

Doctor of Business Administration Program Review Summary Report, March 2023

Programs Reviewed:

- Doctor of Business Administration

External Review Team Appointed by the Provost & Vice President Academic:

- Dr. Rex Hammond, Dean, School of Business and Professional Studies, Virginia University Lynchburg, Lynchburg
- Dr. Harjeet Bhabra, Dean, Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University, Halifax
- Dr. Agnieszka Palalas, Program Director, Distance Education/Associate Professor, Athabasca University (Internal Observer)

Key Milestones:

- Program Review Kick-off: March 4, 2022
- Self-Study approval by DBA Program Council: September 6, 2022
- Self-Study reviewed by Faculty of Business Faculty Council: September 21, 2022
- Self-Study Reviewed by Faculty of Graduate Studies Faculty Council: October 6, 2022
- Virtual Site Visit: December 1-2, 2022
- Receipt of External Reviewer Report: January 19, 2023
- Program Response Report to Faculty of Business Faculty Council: April 5, 2023
- Program Response Report to Faculty of Graduate Studies Faculty Council: May 4, 2023
- Program Response Report to Academic Planning, Priorities and Standards Committee (APPSC) of General Faculties Council: June 20, 2023
- Public Posting of DBA Program Review Summary Report: following APPSC meeting
- Annual Program Update to APPSC: June 2024

Summary of Key Findings from the Self-study and External Reviewer Reports:

The DBA Program Self-Study document outlined the program's strengths and weakness and put forward a list of recommendations for improvement. Program strengths included the AUFB faculty resources, flexibility of the program structure, student diversity, and the potential for student contribution to societal outcomes. Program weaknesses were centered around financial considerations, student supervision, and course value. The main recommendations offered by the self-study included a strengthening of supervisory practices, curriculum review to refocus on the balance between scholarly rigor and practitioner impact, and building broader participation of AU FB faculty members for a stronger research culture in the program. The

external review team agreed with the conclusions of the self-study and offered twelve separate recommendations that emphasized program focus and positioning, faculty engagement, curriculum review, supervisory practices to improve student completion time, and student/alumni engagement. The external review team completed their report with the following observations:

“There is commendable introspection and incremental improvement demonstrated by Athabasca University as exemplified by its participation in continual accreditation, self-studies, and review processes. The DBA program enjoys broad support from current students and alumnus. Athabasca University and its DBA program are working from a position of strength.”

Program Council Action Plan Including Dean's Response:

	Recommendations (in order of priority for the program)	Proposed Action(s)	Timeline (include specifics)	Individual(s) Responsible for Leading the Action(s) (by role)	Responsibility for Resourcing Action(s) (if applicable; by role)	Dean's Response
1.	Supervisory Assignment and Faculty Engagement (Recommendations 2, 8, 10, 9)					
		Formal recognition in faculty workload for engagement in the DBA	2023-2024	- Associate Dean Faculty Development - Associate Dean Graduate Programs and Research - Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs		Supported
		Assign additional faculty members to teach/coordinate courses	2023-2025	- DBA Program Director (PD)		Supported
		Pilot early/interim supervisor assignment	2023-2024	- DBA PD		Supported
		Introduce an annual reflection meeting	2023-2024	- DBA PD		Supported
2.	Program Structure & Curriculum (Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 7)			-		
		Curriculum review	2023-2027	- DBA PD - Associate Dean Graduate Programs and Research		Supported
		Map how competencies are developed (quantitative/qualitative, writing, career-orientation)	2023-2024	- DBA PD		Supported
		Revise curriculum	2024-2028	- DBA PD - Associate Dean Graduate Programs and Research		Supported

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3. Student And Alumni Engagement Opportunities (Recommendations 11, 12)					
	Invitations for optional participation in faculty research clusters	2023-2024	- DBA PD		Supported
	Explore establishing "AUFB DBA Network"	2023-2025	- Manager Strategic Recruitment and Enrollment	FB Dean	Supported
4. Program Objectives and Positioning (Recommendation 1)					
	Develop explanations of DBA vs. PhD, program focus, and example research topics and approaches	2023-2024	- DBA PD		Supported
	Update DBA webpage	2024-2025	- DBA PD	University Relations	Supported
5. Succession and Replacement (Recommendation 3)					
	Monitor workload of DBA PD	2023-2024	- DBA PD - Associate Dean Graduate Programs and Research		Supported
	Prepare successor DBA PD	2025-2026	- DBA PD - Associate Dean Graduate Programs and Research		Supported