

# College of Business PhD Handbook (Traditional Concentrations) Florida Atlantic University

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## Overview

The Ph.D. in Business Administration program is an academic degree program offered by the College of Business.<sup>1</sup> Concentrations are available in Accounting, Finance, ITOM, Management, and Marketing. The program has a very strong emphasis upon research. Attention is also directed to the development of the necessary skills conducive to excellent classroom teaching.

## PhD Program Mission Statement

Florida Atlantic University's College of Business through its PhD program offers select applicants the opportunities to develop research and teaching skills and perform research independently and with research active faculty, and assists our graduates to place in peer universities throughout the world.

Approved by COB PhD Committee, October 4, 2019

## Summary of Degree Requirements

1. Complete the required basic tools, area of concentration, and dissertation courses
2. Satisfy research participation requirements
3. Pass the comprehensive exam in the area of concentration
4. Satisfy the doctoral dissertation proposal defense requirement
5. Complete and successfully defend the final doctoral dissertation
6. Be in good standing at the time of application for graduation (including completion and submission of all required forms)

The course requirements for each concentration are provided in the FAU Course Catalog. Additional information, such as flight plans, can be obtained from the Department PhD Coordinator.

## Program Milestones

The following milestones represent the faculty's expectation as to the latest that the key components of the degree requirements must be completed. Failure to meet these milestones is considered in the evaluation.

Completion of coursework

Fall semester of third year

Comprehensive exam

January of third year

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<sup>1</sup> The guidelines, etc. contained in this document are not applicable to the Executive PhD if offered by the College of Business.

Application for candidacy and formation of Dissertation Committee	Spring / summer semester of third year
Proposal defense	Spring semester of fourth year
Dissertation defense	Spring semester of fifth year

## **Advisors and Committees**

The Director of the College of Business PhD Program and the college PhD Committee is responsible for oversight and overall administration of the program. The Department PhD Coordinators and the Department PhD Committee are responsible for the administration of the PhD program as it relates to the concentrations.<sup>2</sup>

The Graduate College Governance Document requires that each doctoral candidate have an advisor and a Supervisory Committee. These roles are fulfilled by the Department PhD Coordinator, his/her designee, the Department PhD Committee, and the student's Dissertation Committee, as discussed more fully in following paragraphs.

### **Director of the College of Business PhD Program**

The Director of the College of Business PhD Program (the Director) is a Graduate Faculty member from the College of Business and is appointed by the Dean of the College. The Director's responsibilities include working with the Department PhD Coordinators supporting the PhD program, representing and advocating the PhD program and its students, recruiting incoming students, monitoring and streamlining the curriculum, reporting AACSB /BOG assurance of learning information, ensuring procedural issues are sound, and handling any other issues that pertain to advancing the PhD program.

### **College PhD Committee**

The College PhD Committee consists of an Associate Dean, Faculty and Administration (or other designee of the Dean of the College), the Director, and the Department PhD Coordinators. The committee oversees the PhD program, sets policy and assists the Director as necessary.

### **Department PhD Coordinator**

Each department offering a concentration in the PhD program has a Department PhD Coordinator. The Department PhD Coordinator is a Graduate Faculty member from the respective department and is appointed by the chair of the department (or director of the

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<sup>2</sup> Concentration is synonymous with the name of the department / school offering the concentration. The terms are used interchangeably in this document.

school). The Department PhD Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the doctoral program on a day-to-day basis, advising, and carrying out related administrative duties.

Most students will have their closest contacts with the Department PhD Coordinator early in their experience with the program. After the first year or so, students will have most professional contact with their Faculty Advisor (see Faculty Advisors below). However, the Department PhD Coordinator continues to approve all courses a student takes throughout the student's program, works with the student to develop / modify a plan of study, makes decisions (in conjunction with the Department PhD Committee) about the student's continuation throughout the program, approves the student's dissertation committee, and retains other responsibilities as detailed below.

### **Department PhD Committee**

The Department PhD Committee consists of at least three Graduate Faculty members from the department (one of which is the Department PhD Coordinator) and is appointed annually by the chair of the department. The Department PhD Committee serves the function of the Supervisory Committee up to the dissertation stage. As such, the Department PhD Committee is responsible for monitoring the student's academic progress, preparing, overseeing the preparation, administration, and evaluation of the comprehensive exam, and evaluating student's performance on other program requirements prior to dissertation stage.

### **Faculty Advisor**

The PhD Program is as much a program of individual mentoring as it is one of courses and predetermined requirements that apply to all students. During the first year or so, the student becomes acquainted with the faculty and with various specialties within the concentration through courses and assistantship assignments. Through discussions with the faculty and the student, the Department PhD Coordinator assigns each doctoral student a Faculty Advisor (or acts as the advisor him/herself) to guide the student in the details of independent research and the elective aspects of the course sequence. The Department PhD Coordinator reevaluates the assignment annually, or upon the request of the advisor or advisee.

The responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor include the following:

1. Supervise research projects as necessary
2. Provide general guidance to the student in regards to the student's overall teaching, academic and career development

The Faculty Advisor will strongly influence the student's program, dissertation, and early career. Students are likely to progress most smoothly through the program if they identify a Faculty Advisor relatively early in their program so that they can plan their research program details. The Faculty Advisor will be someone with the kind of substantial experience in research and theory in the student's specialty that is needed to contribute to the field. The Faculty Advisor will also typically invite the student to do directed readings courses and collaborate in

research projects that will develop knowledge beyond what can be done through usual scheduled courses. He or she will also make recommendations to the Department PhD Coordinator about advanced methods courses or courses outside of the business school and beyond those required of all PhD students.

### **Dissertation Committee**

When ready to enter candidacy, the student is responsible for finding a faculty member to serve as the chairperson of the dissertation committee. In consultation with the chairperson, the student will then contact additional faculty members to form a Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee serves as the Supervisory Committee during the dissertation stage and is responsible for approval of the dissertation topic, evaluation of the dissertation defense, and approval of the final document.

The Dissertation Committee consists of at least three Graduate Faculty members. At a minimum, the composition of this committee will include three Graduate Faculty members from the concentration department, one of which serves as chairperson. Any minor fields that the student has must also be represented on the Dissertation Committee. In unusual circumstances, leading scholars from outside the College or University may be included as members of a Dissertation Committee.

The Dissertation Committee cannot be formed until the student completes all required courses and passes the comprehensive exam. After the Dissertation Committee is formed, the student must apply for candidacy to the PhD degree.

## **Admissions**

Admission is based on criteria provided by the Graduate College and the College of Business (see their respective websites for additional details). Applicants indicate their intended concentration and admission decisions are then made by the Department PhD committee.

## **Annual Evaluation**

The Department PhD Committee evaluates each PhD student at least annually. As part of this evaluation each student provides a report to the Department PhD Coordinator by the specified deadline. The format of the report varies by department, but will include progress on course work, current research activities, etc.

The Department PhD Committee will evaluate each student's progress toward completion of their degree within a timely fashion and provide feedback including an overall assessment. The student is considered to be in good standing with the following exceptions.

1. The student receives a course grade below a B, receives a course grade of Unsatisfactory, or has the cumulative GPA below 3.0

2. The student does not satisfy the research participation requirements
3. The student has more than one incomplete grade outstanding or has an incomplete grade outstanding that is not converted to a letter grade within one year following the end of the semester in which the incomplete grade is awarded
4. The student does not complete all courses in his or her plan of study within three academic years. This time limit may be extended if remedial course work is assigned by the Department PhD Committee
5. The student is unable to form a dissertation committee by the beginning the fall semester of their fourth year.
6. The student does not meet the milestones contained in this document
7. The student experiences a lapse in continuous enrollment; continuous enrollment is determined by the Graduate College and generally requires full-time student classification during the fall and spring semesters
8. The student is not in compliance with all published policies pertaining to the Program or the University

Upon receipt of an unsatisfactory evaluation, the Department PhD Committee may 1) recommend that the student be terminated from the program for severe deficiencies or continued unsatisfactory evaluations, or 2) provide the student the opportunity to remediate. If a student has the opportunity to remediate, the Department PhD Committee will specify the remedial work, and schedule timeframes for completion of incomplete work. The student will be informed in writing of any requirements for remedial work or deadlines for completion of incompletes or of a decision to terminate their continuation in the program. Failure to meet any of the deadlines provided to the student may result in a recommendation for dismissal from the program. All evaluations are also forwarded to the department chair for use in determining whether funding should be continued.

Approved as revised by COB PhD Committee, April 20, 2022

### **Research Participation**

The student is expected to be developing a research stream throughout the PhD program. This includes developing research papers independently or with other students and faculty members for submission to journals and conferences. Students are also required to attend and **actively participate** in all of the following:

- Doctoral dissertation proposals and other PhD student research project presentations
- All faculty and guest speaker presentations sponsored by the department
- Any other meetings specified by the Department PhD Coordinator

### **The Comprehensive Exam**

After the student completes the required concentration seminars and virtually all of the coursework, he or she must successfully complete a comprehensive exam. The content / format of the comprehensive exam is specific to the concentration and includes one or more of the following components:

- Written responses to questions to be completed in a closed-book setting
- Take-home questions
- Independent research project (paper and presentation)

The Department PhD Coordinator communicates the timing and general structure of the exam to the students at least two months prior to the exam.

An evaluation committee (either the Department PhD Committee or a department evaluation committee formed by the Department PhD Coordinator) evaluates the student's overall performance on the comprehensive exam and assigns an overall grade of pass or unsatisfactory. The evaluation committee may enlist the assistance of other faculty members in evaluating individual questions / components of the comprehensive exam.

If the grade is unsatisfactory, the evaluation committee may, at its discretion, provide the student additional opportunities such as requiring an oral exam, assigning the student remedial course work (not to exceed three courses), assigning other remedial work, allowing the student to repeat the examination in whole or in part, or revising and then presenting the paper. The evaluation committee evaluates the additional opportunities to determine if a pass can be assigned.

If at any time the evaluation committee decides that providing additional opportunities is unwarranted, the student is recommended for dismissal from the program.

Approved by COB PhD Committee, September 20, 2019

## **Dissertation**

A PhD program, unlike an MBA or undergraduate program, is a process of developing world-class research skills and contributing substantially to the body of knowledge in management more than it is a process of completing a specific set of courses. The dissertation is designed to reflect an original contribution to knowledge in a student's specialty. The topic should be chosen carefully. The theory, methods, and industry chosen for study will strongly influence a student's early career after graduation.

The student is required to defend the dissertation proposal. The defense is open to the faculty and other PhD students. Before the proposal is scheduled for presentation, the Dissertation Committee Chair must recommend that the proposal can be presented. The PhD program coordinator will assist the student in scheduling the defense. The proposal defense must be

announced and the dissertation proposal made available at least two weeks prior to the defense date.

During evaluation of the proposal, the Department PhD Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Committee assigns a pass, conditional pass, or unsatisfactory grade to the proposal and provides the student feedback on the proposal. For conditional grades, the student is required to revise the proposal and submit the revised proposal to the Dissertation Committee Chairperson for evaluation within a set timeframe. For unsatisfactory grades, the student, at the Dissertation Committee's discretion, may be recommended for dismissal from the program or be required to revise the proposal and defend the revised proposal within a set timeframe.

The student is required to complete a dissertation based on the approved proposal. Upon completion, the student will defend the dissertation to the Dissertation Committee. The defense is open to the faculty and other PhD students. Before the dissertation is scheduled for presentation, the Dissertation Committee must recommend that the dissertation can be presented. The PhD program coordinator will assist the student in scheduling the defense. The dissertation defense must be announced and the dissertation made available at least two weeks prior to the defense date.

The student is also required to present to the faculty any "interview" paper prior to including the paper and any faculty recommendations in an application package sent to prospective employers. The interview paper is the student's research output that is commonly based on his / her dissertation. The student uses the interview paper to provide a sample of his / her research for others to evaluate in connection with faculty recruiting.

The dissertation and the dissertation defense are governed by the policies of the College of Business and the Graduate College.

Approved as revised by COB PhD Committee, April 20, 2022

## **Research and Teaching Assistantships**

In exchange for receiving the university stipend and tuition waiver, PhD students are assigned an assistantship. Assistantships are intended to serve the dual purpose of developing teaching and research skills and providing students with financial support. At the time of writing, the work expectations are that a student on assistantship will be assigned the workload equivalent of teaching 3 courses during the year, or 20 hours per week per year, possibly with a mix of instruction and graduate teaching assistantship duties. Typically, students are assigned to assist faculty in both teaching and research during the first two years and teach their own courses thereafter.

Teaching excellence and classroom experience are important elements of a doctoral education. Students are therefore required to take a Seminar on University Teaching and are encouraged to teach. The objective is to make the teaching experience a significant and useful one. For

students on university stipend, students are currently expected to teach four of their eight semesters being funded by the university (this is subject to discretion of the Dean of the COB). The Department Chair makes teaching-related assignments in consultation with the Department PhD Coordinator and is also responsible for evaluating the teaching. Continued funding is jeopardized if the student is unable to satisfactorily fulfill their teaching obligation.

**Additional paid assignments for teaching or other work within the University require written approval of the Department PhD Coordinator.** The PhD program is a full-time program. Employment outside the University tends to substantially delay program completion and is discouraged. When outside employment or excessive volunteer work interferes with a student's progress through the program, the Department PhD Committee may require the student to leave the program.

### **Files**

All required forms must be submitted to the COB PhD Advising Office and Graduate College. It is the student's responsibility to present the appropriate forms to the relevant committee or individual for signature. As part of this, the student is required to complete their initial online plan of study (POS) at the Graduate College by the end of the first year. The POS is updated in the future to reflect any changes.

## Accounting Supplement

### Tracks within Accounting

Upon admission to the accounting concentration program, students specialize in financial, auditing and/or accounting information systems research using one of two methodologies – Archival and Behavioral. Other tracks may be considered with the approval of the Accounting PhD Coordinator.

### Qualifying Research Project (ACG 7916)

By the end of the summer following the student's second year, he or she must submit to the Accounting PhD Coordinator the qualified research project (QRP). Requirements for this paper are as follows:

1. It must be scholarly work and represent the creation of new accounting knowledge and should be suitable for submission to an American Accounting Association meeting
2. The research topic must be approved by the student's Faculty Advisor
3. Guidelines for Authors from a major refereed accounting journal should be used for format, etc. (for example, *The Accounting Review*)
4. The student must present this paper to the faculty and PhD students within two months after it is submitted

A student using empirical / archival methodologies for the QRP must submit a complete working paper prior to the presentation. However, the SOA Qualifying Research Project Policy (Adopted September 12, 2014 by SOA PhD Committee) acknowledges that the IRB requirement for behavioral / experimental research as well as the emphasis on properly preparing the instrument necessitates expended time and therefore establishes the required level of completeness before the student can present the QRP to the SOA faculty. Therefore, a student conducting a QRP using behavioral / experimental methodologies has two options. First, the student may submit a complete working paper prior to the presentation (same as for empirical / archival research). Second, the student may submit a proposal prior to the presentation. The proposal should be a substantially complete working paper absent the data collection and analysis, and will include the proposed instrument prior to IRB approval and detail of hypothesis tests to be performed. Finalization of the instrument and hypothesis tests to be performed will therefore benefit from vetting in front of the faculty prior to IRB approval. The SOA PhD Committee's evaluation of the QRP is based on this proposal. If this option is selected, the student is expected to submit a complete working paper including the data collection and hypothesis tests within 6 months of the QRP presentation. The grade is provided after submission of the completed working paper.

After the presentation, the SOA PhD Committee evaluates the paper and presentation and assigns a pass, conditional pass, or unsatisfactory grade. If the SOA PhD Committee provides a

conditional pass, the SOA PhD Committee may 1) require the student to complete additional follow-up work and submit it to the Accounting PhD Coordinator or 2) require the student to take a writing or communications course. The writing or communications course would be required in the event the student's communications skills are deemed insufficient. If the SOA PhD Committee concludes that the paper and presentation are unsatisfactory, the student may be recommended for dismissal from the program. The SOA PhD Committee, at its discretion, may provide the student a second opportunity to submit and present a revised QRP.

## **Finance Supplement**

### **Developing Teaching Skills**

In your first or second semester, you will be assigned 10 hours per week to develop your teaching skills, and this will replace 10 hours of your research assistance assignment in that semester only. In that semester, you will be assigned by the Department Chair to sit in on a course (FIN 3403) the entire semester that is taught by a professor. You can learn a lot from monitoring HOW an experienced faculty member teaches, even though you will likely have your own style when you teach. Since you are getting paid 10 hours per week in that semester to develop your teaching notes, you need to do this assignment in order to retain your assistantship. You will be asked to submit your notes to the PhD Finance advisor and/or to a faculty member for whom you are working on a periodic basis. Your development of teaching notes will allow you to be more prepared when you are assigned to teach courses in the future.

Before your first semester begins, ask the department chair for:

1. a copy of the FIN 3403 textbook and teaching supplements like an instructor's manual, which he will provide to you for free.
2. a copy of the model syllabus for that course that you would follow when you teach in the future. It shows the allocation of time toward various finance concepts. You should obtain this now, because it can guide you as you develop your teaching notes for FIN 3403. The Department Chair may also have some other advice for you regarding the development of your teaching skills.

### **Teaching Assignment**

PhD students are commonly expected to teach courses as a condition of their assistantship, and must be able to clearly communicate to undergraduate students when teaching courses. The transition from research assistant to teaching commonly occurs in the third year. If PhD students are unable to clearly communicate as part of their teaching requirement, they could lose the assistantship.

You may be assigned teaching assistant work for a very large class, in which you would cover duties such as answering questions by students at office hours or in a finance lab with smaller groups of students.

If you are assigned to teach courses, the teaching load is typically a total of three courses over the fall and spring semesters, such as 1 in fall and 2 in spring, or vice versa.

If you are assigned to teach a class, you are expected to teach the content specified in the model syllabus. This is important because it ensures that all undergraduate students are receiving the proper content so that they have the background to perform well in higher level finance courses. You are expected to show up and be on time for each class, and to maintain standards. You are expected to give exams and grade them on timely basis. You should not make the test bank or an instructor's manual accessible to students because other faculty

members may be using them for exams and graded assignments. At the end of the semester, you should assign grades that are in line with the demonstration of knowledge by the students. Your syllabus should communicate the general schedule of the classes, and the exam dates, and the weighting of all specific tasks (such as a required paper or class participation) that you use when assigning your final grades.

There is a set of teaching tips that was created by the Finance Department. PhD students can obtain this list from the finance Dept. Chair or the Finance PhD Coordinator.

## **Management (Entrepreneurship) Supplement**

### **Annual Reports and Progress Evaluations**

The Management Ph.D. Coordinator and the Management Ph.D. Committee will review the progress of all Ph.D. students each academic year. Students are to provide the Management Ph.D. Coordinator and their Faculty Advisor with a report on the second Friday in May that includes the following information:

1. A current academic Vita including courses taught, presentations and publications accepted, and manuscripts under review.
2. A list of all courses taken in the program and the grades received. Details explaining any incompletes or grades lower than "B" and specific plans for when and how the deficiencies will be corrected.
3. A list of all courses in which they are currently enrolled.
4. A paragraph explaining the student's specialization within the program.

By the first Monday in June, each student's Faculty Advisor will provide the Management Ph.D. Coordinator with an evaluation of the student's progress in the program, and a recommendation for continuation or termination. The Management Ph.D. Coordinator will distribute the reports and evaluations to the Management Ph.D. Committee. A vote will be taken in the committee to make a decision about continuation of assistantships and continuation in the program for each student.