Doctoral Program - Graduate School of Business Administration

Objectives

The Darden School offers an intellectually demanding doctoral program for a small, select group of high-potential applicants: men and women who already have a breadth of knowledge in the functional areas of business and who have a strong interest in teaching and research.

The program aims to be distinctive, not only by providing sound training in the theory and methodology of the student’s chosen field, but also by training students to perform applied research. Graduates of the program are expected to be able to conduct rigorous research that contributes to the solution of management problems in a creative and original fashion. The program provides exposure to a variety of pedagogies, particularly interactive approaches that allow students to take an active role in the learning process.

A doctoral student must specialize in a major field of study. The school has major fields in finance, marketing, operations management, and management. The management major field is composed of four subfields: strategic management, business ethics, general management, and entrepreneurship. Only a subset of these major fields admit students in any given year.

Admission

Acceptance of an applicant as a student in the doctoral program is based on the following criteria:

- an assessment of the applicant’s willingness to commit his/her energy to the expeditious completion of a vigorous program of study in a manner consistent with the high intellectual and personal integrity expected by the faculty of a candidate for a profession; of the applicant’s ability to manage effectively the difficult challenges posed by independent study; and of the applicant’s ability to work cooperatively with others;
- an appraisal of the applicant’s ability and capacity to undertake and to complete satisfactorily the requirements of the Program;
- assurance that applicants ordinarily have obtained a Master’s Degree in Business Administration or the equivalent.

Application forms may be requested from:
Director of the Doctoral Program
Darden Graduate School of Business Administration
University of Virginia
P.O. Box 6550
Charlottesville, VA 22906-6550
(434) 924-7247
(800) UVA-MBA-1
Applicants are required to take the Graduate Management Admissions Test given by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, NJ. Those who have already taken this test should request the Educational Testing Service to forward their test results or should submit a true copy of the scores to the director of the doctoral program.

Foreign applicants must also take the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) examination in order to be considered for admission.

Applicants seeking further information regarding the program and admission may write to the director of the doctoral program.

**Administration**

The administration of the doctoral program has been assigned by the Darden School faculty to the Doctoral Operating Committee, a standing committee of the faculty. Each major field of doctoral study established by the faculty has a major field advisor who is a member of the doctoral committee. The general administration of the doctoral program is the responsibility of the director of the doctoral program.

**Financial Assistance**

A student’s entire financial requirements will not ordinarily be underwritten by the school. Nevertheless, the faculty hopes that no qualified applicant will be unable to enter the doctoral program because of lack of financial resources.

A student with outstanding potential and/or who demonstrates that outside sources are not available may apply for a fellowship for tuition, fees, and living costs. Generous fellowship awards may be received for the two years of full-time course work and for the one year of full-time dissertation research. Recipients must be in good academic standing to qualify for fellowship stipends. The director of the doctoral program will review the academic performance and the financial support needs of each student every 12 months. If a student’s financial support needs have changed, revisions in the fellowship stipend will be made. In addition, loans are available. Tuition waivers and part-time teaching and research assistantships are often available to those students needing and desiring them. During the summer, research assistantships are available.

**Degree Requirements**

The degree requirements outlined below apply to all doctoral students. The particular program of study designed to enable a student to fulfill these degree requirements depends on the student’s previous experience and education. An individual program of study is structured in close consultation with the student to permit completion of the degree requirements in the most efficient manner. In general, the development of competence within a major field involves doctoral seminars and course work in second year M.B.A. elective courses and individual reading under the supervision of a member of the major field faculty. Courses in research methods and supportive discipline-based work are usually taken in either the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences or in the School of Graduate Engineering and Applied Science.

The overall time period actually required to satisfy doctoral program requirements
varies depending upon the student’s previous education and experience, the work load and performance, and the nature of the dissertation research.

**Breadth Requirements**

A student must demonstrate mastery of the basic functions and disciplines of business administration determined to be most related to the student’s major field.

**Required Course Work in Quantitative Methods, Economics, and Other Relevant Disciplines**

Each field requires advanced-level training in relevant quantitative techniques, economics, and behavioral sciences. This requirement is typically met by satisfactorily completing graduate courses in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. The specific types and amounts of courses depend on the major field.

**Required Courses for All Doctoral Students**

All doctoral students must complete doctoral-level courses in research methodology and pedagogy. Part of these requirements may be satisfied by research and teaching internship assignments.

**Major Field Professional Requirements**

Each field requires the doctoral student to complete two to four advanced professional courses. This requirement is designed to involve each student in current issues and problems at an advanced level in her or his chosen field.

**Major Field Theory and Literature**

Students in each major field must complete a group of doctoral seminars in order to broaden and deepen their understanding of the significant literature and theory of their chosen field. For example:

**Finance:**
Advanced Price Theory  
Theory of Financial Markets  
Theory of Corporate Finance  
Time Series Analysis

**Marketing:**
Research Methodology in Marketing  
Buyer and Consumer Behavior  
Marketing Theory and Models  
Survey of Current Literature
Operations Management:
Production Planning and Control Systems
Strategic Management of Operations and Productivity Improvement
Current Research Literature

Management:
Foundations of Management
Foundations of Entrepreneurship
Strategy Theory
Ethics and Economics

Major Field Research Paper

Under the guidance of a faculty member, each student develops an intensive field- or library-based study of a significant problem in the student’s major field. Each student is expected to demonstrate independent research abilities, including selection of a research question, selection of research methodology, analyses of appropriate literature and data, and presentation of a written report on the research findings.

Major Field Examination

This examination is normally taken by the end of the student’s second year of full-time work. Administered by a committee that draws some of its members from outside the Darden School faculty, the examination is primarily concerned with a student’s knowledge of the substantive content of the major field, as defined by her or his general program of study. Each student should demonstrate doctoral-level skills and knowledge concerning the field’s fundamental problems, theories, and conceptual frameworks, and should show a well-developed capacity to reason logically, orally, and in writing. Each student should also demonstrate in-depth competence within an area of specialization in the major field.

Dissertation Research Proposal

Each student is required to prepare a dissertation research proposal and to pass a proposal examination before conducting research and writing the dissertation. The purpose of the proposal and examination is to obtain assurance, from the viewpoint of both the faculty and the student, that the research project is worthwhile and feasible.

Dissertation

Each student is required to present an acceptable dissertation based on an approved proposal. A reading committee, of which the dissertation supervisor is normally chair, will determine whether a dissertation is acceptable. The dissertation must contribute to knowledge in the field and the resolution of a significant management problem. Each student is expected to present a public oral defense of the dissertation as part of the requirements for the doctoral degree.
Residence Requirements and Program Length

University requirements for the doctoral degree are two continuous academic semesters of full-time graduate study (or the equivalent) in residence toward the doctoral degree, not including previous semesters in residence at the University of Virginia for the purpose of obtaining another degree. Experience suggests, however, that a minimum two years of full-time work in residence is usually needed to complete the formal requirements of the degree.

Academic Standards

Breadth Requirements

The failure of a student to meet the breadth requirements within three years shall be considered unsatisfactory academic progress and shall terminate the student’s enrollment in the program.

Course Requirements

No course at the Darden School in which the student’s grade is not at least B shall be counted toward the completion of the major field course requirements. Courses taken in other schools to fulfill degree requirements shall be counted for this purpose only if the student receives at least the minimum grade acceptable for credit toward a graduate degree in the schools within which the courses are taken. A student whose work in a major field course fails to meet these standards, and whose work is otherwise satisfactory, may arrange for remedial work with the course instructor or may take another course; any student whose work in more than two major field courses has not been acceptable shall have failed to meet the academic standards of the doctoral program.

Major Field Examination

A student who fails the major field examination shall have failed to meet the academic standards of the doctoral program.

Dissertation Proposal Examination

A student is ordinarily expected to pass the initial dissertation research proposal examination within six months following the major field examination. A student whose initial examination is not scheduled within 12 months, or who fails the examination twice, shall have failed to meet the academic standards of the doctoral program.

Time to Complete Program
The maximum time a student is allowed to complete the program is 60 months, beginning with initial registration. Not completing the program within the 60 months will likely terminate the student’s enrollment in the program.

Failure of a student to meet the academic standards of the doctoral program will result in the termination of the student’s enrollment in the program. The doctoral program committee is authorized to act on behalf of the faculty in receiving and acting on petitions for readmission. In acting on these requests, the committee may establish such requirements and conditions for readmission as it considers appropriate. Students may appeal decisions to the Darden School faculty.

After the residence year has been completed, a student’s tuition is calculated according to the number of semester course credits for which the candidate is registered.