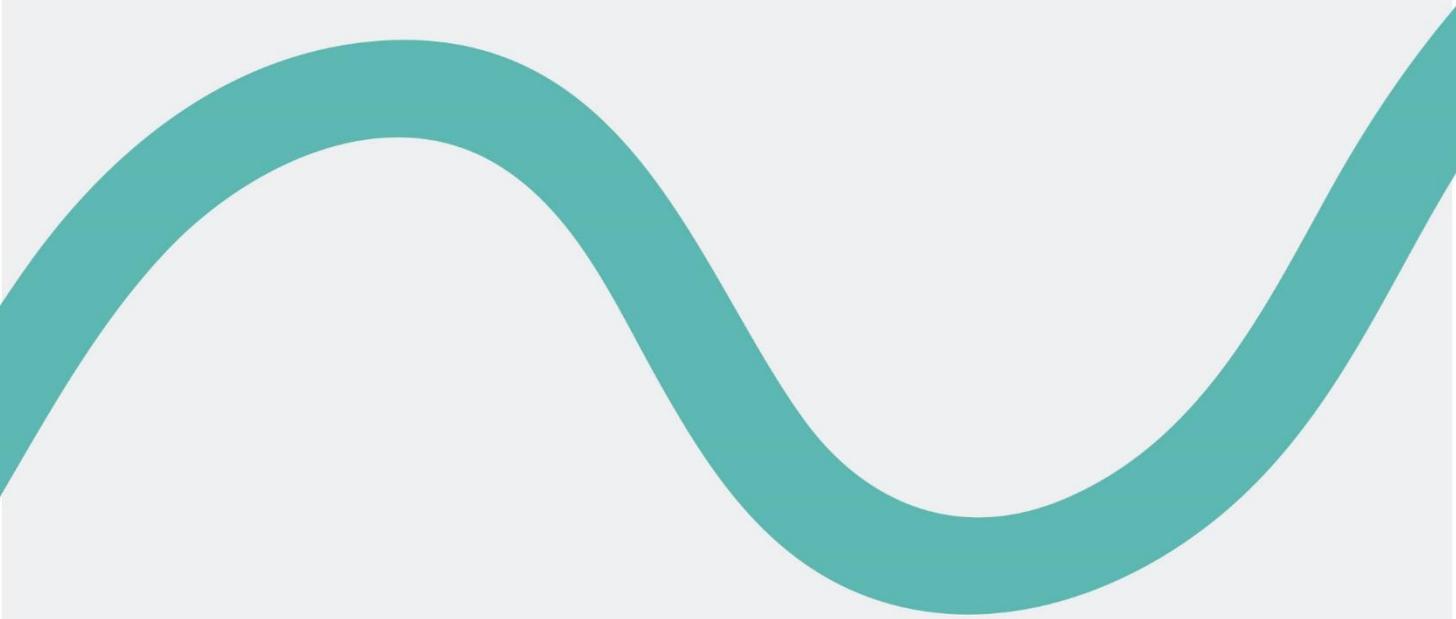


# Doctoral Handbook: 1

## The Course Stage



## 1. Doctoral Programmes

The doctoral programmes, DBA & PhD, at Edinburgh Business School comprise a combination of formal courses (the courses stage) and research (the research stage).

The courses stage requires you to complete three research-based courses and possibly a number of subject-based courses. The research stage requires you to produce a viable doctoral-level research outline before you begin to work under the supervision of an Edinburgh Business School appointed expert to review literature, design a research method, collect data and analyse results. At key stages, you submit work to the School for approval or acceptance.

## 2. Nature of Doctoral Programmes

You should only undertake the Edinburgh Business School DBA or PhD after careful consideration. The time demands are likely to be considerable, there will be constant, and changing, pressures as you progress through the programme. You cannot take the research stage lightly as it requires skills that you may not have had to exercise before. This may be the first time you have faced such a combination of demands. You are unlikely to have worked on a single project alone, for three to four years, without the support of a team and other resources.

## 3. The Courses Stage

This stage provides the theory, knowledge, tools and techniques that underpin the subsequent research stage. There are three compulsory courses – Doctoral Business Research 1, 2 and 3 – and possibly up to four courses in subjects related to your research interest.

Given the nature of the courses, you must start with the first Doctoral Business Research course. You can study the other two courses in any order or alongside the first course and you can attempt more than one exam at an individual exam session.

The final requirements of your courses stage will be determined only when you have completed the Doctoral Business Research courses and have finalised an outline of your research idea.

### Compulsory Research Courses

The research courses will provide sufficient guidance so that you can develop your research to the standards and detail required at each stage. They provide a basic grounding in research design and methods. These courses will bridge the gap between your existing research experience and the specialist research guidance provided by the research supervisor.

### Doctoral Business Research 1: An introduction to research methods

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This course presents the first step in a basic review of the nature of research and methods for business and management doctoral students. It will provide students with the practical research tools and the theoretical background for critiquing and designing research on a variety of topics. It also serves as a useful guide as to the content required in a thesis, the nature of examination for a doctoral degree, and how to generate research questions and write in an appropriate 'academic' style.

#### **Doctoral Business Research 2: The qualitative researcher**

This course introduces qualitative research methods for business and management doctoral students. It will help students to assess the advantages and disadvantages of different qualitative methods and look at how they can combine with each other. Moreover, it provides a holistic understanding of the qualitative research process starting from outline of philosophical underpinnings to qualitative data collection, analysis and reporting.

#### **Doctoral Business Research 3: The quantitative researcher**

This course introduces quantitative research methods for business and management doctoral students. It will provide an understanding of the different techniques available from data collection through to analysis. The course is designed as an introduction to quantitative techniques, bridging into more advanced ones with a comprehensive coverage of the most commonly used methods. The course will also train students on the use of SPSS to carry out analysis and apply the techniques covered within the course.

#### **4. Postgraduate Certificate in Business Research Methods**

We will initially register you on the Postgraduate Certificate in Business Research Methods. Successful completion, by examination, of the three Doctoral Business Research courses entitles you to this award. You can take it as an interim award or, if you decide to withdraw from the programme, as an exit award. Once eligible, you can apply for the award via the [Student Portal](#).

#### **5. Progression to the Research Stage: Development of a Research Proposal**

To progress to the research stage of your chosen degree you must submit a credible research outline suited to your chosen doctoral degree. The doctoral team will review your qualifications and experience in the area of the planned topic to decide if any additional courses are required. If necessary, you must complete these before you we assign a mentor.

If your research outline is credible, Edinburgh Business School will appoint an academic who will guide you to develop your research field, set research aims and objectives and

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develop the necessary research background. We describe the format of the research proposal in detail in Chapter 8 of Doctoral Business Research 1.

You must submit your research proposal to the Edinburgh Business School Doctoral Review Committee (DRC) for approval. Approval is the endpoint of this part of the research process. As well as developing the research proposal to a level where it is accepted by the DRC, you have to pay all due fees and comply with all other Edinburgh Business School and University requirements.

**The DRC may reject a research proposal on a maximum of three occasions before recommending that you be withdrawn from the programme.**

### **6. Award of the DBA or PhD**

The DBA or PhD is awarded only when you have successfully completed an oral defence of your research (*Viva Voce*), made any changes recommended by the examiners and submitted the final bound copies of your thesis.

Until you have graduated with the degree, it is very important if you cite your doctoral studies in your CV that there is a clear distinction between actual qualifications and present education. You must make it clear that you are currently studying for the DBA or PhD and that it cannot be construed as an actual qualification, even inadvertently. Failure to do so can lead to disciplinary action by the University.

It is only after graduation that you can use the letters 'DBA' or 'PhD' after your name or use the title 'Dr'.

### **7. Guidance Notes**

The following is a brief guide to the processes and regulations of the course stage of the doctoral programme. The University updates the Regulations and Ordinances on a regular basis; the online editions available [here](#), replace all previous editions.

#### **Registration (Matriculation)**

To register as a matriculated student of Heriot-Watt, you must accept your offer of a place on the programme by registering on the first Doctoral Business Research course.

#### **Student Identification and Registration Numbers**

Upon accepting an offer, we allocated you a Student Identification (SID) and a Registration Number (RegNo). These numbers are unique to you and will remain with you for the duration of your studies. You should use your SID in all communication with Edinburgh Business School and its partners.

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You will use these numbers when logging in to the [Student Portal](#). Your SID is your username and your Registration Number is your temporary password. You will change your password when you log in for the first time. Your username will continue to be your SID.

We recommend that your password be at least six characters long and contain at least one character from each of the following categories: uppercase letters, lowercase letters and numbers. You can change your password at any time via the Account section of the [Student Portal](#).

If you forget your username or password, please follow the onscreen instructions on the [Student Portal](#) login page.

### **Exemptions**

Exemptions do not apply to the doctoral programmes, as we consider your previous qualifications when designing your courses stage.

### **Examinations**

We assess each course entirely from your performance in a single, written examination. Our exams are currently in a 'Take-at-Home' format, where students have 24 hours to work through the paper and submit their answers online. To complete a course successfully you must obtain at least 50% in the examination.

All examinations are subject to rigorous scrutiny by both Heriot-Watt University examiners and external examiners from other leading UK universities.

To help you prepare for the examinations, a sample exam paper and past-papers for each course is available on the [Student Portal](#).

### **Take-at-Home Examination Requirements and Techniques for Students**

All students will have access to the above course on the Portal that has been specifically designed to help you prepare for the 'take at home' exam format. The course will take around 1 hour to complete and the main areas covered are –

- Take at Home Exam Requirements
- Performance Criteria and Question Types
- Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Referencing

When working through the course, it is recommended that you also refer to both the student and technical guides located within the take at home examinations area of the student portal.

The course and supporting documents have been developed to aid your

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understanding of the take-at-home examinations, and it is strongly recommended that you complete this course at the earliest opportunity. Doing so will not only assist with your exam preparations, but also highlight the expectations placed on you by the University.

#### **Examination Sessions and Dates**

There are three examination sessions each year in Apr/May, August & December at which all three DBR courses will be examined. The full examination timetable is available on the [Student Portal](#).

#### **Special Arrangements**

We permit you to record your answers by an appropriate alternative means approved by the School if you suffer from a disability that, in the opinion of the School, prevents you from completing an examination. You must contact the School in advance of the exam deadline providing certified copies of medical evidence confirming your particular disability.

#### **Examination Registration Deadlines**

The deadline dates for applications for the examination sessions are normally about six weeks before the exam session commences. Details for these deadlines can be found in the [Student Portal](#) within the Studies section. **It is your responsibility to be aware of and abide by these deadlines.**

#### **Registering for an Examination**

In most cases, when you register for a course you will automatically be registered for the next available examination session that is at least 3 months away. You can amend this to a different session within the Examination Registration section of the [Student Portal](#). Please check the details of each registered examination and, if necessary, correct any mistakes by following the steps detailed in the 'Amending a Registered Examination Entry' section below.

You can only sit an examination if you have paid for the course associated with the examination.

If your examination fee was not bundled with your course you will need to register for an examination. You can register for any examination via the Examination Registration section or Examination Timetables sections of the [Student Portal](#). Once you have confirmed the language, examination session and location, your selection will appear as an examination you are in the process of registering for in the list of upcoming examinations with a status of **Awaiting Payment**. You can add multiple examination entries in this way before making payment.

You will have 48 hours to make an online payment by credit or debit card or indicate that you are paying offline. If you do not pay within 48 hours, the entry will disappear from your list of upcoming examinations, and you will

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have to create a new entry.

All examination entries with the status **Awaiting Payment** will disappear from your list if you do not pay before the registration deadline for the relevant examination session.

**Your examination entry is finalised only on receipt of payment, at which point its status will change to Registered.**

#### **Paying for an Examination**

An examination fee applies to all examination entries; your registration is only finalised on payment. **Exam fees are not transferrable to another course and are not refundable.**

Once you have added all the examinations you wish to register to your list of upcoming examinations, go to the Make Payment section and select the method of payment.

Once an online or offline payment is processed, the status of the examination entry in the list of upcoming examinations will change to **Registered**. You will also receive confirmation by email. Please check the details of each registered examination and, if necessary, correct any mistakes by following the steps detailed in the 'Amending a Registered Examination Entry' section below.

#### **Amending a Registered Examination Entry**

If you wish to change the location of your examination or move it to a future examination session, you may do so without financial penalty, if you advise the School before the appropriate deadline date. Simply click on Amend beside the examination in the list of upcoming examinations.

The deadline dates for amending examinations, without incurring any cost can be found on the [Student Portal](#) within the Studies section, by selecting Registration Deadlines.

#### **Rescheduling a Registered Examination Entry**

If you wish to move an examination to a future examination session after one of the above deadlines you may do so, but you will forfeit your examination fee. Simply click on Reschedule beside the relevant examination in the list of upcoming examinations and select a future exam session. This will create a provisional exam entry that will require payment of an examination fee to finalise the registration, as outlined in the 'Paying for an Examination' section above.

#### **Withdrawing a Registered Examination Entry**

If the deadline for amending an examination entry has passed and you decide you no longer wish to attempt it, you can withdraw your entry without rescheduling it for a future examination session. Simply click on Withdraw

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Examination beside the relevant examination in the list of upcoming examinations. To attempt the examination at a future session you will have to register and pay an examination fee as detailed in the sections above.

#### **Absence**

We do not count an absence from an examination as one of your permitted attempts. However, you will forfeit your examination fee. To attempt the examination at a future session you will have to register and pay an examination fee as detailed in the sections above.

#### **Absence on Medical Grounds**

**If you are absent, owing to illness, you must confirm this by sending a certified true copy of your medical certificate to the University, within four weeks of the end of the examination session.** This must cover the day of the examination. If the University accept you were unable to attempt the examination owing to illness, your examination fee will be credited and you will be registered for the examination at a future examination session of your choice.

#### **Examination Results**

Once examination results have been presented to the Board of Examiners they will be posted on the [Student Portal](#), where you will also be able to access a mark breakdown that details your performance in each section of the examination. The date on which the results for examinations will be released will be publicised in advance.

Results are usually released six to eight weeks after the end of the examination session.

**Please do not contact the School about release dates: you will be notified by email as soon as the results are available.**

You will receive the following information in relation to your results:

- Notification of the mark awarded for each course which will be available in the View Examination Results in the Student Portal.
- For guidance, a breakdown of your performance in each section of the examination.

**Please note that the School will not provide any information on examination results over the telephone or by email under any circumstances.**

#### **Feedback on Examinations**

Solutions and other guidance are available for courses in the Past Papers section of each course on the [Student Portal](#) and will provide you with an indication of the standard required to pass the course and help you to prepare

for a possible resit examination.

### Appeals

There are specific grounds under which you can submit an academic appeal. These are set out in the Student Academic Appeal Policy and Procedures documents, available [here](#). **You cannot dispute the decisions or question the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners after we release the results.** If you are considering submitting an appeal, it is important that you act promptly.

**We will not return examination scripts to you under any circumstances after the examination.**

### Re-sits

If you fail a course at the first attempt, you will have one further attempt in that subject. **The School will require a student who twice fails an examination in any of the Doctoral Business Research courses to withdraw from the programme.**

You can register to re-sit an examination at a future session and pay an examination fee by following the process detailed in the 'Registering for an Examination' section above.

### Mitigating Circumstances

You should notify the School as soon as possible after the examination of any illness or other exceptional circumstances that may have adversely affected your performance and that you would like the examiners to take into account in making their decision. For further guidance, please go to [www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm).

### Graduation

The relevant University Committee will confirm your eligibility for the award when you have submitted the final copies of your thesis. You are not a DBA or PhD graduate until the degree has been conferred at a graduation ceremony.

We hold graduation ceremonies in Edinburgh in June and November/December, with additional ceremonies in various locations worldwide in November/December. It is also possible to graduate *in absentia* in April or October.

Eligible students have the option to graduate in person at the next available ceremony, defer their graduation until a later ceremony or graduate *in absentia*. Students who graduate *in absentia* will also have the option to attend the next available ceremony in person.

### **European Diploma Supplement**

A European Diploma Supplement (academic transcript) will be included in your graduation pack. It is a supplement to the degree certificate and describes the nature, level, context, content and status of your studies. The European Diploma Supplement contains a full academic transcript (including an explanation of the University's marking scheme), information related to your programme of study, a description of the higher education sector in Scotland and a description of Heriot-Watt University. Additional copies can be requested on the [Student Portal](#).

### **Changes to Contact Details**

You are responsible for notifying us of any changes to your contact details. You can do this directly through the [Student Portal](#). You must notify us of changes in name in writing together with a copy of the legal documentation that confirms this change (marriage certificate, deed poll certificate, etc.).

### **Changes to Fees and Programme Structures**

Edinburgh Business School reserves the right to make changes to its fees and the structure of the programme at any time. Students will have advanced notice of any changes and we will take steps to ensure that existing students are not disadvantaged.

### **Privacy Policy**

Edinburgh Business School at Heriot-Watt University and its commercial partners work in partnership to deliver the courses and programmes. To ensure we manage this programme efficiently and students supported effectively, we will share some information recorded as you progress in your studies between Edinburgh Business School and its partners. The full privacy policy is available [here](#).

### **Complaints Policy and Procedures**

Heriot-Watt University is committed to providing an excellent education and high-quality services to its students, from enrolment through to graduation. The University values complaints and uses the information gained to help improve services. The Complaints Policy and Procedures apply to all services provided by Heriot-Watt University, including Edinburgh Business School and the Dubai and Malaysia campuses.

Comprehensive information is available in the Policy and Procedures documents, which are available [here](#).