Doctor of Strategic Leadership

Liberty University
School of Business

Doctor of Strategic Leadership
Program Handbook
V2.3

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June 14, 2023

Preface

This document describes the policies and procedures used to regulate the Doctor of Business Administration program. The University reserves the right to make necessary changes without prior notice. 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 themself with the regulations set forth in this handbook and assumes their proper responsibilities concerning them.

Dean

Dr. Richard Diddams, DBA.

Chair of Doctoral Programs

Dr. Alexander Averin, Ph.D.

DSL Program Committee

Dr. Alexander Averin, Ph.D.

Dr. Edward Moore, Ph.D.

Dr. Nicole Lowes, Ph.D.

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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 Doctor of Strategic Leadership (DSL) will gain knowledge and skills in the discipline of strategic leadership that can be applied in current and future leadership and teaching roles. The program seeks 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. This 51-hour program is designed for individuals seeking to advance in their current career as well as those pursuing careers in leadership consulting or academia.

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

DSL Admission Requirements

The DSL has a competitive admissions process. Meeting the requirements does not guarantee admission into the program. In addition to any admission requirements established by the Graduate school, DSL Admission Requirements include:

1. Academic Records. Applicants must submit an official transcript indicating successful completion of a master's degree program from any discipline from an institution accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
2. A cumulative GPA of 3.00 or above on the applicant's graduate degree is required for entrance into the program
3. TOEFL Scores for students who speak English as a second language (score of 600 paper-based test; 250 computer-based test, 80 internet-based test).

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

If you have further questions about admissions requirements for this program, please contact the Liberty University Advising: luoadvising@liberty.edu

Transfer Credits

Applicants may transfer up to 24 hours of coursework. In order for a transferred course to replace a Liberty University course, the following requirements must be met:

1. The school at which the course was taken must be appropriately accredited.
2. The course credit must be at least three semester hours or five quarter hours.
3. The student must have earned a grade of B- or better in the course.
4. The course must overlap one of Liberty's courses by at least 80%. The course(s) to be transferred must have been completed within seven (7) years of the start date of the student's program at Liberty University.
5. Credits from a prior degree on the same academic level earned through Liberty University are considered transfer credits.

Transfer credit will not be given for the following courses: 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 asked 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.

Graduation Requirements

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

1. Complete 51 hours
2. A maximum of 50% of a post-graduate and doctoral degree may be transferred if approved and allowable, including credit from an earned degree from Liberty University on the same academic level.
3. 3.0 GPA
4. No grades lower than a B- may be applied to the degree
5. Degree must be completed within 7 years
6. Submission of Degree Completion Application must be completed within the last semester of a student's anticipated graduation date.

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.

Financial Aid

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

Program Policies and Procedures

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

DSL Program Handbook

Upon admission to the program, students are required to read the DSL 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.

Grading

The PhD BA program uses the standard grading scale for doctoral programs, which is a 6-point scale. Students must earn a minimum grade of "B-" in all doctoral-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

Grade of B minus

A 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. Grades below a "B minus" will not count towards graduation.

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 evaluated for administrative dismissal from the program by DSL Administration.

Enrollment and Breaks in Enrollment

All students are required to maintain enrollment in the DSL program.

1. Until students begin the research project 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 research project phase, they are required to be enrolled in each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) until graduation.

3. Students that have an unapproved break in enrollment will need to reapply to the program and will be moved to the most current Degree Completion Plan (DCP) if accepted.

A student facing certain unforeseen circumstances may contact his or her professor to determine if assignment extensions are possible (as noted in the course syllabi or, if warranted, an incomplete can be granted in order to allow time to complete coursework). An incomplete cannot be granted for any of the 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 Chair of Doctoral Programs. The Chair 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.

Doctoral Research Project

Following the completion of all doctoral coursework and the concept paper course (BMAL 785), students must successfully complete a Doctoral Research Project (DRP) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Strategic Leadership. These courses are BMAL 887, 888, 889, & 890.

The DRP is a comprehensive research project involving a current leadership problem found in the literature. The focus of the ADRP is on research relevant to the 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 over sequential semesters.

The DRP is expected to exhibit scholarship, reflect mastery of technique, and make a distinctive contribution to the field of leadership. A research chair is responsible for the general supervision and progression of the DRP. A presentation of the research is required for final approval in BMAL 890. The research chair will guide the student through various stages of research. The research chair will determine when the research project is ready to be presented.

Canvas LMS and Turnitin

All courses will use the Canvas Learning Management System. Turnitin originality software is utilized by the university to verify the originality of written work. Students needing assistance with these systems can find support at the Technology Education Center.

Academic Misconduct

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

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.

Administrative Dismissal Policy

DSL Core Courses: Students are allowed to repeat a total of two courses from: the DSL Core for a total of 6 hours if they fail or withdraw. This applies regardless of whether the student fails the class (a C+ grade or lower, or an FN grade) or withdraws from the class (a W grade).

DSL Concept Paper Course (BMAL 785): Students are allowed to repeat BMAL 785 one time if they fail the class (an NP or NF grade) or withdraw (a W grade).

DRP Courses: Students in DRP courses may only receive one failing or withdrawal grade (NP, NF, or W) and one making progress but repeating grade (PR) in each course DRP (BMAL 887, 888, 889, & 890).

Once any of the above limits have been reached, the student will not be able to enroll in additional courses in the program and will be evaluated for administrative dismissal from the program. Students considered for dismissal will be notified and will be able to appeal.

Research Chair Change Request Policy

The Research 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. Research Chairs will serve students through 3 separate roles of a mentor:

- Advisor- The research chair is the principal advisor who works with the candidate throughout the research project process.
- Coordinator- The chair will provide the candidate with requirements, conditions, and timelines for the research project documents and the research project process.
- Director- The chair will lead the candidate through each part of the Dissertation and will assist in the selection of methods, direction of the analysis, and the outcome of the research. However, the candidate is ultimately responsible for their progress through the research project.

Regardless of the specific role, the chair is expected to regularly review candidate progress and serve as a mentor, working with the student to move the research project process forward. The chair will carefully review the research project submissions and provide detailed written comments to the candidate, be available to provide further detail if there are questions regarding the comments, and review any revisions prior to determining that the candidate is ready to move forward. In the event a candidate believes a chair is not meeting the above requirements, an appeal for a new chair may be submitted following the process outlined below.

Procedure for Doctoral Candidates to request a change in Research Chair:

1. Changing a Research Chair is not common and should not be taken lightly.
2. Students may submit a formal request to change their Research Chair for the coming semester. Changes are not made during an on-going semester unless there are extenuating circumstances.
3. The student must express their grievance in writing and submit it through the Student Complaint Steps: https://www.liberty.edu/online/complaint-assistance-issue-resolution/steps/ The form must include specific examples with documentation of how the research chair has failed to fulfill their duty as a chair or acted in a manner outside the Liberty Way in their interactions with the student. Only complaints submitted in this manner with supporting documentation will be considered official complaints. Complaints submitted via other forums will not be considered official complaints.
4. The Chair of Doctoral Programs will review the request and accompanying documentation.
5. The Chair of Doctoral Programs will research the issue to include the actions of both the student and the research chair and a decision will be rendered based on research findings.
6. If a change in Research Chair is warranted a replacement will be located for the coming semester. The candidate will be expected to continue to work with the current chair until the change is completed.
7. Any actions by the student found during the investigation that fall outside of the Liberty Way or Code of Conduct will be turned over to the Office of Student Affairs.
8. The student will be notified via email of the decision.
9. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of their initial complaint, they may appeal the decision through the Student Complaint Form. The complaint must include the specific examples and documentation provided in the initial email as well as new information and documentation to substantiate the appeal.

Grievance Policy

The DSL program administration team is committed to the success of our students and doctoral candidates. We recognize that from time to time a grievance might arise that must be addressed in a fair and objective manner. Please follow the procedures below so that we can address your concerns promptly.

All grievances in Doctoral Research Courses (BMAL 785, 887,888,889,890)

1. Doctoral candidates must first make a serious effort to resolve the matter with their research / dissertation chair.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved with their chair or if the issue is related to the program itself, the student can reach out to:
   BusinessDoctoralPrograms@liberty.edu
   The email must include details regarding the grievance and the course/section number and semester. Specific examples with documentation will be helpful in understanding the situation.
3. The Chair of Doctoral Programs will review the grievance and accompanying documentation and reach out to the parties involved for further information if necessary.
4. The doctoral candidate will be notified via email of the decision.
5. If the doctoral candidate is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal the decision by following the complaint process found here:
   https://www.liberty.edu/online/complaint-assistance-issue-resolution/steps/
6. Keep in mind that the complaint must include specific examples and documentation to be considered.

Grade Grievances, not including Doctoral Research Courses (BMAL 785, 887,888,889,890)

1. Doctoral students must contact the course professor regarding a resolution of a grievance related to grades for individual assignments or final grades.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved in this manner, and the final grade has been posted, students may submit a grade appeal following the guidelines found here:
   https://www.liberty.edu/online/graduate-and-doctoral-academic-policies/
3. Keep in mind that the complaint must include specific examples and documentation.
4. The student should note that there is a time limit on submitting a grade appeal following the end of the course.

Other grievances, not including Doctoral Research Courses (BMAL 785, 887,888,889,890)

1. Doctoral students must contact the course professor regarding a resolution of the grievance.
2. If the issue cannot be resolved in this manner, students may submit a complaint following the guidelines found here:
   https://www.liberty.edu/online/complaint-assistance-issue-resolution/steps/
3. Keep in mind that the complaint must include specific examples and documentation.

DSL Course 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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
BMAL 716	Research Theory and Planning	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.
BMAL 720	Leveraging Data for Decision Making	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.

BMAL 727	Leading Effective Teams	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.
BMAL 755	Coaching Theory and Practice	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.
BMAL 770	The Ethical Leader	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.
BMAL 780	Strategic Leadership in the 21st Century	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.
BMAL 785	DRP Research Concept	This course will focus on students completing research concept paper and preparing students for their doctoral research project.
BMAL 887	Doctoral Research Project I	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.
BMAL 888	Doctoral Research Project II	This course is the second step for DSL Doctoral Candidates to develop and complete their doctoral 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 also present their research proposal.
BMAL 889	Doctoral Research Project III	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 presentation in BMAL 990.
BMAL 890	Doctoral Research Project IV	This course is the last step in the DSL program. Doctoral Candidates will present their Doctoral Research Project and finalize their manuscript. Can be taken concurrent with 889.

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 DRP Courses within a single semester for each course in order to follow this timeline. Not all students are able to complete all tasks in a single semester.

Note: Summer J-Term is 14 Weeks

First Semester (Year 1)	Second Semester (Year 1)
B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 700 / 702 D-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 703 / 704	B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 710 / 714 D-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 716 / 720
Third Semester (Year 1)	Fourth Semester (Year 2)
B-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 727 / 755 D-Term (8 Weeks) BMAL 770 / 780	J-Term (7 Weeks) BMAL 785 D-Term (8 Weeks)
Fifth Semester (Year 2)	Sixth Semester (Year 2)
J-Term (16/13 Weeks) BMAL 887	J-Term (16/13 Weeks) BMAL 888
Seventh Semester (Year 3)	Eighth Semester (Year 3)
J-Term (16/13 Weeks) BMAL 889	J-Term (16/13 Weeks) BMAL 890

Note: The table includes the three cognate courses.

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.