

Handbook for Doctor of Business Administration

Welcome to the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at Excelsior University.

At its core, the DBA at Excelsior is a transformative experience; one that challenges professionals to think critically, lead strategically, and act with purpose. This Program Handbook outlines your journey, expectations, and opportunities as you progress through the program and develop as a future-oriented, research-driven leader.

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Program Description

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at Excelsior University is designed for experienced professionals seeking to elevate their strategic leadership, research, and consulting skills. The program is delivered online, with two in-person residencies, providing flexibility while ensuring valuable face-to-face networking, mentoring, and research support opportunities. The program equips students with advanced knowledge of business theories, research methods, and evidence-based practices, preparing them to become leaders in their industries.

Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the DBA program will become future-oriented change agents focused on creating long-term organizational sustainability and will achieve the following outcomes:

- Evaluate contemporary business theories and research methods to identify gaps, trends, and new opportunities that drive decision-making and strategic planning.
- Conduct applied research to examine and advance organizational strategy.
- Formulate evidence-based business solutions for change management with a focus on ethical, social, and global considerations.
- Use a systems perspective to anticipate trends and plan sustainably, balancing profit with social and environmental responsibility.
- Influence diverse stakeholders with impactful communication to build consensus while leading organizational transformation.

Admissions & Enrollment

Thank you for your interest in the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program at Excelsior University. This program is designed for experienced professionals seeking to elevate their strategic leadership, research, and consulting skills, and we are excited to consider you as a candidate. Your background and experience will play a crucial role in contributing to the diversity and richness of our cohort.

Admissions Requirements

Applicants must hold a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution and have a minimum of five years of professional experience, including a demonstrated track record of leading people and managing complex projects. Applications are reviewed holistically, with particular attention to the depth and relevance of candidates' organizational and managerial backgrounds. The DBA is designed for experienced practitioners who are ready to bring scholarly rigor to address the real challenges of organizational life.

Application Process & Deadlines

Deadlines for application are listed on the program website.

To apply to the DBA program, applicants must submit the following materials:

- Official transcripts verifying completion of a master's degree from a regionally accredited institution.
- Two letters of recommendation from professional or academic references.
- A current curriculum vitae (CV) documenting their educational background, professional experience, and leadership and management roles.
- A letter of intent describing their professional background and motivation for pursuing the DBA.
- A portfolio containing one to two examples of professional writing, drawn from either work or prior academic experience.

Once all materials are submitted, the application is forwarded to the School of Business for review. The School of Business evaluates each application and communicates the admission decision back to the Office of Admissions, which then notifies the applicant.

Admission to the DBA program is selective. Satisfying the minimum requirements signals eligibility but does not guarantee an offer of admission. The review process considers the full picture of each candidate's professional background, academic preparation, and potential to contribute to and benefit from doctoral-level study.

Transfer Credit Policies

The DBA program allows a maximum of 30 transfer credits from prior graduate-level coursework, subject to the conditions outlined below. This policy applies specifically to the DBA program.

- Core courses: Graduate or doctoral courses into the core, from Excelsior or any other from an accredited institution.
- Concentration courses: The same courses from any master's program at Excelsior.

Transfer credits must have been completed within the past five years. Students whose prior coursework falls outside this window may submit an appeal for further evaluation on a case-by-case basis.

Regardless of the number of transfer credits accepted, students cannot transfer courses into DBA701, residency courses, or dissertation courses; they must be taken here in the DBA program and at the institution.

Program Structure

The DBA is a 60-credit program designed to integrate advanced business knowledge with applied doctoral research. The curriculum combines core coursework, concentration courses, dissertation seminars, and residencies to provide a holistic view of organizational leadership, strategy, and innovation.

- **Core Courses — 30 Credits.** The core curriculum covers foundational and advanced topics in business administration, building the theoretical and analytical foundation for doctoral-level inquiry. Courses DBA 700 through 710 have no prerequisites and are designed to be accessible at the point of entry into the program.
- **Concentration Courses — 18 Credits.** Students complete 18 credits across two concentrations, which are cross-listed with the MBA program. These courses allow students to develop focused expertise in areas aligned with their professional interests and research goals.
- **Dissertation Seminars — 8 Credits.** The dissertation component spans multiple terms and culminates in an applied research dissertation or three-paper dissertation of professional and organizational significance. Courses DBA 710 through 712 must be completed at Excelsior and may not be transferred in.
- **Residencies — 4 Credits.** Residencies provide structured opportunities for students to engage with faculty, peers, and practitioners in an intensive learning environment.

Curriculum Map / Course Sequence

Core Courses (30 credits)

DBA 700 Contemporary Business Theory and Application (Credits: 3)

DBA 701 Applied Research Methods in Business (Credits: 3)

DBA 702 Leadership Theory and Development (Credits: 3)

DBA 703 Financial Resources Management and Strategic Investment (Credits: 3)

DBA 704 Organizational Structures & Systems Thinking (Credits: 3)

DBA 705 Strategic Foresight and Strategy Formation (Credits: 3)

DBA 706 Global Business Environment and Strategy (Credits: 3)

DBA 707 Marketing for Competitive Advantage (Credits: 3)

DBA 708 Human Capital Management (Credits: 3)

DBA 709 Consulting Techniques (Credits: 3)

Dissertation Seminars (3+ courses/8+ credits)

DBA 710 Dissertation Seminar I (Credits: 3)

DBA 711 Dissertation Seminar II (Credits: 3)

DBA 712 Dissertation Seminar III (Credits: 2)

DBA 713 Dissertation Seminar IV (Credits: 1; Optional and only required if students do not complete their dissertation work by the end of Dissertation Seminar III)

DBA 714 Dissertation Seminar V (Credits: 1; Optional and only required if students do not complete their dissertation work by the end of Dissertation Seminar III or IV)

Concentration Courses (2 concentrations/6 courses/18 credits)

Students select two concentrations from a list of options cross-listed with the MBA program (see below), allowing them to develop focused expertise aligned with their professional interests and research goals. Students must complete one concentration before attending each residency. Students have to complete all their courses and residencies before taking their final dissertation seminar.

Concentration in Cybersecurity Operations:

- CYS 560 Information Assurance
- CYS 575 IT Risk Analysis and Management
- CYS 526 Cyber Attacks and Defense

Concentration in Data Analytics:

- BUS 540 Strategic Management of Innovative Technology
- BUS 563 Data Analytics
- BUS 564 Big Data and Visualization

Concentration in Enterprise Risk Management:

- ERM 600 Foundations of Enterprise Risk Management
- ERM 601 Applied Enterprise Risk Management Methods and Analysis
- ERM 602 Business Continuity Planning Strategy

Concentration in Finance and Accounting:

- ACC 504 Corporate Financial Reporting and Disclosure
- ACC 505 Financial Statement Analysis
- ACC 506 Accounting for Managers

Concentration in Healthcare Management:

- BUS 526 Strategic Management of Health Care Organizations
- BUS 516 Communications Strategy for the Health Care Leader

- HSC 517 Contemporary Issues in Health Care Delivery Systems

Concentration in Organizational Leadership:

- BUS 501 Business Communication
- IND 522 Leading High Performing Teams
- BUS 596/MBAE 596 Strategy & Entrepreneurial Innovation

Concentration in Strategic Sustainability:

- SUST 601 Environmental Sustainability
- SUST 602 Sustainability Science
- SUST 60 Environmental Leadership and Strategic Sustainability

Students will select the first concentration as part of the application process and will select their second concentration by the end of their first residency.

Students who change their concentration after beginning coursework may do so, though this may affect their timeline. Because students must complete a concentration before attending each residency, a concentration change will push back the corresponding residency and, consequently, the final dissertation course. Students may begin their second concentration before attending their first residency.

Core Course Descriptions

DBA 700 Contemporary Business Theory and Application (Credits: 3)

This course explores the evolving concepts and emerging trends in business administration, focusing on current theories, frameworks, and applied research methodologies. Through case studies, critical discussions, and research assignments, this course empowers DBA students to critically evaluate theoretical foundations, identify gaps and trends in the field, and apply advanced research methods to develop evidence-based solutions for strategic and managerial decision-making. Emphasis is placed on ethical, social, and global implications of business practices.

DBA 701 Applied Research Methods in Business (Credits: 3)

This course provides an in-depth exploration of advanced research methodologies applicable to business administration. Students critically evaluate theoretical frameworks, apply qualitative and quantitative analysis methods, and develop evidence-based solutions to complex business challenges. Emphasis is placed on ensuring research reliability, validity, and adherence to ethical standards, with consideration of social and global implications.

DBA 702 Leadership Theory and Development (Credits: 3)

This advanced doctoral-level course provides an in-depth exploration of leadership theories, practices, and development processes, emphasizing their application in contemporary organizational settings. The course critically examines key leadership models, their evolution, and their impact on organizational

culture, effectiveness, and change. Students engage with theoretical frameworks from both classic and emerging perspectives, with a focus on developing their own leadership philosophy and style. Additionally, the course integrates the study of leadership development practices, the role of ethical decision-making, and the complexities of leading in a global and diverse environment. Through case studies, research projects, and reflective practice, students gain the skills to lead with both strategic foresight and operational competence.

DBA 703 Financial Resources Management and Strategic Investment (Credits: 3)

This course provides an advanced exploration of financial resources management, focusing on concepts essential for effective strategic financial planning, capital budgeting, and asset allocation. The course emphasizes risk management, financial analysis, and resource allocation in both domestic and international contexts. Through case studies, simulations, and Open Educational Resources (OER), students gain practical insights into how financial resource management supports organizational goals.

DBA 704 Organizational Structures & Systems Thinking (Credits: 3)

This course explores the complexities of organizational structures and systems, examining the design and functionality of various structures and the influence of systems on organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Through case studies and analysis, students explore concepts of organizational design, structure, control systems, and the interaction of these elements within dynamic business environments.

DBA 705 Strategic Foresight and Strategy Formation (Credits: 3)

This doctoral-level course delves into the principles and practices of strategic foresight and strategy formation, equipping students with advanced tools and methodologies to anticipate future trends, evaluate potential opportunities, and develop adaptive strategies for organizational success. Emphasizing a long-term perspective, the course provides an in-depth understanding of how to systematically assess the external environment, identify emerging patterns, and integrate these insights into dynamic strategy formation processes. Students explore how strategic foresight informs decision-making, aligns organizational objectives with future market demands, and drives innovation. This course incorporates real-world case studies, simulation exercises, and research projects, fostering the development of critical thinking and strategic leadership skills necessary for navigating complex and rapidly changing business landscapes.

DBA 706 Global Business Environment and Strategy (Credits: 3)

This course focuses on the complexities and challenges of the global business environment, providing students with the advanced knowledge and analytical skills needed to develop and implement effective strategies in an interconnected world. Through the exploration of economic, political, cultural, and technological factors that shape international markets, students gain a deeper understanding of global competitiveness, strategic alliances, and the dynamics of emerging markets. The course emphasizes the role of strategic management in navigating the global landscape, integrating concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability, and ethical decision-making. Students engage in case studies,

simulations, and strategic analysis to evaluate real-world business situations and craft strategies that leverage global opportunities while managing risks and uncertainties.

DBA 707 Marketing for Competitive Advantage (Credits: 3)

This course focuses on advanced marketing strategies that organizations can implement to achieve and sustain competitive advantage in a dynamic global marketplace. Students explore cutting-edge marketing theories, frameworks, and practices, with an emphasis on data-driven decision-making, innovation, and customer-centric strategies. The course covers topics such as competitive positioning, brand differentiation, market segmentation, pricing strategies, and digital transformation in marketing. Emphasis is also placed on evaluating the competitive landscape and aligning marketing strategies with organizational goals to create long-term value. Through case studies, research projects, and critical analysis, students develop the skills to design and execute marketing strategies that foster sustainable competitive advantage.

DBA 708 Human Capital Management (Credits: 3)

This course in Human Capital Management (HCM) provides an advanced exploration of the strategic role human capital plays in enhancing organizational performance. The course delves into the critical processes of talent acquisition, development, engagement, and retention, emphasizing how organizations can leverage human capital as a key driver of competitive advantage. Students critically evaluate theories and practices in leadership, organizational behavior, workforce planning, performance management, and employee relations, and their integration with broader organizational strategies. The course also explores contemporary challenges in HCM, including diversity and inclusion, global workforce management, technology in HR practices, and the ethical implications of human capital decisions. Through case studies, research, and strategic simulations, students develop the skills needed to effectively manage and transform human capital for organizational success.

DBA 709 Consulting Techniques (Credits: 3)

This course is designed to equip students with advanced knowledge and practical skills for executing high-impact consulting engagements across various industries. The course covers the full spectrum of consulting methodologies, from diagnosing organizational challenges to designing and implementing strategic solutions. Students examine key consulting frameworks, develop client relationship management strategies, and learn to manage complex projects. The course emphasizes critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and the use of data and evidence to support recommendations. By engaging with case studies, simulations, and real-world consulting projects, students gain experience in delivering actionable insights and demonstrating value to clients.

Residency Requirements

Students complete two residencies as part of the DBA program (DBA 720 and DBA 721, 2 credits each). Residencies take place during the first week of the term in which they are offered and are held in person. Students must complete both residencies before enrolling in the final dissertation course.

Eligibility for each residency is tied to concentration completion. Students become eligible for their first residency upon completing their first concentration and eligible for their second residency upon completing their second. Students may attend the two residencies in any order of their choosing.

Each residency is organized around a unique theme and offers a combination of experiences with experts, faculty, and other University students, as well as DBA-specific work focused on the dissertation and Concentration Research Project. Currently, residencies are offered in up to two locations; students may complete both residencies at the same site.

Following the in-person residency week, students remain enrolled in the residency course in Canvas for the duration of the term (Weeks 2–8), participating in weekly Concentration Research Project check-ins. The Concentration Research Project (culminating in a research paper) is due at the end of Week 8. Students who are unable to submit by that deadline may request an incomplete and submit within the approved extension period.

Hybrid/Online Delivery Details

The DBA follows a hybrid model combining online coursework with two in-person residencies. The online portion is delivered through Canvas and includes both asynchronous and synchronous learning. Students take one to two courses at a time, allowing them to maintain full-time professional commitments while making steady progress through the program.

Students in the DBA program participate in required synchronous components. These include a one-on-one verbal competency session with faculty in Week 7 and a synchronous presentation symposium in Week 8 involving University students and faculty. Some courses also incorporate weekly or other live class sessions. Students are informed of all scheduled synchronous activities in the course in Week 1 of that course. Synchronous engagement fosters a scholarly community and supports the development of concise presentation skills expected by employers. During these sessions, cameras are expected to be on, and microphones should be used as directed. Reasonable accommodations are provided in exceptional cases.

The two in-person residencies are intensive, theme-driven experiences where students engage with faculty, DBA peers, other students and faculty, and advance their dissertation and concentration research. All other program activities take place online on an accelerated schedule designed with working executives in mind.

Certificates

During their DBA studies, students may earn certificates along the way by applying for each certificate separately through the standard application process. Available certificates are listed on the website.

Academic Progress

Academic Planning Milestones

The DBA program is structured around a series of milestones that mark meaningful progress toward degree completion. Students are expected to meet each milestone within the timeframes outlined below. DBA Journey Mentors, academic advisors, along with members of dissertation committees, work together to ensure students remain on track and are aware of what is required at each stage.

Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards

Students enrolled in the DBA program are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout their enrollment. The following standards apply:

- **Minimum GPA:** Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. A grade below B in any course may be subject to academic review.
- **Maximum Time to Completion:** Students must complete all degree requirements within seven years of their first enrollment in the program.
- **Continuous Enrollment:** Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment each term. Students who need to pause their studies must apply for a leave of absence in accordance with University policy.
- **Course Repetition:** Students who do not achieve a passing grade may be permitted to repeat a course once. Repeated courses are subject to standard tuition charges. DBA 710–714 cannot be repeated.

Milestone Progress: Students must meet program milestones within the established timeframes. Failure to progress toward milestones may result in academic review or dismissal from the program.

Time to Completion Requirements

Students must complete the DBA program within seven years, maintaining continuous progress toward their degree throughout their enrollment.

Dissertation – Process and Options

Applied Research Dissertation vs. Three Paper Model

The DBA program offers a flexible and innovative approach to doctoral research, allowing students to align their doctoral studies with their career goals and interests. Students have the option to select from two formats, each designed to support their professional aspirations and contribute meaningfully to the field of business administration.

- **Applied Research Dissertation**
Create a transformative solution for an organization or business issue. This option emphasizes

practical application, enabling you to implement and evaluate a project that drives meaningful change in a real-world business context.

- **Three-Paper Model**

Develop three high-quality, interconnected papers, each addressing a unique aspect of your research focus. These papers are prepared with the rigor and depth necessary for submission to conferences or journals, providing an opportunity to establish yourself as a thought leader in your field.

Each option is guided by experienced DBA Journey Mentor and members of the committee (chairs, subject matter experts and academic quality reviewers) who will support students in meeting rigorous academic standards while ensuring their work has practical relevance and real-world impact. Whether their goal is to contribute to scholarly research, advance their organization, or establish their professional brand, the DBA program provides the flexibility and structure to make it happen.

The table below summarizes differences between these two models.

	Applied Research Dissertation	Three-Paper Model
Primary Goal	Solving a real-world organizational or business problem.	Advancing knowledge through multiple scholarly studies
Alignment	Ideal for executives, consultants, change leaders seeking to advance their organization or launch business initiative	Ideal for thought leaders, scholar-practitioners aiming to build a scholarly or thought leadership profile
Focus	Single overarching problem statement with applied objectives	Single overarching research theme with complementary research questions
Orientation	Practice-driven, solution oriented	Research-driven, publication oriented
Scope of Study	Focused in-depth examination of one organizational problem or business issue	Broad thematic scope explored through multiple related studies
Data Collection	Primarily one dataset	Multiple datasets of phased data collection aligned with each paper
End Product	Implemented and evaluated applied project	Three interconnected, publishable papers

Both formats:

- Require strong theoretical grounding

- Demand methodological rigor
- Emphasize ethical and responsible research
- Contribute meaningfully to the field of business administration

Dissertation Milestones

The dissertation process is governed by a structured set of milestones that guide students from proposal development through final defense. Detailed milestone descriptions, timelines, and required templates for each dissertation model are provided in the Appendix within the templates.

Students are encouraged to review these materials early in their program and to revisit them regularly in consultation with their DBA Journey Mentor and committee chair.

Dissertation Milestones and Deadlines

Milestone	Deadline
Prospectus	End of DBA 701
Proposal & Proposal Defense	End of DBA 710
Chapter 1 / Paper 1	End of DBA 710
Chapter 2 / Paper 2	End of DBA 711
Chapter 3 / Paper 3	End of DBA 712
Dissertation Defense	End of the program

DBA Milestone Map

subject to change

Applied Research Dissertation

701		Milestone 1	Prospectus Review
710	1		
	2		
	3	Dissertation Chair and SME identified	
	4		

Three Paper Model

701		Milestone 1	Prospectus Review
710	1		
	2		
	3	Dissertation Chair and SME identified	
	4		

	5		
	6	Checkpoint A	Chapter 1 up to significance to practice
	7		
	8		
	9		
	10		
	11		
	12	Checkpoint B	Complete Chapter 1
	13	Presentation	Chapter 1 presentation – by course moderated by chairs
	14	Milestone 2	Complete Chapter 1 approval
	15	Committee Meeting	Dis Committee session
711	1		
	2		
	3	Checkpoint C	Chapter 2 up to procedures
	4		
	5		
	6		
	7	Checkpoint D	Complete Chapter 2
	8	Milestone 3	Complete Chapter 2 approval
	9	IRB Submission	
	10	Students revise the write-up from	

	5		
	6	Checkpoint A	3 paper intro to summary
	7		
	8		
	9		
	10		
	11		
	12	Checkpoint B	Complete Paper 1
	13	Presentation	Paper 1 presentation – by course moderated by chairs
	14	Milestone 2	Complete Paper 1 approval
	15	Committee Meeting	Dis Committee session
711	1		
	2		
	3	Checkpoint C	Paper 2 up to procedures
	4		
	5		
	6		
	7	Checkpoint D	Paper 3 up up to findings
	8	Milestone 3	Complete Paper 2 approval
	9	IRB Submission	
	10	Students revise the write-up from forward	

		forward looking to past tense	
	11		
	12	IRB Received	
	13	Data Collection	
	14		
	15	Committee Meeting	Dis Committee session
712	1		
	2	Data Analysis Complete	
	3	Checkpoint E	Chapter 3 up to evaluation
	4		
	5		
	6		
	7	Checkpoint F	Complete Chapter 3
	8	Milestone 4	Complete Chapter 3 approval
	9		
	10		
	11	Schedule Defense	
	12		
	13		
	14		
	15	Milestone 5	Successful defense

		looking to past tense	
	11		
	12	IRB received	
	13	Data Collection	
	14		
	15	Committee Meeting	Dis Committee session
712	1	IRB Submitted	
	2	Data Analysis Complete	
	3	Checkpoint E	Paper 3 - practice oriented paper
	4	IRB received	
	5		
	6		
	7	Checkpoint F	Complete Paper 3
	8	Milestone 4	Complete Paper 3 approval
	9		
	10	Checkpoint G	Synthesis of Findings across three papers
	11	Schedule Defense	
	12		
	13		
	14		
	15	Milestone 5	

Committee Formation and Roles

Whether a student pursues the Applied Dissertation or the Three-Paper Model, the following committee structure governs the dissertation stage of their program. In addition to a faculty mentor, during the dissertation stage, each student is supported by a Dissertation Committee responsible for guiding and evaluating their research from proposal through final approval. The committee consists of a dissertation chair, two additional committee members, an academic quality reviewer, and a subject matter expert. An ad hoc reviewer may also be added at the recommendation of the committee. Committee members are drawn from full-time and part-time faculty, staff, and subject matter experts, as appropriate to the student's research focus. Definitions of each role are provided in the [Faculty Roles and Support Structure](#) section of this handbook.

The committee reviews and approves the student's Research Plan, provides ongoing guidance throughout the research and writing process, approves the final dissertation, and participates in required conference calls. The committee is expected to provide timely, substantive, and competent guidance at every stage of the dissertation.

Process and Approval

All dissertation milestones are subject to committee review and approval before the student may advance to the next phase of the program.

IRB / Research Ethics Requirements*

All doctoral research involving human subjects must receive IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval prior to the start of data collection. Students are responsible for submitting the required IRB application and obtaining approval before proceeding with any research activity. Students are expected to conduct their research in accordance with established ethical standards for the protection of human subjects, including principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and minimization of harm. DBA Journey Mentors and dissertation chairs will guide students through the IRB process as part of their broader dissertation support role.

**IRB approvals are only good for a year. Students reaching a one-year mark who are still in data collection will need to request an IRB extension.*

Presentation and Oral Defense

Students are required to complete two formal presentation milestones as part of their dissertation process.

- Defense of Proposal (by the end of DBA 711)
- Defense of the Dissertation (by the end of DBA 712)

In DBA 710, the presentation provides an opportunity for students to share their research in progress with faculty and peers, receiving structured feedback before finalizing their work. In DBA 712, the oral defense marks the culmination of the doctoral journey, during which the student presents and defends their

completed dissertation before their committee. Successful completion of the oral defense is required for degree conferral.

Submission and Publication Requirements

Upon successful completion of the oral defense, students are required to submit their final dissertation to the University in accordance with institutional submission guidelines. Publication is not required; however, all dissertations must meet the standards of scholarly work suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed outlet.

Policies

Students in the DBA program are expected to follow all University policies listed on our website. A few to note, particularly regarding the unique virtual and synchronous components of this program, are included below. If students cannot comply due to extraneous circumstances, they must contact their academic advisor immediately to discuss their options.

Accommodations

- Excelsior University is committed to the principle that every individual will have an equal opportunity to participate in a degree program, holistically aligning their academic, personal, and professional aspirations toward gaining knowledge, experiences, connections, skills, and competencies under appropriate conditions to complete a degree and reach goals. We provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). [See Excelsior Accommodations for more information.](#)

Attendance

- Students in the DBA program are required to participate in two in-person residencies, as well as some synchronous components.
 - If students are unable to attend all in-person components of the in-person residency, they will be required to retake the residency course and attend a future residency.
 - If students are unable to attend any of the online synchronous sessions, they must contact their faculty member to discuss accommodations.
 - Failure to attend required synchronous sessions on a consistent basis may result in removal from the course or program.

Conduct

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that respects the cooperative standards of the Excelsior community and accords with the University's educational mission. This includes obeying federal, state, and local laws as well as University policies. Not knowing or understanding these standards and policies is not a defense or excuse. See [Student Conduct](#) for more information.

Course Extensions

- No extensions will be granted for the following dissertation courses in the program: DBA 710, DBA 711, DBA 712, or DBA 713. The last dissertation course, DBA 714, will still be eligible for an extension for scheduling the defense.

Repeat Sources of Credit

- **DBA 720–721:** If students are unable to attend all in-person components of the in-person residency, they will be required to retake the residency course and attend a future residency.
- **DBA 710–714:** Students are unable to repeat a dissertation course and will be dismissed from the program if they are unable to complete one of the courses.

Time Limit for Academic Program Completion

- The Doctor of Business Administration must be completed in seven years.

Student Support & Resources

Excelsior has a number of student support services and resources listed and linked on our website and in the MyExcelsior student portal, that include those below. Pertinent links and information will be shared throughout the program.

- Library and research resources
- Writing center/dissertation coaching
- Technology requirements and support
- Student professional development opportunities

Your Faculty Support Team in the DBA Program

The Excelsior DBA program offers a flexible and innovative approach to doctoral research, allowing students to align their doctoral studies with their career goals and interests. Whether you choose an Applied Research Dissertation option or Three-Paper Model, you'll be supported by a dedicated network of faculty who guide you throughout your doctoral journey — from your first course through your dissertation defense. Each faculty role serves a unique purpose to help you succeed academically, professionally, and personally.

1. DBA Journey Mentor – Your Program Guide and Advocate

Your DBA Journey Mentor is your main academic partner from the moment you enter the DBA program until you graduate. They'll help you navigate each stage of your doctoral experience, answer your questions, and connect you with the right people and resources.

What your DBA Journey Mentor does:

- Welcomes you to the program and helps you transition into doctoral-level study.
- Meets with you at least twice each term (at the beginning and midpoint) to discuss goals, progress, and any challenges.
- Provides guidance on course selection, dissertation model selection, dissertation committee formation, concentration choices, residencies, and other academic milestones.
- Serves as reviewer and approver for your prospectus.
- Serves as a consistent point of contact for program questions, policies, and academic planning.
- Directs you to specific support structures (library resources, Writing Center, statistical consults, IRB, career planning, and other doctoral resources).
- Checks in on your progress, helping you stay on track toward graduation.
- Collaborates with other University teams — including dissertation chairs, advisors, and career services — to make sure you have well-rounded support.

Think of your DBA Journey Mentor as your *go-to person* — someone who helps you see the big picture of your DBA experience and stay focused on your goals.

2. Dissertation Chair – Your Research Partner and Primary Guide

When you reach the dissertation stage, you'll be paired with a **Dissertation Chair** — the faculty member who leads your dissertation committee and works most closely with you on your dissertation research project.

Your Dissertation Chair will:

- Help you refine your topic, research questions, and methods to ensure your project is meaningful and rigorous.
- Provide detailed, constructive feedback on all parts of your dissertation.
- Ensure that you meet your key milestones such as proposal defense, IRB approval, and final defense.
- Ensure your work meets doctoral standards for quality, accountability, ethics, and originality.
- Offer support for writing, presentation, and publication opportunities.
- Support your professional growth and help you connect your research to your career goals.
- Coordinate communication among your committee members and keep your project moving forward.

Your Dissertation Chair is your *academic coach* for the research process — offering expertise, accountability, and encouragement every step of the way.

3. Dissertation Committee Members – Subject Matter Experts and Academic Quality Reviewers

In addition to your chair, you'll have two **Dissertation Committee Members** who bring specialized knowledge and diverse perspectives to your project: a Subject Matter Expert and an Academic Quality

Reviewer. Your dissertation committee is a combination of internal Excelsior faculty members and external industry professionals.

Your Subject Matter Expert (SME) will:

- Provide expert feedback on your proposal, chapters, and final dissertation.
- Participate in key milestones such as proposal and final defenses.
- Offer insights to strengthen your research design, analysis, and relevance to business practice.
- Provide guidance on specific aspects of the research related to their expertise.
- Help you connect your work to broader conversations in your field and profession.
- Help you identify potential publication or presentation opportunities.
- Collaborate closely with your Dissertation Chair and Academic Quality Reviewer to provide cohesive support and timely feedback.

Your Academic Quality Reviewer (AQR) will:

- Provide final approval on your proposal, chapters, and final dissertation.
- Participate in key milestones such as proposal and final defenses.
- Ensure your research meets high academic standards.
- Offer insights to strengthen your research design and analysis.
- Collaborate closely with your Dissertation Chair and SME to provide cohesive support and timely feedback.

Your committee members are your *academic team* — they help you deepen your scholarship and connect your dissertation to the real world.

Financial Information

Tuition and Fees

Please see the website for all tuition and fees, as well as for information on financial aid eligibility for doctoral students.