

Doctor of Strategic Leadership

Liberty University
School of Business

Program Handbook 2019-2020

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Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
to award associate, bachelor, master, specialist, and doctoral degrees.
Contact the Commission on Colleges, 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097
or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Liberty University.*

25 June 2019

Preface

This document describes the policies and procedures used to regulate the Doctor of Strategic Leadership program. The University reserves the right to make necessary changes without further notice. The regulations, courses, personnel, and costs listed herein are subject to change after publication of this bulletin through established procedures. In such cases, the University will attempt to communicate these changes to all students, faculty, and staff through written means. It is IMPORTANT that each student familiarize himself with the regulations set forth in this Catalog and assumes his proper responsibilities concerning them.

School of Business Dean

Dr. Dave Brat

DSL Program Director

Dr. Edward Moore, Director of Doctoral Programs

DSL Program Committee

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Dr. Melanie Hicks, Faculty, Associate Dean

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Dr. Roger Bingham, Faculty, Residential Chair

Dr. David Duby, Faculty

Liberty University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability or status as a veteran or disabled veteran. The school maintains its Christian character, but does not discriminate on the basis of religion, except to the extent that applicable law respects its right to act in furtherance of its religious objective.

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Liberty University Statement of Mission and Purpose

Maintaining the vision of the founder, Dr. Jerry Falwell, Liberty University develops Christ centered men and women with the values, knowledge, and skills essential to impact the world.

Through its residential and online programs, the University educates men and women who will make important contributions to their workplaces and communities, follow their chosen vocations as callings to glorify God, and fulfill the Great Commission.

Liberty University will:

1. Emphasize excellence in teaching and learning.
2. Foster university-level competencies in communication, critical thinking, information literacy, and mathematics in all undergraduate programs.
3. Ensure competency in scholarship, research, and professional communication in all graduate programs.
4. Promote the synthesis of academic knowledge and Christian worldview in order that there might be a maturing of spiritual, intellectual, social and physical value-driven behavior.
5. Enable students to engage in a major field of study in career-focused disciplines built on a solid foundation in the liberal arts.
6. Promote an understanding of the Western tradition and the diverse elements of American cultural history, especially the importance of the individual in maintaining democratic and free market processes.
7. Contribute to a knowledge and understanding of other cultures and of international events.
8. Encourage a commitment to the Christian life, one of personal integrity, sensitivity to the needs of others, social responsibility and active communication of the Christian faith, and, as it is lived out, a life that leads people to Jesus Christ as the Lord of the universe and their own personal Savior.

Liberty University Statement on Worldview

Liberty University embraces a worldview that is both historically Christian and biblical, and that underlies the very concept and origins of the university. We hold that God exists and is the source of all things, all truth, all knowledge, all value, and all wisdom. We hold that God has created an orderly universe according to His design and purpose and for His glory, and that He has created human beings in His image. God is actively at work in the world and history, governing them according to His ultimate purpose. From these foundational principles, it follows that truth exists and that there is a standard of right and wrong. We hold that all of creation is fallen as a result of human sin. Finally, we hold that God has revealed Himself and His ways in the natural created order, in history, in the Bible, and supremely in Jesus Christ. God in love and through the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ is redeeming humans and the entire created order.

At Liberty University, students receive an education that integrates this Christian and biblical worldview. Students trained with this worldview perspective will be equipped with a rational framework for understanding and interpreting reality, for comprehending the meaning of life and the value of humans and things, for making decisions and engaging in meaningful action, for studying the various academic disciplines, and for understanding the interconnectedness of all knowledge.

DSL Program Purpose

Students pursuing the Doctorate of Strategic Leadership (DSL) will gain knowledge and skills in the discipline of strategic leadership that can be applied in current and/or future leadership roles.

DSL Program Mission

To provide an opportunity for qualified students to attain academic, professional, and practical competence in the field of leadership and to prepare them for opportunities, and corresponding additional responsibilities, beyond the master's degree level. The DSL program emphasizes practical and real-world applications in both the course work and the major applied doctoral research project requirements. Importantly, all subjects are explored within a biblical worldview.

DSL Program Vision

The DSL program intends to produce graduates with knowledge and characteristics deemed valuable by organizational leadership. These characteristics include the ability to:

1. Defend arguments based on research in matters relating to the practice of strategic leadership [relates to PLO 1,2, & 3];
2. Demonstrate the capacity for integration of theory into best practice [relates to PLO 1,2, & 3];
3. Apply relevant strategic leadership concepts and theories in order to gain a better understanding of the organizational context in which particular problems or opportunities arise [relates to PLO 1,2, & 3]; and,
4. Design and implement a doctoral research project that relates to a strategic leadership problem [relates to PLO 3].
5. Consider each of the areas above in light of biblical principles, and integrated within the Biblical Worldview [relates to PLO 4].

DSL Program Learning Outcomes

1. Evaluate strategic leadership principles based upon current leadership theories and concepts.
2. Recommend analysis methods to perform strategic leadership research.
3. Recommend strategic leadership solutions based upon research, knowledge of the literature, and best practices.
4. Integrate a Christian Worldview into strategic leadership principles

Program Focus and Differentiation

The Doctor of Strategic Leadership (DSL) program focuses on the study of leadership theory and application, independent of the specific field within which the leader operates. Coursework in the DSL focuses on the development of advanced leadership knowledge and skills as well as applied research skills. The program culminates in the development and defense of a Doctoral Research Project (DRP).

By contrast, PhD and DBA programs in Business Leadership focus on preparing individuals to conduct academic research or applied research respectively. The focus in both is on the application of leadership theory and knowledge within business settings. These programs culminate in the development and defense of a Dissertation.

DSL, PhD, and DBA programs have the following in common:

- Rigorous courses of study
- Significant emphasis on research
- Written comprehensive exam
- Development and defense of a major research project

The DSL is considered a professional doctorate degree which is primarily designed for working professionals and not as a teaching degree although individuals may pursue the education profession.

DSL Admission Requirements

Applicants to graduate programs at Liberty University are assessed according to academic background and aptitude for graduate level work. Applicants are considered without regard to race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or status as a veteran or disabled veteran. The school maintains its Christian character, but does not discriminate on the basis of religion except to the extent that applicable law respects its right to act in furtherance of its religious objectives.

Admission to Liberty University's graduate programs is governed by policies and procedures developed by the Graduate Senate and Graduate Administrative Council. Admission to graduate programs does not constitute Degree Candidacy status in a specific graduate program. The University reserves the right to refuse admission to any prospective student or re-enrollment to any student. Any applicant who intentionally withholds pertinent information or who falsifies information may be required to withdraw from Liberty University.

Applicants must submit a completed application package to the LU Online Graduate Admissions Office (<https://www.liberty.edu/online/graduate-admissions/>) in order to be considered for admission. Once Admissions receives and evaluates the completed application package, a decision is rendered. Please see the Graduate School Catalog for official admissions guidelines and policies. Applications will be kept on file for one year and can be considered for any admission period during that timeframe.

Specific DSL Admissions Requirements:

1. Completed Application Package which includes:
 - a. Completed Application.
 - b. Academic Records. Applicants must submit an official transcript indicating successful completion of an acceptable master's degree program from an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Transcripts should be sent directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions from all schools previously attended.
2. Degree Requirement: A graduate of any master's program from an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education will be considered for admission to the DSL program.
3. GPA: A Cumulative GPA of 3.00 or above on the applicant's graduate degree is required for entrance into the program
4. The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Liberty University is authorized under federal regulations to enroll non-immigrant alien students. Any person who is not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States and who desires to be admitted to the University must contact the Office of Admissions. Applicants must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) if English is not their national language. An official score report must be forwarded to Liberty University before an admission decision will be made. The minimum acceptable score for admission is 600. Information regarding the TOEFL may be obtained from: Educational Testing Services; TOEFL Services; P.O. Box 6151; Princeton, NJ 08541, USA.

Admission Review & Notification

Once all application materials are received for admissions, the candidate's application package will be reviewed and an acceptance decision made. Once the application review process is complete, applicants will be notified via email of an admission decision.

International Students

Applicants for whom English is a second language must provide evidence of English proficiency. The DSL is not offered as a residential program and therefore students may not be eligible for a student visa.

Transfer Credits

Courses considered for transfer must be from institutions accredited by agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. These include regional accrediting bodies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and other accrediting bodies such as the

Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Courses from University–approved institutions that meet regional or national accreditation equivalency will be accepted for transfer credit based on the transfer credit policy.

Applicants must request official transcripts be sent directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions from the registrar(s) of previously attended schools.

Up to fifteen (15) semester hours of doctoral credit can be transferred into the DSL program. Transfer of doctoral level coursework may be granted for the DSL Program if the following requirements are met: (a) doctoral courses must be comparable to the corresponding DSL courses; (b) courses must carry a grade of at least a B-; and (c) coursework must have been completed within seven years of the student’s date of admission. The following courses cannot be transferred into the DSL: BMAL 700, 785, 887, 888, 889, 890.

It is the responsibility of each applicant to supply transcripts along with a request to have the credit applied to the degree program. Students may be required to submit the syllabus for any coursework being considered for transfer along with a rationale of why the student believes that the course meets the program’s requirements.

Financial Policies

Student Financial Services (<https://www.liberty.edu/financeadmin/studentfinances/>) can help with information on Tuition & Fees as well as Financial Aid.

Graduation Requirements

In addition to regulations stated in the Liberty University catalog governing graduation, DSL students must meet the following requirements:

1. A minimum of 36 semester hours of DSL coursework must be taken through Liberty.
2. Maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain in the program.
3. All contracts made with the student upon acceptance into the degree program, or during enrollment, must be satisfied before the degree will be awarded.
4. The Doctoral Research Project (DRP) must be completed, submitted to the Jerry Falwell Library, and accepted for publication.
5. Submit a Graduation Application to the Registrar’s Office at the beginning of the final semester.

Comprehensive Exam

Each student will be required to take a comprehensive exam during BMAL 785, Comprehensive Exam and Doctoral Research Project Concept course. Students are expected to master the principles of leadership, and be thoroughly familiar with the scholarly literature in the discipline, before taking the examination. Satisfactory performance in the written Comprehensive Exam is

necessary before students advance to doctoral candidacy in the DSL program. The comprehensive exam is designed to allow the student to demonstrate wide-ranging knowledge of the principles of Strategic Leadership.

Students who do not pass one question in the comprehensive exam will be given one opportunity to retake that question. Students who do not pass more than one question on the comprehensive exam, or do not pass the one-question retake must re-register for BMAL 785 and take it again. Should the comprehensive exam not be passed successfully after retaking the course, the student will be dismissed from the DSL program.

Doctoral Research Project

Pending completion of doctoral coursework and the comprehensive exam, students must successfully complete a Doctoral Research Project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Strategic Leadership. These courses are BMAL 887, 888, 889, & 890.

The Doctoral Research Project (DRP) is a comprehensive research and practice based project involving a current leadership problem found in the literature. The focus of the DRP is on research relevant to leadership, examining the scholarly theories and concepts related to it, and then gathering and analyzing data to present relevant conclusions related to that topic. Part of the deliverable of the DRP is a set of recommendations to inform and advance leadership practice, present informed solutions for decision makers to consider, and report findings of a completed study for executive consideration. The four courses must be taken in order over consecutive semesters.

The DRP is expected to exhibit scholarship and make a distinctive contribution to Strategic Leadership. A faculty committee is responsible for the general supervision and progression of the project. A defense of the research is required for final approval. The committee will guide the student through various stages of research. The committee and the DSL Program Director will determine when the applied research project is ready to be published.

Institutional Review Board

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) will review and approve all research projects involving human subjects. For more information: <https://www.liberty.edu/academics/graduate/irb/>

Time Limits for Degree Completion

The time limit for completing the degree from the date of admission to the DSL program is seven years. Only in unusual circumstances may the student be granted an extension.

Granting of an extension of time will usually result in additional requirements. Any student who does not complete coursework within the permissible time limit, for any reason including discontinued enrollment, must reapply for admission. A student may reapply only once, and will be subject to the current standards and curriculum. The School of Business DSL Committee will

determine if any previous courses are sufficiently time sensitive and must be repeated. Beginning with the date of readmission, the student's time limit for degree completion is determined by the number of hours remaining.

Enrollment and Breaks in Enrollment

All DSL students are required to maintain enrollment in the DSL program. (1) Until students begin the dissertation phase, they are required to be enrolled in at least one course in each academic year (From Fall to Summer); (2) Once doctoral candidates enter the dissertation phase, they are required to be enrolled in each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) until graduation.

A student facing certain unforeseen circumstance may contact his or her professor to determine if assignment extensions are possible (as noted in the course syllabi or, if warranted, an incomplete in order to allow time to complete coursework). An incomplete cannot be granted for any of the doctoral research project courses.

In the event a student is facing such things as an extended illness or hospitalization, relocation due to one's job, military obligations, or the death of an immediate family member, a break in enrollment will be considered and if warranted, granted by the DSL Program Director. The Director and the student will determine the length of the absence and develop a plan to return to the program (if applicable). The length of the break in enrollment will not count toward the student's seven year completion requirement.

DSL Program of Study and Course Descriptions

Information regarding coursework and a degree completion plan may be found at:
<https://www.liberty.edu/online/business/doctoral/strategic-leadership/>

Progression Through the Program

1. Student Responsibility for Contents of Handbook

Upon admission to the DSL program, students are required to read the Doctor of Strategic Leadership Program Handbook. Students are required to read the handbook each year for updates and revisions. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with and abide by the Program Handbook policies and guidelines.

2. Program Policies

All policies and procedures as stated in the current Liberty University Graduate Catalog apply unless otherwise stated in this handbook.

a. Grading

The DSL uses the standard grading scale for doctoral programs, which is a 6 point scale. Students must earn a minimum grade of "B-" in all graduate-level courses.

A = 960 - 1000 -- A- = 940 - 959 -- B+ = 920 - 939 -- B = 900 - 919 -- B- = 880 - 899
C+ = 860 - 879 -- C = 840 - 859 -- C- = 820 - 839 -- D+ = 800 - 819 -- D = 780 - 799
D- = 760 - 779 -- F = 759 and below

b. Grade of B minus:

Student receiving a grade of “B minus” in a course will be permitted to remain in the program, unless their GPA drops below 3.0.

c. Cumulative GPA below 3.0

If a student’s cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 they will be placed on Academic Probation during the first semester the GPA is below 3.0. Students will have one semester to obtain a GPA of 3.0 or above. If their GPA remains lower than 3.0 a second semester, regardless of course grades, the student will be dismissed from the program for not maintaining an overall 3.0 GPA.

d. Course Repeat Policy

DSL Core Courses: This course repeat policy allows students to repeat two DSL core courses (BMAL 700 - 780) for a total of 6 hours if they earn a failing grade or withdraw.

DSL Comprehensive Exam Course: The course repeat policy allows students to repeat BMAL 785 one time if they fail to pass or withdraw.

Doctoral Research Project Courses: This course repeat policy allows students to repeat each DRP course (BMAL 887, 888, 889, and 890) one time for a total of four courses if they fail to pass or withdraw.

e. Doctoral Research Project Chair

The chair is an essential advisor who has the expertise to guide the student through the dissertation process. The chair will take on varying roles during the process, depending on the student, the topic, the research approach, or other factors. Chairs will serve students through 3 separate roles of a mentor:

- Advisor- The dissertation chair is the principal advisor who works with the candidate throughout the dissertation process (from IRB to defense).
- Coordinator- The chair will provide the candidate with requirements, conditions and timelines for the dissertation and dissertation process.
- Director- The chair will lead the candidate through each part of the dissertation and will work with the student in the selection of the methods, direction of the analysis and the ultimate outcome of the research

Regardless of the specific role, the chair is expected to regularly review student progress and serve as a mentor, working with the student to move the dissertation process forward.

The chair will carefully review the dissertation proposal and chapters and provide detailed written comments to the student, be available to discuss these comments, and review any revisions prior to determining that the student is ready to move forward in the coursework or to defend.

In the event that a student believes a chair is not meeting the above requirements, an appeal for a new chair may be submitted to ludsl@liberty.edu. The student must include specific information as to how the chair has not met the above requirements.

f. Grievance Policy

Grade Grievances: Students must contact the course professor regarding resolution of grievance related to grades. If the issue is not resolved at this point, students may submit a formal grade appeal through graduate student advising. Please refer to the grade appeal process in the current *Liberty University Graduate Catalog*. If the situation falls within the parameters set forth in the process, a grade appeal may be submitted.

Other Grievances: Graduate students must first make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the individual with whom the grievance originated. The next step in the process is to appeal to LU Online Student Advocate Office by following the complaint procedure as outlined on the website.

3. Blackboard

All courses will use the Blackboard Course Management platform. Safe Assign software is also utilized by the university to verify the originality of written work. All work submitted in the doctoral research project must be original. Students are not allowed to use work from previous courses or assignments as initially submitted. Students needing assistance with Blackboard or Safe Assign can find support at the Technology Education Center.

4. Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is strictly prohibited. See The Graduate Catalog for specific definitions, penalties, and processes for reporting.

5. Disability Statement

Students with a documented disability may contact the Liberty University Online Office of Disability Academic Support (LU ODAS) at <https://www.liberty.edu/online/online-disability-accommodation-support/> to make arrangements for academic accommodations.

Courses Titles and Descriptions

Course	Title	Description
BMAL 700	DSL Program Orientation	Introduction to doctoral studies, which provides information regarding the Doctor of Strategic Leadership program, the Graduate School of Business, and University resources. Prerequisite - None
BMAL 702	Leadership Theory	This course provides a comprehensive overview of dominant approaches to leadership with a focus on how those approaches can inform leadership practice and follow outcomes. As a complement to leadership theory, the basic competencies or skills necessary for effective leadership are also explored. Prerequisite - Co-Requisite BMAL 700
BMAL 703	Managing the Contemporary Organization	This course provides a comprehensive background in the critical role of management in the modern organization. Topics include the management process, planning and decision making, organizing and motivating individuals and groups, and effective communication. Prerequisite - BMAL 700
BMAL 704	Leading Organizational Change	This course provides a comprehensive overview of the theories, process, and practice of leading successful change in organizations. Topics include the problem with change and its solution, the eight-stage process for effective change, what the organization of the future will look like, and the importance of change for lifelong learning. Prerequisite - BMAL 700
BMAL 710	Understanding the Organization	This course provides a comprehensive overview of the modern organization from a systems perspective. Topics include the importance of organizations, organizations as systems, the environment of the organization, and the structure of organizations. Prerequisite - BMAL 700
BMAL 714	Risk Management Process and Practice	This course provides an analysis of risk management principles with a focus on the processes of risk management, planning risk management, critical success factors for effective risk management, and performing qualitative and quantitative risk analysis. Prerequisite - BMAL 700

BMAL 716	Research Theory and Planning	<p>This course provides a comprehensive overview of the process of planning and conducting effective research projects. Topics include social research theories, research methods and designs, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and reporting results.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 700</p>
BMAL 720	Leveraging Data for Decision Making	<p>This course provides an overview of the process and skills necessary for organizational leaders to make effective data driven decisions. Topics include: Defining business analytics, quantify value it brings to an organization, harnessing the power of analytics to gain advantage.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 700</p>
BMAL 727	Leading Effective Teams	<p>This course provides a comprehensive overview of effective team-based leadership practices in a project environment with a focus on creating high-performance teams, managing team conflict, motivating teams, and empowering teams for the successful completion of projects.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 700</p>
BMAL 755	Coaching Theory and Practice	<p>This course provides a comprehensive overview of coaching theory and methods necessary for effective executive coaching. Topics include coaching methodology and techniques, coaching theories and frameworks, and coaching skills and techniques.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 700</p>
BMAL 770	The Ethical Leader	<p>The course is an examination of ethics from the perspective of a strategic leader. Students will evaluate the theoretical and practical approaches to leading ethically within the context of a Christian Worldview.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 700</p>
BMAL 780	Strategic Leadership in the 21st Century	<p>This is the capstone class for the Doctorate in Strategic Leadership DSL program and allows students to synthesize knowledge gained in previous courses into a cohesive view of leadership. This course focuses on the critical knowledge and skills that leaders must master in order to be successful.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 700</p>
BMAL 785	Comprehensive Exam and Doctoral Research Project Concept	<p>This course will focus on students completing a comprehensive exam, preparing a Concept Paper, and preparing students for their Doctoral Research Project.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 700, 702, 703, 704, 706, 710, 714, 716, 720, 727, 770, & 780</p>

BMAL 887	Doctoral Research Project I	<p>This course is the first step for DSL Doctoral Candidates in the process of developing and completing their research project. Doctoral Candidates will develop Section 1 which includes the Foundation of the Study to include a detailed Literature Review relevant to the proposed research project.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 785</p>
BMAL 888	Doctoral Research Project II	<p>This course is the second step for DSL Doctoral Candidates in the process of developing and completing their research project. Doctoral Candidates will develop Section 2 which includes their methodology for conducting the study and combine it with Section 1 into a single document. Candidates will complete and submit their IRB package and conduct their proposal defense.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 887</p>
BMAL 889	Doctoral Research Project III	<p>This course is the final step in developing the research project. Doctoral Candidates will conduct their field study, develop and present their findings, and develop Section 3 of their research project. Candidates will combine all three sections into their completed Doctoral Research Project manuscript in preparation for their defense.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 888</p>
BMAL 890	Doctoral Research Project IV	<p>This course is the last step in the DSL program. Doctoral Candidates will defend their Doctoral Research Project and finalize their manuscript for publication.</p> <p>Prerequisite - BMAL 889</p>

Suggested Course Sequence

For students that would like to move through the program quickly, the following course sequence is suggested. The student will need to complete all of the tasks in each of the Doctoral Research Project Courses within in a single 16 week term for each course.

First Semester (Year 1) B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 700 / 702 D-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 703 / 704	Second Semester (Year 1) B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 710 / 714 D-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 716 / 720
Third Semester (Year 1) B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 727 / 755 D-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 770 / 780	Fourth Semester (Year 2) B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 785 D-Term (8 Weeks)
Fifth Semester (Year 2) A-Term (16 Weeks) BMAL 887	Sixth Semester (Year 2) A-Term (16 Weeks) BMAL 888
Seventh Semester (Year 3) A-Term (16 Weeks) BMAL 889	Eighth Semester (Year 3) B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 890

The regulations and policies listed herein are subject to change after the publication of this Handbook. The University reserves the right to make necessary changes and / or clarifications to requirements without notice.