



Eterna School of Management Rome

Professional DBA — Programme Syllabus

Duration: 18 Months / Language: English

Delivery: Asynchronous Online

1. Programme Overview

The **Professional Doctorate of Business Administration** is an advanced executive programme designed for professionals, executives, entrepreneurs, and organizational leaders seeking to enhance their strategic impact through rigorous research and evidence-based management practices. The programme develops scholar-practitioners capable of addressing complex business challenges by integrating advanced theoretical knowledge with real-world organizational experience. Through an interdisciplinary and research-driven curriculum, participants deepen their expertise in strategic management, organizational transformation, innovation, leadership, governance, and decision-making. The Professional DBA emphasizes critical inquiry, analytical rigor, and the application of research methodologies to generate actionable insights that contribute to both academic knowledge and managerial practice.

By fostering intellectual leadership, reflective thinking, and the ability to drive sustainable organizational change, the Professional DBA prepares participants to influence business strategy at the highest levels, lead transformative initiatives, and create meaningful impact across organizations, industries, and society.

The programme is delivered asynchronously online through the School's Learning Management System and includes pre-recorded lectures, interactive content, digital case studies, and online tutoring. This delivery model enables enrolled professionals to engage with the learning materials at times that best suit their individual schedules and professional commitments.

2. Admission Requirements

Pathway 1 - Via Academic Qualifications:

Requirement	Detail
Academic Qualification	Master's degree, or equivalent Level 7 qualification, in fields such as management, business administration, or related fields.
Work Experience	Recommended minimum 3 years of professional experience
English Proficiency	CEFR B2 level or equivalent

Pathway 2 - Via Professional Experience:

Requirement	Detail
Academic Qualification	Master's degree, or equivalent Level 7 qualification, in any field
Work Experience	Mandatory minimum 5 years of managerial experience
English Proficiency	CEFR B2 level or equivalent
Definition of "Managerial Experience"	The definition includes roles with significant supervisory or leadership responsibilities. Examples of qualifying managerial positions could include: Department Manager, Project Manager, Director, Vice President, CEO, CFO, COO, etc.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):

Applicants may receive recognition for prior learning. The process involves:

- Submission of detailed documentation of prior learning and professional experience.
- Assessment of the relevance and equivalence of prior learning to the Professional DBA programme requirements.
- Approval by the Academic Board based on the provided evidence of prior learning and experience.

3. Title Awarded

Professional Doctorate of Business Administration (for internal purposes, in Italian language records it could be reported as *Diploma/Certificato di Professional DBA*)

- Issued by: Eterna School of Management Rome
- Level: Learning Outcomes aligned to EQF Level 8
- Duration: Typically, 18 months (maximum 36 months from enrolment)
- Estimated Total Learning Hours: 3,000 hours (including Learning Hours, Supervised Hours, Assessment Hours, and Self Study Hours)
- The program is a professional education qualification and does not constitute an Italian university degree, nor an Italian “*Dottorato di Ricerca*”.

4. Programme Aims

The Professional DBA aims to:

- Develop participants’ ability to investigate complex organizational and business challenges through rigorous research and evidence-based analysis
- Strengthen advanced competencies in strategic leadership, organizational transformation, governance, innovation management, and executive decision-making
- Foster the integration of academic theory and professional practice to generate impactful solutions for contemporary business and societal issues
- Cultivate intellectual leadership, critical thinking, and ethical judgment in the design and implementation of organizational strategies
- Advance participants’ capacity to contribute to managerial knowledge, influence policy and practice, and lead sustainable change across private, public, and third-sector organizations
- Prepare graduates to assume senior executive, advisory, academic, and thought leadership roles at national and international levels

5. Programme Outcomes

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

- Apply advanced research methodologies and theoretical frameworks to investigate complex organizational and strategic challenges
- Critically evaluate and develop evidence-based solutions to address emerging issues in business, management, and public policy
- Lead organizational transformation initiatives through strategic thinking, intellectual leadership, and informed decision-making
- Integrate academic knowledge and professional practice to generate actionable insights that enhance organizational performance and sustainability
- Design, conduct, and communicate rigorous applied research that contributes to both managerial practice and scholarly knowledge
- Critically assess governance, ethics, and responsible leadership practices in diverse organizational and institutional contexts
- Evaluate innovation, entrepreneurship, and change management strategies to support long-term organizational development
- Influence executive decision-making, policy formulation, and strategic planning through data-driven analysis and research-based recommendations
- Engage effectively with diverse stakeholders and lead cross-sector collaborations in complex and global environments
- Demonstrate the capacity to operate as a scholar-practitioner, contributing to thought leadership and organizational excellence at senior levels

6. Typical Programme Structure

Modules	Months	Assessment
1. Advanced Quantitative Business Research Methods	1-2	Assignment-based
2. Advanced Qualitative Business Research Methods	3-4	Assignment-based
3. Advanced Critical Thinking	5-6	Assignment-based
4. Crafting Significance and Strategic Decision-Making	7-8	Assignment-based
5. Foundations of Inquiry in Business Research	9-10	Assignment-based
6. Scholarly Writing Skills	11-12	Assignment-based
7. Professional DBA Thesis Research	12-24	Thesis Defence

7. Hourly Breakdown

Module No.	Learning Hours	Supervised Hours	Assessment Hours	Minimum Self-Study Hours
1 to 6	50 each (Total 300)	25 each (Total 150)	20 each (Total 120)	280 each (Total 1680)
7	0	200	150	1900

Total Learning Hours	Total Supervised Hours	Total Assessment Hours	Total Minimum Self-Study Hours	Programme Total Hours
300	350	270	3850	4500

8. Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage	Description
Distinction	90–100%	Outstanding work demonstrating mastery and critical insight
Merit	75–89%	Good work demonstrating solid understanding and application
Pass	60–74%	Satisfactory work meeting minimum programme standards
Fail	Below 60%	Does not meet minimum requirements

9. Example of Programme Calendar

Period	Activity
Month 1-2	Beginning of Term 1: Induction week; Module 1 lectures and supervision
End of Month 2	Module 1 Assessment
Month 3-4	Module 2 lectures and supervision
End of Month 4	Module 2 Assessment
Month 5-6	Module 3 lectures and supervision
End of Month 6	Module 3 Assessment; Review of students' performance; End of Term 1
Month 7-8	Beginning of Term 2; Module 4 lectures and supervision
End of Month 8	Module 4 Assessment
Month 9-10	Module 5 lectures and supervision
End of Month 10	Module 5 Assessment
Month 11-12	Module 6 lectures and supervision
End of Month 12	Module 6 Assessment; Submission of Thesis proposal to supervisor; End of Term 2.
Month 13-24	Research and writing of Final Thesis
End of Month 24	Final submission; Thesis Oral defence; Graduation

10. Delivery Schedule and Attendance

The taught component of the Professional DBA is designed to be delivered through a self-paced, asynchronous online format. The programme includes around 20 hours per week of learning activities comprising recorded lectures, training materials, and interactive content, all accessible through the Learning Management System without a fixed schedule. Self-study hours are integrated within the learning activities and are essential for completing the programme requirements.

While the taught content is self-paced, students are encouraged to maintain regular engagement with their academic tutor during supervised sessions (e.g., monthly check-ins, module-specific guidance, and feedback discussions) conducted online.

The indicative programme timeline must also take into account public holidays, institutional closure days, scheduled academic breaks, examination periods, assessment windows, and any other approved interruptions. Where such days or periods occur, the academic calendar may be adjusted accordingly to ensure that the required learning activities and supervised tutor sessions are properly completed across the programme.

Regarding the Final Thesis period, all supervision activities and the final defence shall be conducted online. Thesis supervision will be carried out through scheduled virtual meetings with the assigned supervisor, and the final defence will be conducted via online video conference.

11. Teaching & Learning Methods

Online Track (Asynchronous)

- Full curriculum delivered via the School's LMS platform
- Pre-recorded video lectures, organised in daily 3 hours of content
- Interactive content: quizzes, digital case studies, e-reading packs
- Virtual office hours with module tutors: available by appointment
- Students must have access to a stable internet connection and a device capable of video conferencing

12. Faculty Profile Requirements

- A Doctoral degree (Level 8 EQF or equivalent) in a relevant discipline, together with demonstrable professional experience in the subject area; or
- At least three (5) years of relevant professional experience in the subject area, subject to evaluation and approval by the Academic Board.
- Possess appropriate teaching, training, mentoring, or assessment experience relevant to their role.
- Be able to communicate effectively in the language of instruction and assessment.
- Comply with the institution's quality assurance, academic integrity, and assessment policies.

13. Progression & Awards

To be awarded the **Professional Doctorate of Business Administration** (*Diploma/Certificato di Professional DBA*) candidates must:

- Successfully pass all taught modules (minimum grade: Pass, 60%)
- Submit and defend their final thesis meeting the minimum Pass standard
- Have no outstanding academic integrity issues

14. Resit Policy

Regarding Modules 1-6, one free resit is permitted per module. The maximum grade achievable following a resit is a Pass.

Should a candidate fail to achieve a passing grade at this second attempt, they may choose one of the following options:

1. Exit the programme with a *Certificate of Competence* recognising the modules successfully completed, without entitlement to the Professional DBA award;
2. Apply for an additional reassessment opportunity, subject to payment of the prescribed reassessment fee.

Regarding Module 7, should the candidate fail to achieve the minimum passing grade for the Professional Doctoral Thesis, they may choose one of the following options:

1. Accept an exit award in the form of a *Certificate of Advanced Competence in Business Administration*, rather than the Professional DBA qualification.
2. Re-enter the thesis process from the beginning, including the submission of a new research proposal, the development of a new thesis, and a subsequent thesis defence before the assessment panel. This option is subject to the payment of the applicable resubmission and supervision fee.

15. Originality of Work

All coursework, assignments, projects, examinations, dissertations, reports, presentations, and any other assessed work submitted for academic credit must represent the student's own original work and intellectual effort. Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty, integrity, and ethical conduct throughout their studies. Any form of academic misconduct is considered a serious violation of the School's regulations.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism, including the use of another person's ideas, words, research, data, or creative work without proper acknowledgment or citation.
- Self-plagiarism, whereby previously submitted work is reused without prior authorization and appropriate disclosure.
- Collusion, including unauthorized collaboration with other students or third parties on individual assessments.
- Contract cheating, including the purchase, commissioning, or submission of work produced by another person or organization.
- Fabrication or falsification of data, research findings, references, documents, records, or academic evidence.
- Unauthorized use of notes, materials, devices, or assistance during examinations or assessments.
- Impersonation or any attempt to submit work on behalf of another student.
- Submission of content generated wholly or substantially by artificial intelligence (AI) tools, automated writing systems, or similar technologies as if it were the student's own original work.

To safeguard academic standards and ensure fairness, the School reserves the right to review all submitted work using plagiarism detection and academic integrity monitoring systems. Written assignments may be screened through plagiarism detection software, and the School



may employ additional methods of verification, including oral examinations, interviews, draft reviews, source checks, and other procedures deemed appropriate to confirm authorship and originality.

16. Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Procedures

Where academic misconduct is suspected, the matter will be investigated in accordance with the School's Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Procedures below. Students will be given an opportunity to respond to any allegations before a final determination is made by the Academic Board.

Where misconduct is proven, sanctions may include one or more of the following:

- A formal warning;
- Reduction of marks or failure of the assessment;
- A grade of zero (0) for the relevant assignment, examination, or module;
- Suspension from the programme for a specified period;
- Permanent dismissal from the programme or institution in cases of serious or repeated misconduct.

The School reserves the right to report serious cases of any type of misconduct to relevant professional, accreditation, regulatory, awarding, governmental, law enforcement, judicial, or other competent authorities and bodies where required by law, regulation, accreditation requirements, or where otherwise considered necessary by the Academic Board.

By enrolling in the programme, students acknowledge their responsibility to uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct and to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, policies, and academic requirements.