7.5 DOCTORAL PROGRAMS IN BUSINESS

The doctor of philosophy degree is awarded for scholarly attainment and represents the highest degree in business administration that the University may bestow upon a student. Doctoral programs in business are designed principally for those who wish to prepare for careers in university teaching or for research positions in business and government.

The faculty of the Manderson Graduate School of Business offer the PhD degree in seven business fields: accounting, applied statistics, economics, finance, management, operations management, and marketing. The doctoral program in operations management offers an interdisciplinary concentration in management information systems.

**Dual degree programs in Law and Economics.** The University of Alabama School of Law and the Department of Economics, Finance, and Legal Studies offer the opportunity to obtain the dual juris doctor (JD)/doctor in philosophy (PhD) degree in the field of economics. In order to be accepted in the JD/PhD program, a student must apply for admission to, and be accepted into, the PhD program in economics and the JD. For additional information about these doctoral programs and access to specific program policies and guidelines visit the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration web site.

Doctoral programs in business are built upon the premise that a student should possess an extensive, in-depth knowledge of one major field of study and one supporting or minor field of study, as well as knowledge of statistical and quantitative methods of analysis necessary to conduct research and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in business. Special emphasis is placed on the fact that the degree is not granted as a result of the student's having taken a given number of courses or having earned a given number of credit hours.

These factors, while obviously important, will vary for different students: consequently, there is no total number of courses or hours that satisfies degree requirements uniformly for all students. Instead, the requirements should be thought of primarily from the standpoint of the student’s ability to satisfy the graduate faculty that he or she has a thorough grasp of the fields selected. In all cases, however, students must meet the minimum requirements stipulated by the Graduate School and by the Manderson Graduate School of Business.

In addition to the course requirements, each student must show evidence of research competence by writing a dissertation and must satisfy the language/research tool requirement of his or her major field. The dissertation, as the culmination of each student’s scholarly efforts, should be a significant contribution to the field of knowledge in business.

7.5.1 Admission to PhD Degree Programs

Admission to doctoral programs in business is open to qualified individuals who hold undergraduate and/or graduate degrees from accredited colleges and universities. Individuals seeking admission to a doctoral program should follow the application procedure established by the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. Applications for admission are carefully evaluated by selected members of the graduate faculty of the specific field to which the student is seeking admission. Additional information is in the Admission Criteria section of
7.5.2 Degree Requirements

**Student program committee.** For registration for the first semester or summer session in residence, each student will be advised by the graduate coordinator or department head of the major field. The graduate coordinator guides the student in course selection and counsels the student regarding other aspects of the program.

**Plan of Study.** The PhD Plan of Study is available at the Graduate School website. All doctoral students must have a completed Plan of Study approved by the Graduate School no later than the semester during which the student will complete 30 semester hours of UA and/or transfer credit toward the doctoral degree. Otherwise, a “hold” may be placed on future registrations. An amended Plan of Study (if needed) must be submitted to the Graduate School when the student submits the form for Admission to Candidacy for Doctoral Degree.

**Scholastic requirements.** If a student's cumulative grade average falls below "B," or if the student earns a "D" or "F" in a graduate course, the student may be dismissed from the program.

**Residency requirements.** The minimum period (following the bachelor's degree) for earning the PhD will vary dependent on the discipline. The program is full-time and a student is expected to maintain continuous residence at The University of Alabama. Additional information on doctoral residency is in the Doctoral Degrees section of this catalog.

**Major field requirements.** The student must choose a major field from one of the following programs: accountancy, applied statistics, economics, finance, management, marketing, or operations management. The major field may include cognate courses offered by divisions of the University outside or within the Manderson Graduate School of Business. The student must take at least seven graduate-level courses in the major field to prepare for the comprehensive examination.

**Minor field requirements.** One minor field of study must be selected from within the Manderson Graduate School of Business or in a discipline outside the School that is closely related to the student's major field of study. To satisfy the minor-field requirement, the student must meet the standards set by the program area granting the minor. In general, this means that the student must demonstrate a thorough grasp of the philosophy, methodology, and literature dealing with the minor field. The student must take a minimum of four graduate courses to satisfy the minor-field requirement. Some minor fields require a written comprehensive examination. For applied statistics, the minor-field requirement is replaced by the interdisciplinary field courses.

**Quantitative methods requirements.** Each student is required to complete two courses in statistical methods equivalent to the content of ST 550 and ST 551, and two additional courses involving more advanced quantitative and/or statistical methods. These two elective courses are in addition to courses selected to satisfy the major or minor field requirements. A student who selects statistics as the major or minor field may satisfy the quantitative-methods requirement by completing at least four courses involving quantitative methods in addition to those selected to satisfy the minor field requirements in statistics.
**Language/research tool requirements.** There is no University-wide or College-wide language/research tool requirement for the PhD degree. Each program offering the degree may set its own requirements. In cases where the program has established a language/research tool requirement, candidates must complete the language/research tool requirement before taking the preliminary examination. Each student should contact the doctoral program coordinator in his or her major field for more information concerning language/research tool requirements.

**Comprehensive and preliminary examinations.** Each student is required to pass a comprehensive examination in the major field, and, if required, a comprehensive examination in the minor field(s). The examinations primarily aim to determine the student's ability to show relationships among the various segments of knowledge within the major and minor fields of study. The written examination in the major field is scheduled for each student by the department head or program director. Examinations in the minor field (if required) may be taken at any time scheduled by the respective programs.

Some disciplines may also require a preliminary or qualifying examination in which the student must demonstrate competency in the major field in order to continue in the program. Such examinations will normally be administered after the first year in the program and will be scheduled by the department head or program coordinator.

In accordance with University policy, a student may attempt each examination no more than two times. However, each student should consult his or her program’s policies for the written comprehensive examination because programs may vary in approach and requirements.

**Dissertation committee.** The dissertation committee is appointed by the department head or the graduate coordinator in the student's major field, in consultation with the faculty and the student. The dean of the Graduate School must approve the committee upon submission of the form for **Appointment/Change of Doctoral Dissertation Committee.** The committee consists of a minimum of five members of the graduate faculty; no fewer than two members must be from outside the student's major field and at least one member must be from outside the student's academic department. Each member of the committee must possess a terminal degree. Exceptions must be approved by the dean of the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration and by the dean of the Graduate School. The director of the dissertation is the chairperson of the committee.

Program areas may impose additional procedures for approval of dissertation proposals. The dissertation committee is responsible for admission of the student to candidacy, supervision of the dissertation, and administration of the final oral examination.

**Admission to candidacy.** Students are certified by the dean of the Graduate School for **Admission to Candidacy** for the PhD degree after they have met the following requirements:

1. Completed the program of approved coursework
2. Demonstrated in comprehensive examinations their competence in (a) the major field and (b) each minor field requiring an examination
3. Satisfactorily fulfilled the language/research tool requirement, if any
4. Passed the preliminary examination, if required
5. Established an approved dissertation committee
6. Received approval of the dissertation proposal from the dissertation committee

**Dissertation requirements.** A dissertation showing power of independent research and
literary skill must be prepared on a topic in the major field. The subject of the dissertation must be approved by the student's dissertation committee. A student who completes the coursework but fails to complete the dissertation within five years after being admitted to candidacy will be required to retake the written examinations and the preliminary oral examination. All candidates are expected to register for dissertation supervision each semester and summer session until the dissertation is completed.

**Final oral examination.** When the dissertation has been completed the candidate will be given a final oral examination by the committee. This examination is primarily concerned with the research work of the candidate as embodied in the dissertation and the field in which the dissertation lies, but it may extend over the whole primary field of study. The final oral examination is governed by the rules of the Graduate School of The University of Alabama. All faculty members of the Manderson Graduate School of Business are invited to attend final oral examinations. The candidate will present a copy of the final draft of the dissertation to each committee member at least two weeks in advance of the final oral examination.

**Time limit for completion of the PhD.** A student entering the PhD program must complete all requirements for the PhD degree within seven years of the date of admission in the graduate program. If a student is suspended from the PhD program for exceeding the time limits for completion of the program, the individual may petition the department chair and the Culverhouse College of Commerce and Business Administration's PhD Programs Committee.

Extension of time and/or additional requirements for readmission to the program must be recommended to the Graduate School of The University of Alabama by the student's departmental graduate faculty and the dean of the college. A maximum one-semester extension may be granted in those rare instances in which the student presents documentation of compelling circumstances beyond the student's control that made it impossible to complete the degree within 21 semesters after admission. See **Time Limits Extension Request (Doctoral Only)** for the steps in the University's policy and conditions needed for the dean of the UA Graduate School to consider a one-semester extension.

Additional information on the doctoral time limit and all other requirements is in the **Degree Requirements** section of this catalog.