

Doctor of Business Administration

100% Online | Part-Time

Become a scholar practitioner with the highest qualification in business and management

Part-Time & 100% Online

For more information on the online Doctor of Business Administration programme contact an Enrolment Consultant by email at online@herts.ac.uk



Discover our **Doctor of Business Administration**

The online Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme at the University of Hertfordshire is designed for experienced professionals aiming to achieve the highest qualification in business and management. Delivered 100% online, this part-time programme empowers you to lead groundbreaking research while continuing your career.

Through this flexible DBA programme, you'll become a global authority in business by conducting impactful research that addresses real-world organisational challenges. Supported by expert supervision and peer collaboration, you'll refine your strategic thinking, research methods, and ability to influence business practices worldwide.



Enterprise
Zone Status

1 of 20
UK Universities

Herts is proud to be one of only 20 universities awarded Enterprise Zone status for our focus on business, innovation and entrepreneurship

Study with a **Globally Recognised Business Faculty**

At Hertfordshire Business School, you're joining one of the UK's leading business faculties, renowned for its innovative, real-world approach to business education. Here, you will engage with research that tackles societal challenges, from climate change to information security, 90% of which is rated as 'internationally excellent' or 'world-leading' (Research Excellence Framework 2021). At the Herts Business School you'll benefit from our strong connections with regional, national, and international businesses, ensuring that your learning is relevant, opportunity-rich, and practice-led – preparing you to meet the challenges and opportunities of the modern business world.

A Doctoral Journey to Expertise and Innovation

The DBA is a practice-focused, research-based doctoral degree that provides the opportunity to become a thought leader in your field. Unlike a traditional PhD, the DBA equips you with both theoretical expertise and practical skills to address complex organisational challenges.

Key benefits of the programme include:

- ✓ **5-year part-time structure** designed to fit around your professional commitments.
- ✓ **A research journey** tailored to your individual interests and business expertise.
- ✓ **Comprehensive training** in research methodologies, ethics, and reflective practice.
- ✓ **Supervision by a team of academics** with expertise in your chosen research area and methodology.



As part of the Doctor of Business Administration (Online) programme, you'll have the opportunity to focus on a specialised area of research that aligns with your professional expertise and aspirations. Your chosen research topic will empower you to make a significant contribution to both academic knowledge and industry practice, equipping you with advanced insights and skills to position yourself as a global leader and authority in your field. This tailored approach ensures that your research journey directly supports your career goals, enabling you to excel and stand out as an expert in your domain.

Who is the DBA for?

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme is designed for ambitious professionals who are eager to advance their expertise, lead innovation, and make a meaningful impact within their organisations and industries. It is ideal for:

- ✓ **Experienced Professionals:** Executives, consultants, and senior managers with at least 5 years of leadership experience who want to deepen their understanding of business and management. This programme enables you to bridge the gap between theory and practice, contributing meaningful research that directly influences and enhances your field.
- ✓ **Entrepreneurs and Innovators:** Business owners, founders, and industry disruptors who are passionate about driving innovation and exploring new frontiers in their sectors. The DBA equips you with advanced research and strategic thinking skills, empowering you to solve complex business challenges, implement transformative initiatives, and make data-driven decisions that steer your organisation to success.
- ✓ **Aspiring Academics:** Professionals looking to transition into academia by conducting rigorous, impactful research and gaining the credibility needed to teach in higher education. The programme provides the skills and framework to produce research that not only influences business practices but also contributes to the global academic conversation.
- ✓ **Future-Focused Leaders:** Those who recognise the importance of staying ahead in an ever-changing business environment. The DBA empowers leaders to adapt to global trends, such as digital transformation, sustainability, and globalisation, and equips them with the knowledge to lead their organisations through change and complexity.





Achieve Expertise in Business Research and Leadership

A DBA isn't just a degree; it's a platform to elevate your career, expand your influence, and redefine leadership in your field. Graduating with a DBA from the University of Hertfordshire will help you:

- Become a recognised authority in your field, equipped to influence global business practices.
- Gain advanced research skills to address complex challenges and drive organisational transformation.
- Refine your critical thinking, reflective analysis, and strategic decision-making abilities.

Academic Leadership

As a DBA graduate, you'll be well-prepared for esteemed roles in academia, such as professor or lecturer. You'll conduct impactful research, teach the next generation of business leaders, and contribute to advancing knowledge in your field.

Senior Leadership Roles

Your DBA equips you for senior executive positions like CEO, COO, or Director. You'll have the strategic and research-driven expertise to lead global organisations, implement evidence-based solutions, and navigate complex business challenges with confidence.

Strategic Consultancy

Become a sought-after consultant, using your advanced research skills to solve complex business problems, drive innovation, and guide organisations through transformative changes. Your ability to deliver tailored, research-based solutions will set you apart.

Entrepreneurial Excellence

Enhance your ability to scale ventures, foster innovation, and lead sustainable business growth. Whether launching a new business or driving innovation within your organisation, your DBA positions you as an entrepreneurial leader ready to shape the future.

Industry Recognition

As a DBA graduate, you'll gain credibility as a thought leader in your field. Publish impactful research, speak at conferences, and influence industry best practices, solidifying your reputation as an authority in business and management.

Your DBA Journey at a Glance

The Doctor of Business Administration is a carefully structured programme delivered over five years. Each year is designed to guide you through a transformational journey, combining advanced research methods with practical application to address complex business challenges and produce impactful findings. **You can start applying lessons to your day-to-day work, from your very first unit.**

Year 1: Building the Foundations

The first year focuses on transitioning from a practitioner to a scholar-practitioner. Through six structured units, you'll develop essential research skills, explore methodologies, and refine your chosen area of study. This year culminates in a 6,000-word progress report that formalises your research plan and ensures its feasibility for doctoral-level work.

Years 2–3: Advancing Your Research

In this phase, you'll dive deeper into your chosen research topic, conducting in-depth investigations, data collection, and analysis. Through advanced research units, you'll refine your methodologies and ensure the relevance and originality of your work. By the end of Year 3, you will submit a second 6,000-word progress report, showcasing your significant findings and demonstrating your readiness for the final phase.

Years 4–5: Completing Your Thesis

The final phase is dedicated to completing and finalising your research. You'll synthesise your findings into an 80,000-word doctoral thesis, making a meaningful contribution to your field. Your journey concludes with a viva voce examination, where you'll defend your research before an academic panel, solidifying your status as a Doctor of Business Administration.

This phased approach ensures a smooth progression through the programme, providing you with the skills, knowledge, and support needed to excel as a thought leader in business and management.



Year 1: Building the Foundations for Research Excellence

In the first year, you'll transition from a practitioner to a scholar-practitioner by developing the foundational skills necessary for rigorous doctoral research. The six essential units in this year will help you refine your research idea, align it with academic frameworks, and prepare for the challenges of your research journey. You'll gain an in-depth understanding of research philosophies, methodologies, and ethics while solidifying your research proposal.

Becoming an Effective Scholar-Practitioner

Transition from a professional to a scholar-practitioner, equipping yourself with the mindset and skills required for rigorous academic research.

Understanding the Mechanics of the Research Process

Gain a comprehensive overview of the academic research process, including its goals, methods, and standards, to establish a strong foundation.

Making Sense of the Literature

Learn to navigate, evaluate, and synthesise academic literature to build a robust base for your research journey.

Exploring Research Methodologies and Methods

Explore diverse research methodologies and refine your approach to selecting and designing the best methods for your study.

Being an Ethical Researcher

Understand the principles of research ethics, including integrity, plagiarism prevention, and resolving ethical challenges.

Progression Planning for Future Years

Prepare for long-term success by planning your research progression and understanding how to work effectively with supervisors and assessment protocols.

By the end of Year 1, you'll submit a 6,000-word progress report for assessment, outlining a well-defined and viable research proposal.

In Years 2 and 3, you will build on the foundational skills gained in Year 1 by focusing on advanced research approaches and honing the skills required for your specific project.

Advanced Research Design and Data Collection

Dive deeper into complex research designs and data collection strategies tailored to your specific research questions and objectives.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Develop advanced skills in analysing and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data to derive meaningful insights.

Communicating Research Findings

Learn how to effectively communicate your research findings through academic papers, presentations, and professional reports.

Contextualising Research in Practice

Explore how to integrate your research into professional practice, ensuring it creates tangible impact in your industry or organisation.

Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Research

Engage in collaborative research, exploring the value of interdisciplinary approaches and partnerships to enhance your study's scope.

Preparing for the Second Progress Assessment

Consolidate your research findings and prepare a comprehensive progress report to demonstrate the significance and trajectory of your work.

By the end of Year 3, you'll submit another 6,000-word progress report presenting significant findings and progress on your research.

Years 4–5: Completing and Defending Your Research

In the final stages, you will focus on refining your research, preparing your thesis, and defending it in the viva examination.

Refining Research Questions and Scope

Revisit and fine-tune your research questions to ensure your thesis aligns with emerging findings and remains impactful.

Writing the Doctoral Thesis

Develop your doctoral thesis step by step, incorporating detailed analysis, structured arguments, and robust evidence.

Addressing Critical Feedback

Prepare to address feedback from supervisors, peers, and external reviewers, strengthening your arguments and findings.

Preparing for the Viva Examination

Master the skills needed to confidently defend your thesis during the viva, including answering questions and handling challenges.

Translating Research into Impact

Focus on how to translate your academic work into practical solutions or policies that influence your field or organisation.

Achieving Your Doctorate

Finalise your research journey by ensuring your work meets the highest standards of academic and professional excellence.

By the end of your DBA you will develop your doctoral thesis, an 80,000-word dissertation defended through a viva examination.

*Unit specifics and order are subject to change, based on continuous programme optimisation and providing a personalised learning experience.

Questions about your potential DBA path? [Book a meeting with our Enrolment Team!](#)

DBA Assessments

There are three main assessments throughout the DBA programme as well as individual unit assessments. These assessments are critical milestones to evaluate your progress and ensure you're on track with your research journey:

Unit Assessments

Throughout the programme, you will engage in formative assessments within each unit. These are not graded but provide feedback to help you refine your research and progress towards the main assessments.

These may include:

- ✓ Reflective exercises (e.g., 1,000-word submissions at the end of units).
- ✓ Peer discussions and feedback in synchronous and asynchronous sessions.
- ✓ Progress updates to your supervisory team for guidance.

Main Assessment 1: First Progress Assessment (End of Year 1)

- **When:** At the end of the first year (Months 10–12).
- **What:** A 6,000-word report summarising the outcomes of the foundational units (Units 1–6).
- **Purpose:** This report formalises your research topic, objectives, and methodologies, demonstrating the viability and significance of your research proposal.

Main Assessment 2: Second Progress Assessment (End of Year 3)

- **When:** At the end of the third year (Month 36).
- **What:** A second 6,000-word progress report, presenting significant findings and progress on your research.
- **Purpose:** This assessment ensures that your research is advancing effectively and aligns with doctoral standards. It also provides an opportunity for feedback before completing the final thesis.

Main Assessment 3: Final Viva Examination (End of Year 5)

- **When:** At the end of the fifth year (Month 60).
- **What:** Submission of your 80,000-word doctoral thesis and an oral defence in a viva voce examination.
- **Purpose:** This is the final and most critical assessment where you defend your research findings and contributions to a panel of academic experts.



Technical Requirements

You can study this course anytime and from anywhere in the world but you will need to have access to a suitable desktop computer or laptop and a stable internet connection, as well as a camera and microphone.

Your Online Learning Experience

The programme is designed for busy professionals who need flexibility without compromising on quality. You'll access all course materials through Canvas, our virtual learning environment, where you'll find recorded lectures, discussion forums, and study resources. Engage with tutors and peers in live tutorials, group projects, and interactive discussions, making your learning collaborative and engaging.

Learning Approach and Taught Elements

The DBA is a research-based programme but includes structured learning through units with:

- Fixed start and end dates
- Formative assignments with feedback (e.g., essays, discussion boards, reports)
- Asynchronous activities: Readings, videos, self-paced exercises
- Synchronous sessions: 1-2 per unit, depending on the unit leader's preference
- Supervision meetings are flexible and scheduled based on student needs and time zones

Tools and Resources

Students gain access to:

- Online UH Library
- Data analysis software (e.g., NVivo, SPSS)
- Researcher Development Framework (VITAE-aligned)
- Structured training to support academic writing, data management, and methodology development



Your Degree Certificate

Your Doctor of Business Administration degree from the University of Hertfordshire is identical to a degree earned on campus. It carries the same weight, prestige, and academic standing, with no mention of "online" study. Your degree certificate will demonstrate your expertise and commitment, positioning you as a leader in your field.

Graduate On Campus

You will have the opportunity to attend your graduation ceremony alongside on-campus students, celebrating your achievement in a memorable and communal setting. Ceremonies are typically held either at the historic Abbey Church of St Albans or at the Weston Auditorium on the de Havilland campus in either September or December.

Dedicated Student Support

As an online student at the University of Hertfordshire, you will receive multi-tier support tailored to the unique requirements of distance learning and postgraduate study. You will have access to:

- **A programme leader** for overarching course guidance and assistance.
- **Unit leaders** who provide guidance with assessment queries and clarifying learning points.
- **A dedicated student support advisor** who will assist you with managing your schedule and pastoral support.
- **A supervisory team** that will typically comprise of a Principal Supervisor and a Second Supervisor to help with your studies and research.
- **Student Wellbeing units, University Disability Advisors & Hertfordshire Student's Union.**



Student
Support

1st
in the UK

Herts is ranked 1st of all UK universities for student support in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES 2024)

Career Service

As an online student at the University of Hertfordshire, you will have access to the dedicated Careers and Employment and Enterprise service online, supported by their outstanding jobs portal, HandShake.

They are here to help you to develop your skills and make the best decisions for your future, offering assistance in:

- Searching for work experience opportunities
- Advice and tips on how to create the perfect CV
- Applying for jobs
- Undertaking further study
- Starting your own business

Fees and Payment Plans

Fees for the Doctor of Business Administration at the University of Hertfordshire are £7,000 per academic year, and subject to inflationary increases every academic year.

Students can pay in a single installment each year, or break the fees down into 8 equal payments payable for 8 sequential months by direct debit.

Information regarding postgraduate doctoral loans is available on this page: <https://ask.herts.ac.uk/postgraduate-doctoral-loans>.

If a Doctoral student would rather have a more customised plan to break down the annual fee, they will need to contact the Doctoral College to set this up. doctoralcollegefinance@herts.ac.uk

There are no upfront costs related to applying and starting your course. We don't charge an application fee or a deposit. You will get your first invoice a few weeks into your first Unit. There are also no additional costs associated with the programme. You will receive free university access to any required software and learning materials (if applicable).

Start Dates

You can commence your studies when it is convenient to you with 3 start dates, in February, June and October.

Please be advised that the application process can take several months.

Other Funding Options

UK - Funding Your DBA with a Doctoral Loan

The UK Government offers doctoral loans of up to £29,390 to help you fund your Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) studies. This financial support is available for eligible UK-resident students who wish to pursue a doctoral qualification, including professional doctorates such as the DBA.

The loan can be used to cover tuition fees, living expenses, or other study-related costs, providing you with the flexibility to manage your finances throughout your course. It is paid directly to you in three instalments per academic year. Repayment begins only after you've completed your studies, and you'll only need to start repaying when your annual income exceeds £21,000.

Eligibility Criteria:

- You must be under the age of 60 on the first day of the first academic year of your DBA course.
- You must ordinarily reside in England or qualify under specific residency requirements.
- The DBA must be provided by a UK university and cannot be funded in conjunction with any other loans for postgraduate studies.

Doctoral loans make funding your DBA more accessible, enabling you to focus on your research and professional goals.

For detailed information and to apply, visit [gov.uk/doctoral-loan](https://www.gov.uk/doctoral-loan).

Your Application Process

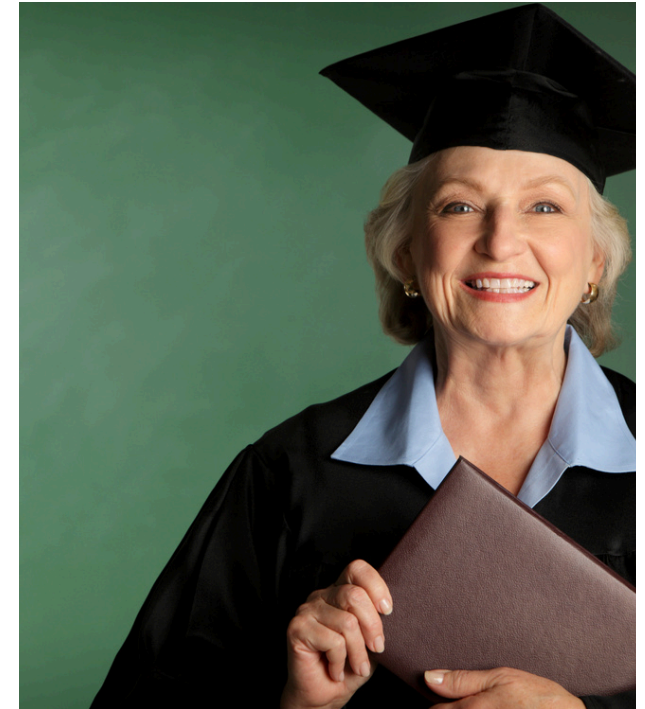
Application for all University of Hertfordshire online degrees is through the dedicated portal applyonline.herts.ac.uk.

- **Professional Experience:** A minimum of 5 years at a senior executive level is required. This should include managing teams, budgets, and strategic decision-making in complex settings. Applicants must demonstrate potential to make a significant impact in their field.
- **Educational Background:** A Master's degree is preferred, but exceptional candidates with significant professional experience may be considered.
- **The faculty is selective** and will choose a small number of individuals based on their success in both the proposal and interview phases. This process can take several months so applicants are encouraged to apply well in advance of their intended start date.

The supporting documents for the programme are:

- **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** A detailed CV outlining your senior-level responsibilities and strategic decision-making.
- **References:** Two professional references from senior colleagues or academics who can specifically support your abilities in problem solving, critical thinking, viewing different perspectives and your potential for research.
- **Research Proposal:** A comprehensive 3,000- to 3,500-word proposal to be reviewed by the faculty, possibly requiring revisions before moving forward. Applicants with suitable, actionable proposals that are selected after the initial review may be invited for a panel interview with the faculty.
- Your final highest academic certificate.
- The official transcripts or full statement of results for your highest academic certificate.
- A copy of your passport or ID.

International education documents will need to be translated into English by an official translator before submission. The application process can take several months to ensure a suitable research proposal is developed and refined.



Apply now!

Regulating Body

University of Hertfordshire programmes are regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) established as the regulator of the English higher education under the provisions of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

Take the Next Step Toward Leadership

Your journey to becoming a global authority in business starts here. The DBA (Online) programme at the University of Hertfordshire is your opportunity to develop cutting-edge research skills, gain advanced expertise, and make a transformative impact in your industry. Whether you aim to lead at the highest organisational levels, drive innovation, or contribute meaningful research to your field, this programme is designed to help you achieve your ambitions.

Don't wait to redefine your professional future. Apply today and join a global network of thought leaders and innovators shaping the landscape of business and management. Your journey toward success begins with a single step – **take it now**.

Bet on Yourself >>>

Apply now!

This brochure was reviewed in December 2024. It contains information on the DBA online programme that the University of Hertfordshire ("Herts") intends to run for students planning to start their course in 2025. Herts has made every effort to ensure this information is helpful and accurate. Still, some changes, for example, to courses, facilities, or fees, may become necessary due to legitimate staffing, financial, regulatory, or academic reasons.

Herts will endeavour to keep changes to a minimum and keep applicants informed appropriately. For this reason, it is important that you regularly check the website (<https://online.herts.ac.uk>) for updates or contact Herts using the contact details contained within this document.

