<http://www.uwb.edu/wacc/teaching/writing/reviews>

<http://guides.library.vcu.edu/lit-review>

## Finding a Research Topic

Which step of the research process takes the most time?

A. Finding a topic  
B. Researching a topic  
C. Both

How did you answer the above question? Do you spend most of your efforts actually researching a topic, or do you spend a lot of time and energy finding a topic? Ideally, you’ll want to spend fairly equal amounts of effort on both. Finding an appropriate and manageable topic can sometimes be just as hard as researching a topic.

A good research topic will have a body of related research which is accessible and manageable. Identifying a topic with these characteristics at the *beginning*of the research process will ultimately save you time.

Finding a research topic that is interesting, relevant, feasible, and worthy of your time may take substantial effort so you should be prepared to invest your time accordingly. Considering your options, doing some background work on each option, and ultimately settling on a topic that is manageable will spare you many of the frustrations that come from attempting research on a topic that, for whatever reason, may not be appropriate.

Remember that as you are searching for a research topic you will need to be able to find enough information about your topic(s) in a book or scholarly journal. If you can only find information about your topic(s) in current event sources (newspapers, magazines, etc.) then the topic might be too new to have a large body of published scholarly information. If this is the case, you may want to reconsider the topic(s).

So how do you find a research topic? Unfortunately there’s no directory of topics that you pick and choose from, but there are a few relatively easy techniques that you can use to find a relevant and manageable topic. A good starting point may be to view the Library's **Resources for Finding a Research Topic Workshop** below.

The sub-pages in this section (on the left-hand menu) offer various tips for where and how to locate resources to develop your research topic. And for additional information on selecting a research topic, see the resources below.

* [Defining a Topic - SAGE Research Methods](http://methods.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/project-planner/defining-a-topic)
* [Narrowing the Topic - NCU Academic Success Center](https://vac.ncu.edu/writing-center/p/25)
* [Top 10 Tips for Choosing a Dynamic Dissertation Topic - ASC Webinar](https://vac.ncu.edu/academic-coaching-services/video/33479/top-10-tips-choosing-dynamic-dissertation-topic)
* [Develop My Research Idea - APA Central](http://apastylecentral.apa.org.proxy1.ncu.edu/)

Note: You MUST create an APA Central account AND start a paper in order to access this tool. Once you have done so, open a paper and click Research Lab Book in the left navigation menu.

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATIONDESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program is designed for current and potential business leaders and senior managers, in the private and public sectors to enhance their knowledge and competencies appropriate to a leadership role in business administration. The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program is a research-based degree, but unlike the PhD, the DBA program is intended to engage the student in the application of theoretical knowledge to the advancement of practice in the field (solving complex problems) (Archibald, 2010; Corley & Giola 2011; Huba, Shubb & Shelley, 2006).  The outcome of the research is designed to provide valuable insights to an organization. Examples of an applied investigation may include a replication study, a case study, or a special project (such as, for example, the creation of a curriculum, training program, or educational artifact), followed by an evaluation. A doctoral project for a professional degree does not have to be an original contribution to the body of knowledge that impacts the theories in the field, but typically responds to a practical problem or proposed innovation (Archibald, 2010).  The DBA is increasingly recognized by international business and management schools as the most appropriate post-MBA (or equivalent master’s degree) route to combining academic research with management and business. LEARNING OUTCOMES  * Communicate with diverse audiences about practices, solutions, and perspectives related to business * Construct socially responsible and ethic business strategies * Evaluate the relationship between the global environment and business decisions * Formulate solutions to practical business problems based on original research    BASIS FOR ADMISSIONS Admission to the Doctor of Business Administration program will be determined by the degree used to meet the basis for admission. In order to enter the doctoral program, applicants are required to have a conferred master’s degree from a nationally or regionally accredited academic institution. There are two options for entering the doctoral program in the School of Business and Technology Management.   1. **Direct Entry –** Individuals may immediately begin the doctoral program through the DBA or PhD track with a previously completed master’s degree in one of the following:  * A generalized business area such as business management or business administration, * Specialized business area (e.g. Master of Finance, Master of Human Resources Management) **AND** an undergraduate degree in business   ***OR***   * A previously completed master’s degree in any field **AND** an undergraduate in business.  1. **Evaluation Track –**Individuals not meeting the direct entry requirements are required to take [SKS-7001 - Doctoral Comprehensive Strategic Knowledge Studies](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt1332) as part of their degree plan.   Students in the Evaluation track will begin their degree plan with [BTM -7101](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt7579) Foundations for Doctoral Studies in Business followed by [SKS-7001 - Doctoral Comprehensive Strategic Knowledge Studies](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt318) and upon successful completion of [SKS -7001](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt3124) take the remaining courses in their degree plan.  Students who feel that they have the business background and knowledge are allowed to take a test-out exam that covers the major business areas. The student must score 70 or above on the exam and can be taken no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of [SKS -7001](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt235) Comprehensive Strategic Knowledge Studies course. This can be discussed with your enrollment or student academic advisor. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS Admission to the Doctorate programs requires a master’s degree from an accredited institution (also see Direct Entry and Evaluation Track Requirements).  The University may accept a maximum of 9 semester credit hours in transfer toward the doctoral degree for graduate coursework completed at an accredited college or university with a grade of “B” or better.  The DBA degree programs in business have the following graduation requirements:   * A minimum of 45 credit hours of graduate instruction must be completed through Northcentral * Grade Point Average of 3.0 (letter grade of “B”) or higher * Satisfactory completion of the DBA Portfolio * University Approval of Dissertation Manuscript and Oral Presentation completed * Submission of the approved final dissertation manuscript to the University Registrar, including the original unbound dissertation manuscript and an electronic copy * Official documents on file for basis of admission: a conferred master’s degree from an accredited academic institution * Official transcripts on file for all transfer credit hours accepted by the University * All financial obligations to the University paid in full  FUNDAMENTAL COMPETENCIES Students in the DBA program are required to demonstrate competency in the areas listed below:   * **Graduate-Level Research Methods Competency-** DBA students are required to complete [BTM -7303](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt7686) and [BTM -7103](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt8307), [BTM -7109](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt9543) and either [BTM -7108](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt9944) or [BTM -7106](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt9002) at Northcentral. * **Graduate-Level Statistics Competency-**DBA students are required to complete [BTM -7104](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt4132) Business Statistics at Northcentral. * **Computer Competency -**Doctoral students are required to have computer skills necessary for completing a dissertation. Students must be able to prepare documents using advanced word processing skills (e.g., creation of tables and figures, headers and footers, page breaks, tables of contents, hanging indents). Students must use computer programs for the statistical analysis of data (e.g., SAS). Students must produce a computer-based presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) for their dissertation oral examination.  TIME TO COMPLETION Northcentral University allows 7 years to complete all doctoral programs of 60 credits or less.  Normal time to completion for this program is 84 months.  Time to completion varies depending upon the pace in which a student completes courses and the number of transfer credits accepted. As most Northcentral students are working adults balancing educational, professional, and personal commitments, our academic advisors will work with you to develop a program schedule that works best for your needs.  The normal time disclosed above reflects the experience of students who may have entered under different program requirements. In the quest for continuous improvement, academic leadership has revised the program to optimize curriculum and pace, facilitate student learning, and improve chances for success. Therefore, the program is now designed for students enrolling today to take advantage of these revised course structures, lengths, and schedules. New students following the preferred schedule designed by the Dean for this program, and applying no transfer credits, can expect to finish in as little as 39 months.  Courses taken to satisfy the fundamental requirements may not be counted toward completion of required specializations courses or electives.  Students who complete at least 15 credit hours in a single area of specialization at Northcentral University (not counting foundational courses) may elect to have the specialization recorded on their transcript and diploma. Students may also opt for a General Business specialization, electing 15 credit hours of cross-discipline courses. Elective courses must be appropriate to the student’s degree program. DISSERTATION PROCESS Faculty assists each Northcentral University Doctoral student to reach this high goal through a systematic process leading to a high-quality completed dissertation. This process requires care in choosing a topic, documenting its importance, planning the methodology, and conducting the research. These activities lead smoothly into the writing and oral presentation of the dissertation.  A doctoral candidate must be continuously enrolled throughout the series of dissertation courses. Dissertation courses are automatically scheduled and accepted without a break in scheduling to ensure that students remain in continuous enrollment throughout the dissertation course sequence.  If additional time is required to complete any of the dissertation courses, students must re-enroll and pay the tuition for that course. Continuous enrollment will only be permitted when students demonstrate progress toward completing dissertation requirements. The Dissertation Committee determines progress. COURSE SEQUENCE The DBA program may be completed in 54 credits. Additional credit hours may be allowed as needed to complete the dissertation research. If granted, additional courses will be added to the student degree program in alignment with the SAP and Academic Maximum Time to Completion policies. Students who do not complete their program in accordance with these policies may be dismissed.  All DBA specializations require the following courses:  Required Foundational Courses must be taken first and in sequence. Evaluation track students will take [SKS -7001](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt5841) after [BTM -7101](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt3498) and before [BTM -7300](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt4271).   * [BTM-7101 - Doctoral Studies in Business](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [SKS-7001 - Doctoral Comprehensive Strategic Knowledge Studies](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) - Eval Track Students * [BTM-7300 - Scholarly Literature Review](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [MGT-7019 - Ethics in Business](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [BTM-7104 - Statistics I](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * Specialization Course 1 * [BTM-7303 - Research Methods](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * Specialization Course 2 * [BTM-7103 - Research Design](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * Specialization Course 3 * Specialization Course 4 * [BTM-7106 - Quantitative Research Design](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) -OR- [BTM -7108 Qualitative Research Design](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt3210) \* * Specialization Course 5 * [BTM-7109 - Planning Dissertation Research in Business](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [CMP-9600B - DBA Portfolio](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [DIS9901A - Components of the Dissertation](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [DIS9902A - The Dissertation Proposal](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [DIS9903A - Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Data Collection](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [DIS9904A - The Dissertation Manuscript and Defense](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * Note: \* A few months prior to [BTM -7106 Quantitative Research Design](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt325), students must consult with their Academic Advisors to consider whether the alternate course [BTM -7108 Qualitative Research Design](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search#tt127) might better suit their plans for a dissertation.  ADVANCED ACCOUNTING SPECIALIZATION This specialization is designed to provide students with practical application of a broad accounting perspective and technical accounting knowledge, enabling the exploration of relationships among business activities, economic outcomes, and business performance. Students will be able to meet the demand for analyzing advanced management and organization of business transactions and statements related to the assets, liabilities, and operating results of a business. SPECIALIZATION COURSES – 15 CREDIT HOURS Select 5 courses from the following list:   * [ACC-7000 - Advanced Managerial Accounting](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [ACC-7010 - Advanced Accounting and Fraud Examination Techniques](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [ACC-7015 - Advanced Forensic Accounting Theory and Practice](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [ACC-7020 - Advanced Accounting for Non-Profit Organizations](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [ACC-7025 - Advanced Tax Strategies](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [ACC-7030 - Advanced Auditing Methods and Practice](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [ACC-7035 - Advanced Accounting Theory and Policy](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search) * [ACC-7045 - Advanced Cost Accounting](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search)  NOTE Electives selected on the initial degree plan can be changed with a request to an Academic Advisor. |   Return to Catalog Search Return to: [Catalog Search](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/search_advanced.php?catoid=6)  [Print Degree PlannerPage](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search)  [Add to My Favorites](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/portfolio_nopop.php?catoid=6&add=1&poid=1125#programs)  [Print-Friendly Page](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=6&poid=%201125&hl=DBA&returnto=search&print)  [Help](http://ncu.catalog.acalog.com/help.php) | |  |

## Resources for a Literature Review or an Annotated Bibliography

Annotated bibliographies and literature reviews are very common forms of writing. The intent of each is to assist you, as the researcher, in gathering resources, identifying trends and problems in the research field, and analyzing those resources to assist your own research. This type of writing is also very helpful to the reader as it identifies key research articles and synthesizes the information to create a coherent picture in which the reader can place your research. Remember that you only want to include pivotal and influential research in this type of writing – this means you will want to focus on scholarly articles that contain primary research. Though literature reviews and annotated bibliographies accomplish a very similar purpose, they are not written in an identical manner.

According to the Purdue OWL website, an annotated bibliography is “a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. … Therefore an annotated bibliography includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources.” An annotated bibliography is compiled of references and summaries in alphabetical order. For more information see the**OWL at Purdue Annotated Bibliographies** page. For information about how to find examples of annotated bibliographies, see the Library's **Annotated Bibliographies FAQ**.

A literature review, on the other hand, is “a summary of what the scientific literature says about your specific topic or question.” A literature review generally organizes references by subject matter, theory type, methodology design, etc. A literature review is generally much more exploratory than an annotated bibliography, and must pull together the information that is presented in many disparate sources to form one, cohesive picture of the research field. For more information see the **OWL at Purdue Types of APA Papers** page.

How do you go about getting the resources you need to write a literature review or an annotated bibliography? Library databases like [EBSCOhost](http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/login.aspx?authtype=ip,uid&profile=ehost) and [ProQuest](http://search.proquest.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/advanced) are a great place to start because they contain so many resources on so many different topics, but there are some additional databases that you may want to consider using for these types of assignments. These sub-pages identify resources and research techniques for your literature review.

* [OWL at Purdue Annotated Bibliographies](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/)
* [Annotated Bibliographies FAQ](https://ncu.libanswers.com/faq/168416)
* [OWL at Purdue Types of APA Papers](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/13/)

## Additional Resources

For additional information about conducting literature reviews, please see the following resources from the NCU Library:

Aveyard, H. (2010). [Doing a literature review in health and social care: A practical guide (2nd edition)](http://site.ebrary.com/lib/ncent/docDetail.action?docID=10413319).Berkshire, GBR: Open University Press.

Card, N. (2010). [Literature review](http://srmo.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/view/encyc-of-research-design/n222.xml). In N. Salkind (Ed.), Encyclopedia of research design. (pp.726-729). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Chaffee, S., & Lieberma, D. (2001). [The challenge of writing the literature review](http://srmo.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/view/how-to-publish-your-communication-research/d4.xml). In A. Alexander, & W. James Potter (Eds.), How to Publish Your Communication Research. (pp. 23-47).Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Ford, N. (2012). [How to do a literature review](http://srmo.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/view/the-essential-guide-to-using-the-web-for-research/n5.xml?rskey=WovdyZ). In The essential guide to using the web for research. (pp. 53-81). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

[Literature Review](http://srmo.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/view/research-and-evaluation-methods-in-special-education/n3.xml). (2004). In Donna M. Mertens, & John A. McLaughlin (Eds.), Research and Evaluation Methods in Special Education. (pp. 35-50). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

[Literature Reviews](http://srmo.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/view/the-handbook-of-social-work-research-methods/n23.xml). (2001). In Bruce A. Thyer (Ed.), The Handbook of Social Work Research Methods. (pp. 400-413). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc

[Literature Reviews and Bibliographic Searches](http://dx.doi.org.proxy1.ncu.edu/10.4135/9781849208925.n22). (2006). In V. Desai, & R. Potter (Eds.), Doing Development Research. (pp. 209-222). London, England: SAGEPublications, Ltd.

Race, R. (2008). [Literature review](http://knowledge.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/view/research/n249.xml). In L. Given (Ed.), The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods. (pp. 488-490). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Thomas, D. R., & Hodges, I. D. (2010). [Doing a literature review](http://dx.doi.org.proxy1.ncu.edu/10.4135/9781446289044.n7). In Designing and managing your research project: Core skills for social and health research.(pp. 105-131). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

[Writing a Literature Review](http://srmo.sagepub.com.proxy1.ncu.edu/view/social-research-methods/n19.xml). (2006). In N. Walliman (Ed.), Social Research Methods. (pp. 182-186). London, England: SAGE Publications, Ltd