

Doctoral Program Policies

DBA Program

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Academics

Degree Requirements

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

The program includes course work and a written doctoral thesis, which are assigned the following credits:

- 48 credit units for required and elective course work
- 12 credit units for independent study courses and additional directed reading courses
- 12 credit units for doctoral thesis work

Prerequisites and Admissions

To be admitted to the program, students must complete an undergraduate degree. Completion of a graduate degree is preferred. Admission to the program is selective, based on parameters used for screening for other graduate programs at Olin, including transcripts of prior studies, GRE/GMAT scores, recommendations, and prior work experience.

Accounting for Prior Studies

Students with relevant graduate-level degrees may be given credit toward a DBA degree based on their prior studies at the discretion of the program academic director. Specifically, the following amounts of credit may be counted:

- Students with a master's degree in finance (MSF) may be permitted to transfer course credits to the DBA in Finance program. For Olin MSF students, a maximum of 24 credits can be transferred.
- For students with other relevant master's degrees, up to 12 credits can be transferred (this is true for both the DBA in Finance and the DBA in Marketing)

Additional Educational Opportunities

Teaching Citation

The optional Teaching Citation program requires attendance at non-credit workshops on teaching, varied teaching experiences, faculty and student evaluations, and preparation of a detailed teaching philosophy statement. Students interested in earning a Teaching Citation should schedule a preliminary consultation by calling 314-935-5921.

Master of Science in Finance

Students may pursue the Master of Science in Finance (MSF) as they progress toward the DBA. The process for pursuing this option is outlined below.

1. Approach the SMP Office (in the Graduate Programs Office in Knight Hall, Room 310) to discuss your interest.
2. Choose the MSF track (Quantitative or Corporate Finance) that you are interested in and complete a formal application.
3. The MSF application should be submitted shortly after beginning your DBA program and no later than six months prior to when you would graduate from the MSF program.
4. Make sure you satisfy all admission requirements.
5. The SMP office will independently decide about your eligibility to be admitted to the MSF program.
6. If they decide to extend admission, you will need to complete the course work required to earn the relevant MSF degree.
7. You will be eligible for obtaining the MSF degree once you complete the relevant course work.
8. Out of the courses applied towards your MSF degree, 24 credit units will be applied towards the DBA degree. Note that you will need to complete a total of 48 credit units of course work for the DBA program.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Olin Business School monitors the academic progress of students in DBA programs, who are required to pass all courses with a letter grade of at least "B-" and to maintain an average grade of at least "B+". Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress may result in a student's immediate dismissal or placement on academic probation for the ensuing year (see "Probation," below).

Grading

The following is the interpretation of grades for course work in the DBA program:

- **A: Outstanding.** The quality of work is distinctly superior.
- **B: Good.** Performance is satisfactory and represents the academic attainment in the course expected of promising candidates for a graduate degree. Course work receiving a grade of "B-" or below is not counted toward the degree.

- **C: Conditional/unsatisfactory.** Poor quality of performance that falls short of that regarded as entirely satisfactory at the graduate level. Units of credit with a grade of “C” must be matched by an equivalent number of credits with a grade of “A”. Course work receiving a grade of “C” is not counted toward the degree.
- **F: Fail.** The student will be placed on academic probation. Course work receiving a grade of “F” is not counted toward the degree.
- **N/I: Incomplete.** A grade of “N” is recorded when otherwise satisfactory work in a course or seminar is not completed. After twelve months, an unchanged “N” becomes a permanent part of the student’s transcript and may not be changed to another grade. Students with more than nine units of “N” or no grades reported are not permitted to register for courses.

Satisfactory Academic Progress for Title IV Federal Financial Aid

The minimum GPA requirements needed to maintain eligibility for Satisfactory Academic Progress are dictated by your specific program of study. In each case, per the requirements of 34 C.F.R. 668.34(a) (4)(ii), the program requires a minimum of a C average to maintain eligibility for aid, but any specific program may have a higher minimum GPA for federal Satisfactory Academic Progress. Olin Business School requires a 3.0 minimum GPA.

Probation

Students determined to be making unsatisfactory academic progress may be placed on academic probation. In such cases, the director of the DBA program or the program office will issue a probationary letter, in writing, to the student (with a copy to the advisor, if applicable) indicating the terms of the probation and outlining an appropriate time frame in which the student may regain good academic standing in the program. The outcome that will result if the conditions are not met will also be specified in the letter.

After the time frame specified in the initial probationary letter, a second letter will be sent to notify the student that the probationary status has been removed, that the student is being dismissed from the program for failure to meet the written terms of the academic probation, or that a new set of conditions for the student to regain good academic standing applies. Students not meeting the written terms of their academic probation may be dismissed from the DBA program by the director of doctoral programs.

Dismissal

Students may be involuntarily dismissed from the program for any of the following reasons: willful misrepresentation to gain admission to the program, breach of academic integrity, academic failure, or behavior that is destructive to the welfare of the academic community. Students who have been involuntarily dismissed from the program may appeal their dismissal to the Director of Doctoral Programs.

Withdrawal

Students wishing to withdraw from the DBA program must give notice in writing, preferably by completing the Graduate School’s Withdrawal Form with the Doctoral Programs office. This form, or any alternative style of written notice, must include the effective date of the withdrawal so as to avoid any financial repercussions for the student or the program.

Graduate Student Code of Professional Conduct Overview

The Code of Professional Conduct (“the Code”) is meant to encourage and clarify appropriate classroom, interpersonal, and extra-curricular etiquette that is expected of each individual by their peers, the faculty and the institution. It is also intended to help describe the overall environment of excellence and professionalism that all members of the Olin community seek to establish and to continually enhance. It is the responsibility of each member of the Olin community to uphold the spirit, as well as the principles, of the Code of Professional Conduct.

Expectations: Professional Standards of Conduct

In keeping with these shared expectations, Olin graduate students are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a professional manner. Professional behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following items:

In the Classroom

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend each class session. Students who must miss a session for any reason should make every effort to notify the instructor prior to the class meeting. Students should never register for courses scheduled in conflict with one another.
- **Punctuality:** Students are expected to arrive and be seated prior to the start of each class session.
- **Behavior:** Classroom interaction will be conducted in a spirited manner, but always while displaying professional courtesy and personal respect.
- **Preparation:** Students are expected to complete the readings, case preparations and other assignments prior to each class session and be prepared to actively participate in class discussions
- **Distractions:**
 1. *Exiting and Entering:* Students are expected to remain in the classroom for the duration of the class session unless an urgent need arises or prior arrangements have been made with the professor.

2. *Laptop, Tablet, and Other Electronic Device Usage:* Students are expected to use laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices only with the instructor's consent and for activities directly related to the class session. Accessing e-mail or the Internet during class is not permitted as this can be distracting for peers and faculty.
3. *Smart/Mobile Phone Usage:* Students are expected to keep their mobile phones turned off or have them set on silent/vibrate during class. Answering phones while class is in session is not permitted.

Outside the Classroom

- Students are expected to conduct themselves responsibly and professionally when dealing with all members of the Olin and Washington University communities as well as in the career search process, at club activities, networking events, job interviews, and other functions where they are representing the Olin community.
- Students are expected to abide by the Student Judicial Code (<https://wustl.edu/about/compliance-policies/academic-policies/university-student-judicial-code/>).
- **Facilities:** Students are expected to help maintain the appearance and the functionality of the building, classrooms and other facilities.

Should Violations of This Code Occur

The matter may be referred to the Code of Professional Conduct Council for review and possible sanctions. The Council will consist of one appointed member from each of these groups: the graduate student bodies, the faculty, and the staff.

Registration

Students are responsible for their own course registration.

- Registration for the fall semester begins in mid-April.
- Registration for the spring semester begins in mid-November.

Getting Started

Students use their WUSTL Key to log in to WebSTAC, Washington University's student portal. There, students can manage their course Favorites, work with their Registration Worksheet, and see their Schedule.

Extra features throughout Course Listings include the ability to add Favorites or to add sections to the Registration Worksheet. Course Listings can be accessed by selecting a School and Department in Listings by Semester.

More advanced options can be accessed by clicking on Search by Semester and from there, searching by Attributes, Day, and Times.

Drop/Add and Withdrawal

Students may drop or add a course to their registration during specified periods at the beginning of each term.

Signature of a faculty member is not necessary to add or drop a class.

The following is the policy for dropping or withdrawing from a course once it has started:

- Within the first two weeks of a "mini" semester course or the first four weeks of a semester-long course, a student can *drop* the course by completing the online Drop/Add procedure. Courses dropped during these time periods will not appear on the student's transcript.
- In the third or fourth week of a "mini" semester course or the fifth week through the eighth week of a semester-long course, a student can *withdraw* from the course by completing the online Withdraw procedure. However, such a course remains on the student's transcript with a code "W."
- If a student encounters extenuating health or other circumstances that necessitate withdrawal from a course beyond the fourth week of a "mini" course or beyond the eighth week of a semester-long course, the student may file a petition detailing the particular circumstances with the university's Academic Review Committee. If the student's petition to withdraw is approved by the Academic Review Committee, the course (or courses) will remain on the student's transcript with the code "W."

Auditing a Course

Students who wish to audit a course should talk with the professor of the course to determine the specific requirements for a successful or unsuccessful audit before choosing this option (grade option "A" when registering for the course). The requirements vary by course and by professor. **Audited courses are not considered in calculating the 72 credit units required for program completion.**

Course Waivers

A course waiver process allows students to avoid redundant study of subjects already mastered and to advance in the program. However, a waiver does not reduce the total number of required program credit units. Students may request a waiver of any required course by submitting a petition to their DBA advisor. Approval will be granted *only* if the student completed substantially equivalent course work during their prior education or demonstrated competency via work experience. The DBA advisor may require the student to enroll in a specific substitution course; if not, the student may choose to substitute other DBA course work for which they have met the stated prerequisites.

Independent Study and Research Internship Credits

Students who would like the opportunity to get more in-depth exposure to an area of interest under the supervision and direction of a faculty member may seek a faculty sponsor. Typically, a student will discuss with a faculty member the possibility of receiving supervision for directed research or an independent study research project. Faculty members have a variety of commitments, so the interested student should have an independent study project fairly well thought out prior to contacting a potential faculty sponsor. Projects may receive from 1.5 to 6 academic credits; normally, however, no more than 3 credits are granted in a single semester. Once a project is agreed upon between student and professor, the student must submit a petition to

the Doctoral Programs Office and ask the faculty member to confirm their approval to the office. The petition should outline the topics to be covered, texts or other research material, methodology, and deliverables. Students must be in good academic standing to receive approval for independent study.

Directed Readings

All DBA students are required to do at least one 3-credit directed reading course. This course consists of a program of readings developed by and with the approval of one or more members of the faculty. Students should identify the faculty based on their research interest. Based on these readings, students should produce a four- to five-page white paper on one of the recent working papers of the advising faculty. The white paper should be oriented towards practitioners, be motivated using recent events from the world of business, summarize the paper and detail key takeaways for finance professionals. Students should submit a syllabus of the approved readings and deliverable to the Doctoral Programs Office. Once approved, students will be registered for the course.

Qualifying Field Examinations

After completing all required courses, students take a four-hour, written field exam. Scheduling of this exam must be arranged with the faculty coordinator. Students must pass this exam in order to start work on a dissertation.

Dissertation

After successfully passing the field exam, students will write an extended research paper under the guidance of a faculty member (“faculty advisor”).

The expectation is that the scope and depth of the dissertation will be greater than for a master’s level thesis but less than for a PhD dissertation. The student will defend their dissertation through an oral presentation to a dissertation committee of three tenured or tenure-track faculty members (including the student’s faculty advisor). The committee will assign a passing grade or a failing grade, or will ask the student to make revisions in order to receive a passing grade.

Graduation Information

University commencement ceremonies, held in May, mark the end of the academic year. Advanced degrees, however, are awarded three times a year: in August, December, and May. The terminal dates for completing all degree requirements are listed in the academic calendar on the Graduate School’s website.

Students who earn May degrees and participate in their school’s recognition ceremony receive their diplomas in person. Otherwise, students pick up their diplomas at the Office of Student Records. Diplomas not picked up in a timely manner are mailed by Student Records to the address indicated on the student’s Intent to Graduate form. The Student Records office issues official transcripts showing courses, grades, and awarded degrees at no charge, on student request. Information regarding these services is on the Student Records website.

General Policies and Procedures

Transfer Credit/Accounting for Prior Studies

Students with relevant graduate level degrees may be given credit toward their DBA degree based on their prior studies at the discretion of the program academic director. Specifically:

- Students with a Masters of Finance degree may be allowed to transfer course credits to the DBA in Finance Program, subject to the approval by the Doctoral Programs Office. For Olin MSF students, the maximum that be transferred is 24 credits.
- For students with another relevant master’s degree, the maximum number of transfer credits allowed is 12 (this is true for the DBA in Finance and the DBA in Marketing).

Students seeking acceptance of transfer credits from another university must submit the Transfer Credit Evaluation Form along with a copy of their official transcript from the institution, a course description, a syllabus from the course, and course equivalency information.

Credits petitioned for transfer must be relevant to the DBA program, must not have been used to satisfy the requirements of another degree, and must have been earned in graduate-level courses for which the student earned at least a “B”. Credit for courses in which the student received no letter grade cannot be transferred. Similarly, credits earned through correspondence courses or through courses or experiences offered under the auspices of proprietary schools, business or industrial training programs, or schools conducted by federal agencies are not considered for transfer.

Approved transfer credits are included on the student’s official transcript as credits accepted in transfer. Letter grades for transfer credits are neither reflected on the student’s transcript nor considered in the determination of the grade-point average.

International Students

The ability to communicate fluently is essential for progress and success in the DBA program. Communication is the vehicle for expressing knowledge and ideas in both written and verbal forms. All students who do not regard their mastery of English as strong are encouraged to enroll in English courses to improve their proficiency.