



UCAM
UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA
DE MURCIA



DOCTORATE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

COURSE SPECIFICATIONS

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1. Welcome to the DBA

We warmly welcome you to the Athena Global Education DBA, in association with Universidad Católica San Antonio De Murcia.

Athena Global Education (AGE) is an ed-tech venture operating from Oxford Science Park, is a subsidiary of Westford Education Group, a higher education services provider since 2009, providing quality UK, Italian and Spanish Bachelor and Master level degrees. We have helped thousands of learners from around the world achieve their higher education goals and through that, their professional goals.

Athena has developed a DBA programme in response to the demands of its hundreds of MBA alumni for a business-focussed higher qualification to allow them to reflect much more deeply on a research problem in their own organisations or industries, to become recognised industry experts and, in the process, to obtain a highly regarded qualification and to earn the distinction of doctoral status.

We wish you well as you embark on your professional doctorate journey with us and we, and all the team, look forward to working with you and sharing in your success!

Best regards,



Firoz Thairinil

Founder & CEO - Westford Education Group



Dr William Painter

Dean – Westford Education Group

2. A Welcome from the Consultant Director

A warm welcome to the Athena Global Education DBA programme!

I am delighted that you have chosen to study for this prestigious degree, which is likely to become your capstone qualification thereby accelerating your career in business and management and enriching you intellectually. I can speak from personal experience how satisfying it is to gain the title of 'doctor' and to be recognised by peers as an expert.

In order to achieve this, there will be considerable demands on your time and it is expected that there will be personal (and family) sacrifices – chiefly your spare time! In fact, if you undertake this qualification then most probably, you will have virtually no spare time, particularly in the final stages of writing your thesis. It is good for you and your family to be prepared in advance for this.

If you can get into good study habits early, then you will find that the process is likely to run pretty smoothly. However, there are times when you tend to feel overwhelmed by the task ahead (most doctoral candidates do – I know I did!). In this program, you will have the chance to build up a network of fellow DBA candidates as well as academic tutors to offer the academic and social support you would need at these trying times.

The key message I would like to give you right at the start is, however hard it may get - keep going! Most doctoral candidates who fail, do so because they give up – not because their work is not good enough! Focus yourself at this stage and keep thinking about the goal – yourself wearing your doctoral graduation robes being awarded your DBA degree!

I very much look forward to meeting you either virtually or in person during your studies.

I am excited for you and for the possibilities which lie ahead!

With very best wishes



Dr Andrew Hambler

3. Your Course Team

This course is taught and supported by members of staff based at Athena Global Education, as well as associate lecturers and supervisors, who are experts in their field and very experienced in ensuring that you receive the highest standard of support at the necessary level. The core staff who support this programme are:

Programme Leader

Dr.HansiniPremi

Email address: hansini@atehna.edu

Hansini is currently working as an Associate Faculty/ Programme Leader for DBA with Athena Global Education. She did her research in Sustainable Marketing from Malaviya National Institute of Technology Jaipur. Her doctoral investigated about the buying behaviour of consumer and development of marketing strategies for green products. Her core research interest areas are Marketing Management, Consumer Behaviour, and Brand Management. She has actively organized and participated in a number of conferences and workshops. She has published papers in reputed peer reviewed journals, International and National Conference proceedings.

The Programme Leader is your first point of contact for any questions or issues you have as your studies progress.

Consultant Director

Dr Andrew Hambler

Email address: A.Hambler@athena.edu

Andrew is an experienced academic who has worked for 16 years in universities in the United Kingdom as a Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor. Andrew's degrees are from Durham University, University of Manchester and the University of Leicester. He studied for his doctorate at Durham University. Andrew worked with Athena Global Education for many years as a partnerships manager and link tutor and has a detailed understanding of the needs and expectations of experienced professionals undertaking study internationally. Andrew's research is in the areas of labour law and human resources and he has a particular interest in religion in the workplace. He has published several articles, book chapters and a monograph. He started his career as an HR Consultant for the global financial services company PwC. For some years, he was an officer in the British Reserve Forces.

Andrew helped to design and write the DBA programme and his continuing role is to provide advice and guidance to the programme team as well as undertaking some supervision, research training and examination work.

Student Engagement and Welfare

Name: Bob Sukesh

Email address: bob@athena.edu

4. An Introduction to your Course

This programme allows you to study for a professional doctorate in the field of business and management within a period of two to four years.

During the course of successfully completing your studies, you will:

- Develop significant competence in appropriate methods of research
- Reconnect with leading thinking in different fields of strategy and management
- Conceptualise suitable research problems and how to approach them
- Undertake a sustained and significant research project with a practical application over a period of time
- Learn tools to constructively reflect on your own research and management skills
- Become an expert in your field of business or management research.

5. About the Accrediting University

This DBA programme has been developed in association with, and is accredited by, Universidad Católica San Antonio De Murcia (UCAM).

Universidad Católica De Murcia (UCAM) is a university par excellence based out of Murcia, Spain. Established in 1996, UCAM has an active student base of 17,000 learners and an academic staff of more than 1000. The university is accredited by Ministry of Education, Spain and National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA). UCAM is a member of The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Universia and European University association (EUA). It has a strategic partnership network with more than 280 universities including UC Berkeley, Stanford, Università di Bologna, National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University. UCAM centres in Cuba, Jakarta, Singapore, and Brussels work together to further develop the university's international strategy. UCAM is among the first universities to adapt its programs to the European Quality System for Education, following the Bologna Process.

UCAM is strongly linked to the business world through study plans responsive to market exigencies, obligatory internships in public and private institutions and enterprises as part of every undergraduate and master's degree, as well as research programs in collaboration with large regional, national and multinational companies. It has corporate strategic partnership with industry leaders like Coca Cola, DANONE, Vodafone and Siemens including Microsoft, and SAP.

UCAM is also known as the University of Sports. It is the only European university with a professional basketball team in the first national league (ACB League Spain) and counts more than 80 Olympiads as its alumni.

6. The Design of your Course

6.1 Structure

This course is designed for those who are seeking to extend their own professional development and contribute to management theory and practice in their own workplace and beyond. As participants are likely to be in the middle of busy careers, the mode of study for the course is part time and is designed to be completed within a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years.

You will complete this course in two stages, completing the equivalent of 180 (UK) credits during the first stage (Year One) and 360 credits in the second stage (Year Two +).

Year One consists of five taught modules worth 180 UK Credits/60 ECTS Credits. Successful students will be awarded CIQ Level 8 Diploma in Business Research and will progress to Year Two where they will undertake the final Practice Based Thesis which will be completed in two years from the beginning of the research. The maximum duration allowed for the research is three years and minimum is one year.

The overall purpose of the first two modules you will study (Year One (a)) is to provide a theoretical and practical foundation in research methodology for advanced empirical research within the management field.

The aim of the next three modules you will study (Year One (b)) is to apply your knowledge and understanding of research methodology to an actual pilot study and overall thesis proposal, and to reflect on your own performance as a researcher.

The purpose of Years Two onwards is to conduct, under supervision, a detailed and research project, meeting the expectations of research act doctoral level, and to write it up in the form of a thesis.

The structure of the programme is set out below.

Award of Doctor of Business Administration

YEAR	MODULE	ECTS
Year 1 (a) (first 6 months)	M1. Research Methodology and Methods	10
	M2. Research Issues within Contemporary Management	10
Year 1 (b) (second 6 months)	M3. Interim Research Project (Pilot Study)	20
	M4. Designing a Research Project (Thesis Proposal)	10
	M5. Developing as a Researcher (Individual Reflection)	10
Years 2 & 3	M6. Practice Based Thesis	120

Other potential exit awards:

If you are unable to carry on with your studies for any reason, there is an exit award that you can achieve, once you have successfully completed the modules in the taught part of the course (Year One).

Potential exit award (Completion of Year One Modules):

M.Phil. in Management (UCAM) or CIQ Level 8 Diploma in Business Research.

6.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the taught stage of the DBA (Year One), you will be expected to demonstrate the following competences:

- Deep knowledge and understanding of appropriate research methodology and methods in the business and management field at an advanced level;
- The ability to identify and conceptualise an appropriate research project within your own organisation or industry;
- An ability to critically reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses as a researcher and identify appropriate development opportunities;
- An ability to synthesise appropriate business and management theory with the outcomes of your own research (pilot) enquiry;
- Where appropriate, to suggest appropriate solutions to organisational problems based on your own research; and
- Communication of your work clearly and effectively in a format which is accessible to the non-specialist whilst respecting appropriate academic writing conventions.

Upon successful completion of the research stage of the DBA (Years 2+), you will be expected to continue to demonstrate the above competences and, in addition, to demonstrate:

- The ability to conceptualise, design and implement an advanced research project in a business and management field which will represent an original contribution to scholarly and professional thinking, and is of a quality worthy of publication.

7. The modules you will study

7.1 Research Methodology and Methods

The aim of this module is to give you a thorough grounding in research methodology and methods. By the end of the module you will be able to explain your own research 'philosophy' and you will be able to decide what research methods to use (e.g. interview, focus group or questionnaire) to achieve your goals and to offer a convincing justification for your choice! This module provides you with your vital training in research which will serve you well when you come to write your thesis.

The objectives of this module are:

1. To explore the main research paradigms within the field of management research.
2. To critically understand the methods of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
3. To demonstrate advanced skills in data handling, using appropriate statistical software.
4. To demonstrate high-level skills in qualitative research methods.
5. To demonstrate deep competence in quantitative research methods.

7.2 Research Issues in Contemporary Management

The purpose of this module is to explore leading knowledge in different management disciplines so that you are completely up-to-date as a thinking business professional. Building on this, the module will help you to identify what would make a suitable, interesting and applied research topic in management so that you can begin to conceptualise your own area for future research, later in the course.

The objectives of this module are:

1. To understand and conceptualise a 'research problem' in contemporary management.
2. To analyse how management researchers have conducted significant research projects.
3. To identify and critically discuss what is considered 'cutting edge' knowledge within management.
4. To identify and assess potential areas of research within different management disciplines.
5. To understand the importance of ethics in management research, and how to apply ethical principles.

7.3 Interim Research Project (Pilot Study)

The purpose of this module is to allow you to utilise the research methods skills you have acquired, and the areas of research you have identified, in order to test them through a small-scale pilot study. You will be asked to research a relevant topic, or practice-based issue (perhaps in your own organisation or industry) and prepare a report (or mini-dissertation) which will allow your tutors to give you constructive feedback on your emerging research skills and help you to test a research area which you may decide to continue with when you embark on your Practice-Based Thesis.

The objectives of this module are:

1. To demonstrate the ability to devise, plan and conduct an extended piece of independent work (in an ethical manner).
2. To critically assess the chosen topic in the context of the current literature (including existing studies).
3. To critically analyse data in order to offer a sophisticated interpretation of results/findings, bringing original thinking to bear, in order to draw justified conclusions.
4. To synthesise and present research findings in the form of a structured written dissertation.

7.4 Designing a Research Project

The purpose of this module is to write a detailed proposal document for your actual thesis. You will be provided with an appropriate structure for your proposal and encouraged to identify a research problem, undertake a small-scale literature review and give detailed thought to the type of research you would like to undertake and the research methods you would like to employ. The feedback you receive on the proposal will provide you with a very helpful progress check before you embark on your actual thesis.

The objectives of this module are:

1. To identify a topic for systematic and critical review, which is at the forefront of research in practice in your professional context.
2. To develop an appropriate research question which will allow for secondary material to be critically analysed effectively, empirical research to be conducted, and for conclusions to be drawn.
3. To demonstrate a deep critical understanding of the appropriate theoretical and empirical sources of information, which is relevant to the topic of the chosen methodology.

7.5 Developing as a Researcher

The benefits of structured individual self-reflection are increasingly recognised both in professional practice and in academic research. The purpose of this module is to provide you with some useful theoretical tools to help you to reflect constructively and in the right depth. You will consider your own strengths and weaknesses as a business academic and come up with a realistic developmental action plan to close any skills gaps before you start work on your final thesis.

The objectives of this module are:

1. To understand and analyse the principles of reflective practice in both management and research.
2. To critically reflect on own competence and development needs as a management researcher.
3. To identify the further skills required to successfully grow and develop as a doctoral-level researcher in a management field
4. To identify how any required skills or competencies may be attained and to plan accordingly.

7.6 Practice-based Thesis

This is the capstone module of the DBA in which you plan and implement your own extended research project which you then write up as a 40,000-50,000 word thesis which you are then called upon to 'defend' during an oral examination. This is where you demonstrate your own deep expertise in a specific area of applied business and management, earn your doctoral title, and quite possibly make a significant difference to your own organisation! Although this is an individual project, you will be fully supported by a qualified and experienced academic supervisor

The objective of this module is:

To research (ethically) and complete a doctoral-level thesis, which represents an original contribution to scholarly and professional thinking, and is of a quality worthy of publication.

8. Learning, Teaching and Assessment on your Course

8.1 Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching will be provided via our VLE. For each module you will receive:

- A module guide
- A detailed assessment brief
- A comprehensive and set of slides with explanatory notes
- A detailed manual to assist your learning, with suggested further reading.

In addition, teaching and tutorial support will be provided in small groups and individually by our expert tutors, either online or in-person (dependent upon location and preferred study mode).

Following the submission of your thesis proposal (module 4), you will be assigned an individual Supervisor to help to guide you through the practiced-based thesis stage of your studies.

8.2 Assessment

A mixture of assessment methods is used on the programme in order to develop a range of skills. The assessment matrix below sets these out, including the indicative word counts for those modules requiring a written assessment.

Year	Module	Assessment Method
ONE (a) (first 6 months)	Research Methodology and Methods Research Issues within Contemporary Management	5,000 word portfolio 4,000 word essay
ONE (b) (second 6 months)	Interim Research Project (Pilot Study)	8,000 word dissertation 5,000 word proposal document

	Designing a Research Project (Thesis Proposal) Developing as a Researcher (Individual Reflection)	Individual recorded presentation (15 minutes)
TWO - FOUR	Practice Based Thesis	40-50,000 word dissertation/ thesis; oral examination (<i>viva</i>)

8.3 How to Submit Assessments

All assessments will be submitted electronically via our VLE.

Instructions for how to submit your assignments will be included in the respective assessment descriptors and module guides. It is your responsibility to make sure that you submit your assignments correctly and on time.

You should submit all assessments required for each module on or before the final submission date. If you do not do so, you are likely to fail the module overall. There may be occasions when you cannot submit an assessment because of circumstances beyond your control. In such circumstances, you should contact the Programme Leader in writing, explaining why you are unable to submit an assessment and to request either a short extension or a longer deferral. Where possible, you should add written evidence to support your request. This request will then be scrutinised by the DBA academic staff and a decision including, where appropriate, a revised submission date, will be communicated to you in writing. Such requests will be treated sympathetically, but good reasons will be required, and these do not generally include day-to-day pressure of work

If you are not successful at an assessment, either because you have failed it or failed to submit it, then you are eligible to re-sit your assessment, although the final mark will be 'capped' at a 50% pass. If you are unsuccessful at the re-sit, you may re-enrol on the module (at a further cost) and again the final mark will be capped at 50%. You may only re-enrol for each module once.

8.4 Feedback on your Work

At Athena Global Education, we believe that constructive and timely feedback is very important so that you know to what extent you are on track with your work and how you can continue to improve. You should expect to receive detailed written feedback on all your assessments, other than your thesis itself, within 15 working days of submission.

9. Communication, Support and Guidance

Communication is very important for success in your study. You will be expected to communicate regularly with your tutors and research supervisor by email or video-call and by participating in lectures, seminars and tutorials, either in person or online. The course team is likely to communicate with you using the VLE as well as via email. Please check your email regularly!

During your course you will have frequent contact with your Module Tutors, often during module contact times. If you need further guidance, please contact your Module Tutors, Course Leader or Supervisor, who can arrange one-to-one support tutorials on request, either in person or through a virtual platform.

Please note that any if you have any additional costs which you incur during the programme (for example any travel in order to complete research activity) these will be your responsibility to cover.

10. The Student Voice

To understand how we listen to your voice as our student, please click on the link below which gives full details of our student welfare, student representation and feedback policy:

https://athena.edu/policies/Welfare_Representaion_And_Feedback_Policy

11. Rules and Regulations

Your award is governed by a range of policies to ensure you are treated fairly and consistently. You may wish to familiarise yourself with these policies, which you can find (in full) by accessing this link:

<https://athena.edu/policy>

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