

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SMEAL - PH.D., M.S.)

Degree Requirements

Master of Science (M.S.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Admission to the M.S. program is only available to students previously admitted to the Ph.D. program, with the approval of the Director of the Ph.D. program. The M.S. degree requires a minimum of 30 credits at the 400, 500, 600, or 800 level in business administration or related areas, including a thesis or scholarly paper. Students who complete a thesis must take at least 18 credits at the 500 or 600 level, with a minimum of 6 credits in thesis research (BA 600 or BA 610). The thesis must be accepted by the committee members, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School. Students who choose the non-thesis option must take at least 18 credits at the 500 level, and complete a satisfactory scholarly paper while enrolled in BA 596.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

Competency Expectations

Entrance into the doctoral program in business administration does not require the completion of an undergraduate degree specifically in business. While almost any major at the undergraduate level may be acceptable, graduate study in business administration does presume a minimum level of competency in mathematics, statistics, and computing. No transcript credit is required for entering doctoral students in these areas, except where specified by particular fields of specialization. However, it must be emphasized that lack of minimum competency in mathematics, statistics and computing could be a significant disadvantage to the student.

Breadth Requirement

All students are expected to develop a broad understanding of the functions of the business organization. To achieve breadth, all Ph.D. students must show competency by completing 12 credits at the 400, 500, or 800 level in a minimum of two of the approved fields of study within the Smeal College of Business and/or in Economics in the College of the Liberal Arts. The 12 credits in the breadth requirement must be taken in fields outside or separate from a student's primary, supporting, and research competency fields.

Primary Field Requirements

All students are required to achieve competency in a primary field of business administration. The primary field is the sphere of scholarship that commands the most extensive and intensive portion of a program and is the area in which the student's dissertation research is conducted and the Ph.D. committee chair is selected. Primary fields may be selected from the following:

- accounting;
- finance;
- insurance and real estate;

- management and organization;
- marketing;
- supply chain and information systems.

Graduate work in a selected primary field may require competency in prerequisite areas, including undergraduate work in the field itself as well as prior work in mathematics, statistics, computer science, economics, and social and behavioral sciences. The prerequisite work will be specified by each primary field.

Supporting Field Requirements

All students must select a supporting field of study from business administration or related outside areas. Those spheres of scholarship complement the student's primary field. Supporting fields from business administration include all the primary fields. Outside supporting fields include, but are not limited to,

- anthropology,
- civil engineering,
- computer science,
- economics,
- industrial engineering,
- mathematics,
- political science,
- psychology,
- sociology,
- statistics.

Research Methods Field

All students must develop a broad understanding of the scientific research process and in-depth competency in the research methods used in the primary field. Each student's Ph.D. committee shall specify a minimum of 4 courses/12 credits at the 400, 500, or 800 level (beyond the M.B.A. core courses) to constitute a supporting field in research methods. These courses should cover specific methods and tools relevant for research in the primary fields. A member of the Ph.D. committee shall be designated to represent the research methods field and shall be responsible for evaluating the student's competence in the field.

Research Paper and Presentation Requirement

To introduce students early to the research process, each Ph.D. student must complete a written research paper within two years after admission to the Ph.D. program. The student must then present the paper at an open departmental workshop or seminar within one semester after the paper is approved by the department committee and chair. The student must work under the guidance of a Research Paper Supervisor (who may or may not later be the dissertation adviser). The research paper supervisor mentors the student, possibly suggesting the research topic, monitoring progress, providing ideas and feedback, and helping the student develop appropriate research, writing, and presentation skills. The paper must substantially represent the student's work, and must be written by the student. The paper must clearly define and motivate the problem being addressed, contain a comprehensive literature review, and present the research contributions and conclusions. Approval of written paper and presentation can be used as a means to satisfy the Graduate Council English competence and communication requirement (to be completed before the comprehensive examination).

Dissertation

To earn the Ph.D. degree, doctoral candidates must write a dissertation that is accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School, and the student must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense).