

Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

The Olin Business School Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree program offers a collaborative atmosphere centered on industry-relevant applied research in finance (<https://olin.wustl.edu/EN-US/academic-programs/dba/Pages/Curriculum.aspx>), marketing (<https://olin.wustl.edu/EN-US/academic-programs/dba/Pages/marketing.aspx>) or operations and manufacturing management (<https://olin.wustl.edu/EN-US/academic-programs/dba/Pages/operations-manufacturing-management.aspx>). This advanced graduate program crosses traditional boundaries and provides students with the opportunity — under the guidance of Washington University faculty — for structured course work along with focused independent scholarly reading and research on important issues relating to business.

The Olin DBA program is a 72-credit-unit doctoral degree designed for individuals with a serious interest in finance, marketing or operations research who wish to pursue graduate study on either a part-time or full-time basis. A DBA is an advanced graduate degree that differs from a traditional PhD and extends beyond the fundamental foundation of a master's degree to develop the necessary skills to conduct applied research. The DBA differs from a master's degree and a PhD in a number of ways, including the scope of study, the approach to research, and essentially the definitive outcome.

The Olin DBA is a practitioner's doctoral degree designed to meet the needs of the researching professional rather than the professional researcher. While a PhD is intended for those who wish to pursue research careers in academia, the DBA involves extended graduate study beyond a master's degree for those who wish to pursue careers in corporations, consulting firms or government agencies that can benefit from advanced research skills for the analysis of business problems. The research capabilities developed in the DBA programs for finance and marketing are of a more applied nature, with more immediate real-world applicability than the typical research pursued in the PhD program. Unlike the PhD program, the DBA program is aimed at those who are working in industry and who may continue to work during their enrollment in the program.

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Degree Requirements

The completion of the DBA program requires 72 credit units of graduate course work. In addition, DBA students must maintain satisfactory academic progress; pass examinations and paper requirements; and write, submit and defend a doctoral thesis. All students are expected to finish the program within four years on a full-time basis or within five to six years on a part-time basis.

Required studies include course work and a written doctoral thesis as follows:

- 48 credit units for course work
- 24 credit units for a doctoral thesis

Qualifying Exams

Comprehensive field examinations should be completed within six months of the conclusion of required course work (normally within two to three years). The examination committee will be composed of the faculty adviser and two other faculty members.

Doctoral Thesis

After completing 48 units of DBA course work and passing the qualifying exams, the student will begin research for their doctoral thesis. A DBA student will prepare their thesis proposal in consultation with their faculty adviser and with the approval of the research advisory committee and the program director. The completed doctoral thesis will be defended in an oral presentation to the advisory committee. The committee will assign either a passing grade or a failing grade, or they may ask for revisions to be made so that the student may receive a passing grade.