Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva
(SSBM Geneva)

SSBM Geneva Program Outline

Top-Up DBA

Method: Online

Duration of Program: 6-18 months

Total number of ECTS: up to 120 ECTS

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

1. Enrollment criteria

The Top-Up Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) is an advanced pathway open exclusively to candidates who already hold a PhD or DBA from a recognized higher education institution.

- Required Documents:
- Copy of your PhD or DBA diploma
- Official grade transcripts
- Curriculum Vitae (CV) or résumé
- Copy of a valid ID or passport
- One recent photo

- 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.

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 or publish two research papers
- 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 Dissertation 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

Learning Outcomes applicable to all DBA programs:

- DBA students will demonstrate fundamental knowledge of the functional areas of research
- DBA students will demonstrate effective research skills including formulation of research problem, building of an appropriate literature review, using and designing a research study, ability to conduct data analysis and summarize and present the results
- DBA students will understand the importance of ethical obligations and responsibilities
- DBA students will be able to apply different frameworks into business context
- DBA students will acquire academic mindset and be able to scientifically analyze, approach and implement solutions to business problems

6. Program Curriculum

Stage 1 — Research & Impact Foundations (≈20 ECTS)

Courses include:

- Advanced Applied Research Methods (10 ECTS)
- Research Methodology (10 ECTS)
    - Research Methodology 1 (5 ECTS)
    - Research Methodology 2 (5 ECTS)

Stage 2 — Research & Impact Portfolio (min. 60 ECTS)

Choose one of the following pathways:

1. Portfolio of Practice: at least two research papers published during the Top-up DBA program
2. DBA Thesis: an applied doctoral thesis

Final Assessment: Both stages are evaluated by your Mentor/Supervisor.

Course ID	Course	Lecturer	ECTS
26649	Research Methodology I (RM01)	SSBM Supervisor	5
26650	Research Methodology II (RM02)	SSBM Supervisor	5
37120	Advanced Applied Research Methods	SSBM Supervisor	10
26655	DBA Dissertation (DBAD01)	SSBM Supervisor	90

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.
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ADVANCED APPLIED RESEARCH METHODS

Course Description

The course provides advanced knowledge of research methodologies, focusing on qualitative and quantitative research approaches, research design, data collection, and statistical analysis. Students will explore academic writing, literature reviews, sampling techniques, and research ethics, with an emphasis on applying rigorous research methods to academic and professional projects.

Course objectives

The course aims to develop students' advanced research, analytical, and critical thinking skills necessary to design, conduct, and evaluate academic research. Students will acquire knowledge of research methodologies, statistical techniques, literature evaluation, and academic writing standards. The course emphasizes practical research skills, methodological rigor, ethical considerations, and the development of independent research competencies.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

- Formulate clear research problems, research questions, and hypotheses based on identified gaps in scholarly literature.
- Critically evaluate academic literature, assess source credibility, and synthesize research findings to establish theoretical foundations.
- Design and justify appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research methodologies aligned with research objectives.
- Apply suitable sampling strategies and data collection techniques while considering research validity, reliability, and ethical requirements.
- Conduct and interpret statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, t-tests, and ANOVA.
- Produce academically rigorous research documents using appropriate structure, critical analysis, and Harvard referencing standards.

Overview of student workload

Learning Activities	Hours	ECTS
Research planning and questions	25	1
Literature review and research gaps	50	2

Research design and methodology	25	1
Sampling and data collection	50	2
Statistical analysis and interpretation	50	2
Academic writing and referencing	25	1
Final research assignment	25	1

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