STUDY WORLD
Global College Malta

Doctor in Business Administration
DBA

MQF Level 8

MQF
MALTA QUALIFICATIONS
FRAMEWORK

Programme Rationale

Global College Malta's DBA is a professional doctorate designed for senior managers and leaders in private, public, and not-for-profit organisations. The programme is specifically designed for critical thinkers and practitioners who wish to reflect in-depth on their organisations and society more generally. The format of the DBA is designed so as to allow learners to engage in applied research, bringing established and cutting-edge theory to bear on their practical organisational issues. Students in the DBA programme develop and enrich practice in their respective areas of research interest, as well as contribute to the wider understanding of the underpinning theoretical base for the work.

The structured approach offered by the College's DBA is based on a number of modules, blending lectures, guest talks, workshop discussions, and student presentations. The doctoral thesis is developed in parallel under guidance from a doctoral supervisory team allocated at the start of the DBA programme. The structured nature of the College's DBA doctoral research programme helps facilitate the demonstration of an original contribution to knowledge in the academic subject and the field of practice through original research or through the original application of existing knowledge and understanding.

The College's DBA programme is based on several taught elements and a thesis. Each 'taught' module on the DBA programme is typically structured around a three-day intensive teaching block, plus support from the College's teaching team and doctoral supervisors. Work on the culminating doctoral thesis begins in parallel with the taught modules. The College's DBA is designed to allow for successful completion in four years.

Since a Doctorate is the pinnacle of academic learning, there is no further potential progression route for the College's DBA graduates to move onto. However, candidates will be expected to undertake dissemination activities as per their professional norms. The College expects to see candidates progressing their career development in terms of promotion and possible change of direction.

Study Material

All students will have access to EBSCO, the world's largest online library, Moodle for class notes and Turnitin for the upload of assignments.

Programme Summary

Status of Programme: Accredited

Number of ECTS: 270

MQF Level: 8

Type of Qualification: Doctorate Degree

Mode of Delivery: Face to Face Lectures

Mode of Attendance: Full-Time

Language of Instruction: English

Programme Duration: 36 Months

Target Audience: 19 -65+ years

Structure of Course: Modular

Target Group

Middle to Senior organisational managers in commercial for-profit organisations, the public sector and the voluntary sector.

Grading System

A	>70%
B	60% -69%
C	50% -59%
D	40% -49%
Minimum Pass Mark	40%
Excellent Pass Rate exhibited over the years.	

Entry Requirements

The College welcomes applications for its DBA programme from all potential students and most important in the decision to offer a place is the College's assessment of a candidate's potential to benefit from their studies and of their ability to succeed in the DBA. Consideration of applications is based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience. The standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

- Candidates will be expected to have strong professional experience, and be operating at a level within their organisation or profession where they can facilitate change that contributes to practice and/or exhibit powers of creativity and innovation;

- Candidates for the DBA will normally have successfully completed a Masters of Business Administration at Level 7 of the Malta Qualifications Framework or similar with an average performance of merit or higher within the ten years prior to applying to study in the College's DBA programme. Applicants will also normally have worked for a minimum of three years at middle or senior managerial levels since completing their MBA;

- Entry to the programme on a similar basis may be possible if the applicant possesses a relevant Master's degree, or equivalent, from a recognised higher education institution or awarding body.

- Since the College's DBA programme is delivered entirely in English, applicants must be able to demonstrate strong proficiency in the English language. Non-native speakers of English must have a minimum score of IELTS 6.5 or equivalent with a minimum of 5 in each component or English B2 referred to as CEFR. Very exceptionally, holders of a Global College Malta Masters' degree awarded within two years prior to entry to the College's DBA programme may be exempt from these English test requirements; and,

- Candidates wishing to be admitted to the DBA programme must have access to an Internet-connected computer.

- The College's Academic Dean will interview all candidates together with at least one other member of the teaching/supervisory team. The interview panel will carefully consider the appropriateness of the candidate's background and professional standing for the study of a DBA. If the interview panel is convinced that the candidate has a very strong likelihood of successfully completing the DBA programme and that they are adequately supported through their place of work then they will normally be accepted onto the DBA programme.

Programme Learning Outcomes

The College's DBA programme has the following overall objectives:

- To enable candidates to conceptualize, design, and implement a project aimed at the generation of new knowledge or applications within Business and Management;
- To enable candidates to create, interpret, analyze and develop new sector-wide knowledge and practice through original research or other advanced scholarship;
- To enable candidates to demonstrate a comprehensive and critical knowledge of the relevant literature and demonstrate a clear articulation of the practical context of their research;
- To enable candidates to demonstrate the systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of Business and Management through the development of a written thesis;
- To enable candidates to demonstrate the systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that results in practical application and impact and, in so doing, generates practical knowledge;
- To enable candidates to respond appropriately to unforeseen problems in project design by making suitable amendments;
- To enable candidates to correctly select, interpret and apply relevant techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
- To enable candidates to construct and critically evaluate a defensible philosophy of research that is congruent with the research question and the methods employed to gather and analyse data;
- To enable candidates to make informed judgments on complex issues in the fields of Business and Management, often in the absence of complete data, and defend those judgments to an appropriate audience;
- To enable candidates to communicate complex research findings clearly, effectively, and in an engaging manner to both specialist (including the academic community), and non-specialist audiences using a variety of appropriate media and events, including conference presentations, seminars, and workshops;
- To enable candidates to disseminate new knowledge and practice gained through original research or other advanced scholarship via high-quality peer-reviewed publications within the discipline and, through this, potentially contribute to new policy development in their area of research;
- To enable candidates to develop the networks and foundations for ongoing research and development within the discipline of Business and Management; and,
- To enable candidates to display the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment, including the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Programme Teaching and Learning

The College's DBA programme aims to combine extreme academic rigour with practicality and relevance to professionals, executives, and managers, reflecting best practice and innovative thinking and research. The approach, therefore, to teaching and learning on the College's DBA aims to integrate applied and theoretical knowledge, facilitating the development of new knowledge which is at the forefront of the discipline and organisational/management practice.

- The philosophy underpinning the taught elements of the College's DBA is that mature students such as those attracted to the DBA learn best by reading, doing, then reflecting on that doing, before beginning the cycle again. Each of the taught modules accordingly seeks to build on the learning achieved in the previous module, so learning is cumulative, and all the taught modules are designed to relate to each other. In the first module, the candidate studies research methods and the philosophy of research. In the second module, the candidate then studies advanced qualitative and quantitative research methods by developing a more in-depth understanding of research methods, with continued refining of their own research aims and questions. In module three, the emphasis then switches to developing an understanding of a particular field through focusing on techniques for critically assessing research in their own chosen sub-discipline. As the candidate progresses through the modules they will apply the ability of critical review to a wider range of literature in their chosen sub-discipline and search more widely for methods or research outcomes from other disciplines that may be transferred to add value to their own work. This review allows them to identify gaps in knowledge in the sub-discipline, consider creative methods to find ways of extending knowledge in the sub-discipline, and explore how to become a practitioner author by studying how to write for academic journals.

- In the first year of the College's DBA, the College's Academic Dean will act as the principal point of contact and personal tutor for each new cohort of DBA candidates. Once the candidates pass the first three taught stage modules they will have acquired advanced scholarship and research skills to enable them to revise their research proposals. By this stage of the College's DBA candidates will be expected to be able to critically reflect on the insights already developed into the key issues they are tackling, and explore how such findings, if replicated in a bigger study, could be translated into practice. The candidates will work with the College's Academic Dean and the two members of their allocated supervisory team on developing their research proposals. The allocated supervisors then become the Personal Academic Research Tutors for the candidates. Once the candidate has passed the first four modules, they will then have to pass the Progression to DBA Research Stage, where a detailed 7000-word research proposal is presented and defended. Successful completion of the Progression to DBA Research Stage prepares candidates for the main research stage and writing the thesis. During the main research phase, candidates will be required to attend DBA Progress Meetings aimed at reviewing progress, enhancing understanding, providing motivation and support, enabling networking, and preparing candidates for presenting their work to non-specialists.

- Teaching for the taught elements of the College's DBA programme is undertaken in intensive study blocks, typically of three to five days, and after each study block, candidates will have some six to eight weeks in which to undertake the coursework required by the module. Teaching will consist of a mixture of lectures and seminars. During this phase of the College's DBA programme candidates will be required to focus on self-directed study, in liaison with the College's Academic Dean and their supervisors. The College will, as appropriate, provide online supervisory support if face-to-face meetings aren't always practicable due, for example, to work pressures, etc.

- The College is acutely conscious that its DBA students should be at the cutting edge of developments in their sub-discipline areas of Business and Management and the College's aim is accordingly to try and ensure that all the College's DBA candidates can learn from each other, as well as from the College's academic staff. The College's intention is to encourage debate amongst peers so that each candidate can continue to develop their own values and understanding of research. The nature of the DBA candidate cohort will expose candidates to perspectives that they may not otherwise come across and the College accordingly regards the peer-to-peer debate as being an essential part of the College's DBA learning and teaching strategy. DBA students will have the opportunity to give lectures on their academic research and/or area of management/organisational

expertise in the College's Guest Lecture Programme. This opportunity is available throughout the DBA and lectures are typically attended by College postgraduate, undergraduate, and academic members of staff. The College also offers mock viva voces in order to fully prepare DBA candidates for their final viva examination. These involve the College's Academic Dean and the candidates' supervisors.

Details of the assessment procedures are given in the individual module descriptors.

Hours for Total Learning

Total Learning Hours	6750
Total Contract Hours	310
Self-Study Hours	6265
Assessment Hours	175

Modules

Module Code	Module Name	EQF/MQF Level	ECTS	Total Hours of Learning
GCM - DBA01	DBA Research Design and Philosophy	8	10	250
GCM - DBA02	Literature Review for DBA Studies	8	10	250
GCM - DBA03	DBA Research Methods	8	10	250
GCM-DBA04	Translating DBA Research into Practice	8	10	250
GCM-DBA05	Progression to DBA Research Stage	8	20	250
GCM-DBA06	DBA Thesis	8	210	5250

Modules' Details

GCM - DBA01	DBA Research Design and Philosophy	8	10	250

Competences:

Students on the module will be expected to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex and unpredictable and that may require new strategic approaches. Students will be expected to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and, where appropriate, for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

Directly linked to the Maltese Qualification Framework Level 8 descriptors and required learning outcomes at MQF Level 8, at the end of the module the successful learner will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy equivalent to MQF level 8 to:

- Be able to develop and convincingly practise broad-ranging and advanced research skills;

- Be able to critically understand the philosophical framework that informs research methods and methodologies facilitating the critical analysis of the assumptions and methods of research; and,

- Be able to critically apply advanced understanding of advanced research methodologies in Business and Management studies more generally.

GCM - M02	Literature Review for DBA Studies	8	10	250

Competences:

Students on the module will be expected to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex and unpredictable and that may require new strategic approaches. Students will be expected to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and, where appropriate, for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

Directly linked to the Maltese Qualification Framework Level 8 descriptors and required learning outcomes at MQF Level 8, at the end of the module the successful learner will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy equivalent to MQF level 8 to:

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- Be able to undertake a systematic and advanced search and review of current literature, knowledge and debates at the forefront of the Business and Management discipline; and,

- Be able to systematically analyse and critically evaluate the literature on a specific topic in business and management studies.

GCM - DBA03	DBA Research Methods	8	10	250

Competences:

Students on the module will be expected to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex and unpredictable and that may require new strategic approaches. Students will be expected to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and, where appropriate, for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

Directly linked to the Maltese Qualification Framework Level 8 descriptors and required learning outcomes at MQF Level 8, at the end of the module the successful learner will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy equivalent to MQF level 8 to:

- Be able to demonstrate an in-depth practical understanding of how established research techniques are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;

- Be able to demonstrate high level skills in gathering, analysing, and managing qualitative and quantitative data, from computer-driven to discourse analysis;

- Be able to design a doctoral-level research project using appropriate qualitative and quantitative research methods to generate, analyse and interpret new empirical data;

- Be able to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques, and where appropriate create new hypotheses;

- Be able to critically analyse qualitative and quantitative data using a variety of different analytical techniques and be able to locate those techniques within an epistemological perspective; and,

- Be able to deal with complex research issues systematically and creatively, and communicate the conclusions to specialist and practitioner audiences The module aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods, so as to equip DBA candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to undertake doctoral level study involving qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed methods research.

GCM-DBA04	Translating DBA Research into Practice	8	10	250

Competences:

Students on the module will be expected to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex and unpredictable and that may require new strategic approaches. Students will be expected to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and, where appropriate, for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

Directly linked to the Maltese Qualification Framework Level 8 descriptors and required learning outcomes at MQF Level 8, at the end of the module the successful learner will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy equivalent to MQF level 8 to:

- Be able to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship with the objective of extending both academic and practitioner knowledge in Business and Management studies; and,

- Be able to make informed judgments on complex issues and clearly communicate ideas, findings and conclusions to specialist and practitioner audiences.
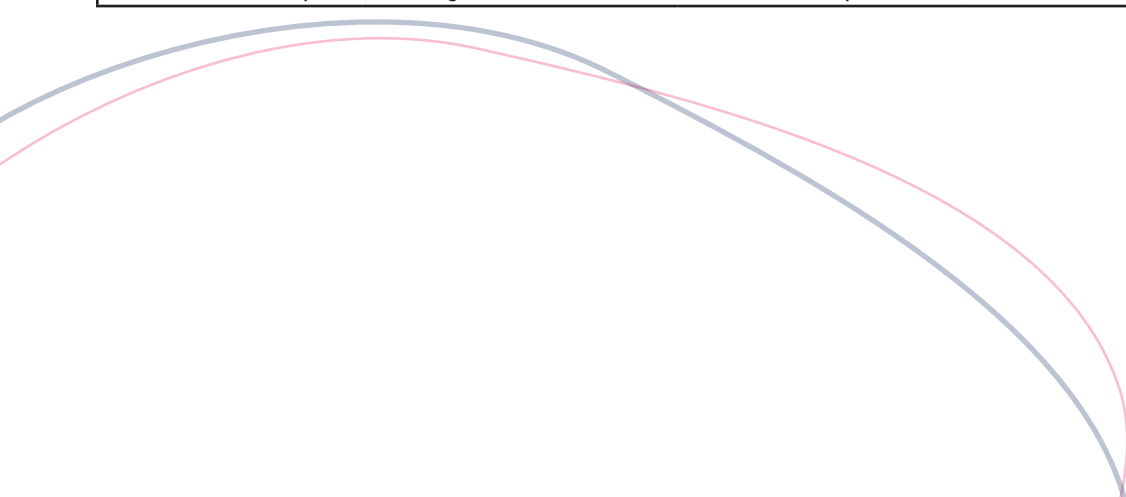
GCM-DBA05	Progression to DBA Research Stage	8	20	250

Competences:

Students on the module will be expected to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex and unpredictable and that may require new strategic approaches. Students will be expected to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and, where appropriate, for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

Directly linked to the Maltese Qualification Framework Level 8 descriptors and required learning outcomes at MQF Level 8, at the end of the module the successful learner will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy equivalent to MQF level 8 to:

- Be able to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship, to extend the forefront of Business and Management studies; and;

- Be able to address major challenges currently facing business and the wider global society. These may include, but are not limited to, issues such as globalisation, corporate social responsibility and sustainable development.

DBA Taught Units' Assessments

(for Units GCM-DBA01, GCM-DBA02, GCM-DBA03, GCM-DBA04, GCM-DBA05.)

The assessment for the modules encourages students to situate their own research plans within an existing field of academic knowledge in respect of Business and Management and apply a philosophical perspective to understanding their own research.

Assessments are in the form of research papers that include a brief literature review and a critical and detailed evaluation of research methodologies in order to design the candidate's own DBA research project. All the module's stated learning outcomes (see previous pages) accordingly contribute to achieving the module's objectives. DBA candidates will be required to write a 4,000-word research paper that situates their own research plans within an existing field of Business and Management academic knowledge. The paper must include a review of current literature, an evaluation of two distinct research methods employed in the field, and the development of an advanced research methodology and design to inform the candidate's DBA research project.

The assessment will be submitted via Turnitin.

GCM-DBA06	DBA Thesis	8	210	5250

Competences:

Students on the module will be expected to manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex and unpredictable and that may require new strategic approaches. Students will be expected to take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and, where appropriate, for reviewing the strategic performance of teams.

Directly linked to the Maltese Qualification Framework Level 8 descriptors and required learning outcomes at MQF Level 8, at the end of the module the successful learner will have acquired the responsibility and autonomy equivalent to MQF level 8 to:

• Be able to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship, to extend the forefront of Business and Management studies; and;

• Be able to address major challenges currently facing business and the wider global society. These may include, but are not limited to, issues such as globalisation, corporate social responsibility and sustainable development.

This unit will be assessed as follows:
DBA candidates will be required to complete a thesis of a minimum of 60,000 words and a maximum of 80,000 words.
For the final assessment, candidates will submit their thesis to the College and defend it in a viva voce examination in front of an independent external chair and internal College examiners.

Further Information

Prospective students are welcome to get in touch or visit our premises to seek further information about the programmes and services that we offer.

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