

JIU DBA Project

The curriculum of the JIU DBA requires that you conduct a Doctoral Project. The University considers this project to be the capstone of its Doctoral educational program. The Project is designed as a comprehensive instructional approach in which applied research theory intersects real world business challenges. All students are required to devote a considerable amount of time, even during the first two years of the program in the Mentoring Track, defining, refining and shaping the DBA Project.

The major criterion for the DBA Project is that the end-product integrates doctoral level applied research rigor in the areas of review of literature, research design, and appropriate methodology. Showing mastery of the applied research process through the DBA Project ensures that graduates of the DBA program are consumers of management literature at a level that ensures their ability to adapt and apply the skills of a research professional in their organization.

A doctoral degree implies the learner can read, write and think like a scholar. It is essential that he/she perfect these skill levels because he/she will be expected to use them in his/her profession once the degree is conferred. Employers expect post-graduates to problem-solve by analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information. A Doctoral Project presents the ideal opportunity for the learner to master these research professional skills.

The research curriculum begins with the course BA-M 801a "Becoming a Research Professional" which provides a transition from web-based research to research-based research to solve business challenges. In the subsequent courses in the Mentoring track BA-M 801b through BA-M 806b, which run concurrently with the DBA coursework, students become part of a learning community which includes peer review and collaboration, while still focusing on individual research interests and topics.

Project development is further supported with the course research methods sequence: BA 720 Principles of Research, BA 721 "The Foundational Basis of Statistics", BA 722 "Advanced Statistics", and BA 723 "Business and Quantitative Methods for Manager Assessment". This series of courses reviews statistical training and familiarizes learners with philosophy of science the logic and design of formal experimental and naturalistic field studies, qualitative and program evaluation methodologies and the ethics of research. In keeping with our overall philosophy, every effort is made throughout to make explicit linkages between this material and the realities of professional application.

BA-731 "Formal DBA Project Proposal" and, BA-DC 807 through BA-DC 809 A/B "Dissertation Critiques", complete the research curriculum in the third year. In these courses, learners work with their faculty advisor/mentor to develop and complete a Doctoral Project. These courses provide support and consultation where ideas, progress, dilemmas, and experience in developing and executing the Doctoral Project continue to be shared with the community of learners across all topic areas. Learners can draw on the expertise of the faculty in addressing the research area of their choosing, as well as the learning experience of their classmates Project endeavors. Each learner then presents his or her project in a Public Workshop.

The Doctoral Project provides an opportunity for learners to demonstrate doctoral level scholarship in Management. It may take a variety of forms including:

- an empirical study (quantitative or qualitative);
- a theoretical contribution/critique,
- a program evaluation,
- an analysis of a public policy issue as related to professional application,
- a program evaluation project, or
- a careful case analysis of an organizational problem.

Learners are encouraged to select topics that flow from their personal and professional concerns, and for which they can find appropriate Doctoral Project advisement from among the faculty or within the region. In our view, this type of Doctoral Project, in which educational concerns take priority over knowledge production, is an important component of professional socialization, particularly in fostering within learners a sense of knowledge, ability, professional authority, and professional "voice". It is our impression that major developmental changes in professional self-image are manifested in conjunction with the successful completion of this project.