BSL Business School Lausanne

# Doctorate of Business Administration

Business Transformation
Sustainable Business
Entrepreneurship
Digitalisation
Artificial Intelligence

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# Director of the Doctoral School's Message

## Solving a problem: what a DBA is ultimately about!

If you are wondering whether a DBA journey is the right thing for you, you need to read what follows!

A DBA research and dissertation is an incredible experience that enables you to establish a bridge between two worlds: the world of business and the world of research.

**How is that so?**

At Business School Lausanne, we consider that every DBA research and dissertation aims to enable you to transform business while advancing academic research at the same time.

In other words, the objective of every DBA research lies within a transformative contribution to your industry on a two-fold level: the level of business and the level of academic production through research done in the area of business administration related to your research topic.

**What is special about the problem you want to solve?**

Every DBA journey should start with a problem that you have identified in your professional environment and practice and that you want to solve. This problem can be of any nature related to business administration.

What makes solving this problem different from a consulting practice, is that within a DBA research you will have to make an advancement of the theory that will lead to or is caused by a transformation of business on an operational or a strategic level.

Your research will attempt to offer a solution at the academic level of your business problem. For example, it may be a new problem or a problem that no one has ever seen before, or the solution which exists does not lead to the expected results and could be improved, or the solution is not able to solve the problem anymore.

The DBA research is also different in terms of problem-solving from the consulting practice because we do not want you just to **imagine** new solutions to apply from which you think that they might work to solve the problem you have identified.

We want you to **validate** the solutions and collect data in the field with a scientific methodology, regarding the proposed solution to the problem, so that your solution becomes backed with academic rigor.

Sometimes the problem is evident and easy to identify. Sometimes it is blurry, complex and intricate. Sometimes the problem is restricted to one research field. Sometimes the problem has multi-disciplinary aspects. Sometimes the problem comes from a change of paradigm. Sometimes the problem has been addressed many times already but with a non-satisfactory solution, and sometimes the problem you think you have identified is not the problem you will end up solving in your DBA journey.

The two key ideas to remember are that: the starting point of every DBA journey lies within the identification of a problem, and the problem you may have identified is not necessarily the problem you will end up solving in your research.

So why is the problem you have identified, not necessarily the problem you will end up solving?

# Director of the Doctoral School's Message

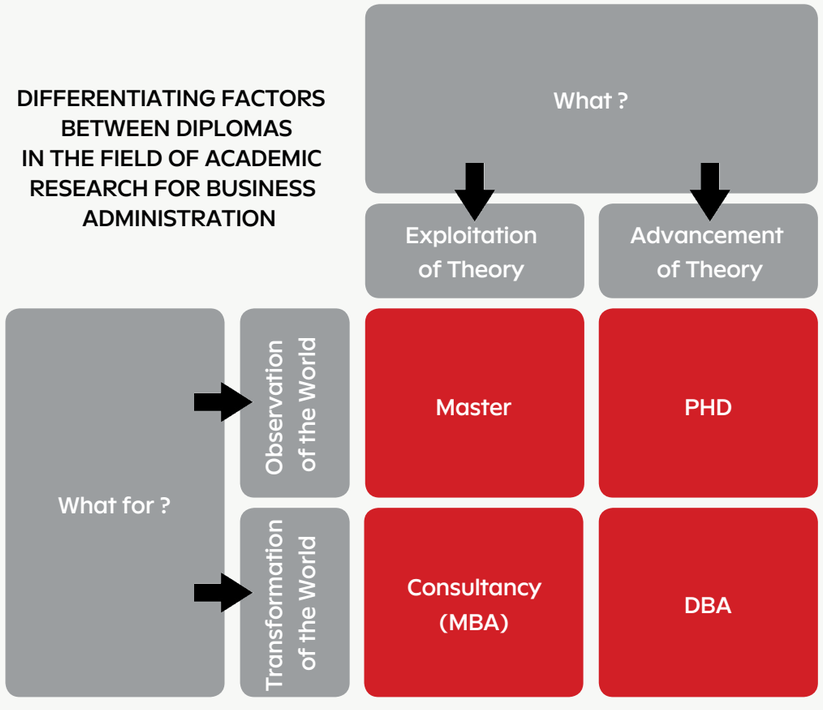
Because the second and central component of your DBA journey is related to the level on which you are going to solve the problem you have identified.

This level is the level of the advancement of theory and academic research. You will not solve the problem you have identified from a consulting perspective, staying at the level of your business or company in terms of impact. You will solve the problem at larger scale, contributing to transforming the theory, and thus having an impact on your industry, and not a on a specific company.

### DBA thesis versus Ph.D. thesis

The DBA research bridges the gap between the academic need for advancement of theory at the level of Doctoral studies and the actual transformation of the business world. In this respect, DBA research is very different from Ph.D. research, which stays, most of the time, at the level of the advancement of the theory only.

Therefore, you will have to make sure that your doctoral journey digs into the existing literature to see how the problem has been addressed or analyzed on an academic level so far.

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And this is also where your researcher's' journey starts.

As a Doctoral journey aims to contribute to the advancement of theory, you need to find a gap in the existing academic theory. This gap can consist of a blind spot, for example, or of partial research done on the business topic related to the problem you want to solve.



# Director of the Doctoral School's Message

### What can you expect to do in the course of your research?

Once you have identified a gap in theory that is related to the problem you want to solve, you can use different research methodologies that you will discover and learn to master throughout your DBA journey, to fill that gap with a new piece of academic research.

This way you will, at the same time, contribute to solving a business problem and to advancing theory.

A DBA journey leading to the writing of a Doctoral Thesis dissertation is not a linear process and is difficult to time precisely.

Your journey starts with the first piece of your dissertation, the critical literature review, showing that you master and can challenge and question the current state of academic theory.

Based on the literature review and on the gaps you have identified in the theory, you will be able to select the methodologies (qualitative and/or quantitative) that can help you fill the theoretical gap and develop a new practical solution of a transformative nature for your industry.

The results you get from your research and the help of your supervisor guide you constantly towards the next steps of your researcher's journey and ultimately to the successful completion of your DBA thesis.

### The difference the advancement of theory makes

It is very important to understand that the results of your research are going to constitute your findings and that these findings are going to be the central contribution of your thesis dissertation.

Your findings will either validate or invalidate the solution you think should be applied to the problem you identified when starting your researcher's journey.

That is how you grow as a researcher—you approach the problem without presupposing the solution.

You humbly look for the solution having a starting point in mind.

You are ready to challenge your intuition and your assumptions.

You are prepared for the fact that your findings might contradict your beliefs on how to solve the problem.

Throughout your Doctoral journey, you will become a game-changer in your industry, as well as an accomplished academic.

**Dr. Dominique Bourqui**
Chief Academic Officer &
Director Doctoral School

# Program Overview

The accelerated pace of change is the signature of the 21st century and has, as we have observed, the capacity to destabilize all areas of human existence. With this in mind, we believe that business is at the forefront of defining, solving and managing a new business paradigm. Reconstructing how business is practiced by building new, strong, carefully tested hypotheses through research in the field, will be at the very heart of business and global business transformation.

Business School Lausanne (BSL) has shaped the Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) to look beyond the success or innovation of a specific company.

Our Doctoral program provides our students with the opportunity to determine, through their Doctoral studies, how business should be framed in the future, considering an entire industry and not just a single company. The DBA program combines the realism and focus of in-field data collection with a broad and in-depth understanding of methodical Doctoral research.

Therefore, BSL's Doctoral program builds a bridge between academic research and the reality of the business world to help students find solutions that will be applicable in practice.

**Become a Change Maker by shaping and leading the Business Transformation your industry needs**

The BSL DBA program is intended for those with previous managerial and leadership experience who wish to make a significant contribution to enhancing and transforming their field of Business Administration. You achieve this through the critical understanding, review and application of appropriate theories and research, challenging the professional practice of business management and administration, all in an effort to create new and better solutions for the complexities that surround managing a business into the future.

**Research that starts in the field with results aimed at bettering the field**

You will be expected to produce a significant Doctoral-level transdisciplinary study that advances research in the fields of business, and management that is both relevant and can be applied in the real world.

The DBA thesis dissertation, based on research that is carried out throughout the program, is the primary piece of work that will be assessed for the awarding of the Doctorate degree.

Our Doctoral program has been designed by business leaders for business leaders across the globe. Through meticulous design, we will help wyou pursue a twofold objective: defining and pursuing a research degree, while matching your professional goals.

As business executives, our DBA candidates are established professionals seeking to enhance their careers through a doctoral degree, while also often pursuing the academic ambition of teaching their area of expertise in a business school.

We support our students in their research, enabling them to create meaningful business impact while developing into rigorous and capable researchers.



# Program Overview

### A pool of academics who are at the same time active business leaders

The Doctoral School is composed of academics who are at the same time senior, still active and successful business practitioners and leaders.

We believe that a successful Doctoral journey lies within the real world application possibilities of the research results and our Doctoral School team helps you in achieving this goal.

### A fully flexible learning program

The BSL DBA program is a fully flexible learning program. Business professionals from all over the globe who are looking to make a real difference to the study and practice of business administration are welcome to apply.

While you are able to conduct your studies from anywhere, all seminars run by the BSL Doctoral program will be held most likely in Geneva, Switzerland. They are non-mandatory but we highly recommend you to attend as they cover the most important subjects that will assist you in achieving your degree.

You will acquire invaluable insights via face-to-face interaction with expert faculty and researchers who have significant experience in guiding doctoral study.

### A flexible duration

The duration of the DBA program is of 3 years minimum and of 6 years maximum depending on the student's individual academic progress during the program and the duration of the review process between the submission of the Thesis Dissertation by the student to the Doctoral School for review, and the acceptance (Post Oral Defense) of the amended final version of the Thesis Dissertation, by the Thesis review committee.

The following elements related to your researchers' journey have the potential to influence the duration of your study:

- The subject of the study and your pre-existing knowledge
- The development of an appropriate and meaningful research question
- Your chosen research methodology
- The network you have that can be easily activated to gather data and information from, and thus your capacity to collect the data
- Your capacity to analyse the data
- Your writing skills and the development of your academic writing skills.

Furthermore, you have to take into account that the vocational nature of your chosen study track and the evolving professional obligations you may have can also affect the length of time that is required to achieve your DBA program. This is why we have established a range of recommended timeframes to support the completion of your degree.

**In addition, you can also look forward to gaining mutually beneficial connections with fellow Doctoral students from all over the world and connect with our research community**

# Program Overview

## BSL Signature Features

## Bridging the World of Business and the World of Academia

Studying at BSL comes with a number of advantages that you will not find with other business schools. Some of the outstanding features of studying at BSL include:

### A Personalized approach

Throughout the different phases of your Doctoral journey, you will not only receive personalized support from your appointed supervisor, but also from the BSL Doctoral School community in helping you, at various stages of your research, identifying the right focus to keep.

### Real business transformation

Our faculty consists of academics who are usually also seasoned and active business practitioners. As such, they are aware of the latest trends and business knowledge related to business transformation.

### A research community and global network

Over 60 nationalities are represented by BSL's student body and faculty, allowing you to develop an important global business network.

**A program designed by business professionals for business professionals across the globe**



# BSL Doctoral School

## Your BSL Support System

### Pillar 1: Your Supervisor

The BSL Support System of your doctoral journey is based on 4 main pillars.

The Doctoral School is composed of academics who are senior business practitioners.

Our Faculty is building bridges between the world of business and the world of academia and is bringing research to the next level.

We believe that a successful doctoral journey lies within the real world application possibilities of the research results and our Doctoral School helps you achieving this goal.

You will be assigned a supervisor who will be your sparring-partner, helping you navigate the challenges of your doctoral journey by guiding you, answering your questions and helping you anticipating, identifying and solving the problems you will encounter in your research journey.

The relationship between you and your supervisor is a central pillar of the DBA program.

### Pillar 2: Digital Resources Center

#### Self-Paced Learning Approach

To support your academic and doctoral journey, we also provide you with a very complete digital resources center in which you will find webinars by our BSL Research Supervision team, for you to discover in a self-paced learning mode, on important topics related to academic research:

- How to define a research question?
- What a literature review is about?
- How to write your literature review?
- The importance and the process of data collection?
- What are the main research methodologies and methods at your disposal?
- What a research design is?
- How to best manage your research project?
- How to present your academic research?
- How to publish and be published in academic journals?

You will also find guidance navigating the BSL thesis guidelines and the different phases of your Doctoral journey.

#### Belonging to a Research Community

In order to enhance your feeling of belonging to the BSL academic community, the resources center is also the place where you can watch student presentations about the different phases of their research that have been recorded during the acceleration weeks.

# BSL Doctoral School

## Pillar 3: DBA Acceleration Weeks Our BSL Signature Support

The goal of the DBA Acceleration Weeks (DAW) is to help you accelerate the progress of your doctoral studies and work towards meeting the deadlines you set yourself for the completion of your Doctoral program.

The acceleration days take place twice every year. They are non-mandatory but highly recommended and are included in the DBA tuition fees.

During those days that take place every 6 months, you will be invited to take part in different formats such as:

1. Lectures and workshops led by Faculty (ex: lecture topics related to research and research methodology, qualitative research, quantitative research, mixed methods, research design )

2. Presentation and /or discussion sessions by students on the different phases of the DBA research journey they are completing.

3. Industry expert sessions

The DAWs will help you solve problems in the following areas:

- Thinking and reasoning
- Research methodology
- Academic writing and the writing process
- Communication and academic presentation skills
- DBA work-life balance related questions
- Continuous alignment of your research and your business goal
- Personal and professional development

DAWs are a unique opportunity for you to work on your thesis in an international academic environment whilst accelerating your academic thinking skills and writing proficiency as well as receiving feedback.

## Pillar 4: the BSL Learning Environment: Digital Learning

BSL has selected world-class learning and research tools to help you accomplish your research related tasks faster and with more satisfying results. Thanks to this environment, you will be able to:

- Write faster, thanks to Grammarly, your cutting-edge writing assistant
- Check and prove the originality of your work, thanks to Turnitin in the word's most advanced anti-plagiarism platform
- Access thousands of scientific articles and statistical sources in the field of Business Administration thanks to EBSCO, a leading provider of research databases.



# The Doctoral Program

## Duration

The duration of the DBA program is of 3 years minimum and of 6 years maximum depending on the student's individual academic progress during the program and the duration of the review process between the submission of the Thesis Dissertation by the student to the Doctoral School for review, and the acceptance (Post Oral Defense) of the amended final version of the Thesis Dissertation, by the Thesis review committee.

## Course Work

During your time of study, you will have access to a number of BSL resources and your course work will include the following:

- Two, non-mandatory, seminars per year (DBA Acceleration Weeks – DAWs)
- Individually supervised research by a supervisor
- Continuous support from the BSL Doctoral School team.
- Access to the Doctoral School Resource Center including all the available resources.

## Academic Calendar

The BSL DBA program has four intakes per year: February, May, September and November.

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## Phasing

### PHASE 1 / ADMISSION

At BSL, our admissions team provide comprehensive support in the submission of your application. The primary purpose of which is to provide you with guidance and advice on your personal capacity to embark on your DBA journey.

Aside from the administrative tasks required for acceptance on to the program, the admission process incorporates a letter of intent and a preliminary research topic proposal. This first step will help you define and explain your area of interest and focus for your research.

Once you have submitted your completed application and Research Topic, a preliminary review will be rendered and an acceptance decision will be provided to you. A preliminary admission means that your research topic has been accepted and the Doctoral School has initiated the selection of an appropriate faculty supervisor.

# The Doctoral Program

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### PHASE 2 / DEFINING YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION

(estimated duration under optimal conditions: 18 months)

Once fully accepted to the program, a DBA consultancy session will be held with the Director of the Doctoral School, to onboard you into the DBA program.

This will allow you to contextualize the ways in which BSL will assist you in reaching your desired research aims and program objectives. Following this consultancy session, a faculty supervisor will be appointed to you.

During Phase 2, in collaboration with your supervisor, you will work on defining your business problem and your research questions, conducting a thorough critical literature review to define your research gaps and research questions.

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### PHASE 3 / RESEARCH PROPOSAL

During Phase 3, you will submit a formal research proposal to the Doctoral School.

Your research proposal will be reviewed and discussed with you and your supervisor in an online session.

After a validation of your research question and planned research design, you will be able to start Phase 4, which includes the data collection and the continuation of the writing of your DBA thesis dissertation.

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### PHASE 4 / THESIS WRITING AND CONSOLIDATION

(estimated duration under optimal conditions: 18 months)

Your DBA thesis dissertation, centered on the research carried out throughout the program, is the primary piece of research that will be assessed for the eventual awarding of the Doctoral degree.

In accordance with your supervisor, a progression plan will be defined to ensure the completion of your thesis dissertation.

During phase 4 of your Doctoral program regular feedback, support and progression monitoring will be provided in order to make sure that you have the appropriate guidance during the writing process, whilst simultaneously ensuring the timely completion of the thesis. Your dissertation will also include a revised literature review.



# The Doctoral Program

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### PHASE 5 / ORAL DEFENSE

The Viva Voce should take place in person on campus; live video Thesis Defenses may as well take place.

The DBA thesis is assessed by a minimum of two appropriately qualified examiners, who hold a doctoral-level research degree.

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### PHASE 6 / PUBLICATION AND THESIS BINDING

Your DBA dissertation will be published by you and stored in the BSL physical repository.

During the course of your Doctoral program, you will also have the possibility to publish scientific articles with the support of your supervisor.

**Have any Questions?**

Ask Our Expert Advisor at

**admissions@bsl-lausanne.ch**

# The Doctoral Program

## Phasing

### 1 RESEARCH TOPIC

- Research topic definition
- Formal admission to the program
- Deep-dive session
- Supervisor match
- Self-paced learning and DAW

### 2 RESEARCH QUESTION DEFINITION AND RESEARCH

- Preliminary literature review
- Research question definition
- Literature review
- Definition of research methods and research methodology
- Independent research
- Analysis of first research findings pilot study
- Self-paced learning and DAW

### 3 RESEARCH PROPOSAL TOWARDS BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

- Submission of a consolidated research proposal
- Review of the research proposal by the Doctoral School Committee
- Feedback by the Doctoral School Committee with amendments
- Definition of a concrete action plan for the next steps of the research based on the research proposal
- Self-paced learning and DAW



# The Doctoral Program

## Phasing (cont.)

### 4 THESIS WRITING AND CONSOLIDATION

- Independent research
- Further literature review
- Business transformation
- Thesis submission of a proof-read Dissertation
- Review phase of the Dissertation
- Amendments
- Self-paced learning and DAW

### 5 ORAL DEFENSE

- Oral Defense organization
- Viva Voce
- Amendments
- Submission of a final and approved version of the Thesis Dissertation

### 6 PUBLICATION THESIS BINDING AND GRADUATION

- Binding of the Thesis Dissertation
- Graduation

# Admission Process

## Admission Requirements

The DBA is intended for individuals that hold an E/MBA or a Masters-level degree in management or a related field, along with those who have an equivalent professional qualification. The profile of Doctoral Candidates are mature and experienced leaders who demonstrate the potential to meet the learning and research requirements of the DBA.

In general, students are expected to have a minimum of eight years professional experience prior to their DBA studies. In exceptional cases, candidates holding a minimum of five years of management experience may be considered. A significant portion of this experience should be at a senior level.

## Am I eligible?

The requirements for eligibility to apply are:

- Hold an E/MBA or Masters degree in a business faculty or management fields
- Display evidence of the potential to do doctoral level work through the submission of a research topic
- Hold at least eight years' of professional experience (case-by-case assessment is possible for the number of years of professional experience) and hold at least one of the following:
  - Be working in a professional capacity with significant responsibility **OR**
  - Hold a senior management role **OR**
  - Be the managing director/chief executive officer of a small and medium-sized enterprise or C-Suite executive or equivalent position **OR**
  - Be pursuing, or have pursued, a significant career in a professional or business area that falls within the research interests of Business transformation
- Proof of English Proficiency

## Application Deadlines

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis, up to one year prior to the selected intake.

We always recommend applying as soon as possible to ensure a seat in the program.

**September intake** - July 31st
**February intake** - January 31st
**November intake** - October 31st
**May intake** - April 30th



# Admission Process

## Checklist

The BSL Admissions Committee only review complete applications. However we offer comprehensive support to help you build a strong application during this process.

**Review the Admissions criteria**
As soon as you have decided that BSL is the right business school for you, please carefully review the admission criteria to confirm your eligibility. If you have not yet connected with your program advisor, you can reach us directly admissions@bsl-lausanne.ch.

**To complete your application *OR* Register for the workshop you must submit the following:**

- A complete Application Form
- A completed Research Topic Proposal
- Updated Curriculum Vitae
- One Recommendation Letter
  *Evidence of academic achievements (1 academic reference + master thesis) or*
  *Evidence of professional proficiency (1 general reference letter)*
- Official Transcripts and copy of your College/ University degree
  *Note: Foreign Official Transcripts must be certified by a legal authority such as a public notary, with translation when necessary. Official Transcripts can be submitted electronically to* ***admissions@bsl-lausanne.ch*** *or by post to the Office of Admissions: La Voie-Creuse 16, 1202 Geneva (Switzerland).*
- Proof of English proficiency *(only one test necessary)*
  ***Minimum requirements:***
  *IELTS 7.0 / TOEFL 90 / Duolingo 130-135 (official English exam results) / TOEIC 800 / Cambridge C1 / Pearson 66 (or proof of studying previously in an English-speaking environment for a minimum of 3 years).*
- Copy of your Passport of Government Issued I.D.
- A digital portrait photograph
- An application Fee of 150 CHF, payable online. The application fee is payable once and will not be charged later on again when you articulate into the DBA.

## Program Fees

Tuition per Semester: EUR 7'000 (3 year to 6 year program) * One year = 2 semesters (The program duration varies between 3 and 6 years depending on the candidate's individual research progress).

An additional administrative fee of 1'900 CHF is required to reserve a seat and is payable upon preliminary acceptance.

If you are a Swiss resident and you pay your taxes in Switzerland, you may be allowed to partially deduct your tuition fees from your taxable income. The rules are different in each canton. We advise you to check this with the fiscal authorities of the canton you live in.

# Rankings, Memberships, Certifications & Accreditation

## Rankings & Listings

The BSL DBA program is ranked 2nd out of 58 University and Business School Doctoral and Executive Education programs in Europe by the European Commission.

The BSL DBA program was shortlisted by CEO Magazine as part of their premier programs.

## Memberships & Certifications

BSL is proud to be both partners and members of many Educational Alliances, Groups, Foundations and Organizations whose goals are ultimately to improve the world through excellence in areas such as Management, Sustainability and Education. BSL must be able to prove and perform in order to maintain partner and member status for many of these.



# Rankings, Memberships, Certifications & Accreditation

## Accreditation

The business programs at Business School Lausanne are accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), an accreditation organization for business education officially recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The ACBSP accreditation covers business programs from approximately 2'400 higher education institutions internationally. In the United States, CHEA is officially entitled to list accredited programs, including those at Business School Lausanne.

In Europe, each country has set up its own national academic information center (NARIC), which lists officially recognized institutions within a particular country. In Switzerland, the Swiss CRUS (Rectors' Conference of Swiss Universities, a state-owned institution) currently lists only Swiss state-owned universities. Thus, leading private institutions such Business school Lausanne are not included. It should be noted that BSL is listed in the U.S. National Academic Recognition Information Center through CHEA.

# Contact us

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ACBSP
GLOBAL BUSINESS ACCREDITATION

swiss safety center
ISO 9001
certified system

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