



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Management
School

EXECUTIVE DOCTORATE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Drive transformational change.

Become a thought leader in your
professional area.

Create powerful impact.

We are the original redbrick
liverpool.ac.uk



Contents

[Enable transformational impact within your organisation 02](#)

[Adapted to your goals and professional life 03](#)

[Programme structure 04](#)

[Stage 1 – pre-thesis stage 06](#)

[Stage 2 – thesis development stage 08](#)

[How to apply 10](#)

[An exciting place to learn and an excellent research environment 12](#)

[Contact us 13](#)

Lead with confidence and transform your business, with the Executive Doctorate in Business Administration.

Our Executive DBA is an action-research based postgraduate programme designed for senior professionals.

Learn how you can use research to design actionable strategies, to improve business performance before and after graduation.

Format: [Part-time](#)

Delivery: [Hybrid](#)

Starting in: [September](#)

Duration: [4.5–7.5 years](#)



Enable transformational impact within your organisation



Dr Paul Ellwood
Executive DBA
Director of Studies



Scan the QR code to watch Dr Paul Ellwood provide a full overview of the Executive DBA programme.

Academic research holds transformational value for modern businesses.

Our Executive DBA is not simply a PhD for managers. It is a professional doctorate for business leaders who want to drive change and improve business performance within their organisations.

The design of the programme is based upon our own research.

This means the Executive DBA follows a pedagogy specifically tailored to business people. It provides the knowledge and skills needed to undertake organisational research before and beyond graduation.

Alongside giving access to the highest level of academic qualification, the programme will equip you with high level analytical and problem-solving skills. The goal is to ensure you are able to use research strategically, to solve a variety of business challenges in real-life scenarios.

We are here to help you take the next step in your academic and professional career, and look forward to meeting you soon.

Adapted to your goals and professional life

Our Executive DBA aims to develop world-class scholar practitioners. The programme helps you achieve personal and professional goals, while adapting to the demands of your current career.

Organisational impact, by turning theory into practice

The Executive DBA emphasises highly relevant, workplace-based research, by producing actionable knowledge in the context of your organisation.

Rather than focusing on creating narrowly defined and theoretical scholarly research, the programme's practical approach is highly beneficial to you as a working professional and the business you work for.

The research you produce during the course allows for the immediate integration of actionable knowledge and critical thinking skills into your work environment.

Completing the programme gives you the ability to solve complex business problems, not only while you study, but most importantly, after graduation.

Some examples, of impact research undertaken by our students are:

- Creation of recovery strategies and initiatives following major natural disasters in the USA
- Development of a bespoke leadership evaluation and development tool used in management consultancy interventions
- Design of a technology transfer process for a major international food security programme in Mozambique
- Avoidance of COVID-related deaths in a chain of UK care homes.

Not just a PhD for managers

Whilst being equivalent in status and challenge to a PhD, the Executive DBA is ideal for those pursuing professional, rather than academic careers.

The pedagogy of the programme is based on research aimed at understanding how to best equip business leaders with the skills to undertake organisational research.

The course is specifically tailored to people wanting to undertake research within a business environment, as well as being the highest level of academic qualification you can achieve.

Compatible with your working life

The Executive DBA has been designed with the commitments of working professionals in mind.

The programme is part-time and delivered in a hybrid format, to facilitate completing the course without interfering with your busy agenda.



Participating in a DBA programme has positive benefits that show themselves years after the programme is completed; I still find myself learning and growing with the different critical thinking skills I gained from my participation in the programme. These have allowed me to move into completely new sectors professionally as well as grow in confidence to tackle large global systemic challenges.

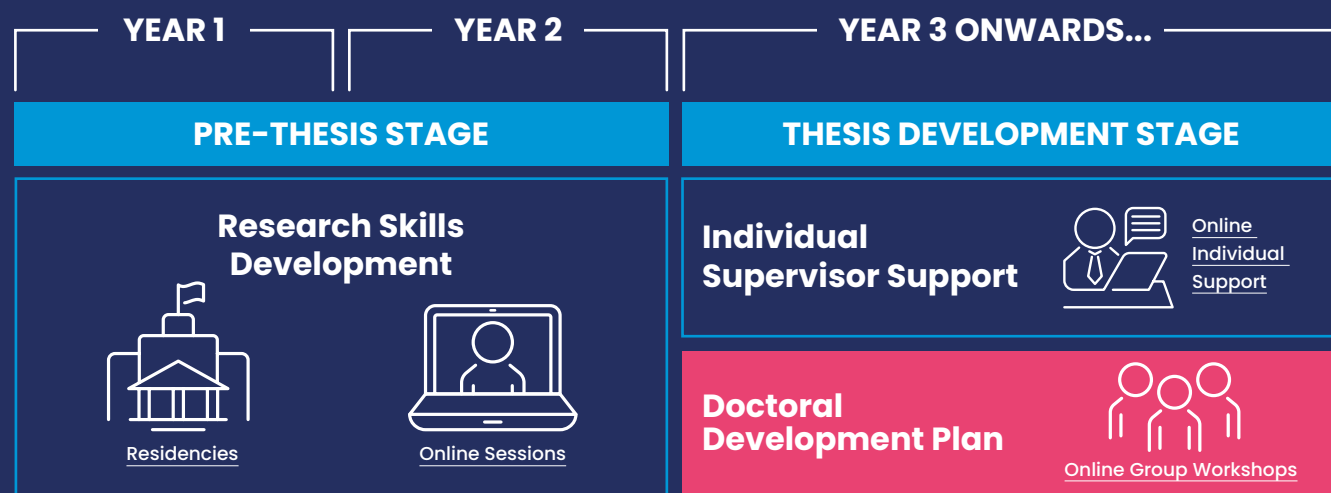
Dr Katherine Gunderson
Chief Executive Officer at Grand Bequest,
Historical Real Estate Platform

Programme structure

The Executive DBA is a hybrid learning part-time programme for business leaders, starting in September and open for applications all year round.

The programme is structured in two stages with a shorter taught component followed by a longer research phase.

The whole process can be completed in 4.5 years. However, we understand unexpected personal or professional situations can affect your progress, so if needed, you are allowed up to 7.5 years to finish the programme.



With the Liverpool DBA, I was able to research and create new knowledge within my field, but it was more than that. I was able to apply my research to expand my business, make significant professional progress, and develop real solutions to real problems. The beauty of this research orientation is that it enables you to solve real life problems, and that helps you progress in your professional and entrepreneurial pursuits. The programme has rigour but also creative flexibility. It is empirical but it teaches you to think critically and reflect. When you come out on the other end, you become the best combination of a more practical researcher and a more learned practitioner. How can you beat that power pairing!

Dr Al Naqvi
Chief Executive Officer at the
American Institute of Artificial Intelligence



Stage 1

Pre-thesis stage

2 years: 180 credits at Level 7

The pre-thesis stage of the programme is aimed at developing your research skills, during an intensive 2-year period which combines online learning with residencies that can be attended in Liverpool or remotely.

During Stage 1 of the Executive DBA you will complete four online modules and four residencies (one per module).

Residencies take place during weekends, and consist of special sessions with academics and guest speakers, group workshops and networking events. The residencies bring essential value to your development as a researcher, as you will have the opportunity to discover the University's research ecosystem.

In-person attendance at these Liverpool-based residencies is highly recommended, but not compulsory, so if you are unable to come to our city, you can still take part remotely.

After completing the pre-thesis stage, you will be awarded with 180 credits at Level 7, which will enable your progression to the next phase of the programme.



Modules Year 1

Introduction to Doctoral Research

Year 1: 45 credits at Level 7

In this module, you will become prepared for doctoral management research and learn what it means to be a 'scholarly practitioner'.

We use this term to describe the senior manager who is able to integrate the research skills of the scholar, with the leadership insights of the practitioner.

You will learn to create and implement new organisational strategies, and how to make a significant contribution to the development of management as a profession.

The module will also introduce you to different styles of scholarship and allow you to develop your own voice.

Key topics

- The nature of management knowledge
- Philosophy of management research
- Researching with others through action in the workplace
- Conceptualising and problematising the organisation of work
- Integrating leadership and scholarly research.

Assessment

Written assignments that will test your understanding of foundational concepts for scholar practitioner research, and your ability to use them in the workplace.

Working with literature

Year 1: 45 credits at Level 7

Doctoral reading enables you to view issues from different perspectives.

This module prepares you to utilise ideas from existing academic literature to inform your thesis, and demonstrate connections between theory, enquiry and management practice.

Key topics

- The function of existing research in a DBA thesis
- Designing and conducting a literature review
- Writing a literature review
- Concept development and theory-building
- Developing research questions.

Assessment

Written assignments to test your skills at designing literature reviews and using existing literature to develop research questions.

Modules Year 2

Research methods

Year 2: 45 credits at Level 7

During this module you will develop a comprehensive understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods, as well as becoming equipped with the practical research skills needed to conduct the empirical aspects of your doctoral research.

This includes designing effective and rigorous data collection tools, and being able to analyse data using a range of appropriate methods.

You will also learn how to evaluate research methods in terms of suitability and commensurability, and how to effectively report and write up quantitative and qualitative research findings.

Key topics

- Qualitative research methods
- Quantitative research methods
- Executing research methods in business and management
- Evaluating relevance & effectiveness of research methods.

Assessment

Written assignments where you must demonstrate an ability to analyse quantitative and qualitative data.

Designing scholarly practitioner research

Year 2: 45 credits at Level 7

In this module you will learn how to construct and justify a scholarly practitioner research design that – if successfully executed – will generate knowledge of practical value in your organisation.

This involves integrating learning from the first three modules; whilst its justification will extend your understanding of the philosophy of management knowledge and major methodologies of social research.

The importance of researching with integrity is also explained during the module in terms of the principle and practices of research ethics.

Key topics

- Researching with integrity
- Constructing research designs
- Explaining and justifying research designs
- Project managing doctoral research.

Assessment

A thesis research proposal which serves as a foundation to your future research.



Stage 2

Thesis development stage

2.5–5.5 years: 360 credits at Level 8

During the thesis development stage, you will receive regular one-to-one online support from your individual supervisor. You will also be provided with continuous research skills development through a new Doctoral Development Plan module.

The doctorate is awarded once students have completed Stage 2 of the programme, which accounts for 360 credits at Level 8.



Modules Year 3 onwards

Doctoral Development Plan

Year 3 onwards:
30 credits at Level 8

During these sessions, you will have access to group seminars and refresher workshops on different methodologies and aspects of the research process.

The goal is to build research capabilities that allow you to deploy these skills, not only in your thesis project, but also after graduation.

Assessment

Two written assignments (one before and one after your thesis is completed) in which you critically reflect on your development as a scholar practitioner.

Executive DBA Thesis

Year 3 onwards:
330 credits at Level 8

The thesis involves conducting in-depth research into an organisational problem and reporting the contribution of the actionable knowledge produced as a result.

Typical aims of an Executive DBA thesis include:

- Progressing an intractable work-based problem towards a solution
- Bringing about organisational change
- Empirically investigating an issue of relevance to management/business.

Your Executive DBA thesis must report new actionable knowledge and critically evaluate progress towards realising the project aims.

You must also demonstrate your engagement with research participants, and an awareness that your presence as a manager -and as a researcher- has an effect on what happens in the workplace.

Assessment

A 60,000-word thesis and a viva voce examination with two independent examiners.



When I look back, the DBA at Liverpool had a huge impact on my career path. It gave me the voice, the critical thinking and the knowledge, but it also built me as a leader. I became more confident in openly sharing my knowledge, my views and suggestions. Soon after graduation, I was elected to the role of Chair of Global Staff Association in a multinational environment of a UN agency. Staff in 40 offices around the world had given me their trust and valued my knowledge and qualifications to represent them and advocate for their employment rights and conditions. Using my knowledge of change management and leadership, I reformed the Association to improve staff management relations, bring in effective communication, and make the Association an active contributor to corporate reforms.

Lenyara Fundukova (opposite)
Chair of International Fund for
Agricultural Development Staff Association



How to apply

Applications for the Executive DBA are online and open all year round. If you are accepted you will join the next cohort in September.

Entry requirements

Executive DBA applications are welcomed and will be considered from well qualified graduates, who would typically hold a UK first or 2:1 class first degree or equivalent in a relevant subject.

In addition, you must have:

- MBA/Masters in business and/or management (or a related discipline)
- At least 5 years of significant experience working at senior level within an organisation or as a consultant.

If you are an international student, you must also demonstrate a sufficient level of English proficiency and satisfy the University's requirements.



Scan the QR code to find out more about the Executive DBA English language entry requirements or visit: liverpool.ac.uk/management/study/edba/entry-requirements

Funding your degree

Before starting your application, you need to ensure you are able to cover the programme's fees.

Students normally meet the costs of studying the Executive DBA via:

- Self-funding, by working alongside studying the programme or other sources
- Applying for research scholarships, grants and bursaries, which may cover all or part of the fees, and help towards other expenses
- Employee sponsorship.

Securing funding can be complex and time consuming, so it is important to start your search early.



Scan the QR code to find out more about the programme's funding opportunities via scholarships and how to talk to your employer about sponsorship, or visit: liverpool.ac.uk/management/study/edba/fees-scholarships

Documentation and research proposal

As part of your application, you will need to provide the following documentation:

- Academic transcripts and certificates
- Evidence of English proficiency (where applicable)
- Personal statement
- Two references.

You must also submit a research proposal of around 2,000 words, which sets out the research problem you are planning to address during the thesis development stage of the programme.



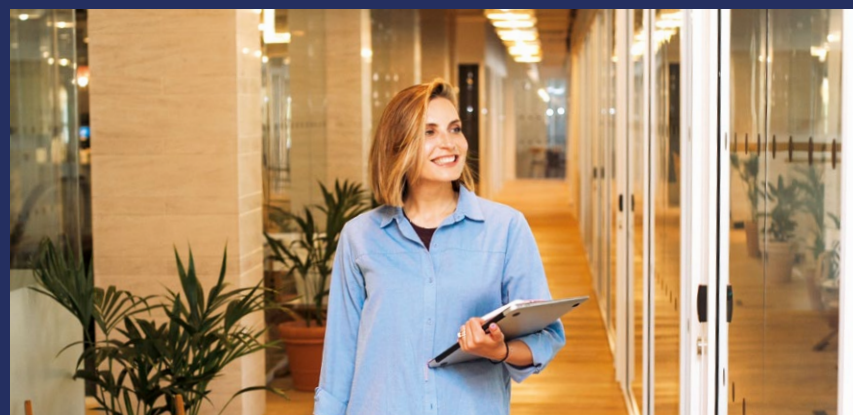
Scan the QR code to find out more details on how to write your research proposal, or visit: liverpool.ac.uk/management/study/edba/application

Interview and academic offer

Once you have submitted the online application, our Admissions Team will review all documentation and inform you of the outcome of your evaluation, whether you are successful or not, via email.

If you meet the Executive DBA's criteria and are considered a good fit for the programme, we will invite you to a 30-minute online interview with the programme's Director of Studies. Following your interview, the Executive DBA Team will make a final decision on your application.

You do not need to find a supervisor prior to starting your Executive DBA application. This is something which will be arranged during the pre-thesis stage of the programme, once you have demonstrated a sufficient level of progress in your research proposal.



An exciting place to learn and an excellent research environment

The University of Liverpool Management School is an exciting place to learn, that offers unique opportunities to get involved in cutting-edge interdisciplinary research across multiple areas.

A dynamic research ecosystem

By joining the Executive DBA, you will become part of the University of Liverpool's live research environment and gain access to a number of professional networks, which bring together students, alumni and faculty, to explore industry practice and the latest research in a variety of industry areas.

The Management School is a research powerhouse, with international experts shaping world-class academic thought, and making a direct impact on a wide range of organisations and institutions.

Our academic staff not only publish in leading scholarly journals, but also conduct research programmes for companies and governments worldwide, focusing on growing enterprises, innovation and communities.

From developing sustainable procurement standards, to addressing farmers access to institutional credit in India, and the impact of gambling on consumers, our research projects address key issues affecting the world.

The School's research strength has been recognised in the latest Research Excellence Framework (REF 2021), where it was positioned in the Top 20 of 108 UK business and management schools.

- 12th place for research classified as 'world leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*)
- 100% of research supported by a 'world leading' (4*) or 'internationally excellent' (3*) environment
- 9th place for research power, which considers strength in numbers of research staff and research performance

The Management School supports pioneering research via its research centres. The centres facilitate access to funding and bring together interdisciplinary researchers, to work on contemporary issues in business and society, and provide actionable insights for organisations and policymakers.

Excellent teaching environment

The University of Liverpool is part of the Russell Group of Universities, acknowledged as the UK's leading establishments for excellence in teaching and research.

We are leaders in online education, with over 10 years' experience delivering distance learning.

The Management School is among the 1% of academic institutions across the world to hold the gold standard triple accreditation from the Association of MBA's (AMBA), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB) and EQUIS.

This means we have demonstrated the highest standard in educational experiences, including faculty, staff and facilities, in the three most rigorous quality assessments for business and management schools.



A city with business at its heart

Liverpool is a vibrant city, with a burgeoning business ecosystem.

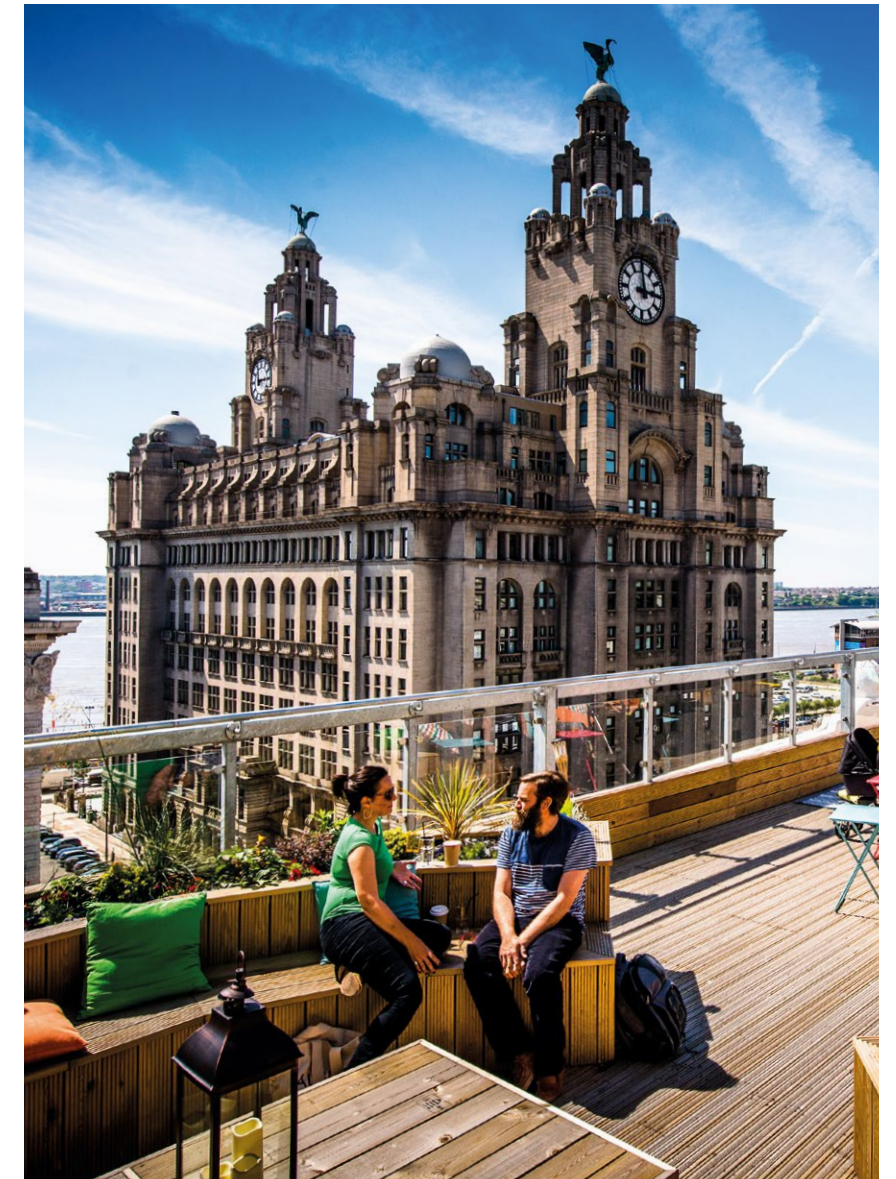
As a city famous for its commercial influence and cultural impact worldwide, Liverpool is the perfect place to bring business teaching, research and practice together.

Liverpool's entrepreneurial and creative spirit is fuelling a boom in business start-ups, and also attracting many global businesses which have made our city their home.

Voted the fourth friendliest city in the world by Rough Guides, Liverpool is a wonderfully welcoming place, and our University shares and shapes the city's spirit by opening our doors to learners from all walks of life.

Liverpool is a warm and full of character city, home to nearly half a million people, and well known for its influence on art, music, sport and culture. Our city has a rich and exciting cultural scene, with more galleries and museums than any other UK city outside of London.

As an Executive DBA student, you have the option to attend four in-person residencies, which gives you the opportunity to experience all the exciting things happening on-campus and discover our fantastic city.



Contact us

Contact the Executive DBA Team to find out more details about the programme and how to take the next step in your academic and professional career.

If you have any questions about the Executive DBA application process, fees and scholarships, or programme structure, please visit our website or send a message, and a member of our team will contact you as soon as possible.



Scan the QR code to find out more information on the Executive DBA, or visit: liverpool.ac.uk/management/study/edba

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Learning to make
a difference from
an enterprising
and vibrant world
city of culture



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