

## Executive Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Online

Take your success further with the executive Doctor of Business Administration (DBA). Designed for experienced professionals, our programme is a pivotal milestone in professional and personal development. Gain credibility and confidence to make a real difference as you earn an elite qualification equivalent to a PhD.

We specialise in Accounting, Law, Marketing, Strategy, Economics, Finance and Entrepreneurship.

**100% online, part-time | Graduate in 4-6 years | 540 credits | 6 week and 12 week modules | Two intakes per year, April and September | Cost: £39,000**

Course type

Online / distance learning

Course format

Duration

4 - 6 years

UCAS code(s)

N/A

Start date

Overview

Explore the DBA

### **What makes a good DBA application?**

Programme Director, Geoff Parkes provides some guidance on creating a good application. He discusses the importance of having a structure to your application, knowing what the research question is and what the contribution of your research would be.

[Find out more](#)

 **Geoff Parkes** type unknown

### **Rising demand for DBAs**

Today's global business environment has led to rising demand for more advanced qualifications. Aston University's DBA Programme Director Dr Geoff Parkes explains how a DBA degree can help leaders meet employer demands and identify cutting-edge solutions to business problems.

[Find out more](#)

## John Blakey's journey

Listen to John Blakey's DBA experience and why he chose to study at Aston University.

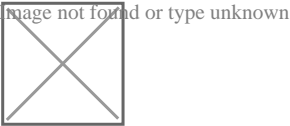
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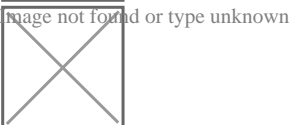
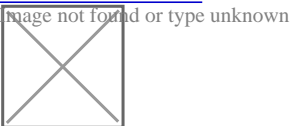
- [Our DBA programme equips graduates with the skills needed to tackle business challenges and make an impact on industry.](#)
- [We are one of only three business schools in the UK to receive the Small Business Charter Award.](#)
- [78% of our business research achieved 3\\* and 4\\* in the latest Research Excellence Framework.](#)
- [Aston Business School is one of just 1% of business schools in the world to hold AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA accreditation.](#)

## [Aston Business School](#)

Executive Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) Online



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## Register your interest

Adam Robinson unknown

**Adam Robinson**

Account Manager, Executive Doctor of Business Administration

If you would like to register your interest, our Account Manager, Adam Robinson, will be in touch to talk to you about the application process and answer any questions you may have.

[Register your interest here.](#)

## Course outline

The global business world scenario is one of constant change - be it in terms of technology, regulations, macroeconomic forces or the range and depth of skills required. Change that constantly throws up new and complex challenges that must be thoughtfully and skilfully navigated to ensure long term business prosperity.

This challenging, part-time, online, research based doctoral programme is designed for experienced business executives who are looking to leverage their professional experience with cutting edge research-based skills to robustly analyse and address complex real-world business problems.

They say that getting to the top is not easy. And *staying there is even more difficult*. Aston Business School is part of the elite, top 1% of business schools thanks to our triple accreditation from AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA. At Aston, we have a long and distinguished history of supporting businesses and business leaders. Our alumni include highly successful CEOs and senior executives from a wide spectrum of the industrial map.

We know what it takes to get to the top... and more importantly... how to remain there.

Our DBA programme is geared towards executives with at least five years of experience, who hold a Masters degree in management and are looking to enhance their skills and equip themselves to successfully tackle business challenges and make an impact on industry and society. As part of the programme, you will combine advanced theory and contemporary business research to develop a comprehensive data driven research project. This can be across a range of disciplines such as finance, business management, accounting, economics, organisational behaviour, data analytics and human resources.

### What is the difference between a DBA and a PhD?

There are several factors to consider when selecting postgraduate study. Both the DBA and PhD have similarities in their approach and international recognition. However, there are key differences in choice of topics, career outcomes, candidate profile and motivation.

A PhD is generally undertaken on a full-time basis by those with little or no work experience and primarily interested in a career in academia. A DBA gives flexibility for busy professionals to elevate their success and career without putting it on hold. DBA coursework is designed to equip professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to deal with organisational challenges and opportunities in a structured manner that entails thorough research, analysis, and discussions.

[Listen to our podcast to find out more](#)

For more information on developing a research proposal, see our [guidance notes](#).

## DBA Community

As part of the Aston University DBA programme, you will join an international community of DBA students and alumni. Students on the programme are part of a vibrant, thriving research community. Our faculty hold research seminars and webinars and DBA students may attend the same.

We also seek to host research colloquia where doctoral students can present their work-in-progress, share ideas and perspectives, receive feedback and network with faculty, invited guests and peers. We held our inaugural DBA Research Colloquium in 2022. More details can be found here: [DBA Research Colloquium](#).

Successful and timely completion of your research degree also depends on developing a mixture of subject-specific and transferable skills. Many of these skills will also be important in your future life, whatever career choices you make. DBA students thus have access to a range of training programmes that offer personal and professional development opportunities for all postgraduate researchers at Aston University. The workshops are delivered by the Graduate School which oversees all postgraduate research degrees at the University. More information can be found at: [Aston Graduate School](#).

## **How will my skills develop?**

Upon completion of the executive DBA, you will develop and advance a wide range of leadership skills to transform your career and organisation. You will gain a unique skill set, this includes:

- **Critical thinking** - You will strengthen your ability to identify, understand, analyse and solve complex problems through rigorous research and analysis.
- **Strategic decision-making** - Elevate and refine your insights to make an even greater organisational impact through evidence-based practice.
- **Research expertise** - You will build advanced understanding and application of theory to real-life business challenges.

## **Programme pathway and modules**

Taught Phase: 75 credits

During the first year of your programme, you will gain baseline research skills through modules taught by inspirational faculty and refine your research topic. The modules are designed to allow you to develop as an independent, professional researcher and equip you with the knowledge needed to develop your research thesis. Classes are 100% online and combine asynchronous content with synchronous sessions hosted on our virtual learning platform, giving you the opportunity to interact with your peers and faculty members, share perspectives and network.

### **Modules in taught phase | 75 credits**

**Introduction to Business and Management Research (15 credits)**

This module will help you understand the process of business and management research and develop the necessary research skills to conduct a literature review.

### **Applied Research Methods (15 credits)**

This module will enable you to think about the links between philosophy, theory, and research methodology, and apply these to business and management research.

### **Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods (30 credits)**

This module will provide you with a grounding in the theoretical principles of, and approaches to, quantitative and qualitative research.

### **Professional Development and Research Impact (15 credits)**

During this module, you will develop an appreciation for impact related research to inform the operations and decision making within business and consider your future professional development.

*Note: The module list provides an overview of what is currently available and is subject to change.*

Research Phase: 465 credits

On completion of the taught phase and based on your research topic/area, you will be partnered with academic supervisors. Your supervisors will guide and support you as you develop your doctoral thesis, which forms the capstone for programme. Our faculty specialise in departments such as Accounting, Aston Law, Marketing and Strategy, and Economics, Finance and Entrepreneurship. A full list of departments and academic faculty is available at: [ABS Faculty](#).

This stage of the programme requires significant drive, commitment and dedication to undertaking independent study.

In month 20 of the programme (determined from point of programme registration), you will submit a qualifying report which is assessed by viva voce examination with internal examiners. Briefly, the report will deliver a detailed review of previous research findings relating to your research and a plan & design for research work going forward.

Progress on the programme is contingent on meeting the submission deadline for the qualifying report and passing the viva.

Following successful completion of the qualifying report and viva, candidates further develop and ultimately submit a thesis which is examined in a viva voce examination with internal and external examiners.

## **Entry requirements**

## Entry Requirements

To enter the DBA programme:

- You should hold a Master's degree in business or management (or comparable subject).
- A minimum of 5 years senior management experience.

Entry is competitive and all applicants must submit:

- Official academic transcript(s) and certificate(s) evidencing an MBA, MSc or MA degree in business or management
- Two references, one of which will be from your current employer
- Detailed CV
- Copy of Passport
- A research proposal ([Guidance notes](#))
- A personal statement detailing your motivations in undertaking this programme and how your background, qualifications and experiences will help you meet the demands of the programme ([Guidance notes](#)).

## International Students

To enter the DBA programme:

- You should hold a Master's degree in business or management (or comparable subject)
- A minimum of 5 years senior management experience.

Entry is competitive and all applicants must submit:

- Official academic transcript(s) and certificate(s) evidencing an MBA, MSc or MA degree in business or management
- Two references, one of which will be from your current employer
- Detailed CV
- Copy of Passport
- A research proposal ([Guidance notes](#))
- A personal statement detailing your motivations in undertaking this programme and how your background, qualifications and experiences ([Guidance notes](#)).

*If English isn't your first language, in addition to the standard entry requirements, you must evidence that your master's degree was taught entirely in English.*

*Alternatively, you can evidence that you have a minimum IETLS score of 6.5 overall or an equivalent English Language qualification recognised by Aston University, taken within the last two years.*

*Aston University can also provide an internationally accredited online English Language Assessment, this can be discussed during the application process with your DBA Advisor.*

## Application process

Applications that meet entry requirements are reviewed by the DBA Programme Director. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview via Microsoft Teams. As part of the interview, applicants will have a conversation the DBA Programme Director and faculty members to discuss their proposed research and the requirements of

the programme.

Successful applicants will receive offer letters and information on programme registration and enrolment.

## Fees and scholarships

Annual fee for years 1-4	£9,750
Annual fee for year 5 (if required)	£5,000
Annual fee for year 6 (if required)	£500

The annual tuition fee for the Programme is £9,750, payable over three instalments of £3,250. This tuition fee is a fixed annual fee for the first 4 years of the programme (£39,000).

Aston Alumni will receive a 20% fee reduction.

**Please note** - there are no scholarship opportunities available for the DBA programme.

## Frequently asked questions

How does a DBA differ from a PhD?

A DBA is the same level of education as a PhD. Both are research-oriented degrees that confer the title of Doctor and both degrees require candidates to conduct original research and make a significant contribution to knowledge. The research context and typical candidate profiles however differ between the degrees.

The DBA is considered a professional doctorate geared towards executives and high-level managers. In a DBA, the focus is on using theory and research to design robust interventions that address real-world business issues. An impact on professional practice is thus achieved.

On the other hand, typically, a PhD focuses on more theoretical research seeking to identify new theories or extend existing ones. And PhD candidates are typically in the early stages of their academic careers.

[Listen to our podcast to find out more](#)

Do I have to create a new theory as part of the doctoral thesis?

No. Einstein and Sir Isaac Newton created new theories – that level of academic endeavour isn't what's required. What you must do in a doctoral thesis is make a contribution to knowledge both for practice and academia. Just like in natural and physical sciences we have social science theories and the opportunity for a DBA student is to apply these theories to a practical business problem, in a way that creates new knowledge. DBA students have an edge over PhD students because they are closer to practice and can access data – that is always a big challenge for academics.

How long is the part-time Online DBA programme?

The programme is offered on a part-time basis. In accordance with University Regulations for part-time research students, the earliest date for completion of the doctoral programme (i.e. submission of thesis) is 4 years following registration. This may be extended to a maximum of 6 years.

How will my skills develop?

Throughout the duration of the course, through a mixture of pathways such as research, analysis and discussion, you will be equipped with the knowledge to excel in your career and also contribute to positively transforming your current organisation. It will help you to deal with organisational challenges by applying theory and research-based solutions to real life business experiences.

The course will encourage you to become more inquisitive and analytical professionally and will hone your strategic decision-making skills and enable you to make a greater impact through the decisions that you make and the processes you put in place.

How will this course help my career?

The Executive DBA allows you to focus on a particular topic in business that you see most vital for your organisation – alongside work.

The part-time, flexible structure of the course allows you to complete your studies alongside your normal professional commitments. Through this you can interlink theory and practice and apply new knowledge to your role.

What does a Doctor of Business Administration do?

A Doctor of Business Administration is the next step past an MBA and the highest level of business administration degree. You can establish yourself as a thought leader through meaningful data-driven research founded on advanced academic theory and contemporary business research that impacts business practice.

Can I apply for a DBA online?

Yes. To allow students to continue working during their degree, we offer a fully online Doctor of Business Administration. If you want to further your career through education but are too busy to attend traditional classes, earning your DBA online is a great option.

What is a Research Proposal?

See our [guidance notes](#) on developing a research proposal.

Your research proposal is a critical element of your application. It gives an overview of your research agenda and provides the reader with (a) an understanding of the key research question(s) (b) the context, background and relevance of the same (c) potential research methods that could address the research questions in a timely manner (these can be broad) and (d) the anticipated contribution to current understanding in the field / professional practice. An indication of the current state of knowledge around the research area (i.e., theories and literature) and potential data sources that can be used to address the research question(s) is also expected. The proposal ideally identify the department(s) that the research most closely aligns with.

In essence, the research proposal clearly communicates what is to be researched, motivates, and justifies



the proposed research, explains how the research is to be undertaken and provides an indication of the usefulness of the results it generates to the field / professional practice.

It is important to note that the research proposal is an outline of the intended line of research and evolves as you become more familiar with the literature and theories around your research area over the course of the programme. Thus, you are not expected to conduct a comprehensive review of the outstanding literature / research associated with your research area nor confirm methodological approaches to resolving the research problem at this stage. However, you are expected to convey your current line of thought and knowledge around a given research issue / problem and potential approaches to analysing the same.

Given that the proposal is a concise blueprint for the research to be undertaken, it should be 1000-1400 words. Finally, the research proposal must have a succinct and meaningful title (the title is excluded from the suggested word limit).

What is the interview structure? What do I need to prepare?

Be prepared to talk about your research question in an academic context – so why would knowledge in this area be different – be capable of making a contribution? Most importantly find out about Aston Research Centres and the research profiles of our academics. These outline the research we specialise in and want to receive proposals about. If you can read some journal articles – do any call for more research on your topic?

How can I find out more information?

Adam Robinson

**Adam Robinson**

Account Manager, Executive Doctor of Business Administration

If you would like to register your interest, our Account Manager, Adam Robinson, will be in touch to talk to you about the application process and answer any questions you may have.

[Register your interest here.](#)

Download our Executive DBA brochure

[DBA Brochure 2023](#) 1.23 MB

If you need more information or have any queries, [please email us](#).

## News

Listen to Paul Jones discuss the differences between a PhD and DBA

Paul Jones joins Dr Simon McCabe and offers some real insight into how a DBA differs from a PhD. Paul

also discusses why he chose to study a DBA at Aston University.

## The rising demand for DBAs

Today's global business environment has led to rising demand for more advanced qualifications. Aston University's DBA Director, Geoff Parkes, explains how a DBA degree can help leaders meet employer demands and identify cutting-edge solutions to business problems.

Read the full article below:

[Read more](#)

## Geoff Parkes discusses what makes a good DBA application

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## Download our DBA brochure

[DBA Brochure 2023](#) 1.23 MB

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Aston University is in a great, central location. Ideally positioned in the centre of Birmingham - one of the youngest cities in Europe - our campus is only a 10 minute walk to the city centre.

## **Clubs and societies**

Joining a club or society is one of the best ways to get the most out of your time here at Aston. With over 130 student-led groups we have something for everyone.

## **Sports**

Here's Sports at Aston. Discover what's happening on the Aston University campus at the Sir Doug Ellis Woodcock Sports Centre.

## **Student support at the Hub**

The Hub is a central location on the Ground Floor of the Main Building where most of the student support services are located.

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