

**Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
Programme Specification**

This document applies to Academic Year 2025/26 onwards

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|-----|---|--|
| 1. | Awarding institution/body | University of Worcester |
| 2. | Teaching institution | University of Worcester |
| 3. | Programme accredited by | N/A |
| 4. | Final award | Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) |
| 5. | Programme title | Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) |
| 6. | Pathways available | N/A |
| 7. | Mode and/or site of delivery | Taught input during the pre-thesis stage, followed by supervision at the thesis stage. |
| 8. | Mode of attendance | Part time It is expected, that most students will complete and pass the pre-thesis stage of their programme within the first 20 months of Registration. It is then expected that the thesis stage will normally be completed within a further 24-48 months. Max completion date is 8 years. |
| 9. | UCAS Code | N/A |
| 10. | Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement | The programme is informed by Vitae's <i>Researcher Development Framework</i> and the QAA's <i>Doctoral Degree Characteristics</i> . The guidelines published by the Association of Business Schools for DBA (2005) and the QAA Code of Practice for PG Research Programmes have also informed the design of the programme. |
| 11. | Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision | May 2022 - Periodic Review June 2022 – Research School and Worcester Business School amendments June 2023 – Research School amendments June 2024 – Doctoral School amendments June 2025 - Doctoral School amendments |

12. Educational aims of the programme

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) can be awarded to a candidate who has made an independent and original contribution to a specific professional area and who has successfully completed an approved course of study incorporating a *taught component* and a *research component*, culminating in the submission of a thesis to a requisite standard.

The purpose of the programme is to provide an opportunity for business and management professionals to work creatively by analysing and synthesising research literature and their own research evidence to understand their own contexts more critically and to find solutions to key challenges in their working environment. In doing so it is envisaged that the cohort will become (and ultimately lead) communities of practice for their profession.

The DBA award is distinct from the PhD award in the following respects:

- There is a considerable weighting given to a taught component which comprises an integral and key part of the programme, and the assessment of the taught component contributes directly towards the final award.
- The thesis produced by DBA students will make an original contribution to knowledge within the relevant area or areas of professional practice.

Each DBA programme at the University of Worcester includes:

- Stage 1 - a relevant and up to date Masters Programme. It is expected that candidates will enter the programme with this qualification.
- Stage 2 - a pre-thesis stage of structured learning that integrates the choice of a research topic and design with high quality training in research skills and methods. Stage 2 will be delivered in a series of 6 blocks that are spread across 18 months.
- Stage 3 - a thesis stage. Students work with supervisors to prepare a thesis (a substantial independent piece of work following systematic and detailed investigation into a discrete area of research which will primarily be in written form although it may include material in other than written form).

The DBA Programme aims to develop business and management professionals' ability to integrate rigorous academic/critical analysis with practical relevance and application to enable them to become more effective evidence-based practitioners and to contribute to the development of their profession through the furtherance of knowledge. In so doing, it seeks to improve the quality of their profession.

The DBA will be awarded to students who can show they meet the following criteria:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to extend the forefront of the discipline, satisfying peer review and meriting publication;
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications for understanding at the forefront of the discipline and to adjust the project in the light of unforeseen problems;
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

| Knowledge and understanding | | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| LO no. | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | Module Code/s |
| 1. | Critical understanding of various forms of knowledge generation, management and dissemination in different working contexts and the epistemologies underpinning these. | PRDC8001 |
| 2. | An in-depth and critical understanding of the complexities of their professional context and the multiple factors shaping it. | PRDC8001 |
| 3. | Critical evaluation of the use and critical interpretation of research relevant to their professional context. | PRDC8001 |
| 4. | Develop a clear rationale for a research project, drawing appropriately on relevant literature and conceptual frameworks. | PRDC8003 |
| Conceptualization and Critical Thinking | | |
| LO no. | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | Module Code/s |
| 5. | Critical reflection on their professional identity, self and agency in the organisational settings and the philosophies and theories informing practice. | PRDC8001 |
| 6. | Critically review and evaluate the main methods of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. | PRDC8002 |
| 7. | Explain the paradigm and approach that is most suitable for a proposed study | PRDC8003 |
| Analysis and Evaluation | | |
| LO no. | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | Module Code/s |
| 8. | Appreciate and synthesise a range of research skills relevant to the conduct of a doctoral standard research study. | PRDC8002 |
| 9. | Evaluate and articulate strategies for managing information and data. | PRDC8003 |

| | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| 10. | Understand how ethical issues apply to the design and implementation of a research project. | PRDC8003 |
|-----|---|----------|

Research and Enquiry

| LO no. | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | Module Code/s |
|--------|--|---------------|
| 11. | Critically discuss relevant issues of research design, implementation and data analysis. | PRDC8002 |
| 12. | Critically debate the differences between the main research paradigms; | PRDC8002 |
| 13. | Engage critically with research methodologies and methods. | PRDC8002 |
| 14. | Explain why particular strategies and decisions will be adopted and implemented. | PRDC8003 |

Transferable skills

| LO no. | On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to: | Module Code/s |
|--------|--|---------------|
| 15. | Present and communicate ideas clearly, orally and in writing. | PRDC8002 |
| 16. | Identify and develop an appropriate academic voice for writing the thesis. | PRDC8003 |
| 17. | Plan research effectively and flexibly. | PRDC8003 |

Teaching and Learning

Great care has been taken to adopt an action based and blended approach to learning design throughout this programme. Workshops will be integrated as part of the learning process with tutor and peer led learning activities, on-line resources available via the VLE (Blackboard).

The workshops will be face-to-face or virtual via Blackboard Collaborate if necessary. Individual support may be face-to-face or virtual, via Microsoft Teams or other appropriate technology.

Structured sessions will utilise a variety of activities, including group discussion, case study analysis, simulation and tutor input as appropriate to the needs of the subject matter and the learning outcomes of the module. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their prior experience of research to identify your researcher development needs and to inform your on-going research project.

Learning Sets will be set up during the first workshop. These sets are a vital resource for this programme and will provide a vehicle for peer support between modules, during

research project work and beyond. Participants will be encouraged to continue meeting as a set throughout the course to provide a forum for support, discussion and critique of research plans. Each module will utilise the VLE for the provision of specific module information (module outline, assessment details, and assessment criteria) as well as details of essential reading, hyperlinks to internet-based resources, and key on-line articles from University-subscribed databases.

14. Assessment Strategy

Students are assessed in 4 ways during the programme:

- a) Through the taught modules.
- b) Their progress against the programme of research which they develop with the guidance and support of their supervisory team is assessed through Annual Progress Review.
- c) Their progress is also kept under constant review by their supervisory team.
- d) Finally, all students must submit a thesis and defend this thesis at an oral examination (*viva voce*) which determines if they have met the Learning Outcomes and if they should be awarded a DBA

Taught Modules

The Assessment strategy has been designed to provide students with a variety of challenges appropriate for a doctoral level modules in Business. The range of assessments specified in the module outlines have been developed in order to support the pedagogical approaches employed and which are appropriate for the nature of the subject disciplines covered.

Associated with each module will be several pieces of assessed work:

| Module title | Module Code | Assessment items | Weighting |
|--|-------------|--|---------------------------|
| The Researching Professional | PRDC8001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Critically Reflective Journal ▪ Individual presentation ▪ Assignment 4000 words | 20% 20% 60% |
| Research Methods and Design | PRDC8002 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analytical review of methodological approaches 5000 words ▪ Individual presentation (30 mins) | 80% 20% |
| Project Development, Planning and Management | PRDC8003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research Proposal, 5000 words | 100% |

In line with the University of Worcester Assessment Policy, assessments for the individual modules have been designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have successfully met the learning outcomes. These are specified in each assignment brief along with any assessment criteria. Students are also supported through the use of grade descriptors.

Annual Progress Review

The Annual Progress Review (APR) is designed to complement the ongoing monitoring of research student progress by the supervisory team. It sets out to provide an independent assessment of a student's progress against the requirements of the degree and the student's own programme of research as agreed with the supervisory team. The review will take place annually during the thesis stage and is designed: to allow student and supervisors to reflect on progress; to provide assurance to the University that the student's progress is as expected and the programme of research is fit for purpose; to identify any problems or issues that have emerged over the previous 12 months; and to establish an action plan to address any problems or issues thus enabling the student to get back on track.

Supervisory Review

It is the role of the supervisory team, in particular the Director of Studies, to keep the student's progress under regular review throughout the programme of research and to raise any concerns as soon as these arise.

Examination

The assessment of the programme as a whole is based on a two-stage process:

- an assessment of a written thesis by an examination panel of 2-3 examiners, who are experts in the field of study
- an oral examination at which the student is asked to "defend" their thesis in front of the same examination panel, demonstrating that the written thesis is their work, that they are aware of its strengths and weaknesses and that they are able to explain and justify any issues or problems in the written thesis.

15. Programme structures and requirements

The programme consists of:

- 180 credits at Level 7 (Stage 1) see below
- 90 taught credits at Level 8 (Stage 2)
- 270 credit thesis at Level 8 (Stage 3)

Stage 1 – Masters level work

It is expected that the DBA programme at Worcester will primarily recruit active, experienced professionals who have already recently been awarded a relevant Masters qualification and who are now seeking to further enhance their professional development. If an applicant does not have a recent, relevant Masters level qualification the Programme leader will talk to the applicant and suggest an appropriate programme.

Please refer to Programme Specifications: <https://www.worc.ac.uk/aqu/716.htm>

On successful completion of Stage 1 a student will be awarded a Masters. They may

then progress to Stage 2 if they also have at least 3 years senior management experience (see Section 18 below).

Stage 2 – The Taught Programme

We expect the student to have completed Stage 2 of their programme within the first 20 months of Registration.

| Taught Stage 2 | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Module Code | Module Title | Pre-requisites | Module status | Credits |
| PRDC8001 | The Researching Professional | None | Mandatory | 30 |
| PRDC8002 | Research Methods and Design | None | Mandatory | 30 |
| PRDC8003 | Project Development, Planning and Management | None | Mandatory | 30 |

Students who successfully complete Stage 2 of the programme but who do not wish to proceed to Stage 3 will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Enquiry.

Stage 3 - The Thesis

A student registered for a DBA will complete a doctoral thesis. It is expected that students will commence the thesis stage of their programme following notification that they have passed Stage 2 of their programme.

The text of the thesis excluding ancillary data, must be a maximum of 60,000 words.

It is expected, within this timeframe that most students will complete and pass the taught element of their programme within the first 20 months of Registration. It is then expected that the Thesis will normally be completed within a further 24-48 months.

Annual Progress Review

Annual Progress Review

The review will be undertaken initially by the DBA Programme leader or nominee whose role is to assess the student's progress against the programme of research and to make recommendations to University's Research Degrees Board (responsible for oversight of the DBA programme from registration to examination).

The Programme leader's assessment will be based on consideration of written documentation submitted by the student, the Director of Studies and Doctoral School. The written documentation required for review will be determined by the stage the student has reached in their programme and will be set out in the relevant Course Handbook.

The Programme leader or nominee will make one of the following recommendations to Research Degrees Board (RDB) for each student reviewed. If the Programme leader has concerns about both the standard of work and progress, then they will select option 3 but make a note of this in their recommendation:

- i. The student's progress and standard of work, including their technical proficiency in the English language, is at or above expectations; the student may progress, and no further action is required.
- ii. The student's progress and standard of work, including their technical proficiency in the English language, is at or above expectations but there are some outstanding issues identified by the Programme leader (usually certain deadlines that have not been met, for example, completion of the modules or ethical approval); the student may progress subject to providing a satisfactory response to the issues outlined by the Programme leader by an agreed deadline.
- iii. The student's standard of work, including their technical proficiency in the English language, is below expectations. The student should be referred to an APR panel to include feedback from an expert reviewer selected by the supervisory team.
- iv. Although the standard of work meets expectations, including their technical proficiency in the English language, the rate of progress for the student is below expectations. The student should be referred to an APR panel. No expert reviewer is required for this panel.
- v. There is insufficient evidence in the student's folder to demonstrate that the student's progress and /or standard of work is at or above expectations. The student should be referred to an APR Panel. No expert reviewer is required for this panel.

Programme leaders can call a Panel where they have concerns about both standard of work and progress (recommendation 3 and 4). Where a Programme leader has concerns about the standard of the student's work (Recommendation iii above), they should work with the supervisory team to identify an expert to provide written feedback on the significant piece of written work to the APR panel. The expert must not be on the supervisory team and will normally be a member of academic staff on the register of approved supervisors but can also be, if appropriate, an Honorary Visiting or Emeritus colleague. The expert should have relevant disciplinary and/or methodological expertise. It will be for the Programme leader and supervisory team to decide if, for example, methodological expertise is particularly needed, more so than disciplinary expertise, such that they can review and provide comment on the student's significant piece of written work. The expert should also normally have experience of doctoral supervision and/or examination as they will be asked to give their perspective on the "level" of the student's work, i.e. is the work at doctoral standard or is it on course to meet doctoral standards?

We will ask the expert to provide a written commentary on the written work before the panel meeting. The expert will not normally attend the Panel meeting.

If the Programme leader is of the view that the student's progress is being limited by their supervisory team, for example, supervisors are not engaging with supervision, available for supervisory meetings, responding to drafts of work in a timely manner etc, this will always be referred to an APR Panel.

Where a student's response to the Programme leader is not satisfactory, the Programme leader may:

- i. Refer the student to an APR panel.
- ii. Request further information by a specified deadline. If the Programme leader is still not satisfied with the response, they should then refer the student to an APR panel.

Where a student does not provide documentation or a response by the deadline then the Programme leader will normally refer the student to an APR panel. A student will not be referred to an APR panel when a delay is caused by information not being provided by the RS or Supervisory Team.

The APR panel will normally include:

- Chair: College Director RKE or Chair of RDB
- Programme leader or nominee
- RDPO or Head of Doctoral Services as note taker (standard of work panels only).

The Panel will be attended by the student and normally, their whole supervisory team, but can go ahead with just one supervisor. Panel meetings can take place in person or on Microsoft Teams, however all Panels that are called around standard of work will be organised in person, if possible. If the Panel meeting takes place on Microsoft Teams, the Panel meeting will not be recorded in any form. Notes of the actions agreed will be attached to the Chair's report, sent to the student after the meeting.

Where an expert reviewer has been invited to provide a written report to the panel regarding the academic standard of a piece of submitted work, this will have been submitted and shared with the Panel in advance. The written report will include the opportunity for an expert reviewer to provide a recommendation regarding proposed next steps for the student. The panel will consider the expert recommendation in relation to their overall Panel recommendation. The student will see but will not be expected to respond to this report until after the Panel meeting. The report will be placed in their SharePoint file to help them prepare for the panel meeting. The Panel report will be sent to the student after the Panel meeting. A suitable response to this expert report will be part of the overall Panel's recommendation.

The Panel will comprise of 4 stages. **Stage 1** will be a Pre-Meet, attended by the Chair and Programme leader to set the agenda. **Stage 2** will be a meeting of the student with the Panel but without the Supervisory Team present. **Stage 3** will form the substantive panel meeting, attended by the student, Supervisory Team, Chair, Programme leader and RDPO. **Stage 4** will be a post-meeting involving the Chair, Programme leader and supervisory team.

Outcome of the APR Meeting

The Chair, with the support of the Head of DS (if in attendance) is responsible for producing a brief report on the appropriate template, post Panel meeting and will make one of the following recommendations to RDB (sent to the student and DoS by email within 5 working days of the Panel meeting- see below). The report will outline actions for the student to complete, timeframe for completion and who will approve these changes. The report will be accompanied by the expert reviewer's report, if used.

| Outcome of Panel Meeting | Recommendation | Further action |
|---|--|---|
| 1. The student's progress and standard of work is at or above expectations. | The student may progress and no further action is required. | |
| 2. The student's standard of work is below expectations. | The student must complete work and/or respond to feedback outlined by the Panel by an agreed deadline. | <p>In this case, the student's response will be sent back to and considered by the Panel and expert reviewer who may recommend the following to RDB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The student has responded satisfactorily to the actions specified and no further action is required. b. The student has not responded satisfactorily to the actions specified. A second Panel will be convened and at this meeting, the student should be given a specified timeframe to provide a further response. |
| 3. The rate of progress for the student is below expectations. | The student must respond to a set of actions determined by the Panel by a specified deadline | <p>In this case, the student's response will be sent to and considered by the Panel who may recommend the following to RDB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The student has responded satisfactorily to the actions specified and no further action is required. The student may progress. b. The student has responded satisfactorily to the actions specified but the Programme leader will also arrange to meet the student and DoS within an agreed timeframe (normally within 6 months of the APR Panel meeting) to check on progress. c. The student has not responded satisfactorily to the actions specified. A second Panel will be convened and at this meeting, the student should be given a specified timeframe to provide a further response. As in (b) above, the Programme leader may also ask to the student and DoS within an agreed timeframe (normally within 6 months of the APR Panel meeting) to check on progress. |

The student's response to a Panel's recommendation must be signed off by the supervisory team and sent back to the RDPO. The RDPO will pass this to the Panel and expert reviewer (if used) by the deadlines given. The Panel (to include the expert reviewer if used) should briefly meet to discuss this response (it may sometimes be appropriate to do this by correspondence). If all parties are satisfied that the student has responded satisfactorily, the Chair will inform the Doctoral School in writing that they approve progression and the RDPO will write to the student and supervisory team.

If the Panel deems that the student's response to the Panel's feedback and recommendations is not satisfactory, then a second Panel meeting will need to take place with the student and supervisory team present. If an expert reviewer was used, they will be asked to join the second panel meeting as a Panel member to allow a full and open discussion about their concerns. At this second Panel meeting, the Panel will explain why they are not satisfied with the student's response, the student will be able to defend their response and the student should then be given one more chance to provide a response to the Panel's recommendations.

As at Panel 1, drawing on the notes of the RDPO, the Chair is responsible for producing a brief report on the appropriate template, post Panel. The report will outline actions for the student to complete, timeframe for completion and who will approve these changes.

The student's response to a second Panel's recommendations (signed off by the Supervisory Team) will be sent back to the Panel and expert (if used) by the deadline given.

If the second Panel (to include the expert reviewer, if used), deems that this further response is not satisfactory, the Panel may recommend that RDB withdraw the student from the programme.

Where a student does not respond by any deadline without explanation, RDB may withdraw the student from the programme.

Where a student's progress is deemed below expectations in two consecutive Annual Progress Reviews, RDB may withdraw the student from the programme without need for further action.

Examination

The text of the thesis excluding ancillary data, must be a maximum of 60,000 words. It must fulfil the requirements for format, content and appearance as set out in the Research Degree Regulatory Framework.

There will be a +10% margin for the maximum word count. There is no fixed penalty for exceeding this word count but, in line with the University's 'Policy on Word Count' the examiner will not normally consider any work after the +10% margin has been reached.

The oral examination (viva voce) will normally take the form of a meeting of 1-3 hours to discuss the content of the thesis, although the timeframe may on occasion extend beyond this.

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This award is located at level 8 of the FHEQ. The programme has been designed with reference to the QAA Doctoral Degrees Characteristics (2011) and FHEQ (2008) Qualification Descriptor for Level 8. The guidelines published by the Association of Business Schools for DBA (2005) and the QAA Code of Practice for PG Research Programmes have also informed the design of the programme.

17. **Support for students**

On acceptance, students are assigned a supervisor (Director of Studies) who has expertise in their specialist area. The supervisor provides advice and undertakes regular progress reviews during the period of study. Written records should be kept for all meetings. At the end of each year a report on progress is produced by the supervisor in consultation with the student.

Students are also provided with:

- an induction programme
- the Handbook for DBA Students and Supervisors
- day to day support through the Doctoral School.
- an introduction to the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP)
- training opportunities for career planning through the Doctoral School and Careers Service
- <https://www.worc.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx>
- <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/>

18. **Admissions**

Admissions Policy

Entry requirements

Stage 1: Applicants are normally expected to have:

A second-class honours degree in any subject (or International students holding a qualification recognised as equivalent by the University), **plus** a minimum of 2 years business/management experience, at an appropriate senior level.

Stage 2: Applicants are normally expected to be:

Active experienced professionals who have recently (within the last 6 years) been awarded a relevant Masters qualification (see 14 above). Applicants must also be able to demonstrate that they have a minimum of three years **senior** management and /or business experience.

International students will also be required to demonstrate that they have the appropriate level of written and spoken English (normally IELTS score of 6.5 with no less than 6 in any component). Entry qualifications for international students are guided by Ecctis.

In keeping with University policy on widening participation and diversity the Programme encourages and welcomes the contribution of older learners and people from the widest range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

See [Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Stage 1: Candidates may be admitted on to stage 1 (Masters Programme) without a first degree via Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL). For more

information, please refer to the relevant Masters Programmes Handbook and/or discuss this with the Masters Programme Leader.

Where an applicant has successfully completed one or more appropriate Masters level modules in a subject related to the course in the last 6 years they may apply for credit transfer which may eliminate the need to undertake one or more modules in the Programme.

Similarly, where an applicant can demonstrate that they have appropriate and relevant professional experience related to the subject area of the course they may apply for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) or Recognition of prior certificated learning (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards) which is at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credits or qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications framework; which may eliminate the need to undertake one or more modules in the Programme.

Stage 2: Prior to commencing their studies or during the first few weeks of the programme, students will be required to apply formally for credit transfer for the 180 credits at Level 7 unless the Masters qualification has been completed at UW.

It is not normally possible to claim RPEL or RPCL for Stage 2 of the DBA. There may however be rare occasions where an applicant has already completed some or all of a DBA taught programme at another UK HEI and wishes to transfer this credit in order to complete their programme of study at the University of Worcester. The credit must have been completed within the last 6 years and the maximum credit that can be awarded under credit transfer or RPL is set out in PRF.

In these cases, applicants will be required to provide the university with transcripts showing credit achieved at Level 8, copies of module outlines, progress reports and samples of written work. All applicants will be asked to complete the relevant RPL documentation prior to interview so that this can be considered by the interview panel (the DBA Programme Lead, the Programme leader, a potential supervisor and the Head of Doctoral Services). The Panel will look at all the evidence and make a decision about how much credit can be transferred, what the student is still required to complete, the maximum completion date and the supervisory team.

In all cases, applicants will be expected to provide the interview panel with a detailed research proposal and ethics protocol for the thesis which is equivalent to the assessment expected for module PRDC8003 Project Development, Planning and Management. If this cannot be provided then the applicant will be required to take and pass this module before entering Stage 3, the thesis.

It is not possible to claim RPL for any part of Stage 3 of this programme.

| Award | Credit required for award | Maximum credit allowed | Level |
|-------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| DBA | 180 (M) + 360 (D) | 180 (M) 90 (D) | 7 and 8 |

Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University [webpages](#) or from the Doctoral School (01905 542595).

Admissions procedures

All applications are submitted to the Doctoral School and passed to the relevant Programme leader for consideration. In the application form applicants are required to outline a research proposal for their intended thesis. If the application has potential, an interview is scheduled by a panel comprising at least two members of academic staff. Completion of an interview checklist allows for a thorough rigorous evaluation of the candidate's strengths at interview. It also means that details about the offer conditions are passed back to the Doctoral School, enabling a comprehensive offer letter and contract to be produced.

Applications from those with international qualifications are checked by the Doctoral School Team against Ecctis and copies of all certificates are required before an unconditional offer is made to the student. All international applicants are checked for their competency in English language by the Language Unit. When it is felt that the applicant does not possess the appropriate level of English language, an in house English language course may be recommended before the student embarks on their RDP. Information about all offers made to international students is passed back to the relevant personnel in Student Services who can provide the student with additional support and guidance (for example, to obtain a visa, accommodation etc).

The selection and admission processes outlined above ensure that only appropriately qualified students are admitted to a DBA and that the student can be satisfactorily supported in their research.

Admissions/selection criteria

An offer of a place on a DBA will be made when the following conditions are satisfied:

- Applicant meets the specified entry requirements.
- The University has the supervisory capacity and expertise to support the research project outlined in the application form.
- The proposal outlined has the potential to become a viable research project at Doctoral level.

19. Regulation of assessment

Stage 1 and 2

The taught programme operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Requirements for Awards

| Award | Requirement |
|--|---|
| PG Cert | Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map |
| PG Dip | Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map |
| Masters (MA/MSc/MBA/MTL) | Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map |
| PG Certificate in Research Enquiry (doctoral level) Exit award after Stage 2 of the DBA | Has passed a minimum of 90 credits at level 8. |

PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

If a student chooses to exit the award at the end of Stage 2, students who pass stage 2 will be awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Enquiry.

Stage 3

The regulations for stage 3, the thesis, are set out in the [Research Degree Regulatory Framework](#).

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

- The DBA qualification will enhance Graduates career prospects both for promotion within their chosen fields, working in a different economic sector, or to become an academic.

- Worcester Business School aims to promote closer links with employers through the work of its **Business Development Team**. The team is currently working with key decision makers in a variety of private, public and third sector organisations, and is supported by **the School's Employers' Advisory Group**, which meets on a regular basis.
- The School works closely with a number of **professional organisations** and **external agencies** including the Chartered Institute of Management, Institute of Commercial Management, Chartered Institute of Marketing, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Chartered Institute of Public Relations, Institute of Financial Accountants, Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals, British Computer Society, Institute of Directors, Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Commerce and Confederation of British Industry.
- The School has worked with a number of **business clients** in developing and delivering its programmes. These include - The NHS (a range of Primary Care and Acute Trusts); Local Government (a range of County, District and Unitary Authorities); West Mercia, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and Staffordshire Constabularies; Ministry of Defence and The Royal Air Force; Her Majesty's Prison Service; Royal Mail; Financial Service Organisations (e.g. Lloyds TSB, HBOS Plc, Clerical Medical, NFU Mutual and Virgin Money); Housing Associations, Southco and Malvern Instruments.
- The School has well-developed working relations with the **local business community** many of whom contribute to Masters programmes to give a real-world insight into the future world of work.
- These professional and business networks also involve **external events**, many of which are open to students, as well as employers.
- The School has, for a number of years, been an important focus for **projects linked with the West Mercia Constabulary** through the Shared Police and Higher Education Research and Enterprise (SPHERE) partnership, which enables the force to utilise academic expertise to enhance its policing activities eg through Masters students' dissertation/ consultancy projects.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines.