative and qualitative data analysis packages. These concepts are developed through the preparation of a project proposal and the research project with input from a supervisor and the support of the student cohort.

The concepts underpinning D1 to D 10 are delivered through interactive workshops led by the course team. D2, 4, 8, 9 and 10 will be developed through the professional development unit and its seminar activities in particular, D1, D6 and D7 will be developed through the publication and dissemination unit where tutorial and peer support in developing an article for publication and a presentation will be provided and D3 will be particularly developed by the Advanced Research Methods unit.

17. Assessment Strategy

A1 to A5 are assessed in Part 1 through a range of coursework assignments including a portfolio. Assignments will require students to review the philosophies and theories underpinning research and knowledge and develop and justify their methodological position as a researcher practitioner; the selection and use of qualitative and quantitative research instruments which will require students to justify, evaluate and critique the choice of research method and the use of the instrument in the

investigation and critically analyse the relevant practical, theoretical and ethical issues; the preparation of a research proposal. In Part 2 students are assessed on A1-A5 through the final thesis and the viva voce examination. A presentation of the research is also made.

B1 to B4 are assessed in Part 1 through coursework assignments including the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data; the justification, evaluation and critique of the choice of research method and the relevant practical, theoretical and ethical issues; a report or journal article ready for submission to a named peer reviewed journal or professional publication; a portfolio which requires students to critically reflect upon their own skills, identify gaps, and develop a personal and professional development plan for the doctoral programme. In Part 2 students are assessed on B1-B4 through the final thesis and the viva voce examination.

C1 to C11 are assessed through coursework, including a research proposal; qualitative and quantitative data analysis which will require students to justify, evaluate different research methods and the discussion of relevant practical, theoretical and ethical issues; a portfolio which requires students to critically reflect upon their own skills, identify gaps, and develop a personal and professional development plan for the doctoral programme. In Part 2 students are assessed on C1-C9 through the final thesis and the viva voce examination. A presentation of the research is also made.

D1 to D11 are assessed through coursework, including the preparation of a report or journal article ready for submission to a named peer reviewed journal or professional publication; a contribution to an appropriate conference (e.g. DBA conference) a portfolio which provides a critical reflection on the student's learning and development. In Part 2 students are assessed on D1-D7 through the final thesis, a viva voce examination and a presentation given to an invited audience prior to the viva voce.

The assessment strategy in Part 1 assesses unit learning outcomes through a developmental series of assignments. The units assess the capacity for professional development and review and knowledge and skills relating to the use of advanced research techniques, the students' capacity to disseminate research findings in a range of formats and to a range of audiences and their capacity to design of a research proposal which will lead to Part 2 where students undertake research which makes an original contribution to knowledge and to professional practice. Part 2 is assessed by a presentation and viva voce examination of the thesis.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](#)¹ for full details on the course structure and units

The professional doctorate comprises 540 credits. Stage One requires 60 M level credits in a relevant subject area. Direct entry to Stage Two is the normal route into the programme. Stage Two comprises Part 1 (the taught component made up of 120 D level credits) and Part 2 (the research component made up of 360 credits). Students who have completed Stage 2, Part 1 may exit with a PgDip (120 Credits) or PgCert (60 Credits) Professional Research Methods. Standard University rules apply. The regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

19. Employability Statement

The programme learning outcomes are achieved through activities that are based in, or are derived from, students' professional context and practice. The Professional Development and Review unit requires students to reflect explicitly on their current professional role and their future personal and professional development. Formal and informal links with employers and alumni are maintained through workshops, events and networking opportunities.

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a DBA Director
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing and counselling
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK)
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)
- Excellent library facilities
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations
- Feedback is provided for all assessments
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

The DBA is a recognised qualification aimed at Masters level postgraduates who wish to take their management and professional development into new levels and add to the professional and managerial body of knowledge. Admission criteria are as follows:

- A PG Certificate (60 M level credits) in a related suitable field
- A minimum of three years' experience of business and management
- Evidence of recent CPD in a relevant area of business and management / management science.
- An outline research idea suitable for development to a research proposal suitable for Part 2 of the course.

Applicants must be in relevant employment which enables them to achieve the programme learning outcomes.

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports
- Periodic Programme Review
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees
- National Student Survey
- National Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

- Staff Performance and Development Review
- Peer Review and Development Framework
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course
- Head of Department
- Associate Dean (Academic)
- Associate Dean (Students)
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies
- Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and International Student Barometer (ISB)

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Support staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (see [Assessment and Regulations²](#)).

24. Role of Externals

For Part 1, Subject External Examiners will:

- oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- approve unit assessment strategy
- sample assessment artefacts
- present their report to Unit Assessment Boards

² www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/

For Part 2, External Examiners will:

- assess the Stage 2, Part 2 (Professional Research and Development Unit) thesis
- assess the Stage 2, Part 2 (Professional Research and Development Unit) presentation
- conduct a viva voce examination
- make a report on the above Unit assessment activities for presentation at the Unit Assessment Board

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- Oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards
- Scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment
- Ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom

The DBA programme will be reviewed by external assessors at periods (usually every five years) as proscribed in the University post-graduate course quality and research degree regulations.

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

N/A

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

Fitness of Purpose of Curriculum confirmed at validation in 2006, and Annual Monitoring and Review Processes confirmed as effective at programme review in June 2017.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015](#)*³).

D. Others

None.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth](#)⁴ and [Subject Group](#)⁵ websites

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ <http://www.port.ac.uk/organisation-studies-and-human-resource-management/>