Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva
(SSBM Geneva)

SSBM Geneva Program Outline

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

Method: Online

Duration of Program: 24 months/4 semesters

Total number of ECTS: min. 120

Avenue des Morgines 12, 1213 Genève
Switzerland
www.ssbm.ch

1. Enrollment criteria

Admission to DBA studies is granted to people who fulfil the following requirements:

- Hold MBA (or equivalent qualification) from a recognized higher education institution;

or

- Hold Master's degree in management (or associated discipline);

or

– Hold a Master's degree in a field other than management (or related discipline) but with a minimum of 5 years professional work experience.

- English requirements:

- TOEFL, IELTS or Cambridge
- Intensive English Program certificate
- Previous education in English speaking or Bilingual school with an official certificate
- Test/Interview with SSBM member staff (75 EUR cost which will be deducted from tuition fees upon enrolment).
- If a candidate is not from a majority English-speaking country, then an evidence of English language competency is required.

- For Executive DBA a minimum of five years postgraduate work experience prior to DBA study, some of this at a senior level

2. Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning

Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning are described in the "Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy" of SSBM Geneva.

3. Graduation Requirements

To successfully complete the DBA program, students must:

- Complete all program courses with a passing grade
- Complete and defend the final dissertation with a passing grade
- Have no outstanding financial obligations towards SSBM

Summa Cum Laude

"Summa cum laude" is an honorary title to signify a DBA that was earned "with the highest distinction". It is awarded to students for exceptional DBA Dissertation which was awarded the highest grade of 100 with innovative and original contribution to the field of research.

4. Teaching Method and Learning Materials

DBA program is delivered on campus or online through the SSBM Online Learning Portal used by Harvard and MIT and by remote online mentor supervision. DBA Executive and DBA Global programs are delivered entirely online.

All learning materials for this program are made accessible through the SSBM Online Learning Portal.

Access to S-Connect is provided to all SSBM students. S-Connect is an online platform to socialize / exchange / engage and communicate with current students, alumni, professors and industry partners.

Access to SSBM e-Library and ESBCO (largest provider of research databases, e-journals, magazine subscriptions, e-books and discovery service) is provided to all students. SSBM Librarian is available to all students to further advance their access to literature.

5. Program Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- Critically evaluate contemporary educational theories, leadership models, and learning sciences to address complex challenges in diverse global educational environments.
- Design and implement innovative educational strategies that integrate digital transformation, emerging technologies, and Generative AI to enhance teaching, learning, and organizational effectiveness.
- Apply advanced qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to conduct independent doctoral research and develop evidence-based solutions to educational and institutional challenges.
- Demonstrate strategic leadership and change management competencies to drive innovation, organizational transformation, and continuous improvement in educational and professional learning environments.
- Analyze and evaluate ethical, cultural, and policy considerations in educational leadership and technology adoption to promote responsible, inclusive, and sustainable educational practices.
- Develop and communicate original research findings, strategic recommendations, and innovative solutions that contribute to educational knowledge, learner engagement, institutional performance, and professional practice.

6. Core Program Curriculum

Course ID	Course	Lecturer	ECTS
26649	Research Methodology I	SSBM Supervisor	5
26650	Research Methodology II	SSBM Supervisor	5
26654	Research Proposal	SSBM Supervisor	20
26655	DBA Dissertation	SSBM Supervisor	90
26901	Research and Academic Writing (optional)	Anna Provodnikova	8
37092	Generative AI (optional)	Mario Silic	6

Course Descriptors

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY I

Course Description

The focus of this DBA level course is on social science research, in particular, research methods. We address different methodological perspectives including experimental type research as well as research in the applied context. Students will get a full understanding of basic statistical concepts and qualitative/quantitative analysis techniques. At the end of course, students would have developed the capacity to frame research questions, derive appropriate experimental research designs, and analyze the data collected from these designs. They would also acquire proficiency in the use of software for analyzing experimental data

Course objectives

The course is designed to acquaint researchers with the principles of experimental design, basic research designs used in social science research including qualitative and quantitative research design methods.

Course Learning Outcomes

After this course, students will be able to:

- Develop the capacity to frame research questions and identify suitable experimental research designs.
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic statistical concepts and qualitative/quantitative analysis techniques.
- Analyze different methodological perspectives, including experimental and applied research contexts.
- Acquire proficiency in the use of software for analyzing experimental data.
- Understand and comply with ethical considerations in research, including academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism.
- Prepare a research concept paper following academic standards and guidelines provided by the course

Assignment Overview: Concept Paper

Your task is the following one:

- You have to submit to your mentor 4-5 pages document (including citations and the first page) where you will write about the topic you would like to study. You have to strictly follow the CONCEPT PAPER template that you can find on the DBA info course or you can request it from your mentor.
- You should structure your short research talk in the following way:

1) Introduction
2) Literature review
3) Discussion
4) Conclusion

- For the Introduction part you should briefly introduce the topic of your study (e.g., why your topic is important? why you would like to study it?

why is it novel? what is so new with your topic? what you will bring to the management/business world by studying that particular topic? etc...)

- For the Literature review: at this stage you can use Google Scholar as the main database and you should query it with some keywords related to your topic (e.g., if your topic is "Business challenges related to Bitcoin introduction"
- Then you should enter some keywords in google scholar such as "business challenge bitcoin" or "organization challenge bitcoin". etc. Once done, you need to briefly review what for example top 20 papers said about that topic (you need at least to read the abstract of those papers).
- Finally, once you analyze the first 20 or 30 papers, you should do the critical review of that literature and say what will be your work contribution and how you will fill the gap with your work. You do not need to go too much in details but just to indicate and cite past papers in this literature review section.
- For example: According to Pelletier 2017), business challenge related to bitcoin is largely underestimated and further research is needed to deep dive in this topic. Indeed, Mancure et al. (2013) argue that bitcoin is still in the nascent stages and....
- Citation style: Harvard style
- For the discussion part: you need to briefly discuss what you have found and how the findings from other studies will related to your research.
- Finally, in the conclusion, you should briefly say what your paper on this literature review dealt with and what you have found.

Overview of student workload

Learning activities	Number of Hours	ECTS Allocation
Researching subject and reading literature	110	4.4
Supervision meetings	2	0.1
Writing Concept Paper	12.5	0.5

Course materials and textbooks

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students*, 5th Edition, © Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill 2009

RECOMMENDED REFERENCES:

Keppel, G., & Wickens, T. D. (2004) Design and analysis: A researcher's handbook (4th ed.). Pearson, Prentice Hall.
Kirk, R. E. (1995). Experimental design: Procedures for the behavioral sciences. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2001). Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference. Houghton Mifflin Company.
Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). Experimental designs using ANOVA. Duxbury.

Alan Agresti (2007) An Introduction to Categorical Data Analysis (Wiley Series in Probability and Statistics), Publisher: Wiley-Interscience; 2 edition
On SPSS: George, D. & Mallery, P. (2005). SPSS for windows step-by-step: A simple guide and reference, update (6th Ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
SSBM web platform

Presentations, seminars and additional materials for class participation
Web

Different web sites will be mentioned during the lectures. The students are fully advised to consult such web pages in advance of lectures so that they can be prepared to better understand different chapters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY II

Course Description

The focus of this DBA level course Research Methodology II is on providing high level overview of the research process that includes data collection, literature review, ethical guidelines, research proposal, research design and several other research related tips.

Course objectives

The course is designed to acquaint researchers with the principles of the research process that includes literature review, research design and research methodology.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Develop proficiency in conducting literature reviews, including identifying relevant sources, critically evaluating existing research, and synthesizing findings.
- Gain an understanding of ethical guidelines and considerations in research, including issues related to data collection, participant consent, and research integrity.
- Acquire skills in formulating research proposals, including defining research questions, selecting appropriate methodologies, and outlining research objectives.
- Demonstrate competence in research design, encompassing the selection of appropriate methods, procedures, and analytical techniques for investigating research questions.
- Enhance knowledge of different research methodologies, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches, and their applications in various research contexts.
- Develop the ability to apply research methods learned in the course to address practical research challenges and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

- Practice academic writing skills, including adhering to citation conventions, structuring literature reviews, and presenting research findings effectively.
- Foster critical thinking and analytical skills necessary for evaluating research literature, identifying research gaps, and formulating research questions.
- Understand the importance of academic integrity and ethical conduct in research, including avoiding plagiarism and adhering to ethical guidelines throughout the research process.
- Prepare a comprehensive literature review following academic standards and guidelines provided by the course.

Assignment Overview: Literature Review

Your task is the following one:

- You have to submit to your mentor a literature review (including citations and the first page) where you will review the topic you would like to study
- You should structure your literature review as per instructions provided on the learning portal.

Overview of student workload

Learning activities	Number of Hours	ECTS Allocation
Researching subject and reading literature	110	4.4
Supervision meetings	2	0.1
Writing Literature Review	12.5	0.5

Course materials and textbooks

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students*, 5th Edition, © Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill 2009

RECOMMENDED REFERENCES:

Keppel, G., & Wickens, T. D. (2004) Design and analysis: A researcher's handbook (4th ed.). Pearson, Prentice Hall.
Kirk, R. E. (1995). Experimental design: Procedures for the behavioral sciences. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2001). Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference. Houghton Mifflin Company.
Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). Experimental designs using ANOVA. Duxbury.
Alan Agresti (2007) An Introduction to Categorical Data Analysis (Wiley Series in Probability and Statistics), Publisher: Wiley-Interscience; 2 edition

On SPSS: George, D. & Mallery, P. (2005). SPSS for windows step-by-step: A simple guide and reference, update (6th Ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
SSBM web platform

Presentations, seminars and additional materials for class participation
Web

Different web sites will be mentioned during the lectures. The students are fully advised to consult such web pages in advance of lectures so that they can be prepared to better understand different chapters.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Course Description

The Research Proposal course guides students in developing a comprehensive research proposal that serves as the foundation for their final thesis. Building on the Concept Paper and Literature Review, students refine their research problem, research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology while demonstrating academic rigor and critical thinking.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to design a coherent, academically rigorous, and feasible research proposal. Students will strengthen their ability to critically evaluate scholarly literature, formulate meaningful research questions or hypotheses, select appropriate research methods, and justify their methodological decisions.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define and critically evaluate a research problem, establishing its significance, relevance, and contribution to the field.
- Formulate clear research objectives, research questions, and hypotheses or propositions aligned with the identified research problem.
- Conduct a comprehensive and critical literature review to identify research gaps and develop an appropriate theoretical or conceptual framework.
- Design and justify a suitable research methodology, including research approach, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and analytical techniques.
- Evaluate the reliability, validity, ethical considerations, and feasibility of the proposed research design.
- Integrate theoretical knowledge, scholarly evidence, and methodological decisions into a coherent and academically rigorous research proposal.
- Prepare and present a structured research proposal that meets academic writing standards and provides a clear blueprint for the final thesis.

Assignment Overview: Research Proposal

Students are required to develop a comprehensive Research Proposal based on their previously completed Concept Paper and Literature Review. The assignment should clearly define the research problem, objectives, and research questions; provide a critical and sufficiently developed literature review; and present a detailed methodology explaining the research design, sampling approach, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and relevant ethical considerations.

The proposal should normally be **10–12 pages long and must not exceed 30 pages**. Unless otherwise approved by the Mentor, it must include a title page, table of contents, Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Review of Literature, Chapter 3: Methodology, references, and appendices where appropriate.

The proposal must be written in a formal academic style, demonstrate critical analysis and independent research skills, use appropriate scholarly references and consistent citation formatting, and present a logical connection between the research problem, literature, and methodology.
The completed Research Proposal should provide a clear, feasible, and academically sound foundation for conducting the research and writing the final thesis. Once approved, it serves as the guiding framework for subsequent thesis development, with any significant changes subject to agreement with the Mentor.

Overview of student workload

Learning Activities	**Hours**	**ECTS**
Research problem and objectives development	50	2
Literature review and synthesis	125	5
Theoretical framework and hypotheses	50	2
Research methodology development	100	4
Research validity, reliability, and ethics	25	1
Research proposal writing	75	3
Mentor consultations and feedback	25	1
Revision and final submission	50	2
Total	**500**	**20**

DISSERTATION

Course Description

The Dissertation course represents the final stage of the doctoral research process, during which students independently conduct and complete an original research study based on an approved Research Proposal. Students collect and analyze data, critically interpret their findings, develop evidence-

based conclusions, and demonstrate their ability to contribute to academic knowledge and professional practice through a comprehensive doctoral dissertation.

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to enable students to conduct independent, academically rigorous research and produce a doctoral dissertation that demonstrates advanced research competencies, critical thinking, and methodological expertise. Students will strengthen their ability to apply appropriate research methods, systematically analyze empirical evidence, evaluate findings in relation to existing literature, and formulate meaningful theoretical and practical contributions.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Conduct independent research by implementing an approved research design and addressing clearly defined research questions, objectives, and hypotheses or propositions.
2. Critically evaluate and synthesize scholarly literature to establish the theoretical foundations of the study and demonstrate its contribution to existing knowledge.
3. Apply advanced research methodologies by selecting and implementing appropriate sampling, data collection, and analytical techniques.
4. Demonstrate research rigor and ethical responsibility by ensuring appropriate reliability, validity, transparency, and adherence to ethical research standards.
5. Systematically analyze and present research findings using suitable quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approaches.
6. Critically interpret and evaluate research results in relation to the research questions, theoretical framework, and existing scholarly literature.
7. Develop evidence-based conclusions and recommendations that demonstrate theoretical contributions, practical implications, and opportunities for future research.
8. Produce a comprehensive doctoral dissertation that demonstrates independent scholarship, academic integrity, critical analysis, and advanced academic writing skills.

Assignment Overview: Dissertation

Students are required to complete an independent doctoral dissertation based on their previously approved Research Proposal. The dissertation must demonstrate the student's ability to conduct original research, apply appropriate research methodologies, collect and systematically analyze data, critically evaluate findings, and develop well-supported conclusions and recommendations. The research must demonstrate academic rigor, methodological transparency, and a meaningful contribution to scholarly knowledge and/or professional practice.

The dissertation must contain 120–200 pages of main text, excluding photographs, images, tables, and similar visual elements. Unless otherwise agreed with the Mentor, the dissertation should include a title page, signature page, table of contents, lists of tables and figures, abstract, Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Review of the Literature, Chapter 3: Methodology, Chapter 4: Results, Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications, references, and appendices. The dissertation must follow the Harvard referencing style and the official SSBM dissertation templates provided by SSBM or the Mentor.

The completed dissertation must demonstrate independent scholarly work, critical engagement with relevant literature, appropriate data collection and analysis, and objective interpretation of research findings. Students are expected to revise previously developed chapters as necessary, incorporate Mentor feedback, and ensure that the final document meets the highest standards of academic quality, coherence, research ethics, and professional presentation.

Overview of student workload

Learning Activities	**Hours**	**ECTS**
Research planning	125	5
Literature review	250	10
Methodology development	250	10
Data collection	500	20
Data analysis	375	15
Results and discussion	250	10
Conclusions and recommendations	125	5
Mentor consultations	125	5
Revision and submission	250	10
Total	**2,250**	**90**

RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC WRITING

Course Description

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to develop effective research plans, to evaluate different research methods, to use a high standard of academic writing, and to use independent learning techniques to support their self-development. The focus of this Bachelor level course is on social science research, in particular, research methods. We address different methodological perspectives including experimental type research as well as research in the applied context. Students will get a full understanding of basic statistical concepts and qualitative/quantitative analysis techniques. At the end of course, students would have developed the capacity to frame research questions, derive appropriate experimental research designs, and analyze the data collected from these designs. They would also acquire proficiency in the use of software for analyzing experimental data.

Course objectives

The course is aimed at providing students with theoretical principles as well as with practical knowledge, including tips and tricks in the area of change and innovation management. The students will develop understanding of innovation and creativity as phenomena in general, and specifically within an organizational environment. They will develop individual and team skills in preparing and presenting innovative projects, specifically those based on digital transformation and creating added value.

Course Learning Outcomes

After this course, the students will be able to:

- Identify and evaluate different sources of information and formulate appropriate research questions and objectives.
- Conduct a structured literature review to identify relevant academic sources, research findings, and knowledge gaps.
- Analyze and evaluate research methodologies and data collection techniques appropriate to different research objectives.
- Produce academically rigorous written work using appropriate academic writing conventions and the Harvard referencing system.
- Apply independent learning, self-study, and critical self-evaluation techniques to improve academic performance and research quality.

Overview of student workload

Learning activities	Number of Hours	ECTS Allocation
Lectures – Video materials	4	0.2
Preparations for the LECTURES	45	1.8
Readings (presentation and literature)	50	2
Learning for final assignment + time for solving	100	4

Course Materials

Required Literature

1. Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) Research Methods for Business Students. 5th edn. Harlow: Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

Additional Literature

1. Barras, R. (2005) Students Must Write: A Guide to Better Writing in Coursework and Examinations. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

2. Binsardi, A. (2008) Research Methods for Management. Cambridge:

International Academic Press.

3. Booth, A., Papaioannou, D. and Sutton, A. (2012) Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review. London: SAGE Publications.

4. Burns, R.P. and Burns, R. (2008) Business Research Methods and Statistics Using SPSS. London: SAGE Publications.

5. Cooper, D.R. and Schindler, P.S. (2006) Business Research Methods. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

6. Cottrell, S. (2008) The Study Skills Handbook. 3rd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

7. Cottrell, S. (2008) Skills for Success: Personal Development and Employability. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

8. Deniels, P. and Becker, L. (2012) Developing Research Proposals. London: SAGE Publications.

9. Denscombe, M. (2007) The Good Research Guide. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

10. Fink, A. (2009) Conducting Research Literature Reviews. London: SAGE Publications.

11. Jesson, J.K., Matheson, L. and Lacey, F.M. (2011) Doing Your Literature Review. London: SAGE Publications.

12. Kelemen, M.L. and Rumens, N. (2008) An Introduction to Critical Management Research. London: SAGE Publications.

13. Marshall, L. (1998) A Guide to Learning Independently. New York: Longman.

14. McClave, H.J. (2008) Communication for Business. 4th edn. Ireland: Gill & Macmillan.

15. McNiff, J. and Whitehead, J. (2009) Doing and Writing Action Research. London: SAGE Publications.

16. Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) Research Methods for Business Students. 5th edn. Harlow: Financial Times/Prentice Hall.

17. Thomas, R. and Lynn, P. (2009) Survey Research in Practice. London: SAGE Publications.

GENERATIVE AI

Course Description

Welcome to the Generative AI course! In this cutting-edge program, you will embark on a journey to explore the fascinating world of generative models and their profound impact on the field of artificial intelligence. This course is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how generative AI works, the underlying principles and techniques, and its diverse applications across various

industries.

Course objectives

The course aims to develop students' understanding of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and its fundamental principles, models, and practical applications. Students will acquire the technical and analytical skills necessary to design, implement, and evaluate generative AI models using modern frameworks such as TensorFlow and PyTorch. The course emphasizes critical thinking, innovation, effective communication, and the ethical and societal implications of generative AI, preparing students to apply these technologies responsibly in real-world contexts.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain the fundamental principles, concepts, and architectures of generative artificial intelligence (AI) and their applications in different contexts.
- Design and implement generative AI models, including Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), Variational Autoencoders (VAEs), and autoregressive models, using frameworks such as TensorFlow and PyTorch.
- Apply generative AI techniques to solve real-world problems through model development, training, and optimization.
- Critically evaluate generative AI models, emerging research trends, and technological advancements to identify opportunities for innovation and improvement.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills by presenting generative AI concepts, research findings, and technical solutions through presentations and academic reports.
- Assess the ethical and societal implications of generative AI, including data privacy, algorithmic bias, deepfakes, and responsible AI development and deployment.

Overview of student workload

Learning activities	Number of Hours	ECTS Allocation
Lectures – Video materials	6.5	0.2
Readings (presentation and literature)	70	2.8
Video tutorials	2	0.1
Individual study	20	0.8
Learning for final assignment + time for solving	50	2.0

Course Materials

1. Books and Textbooks

1. Goodfellow, I., Bengio, Y. and Courville, A. (2016) Deep Learning. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Key topics: Generative Models, Variational Autoencoders (VAEs), and Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs).

2. Bishop, C.M. (2006) Pattern Recognition and Machine Learning. New York: Springer.

- Key topics: Graphical Models, Approximate Inference, and Bayesian Networks.

3. Murphy, K.P. (2022) Probabilistic Machine Learning: An Introduction. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Key topics: Latent Variable Models, Variational Inference, and Markov Chain Monte Carlo.

4. Foster, D. (2019) Generative Deep Learning: Teaching Machines to Paint, Write, Compose, and Play. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media.

- Key topics: GANs for Image Generation, Sequence Models, and Advanced GAN Techniques.

5. Valle, R. (n.d.) Hands-On Generative Adversarial Networks with Keras.

- Key topics: Introduction to GANs, Building Your First GAN, and Advanced GAN Applications.

2. Key Research Papers

1. Goodfellow, I. et al. (2014) 'Generative adversarial networks'. Available at: https://arxiv.org/abs/1406.2661.

2. Kingma, D.P. and Welling, M. (2013) 'Auto-encoding variational Bayes'. Available at: https://arxiv.org/abs/1312.6114.

3. Vaswani, A. et al. (2017) 'Attention is all you need'. Available at: https://arxiv.org/abs/1706.03762.

4. van den Oord, A. et al. (2017) 'Neural discrete representation learning'. Available at: https://arxiv.org/abs/1711.00937.

5. Bengio, Y. et al. (2003) 'Hierarchical probabilistic neural network language model'.