

WILEY UNIVERSITY

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GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
Executive Doctor of Philosophy in Business Administration

Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies

Office of Academic Affairs

Academic Year 2026–2027

Effective: Spring 2027 Cohort Enrollment

AI, Data Science & Business
Innovation

Entrepreneurship

Faith-Based Administration

60 Credit Hours | 10 Terms of 8-Week Intensive Sessions | Online / Hybrid Format
Target Completion: 2–3 Years | Tuition: \$75,000 All-Inclusive

Morris Thomas, Ph.D., MBA, PMP

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

This handbook supersedes all prior doctoral program handbooks. Policies are subject to annual review.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 Welcome from the Provost

Welcome to the Executive Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Business Administration at Wiley University. This program represents a historic milestone for our institution — the first doctoral program in our 150-year history — and reflects our enduring commitment to academic excellence, scholarly rigor, and the development of transformative leaders.

The Executive Ph.D. is designed for accomplished professionals who seek to combine rigorous doctoral scholarship with the demands of executive leadership. You will conduct original research, develop expertise in your chosen concentration, and produce a dissertation that contributes meaningfully to your field. We are honored to walk this journey with you.

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Wiley University | Marshall, Texas

1.2 Institutional Mission Alignment

Wiley University's mission is to provide a quality education that prepares students to be lifelong learners and productive members of a global society. The Executive Ph.D. in Business Administration directly advances this mission by developing scholar-practitioners capable of generating knowledge that addresses complex business, organizational, and societal challenges.

1.3 Program Overview

Program Detail	Description
Degree Conferred	Executive Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Business Administration
Division	Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies
Credit Hours	60 post-master's credit hours
Program Structure	10 terms of 8-week intensive sessions
Target Completion	2 years (target); 2.5–3 years (average with dissertation)
Maximum Completion	7 years from first enrollment
Delivery Format	Online / Hybrid
Application Fee	\$50 (non-refundable)
All-Inclusive Tuition	\$75,000
Launch	Spring 2027 (first cohort)
Target First Cohort	24 students

1.4 Concentrations

- AI, Data Science & Business Innovation
- Entrepreneurship

- Faith-Based Administration

1.5 About This Handbook

This Doctoral Student Handbook governs all students enrolled in the Executive Ph.D. in Business Administration program. It is issued annually and updated as needed. Students are bound by the policies in effect at the time of their enrollment, subject to program-wide revisions communicated in writing. Where not otherwise specified in this handbook, graduate students should consult the Wiley University Faculty Handbook and the University Course Catalog for applicable institutional policies.

Important Notice

The existing Wiley University Student Handbook governing undergraduate and master's students applies to those populations. This handbook governs doctoral students specifically. In cases of conflict, this Doctoral Student Handbook takes precedence for Executive Ph.D. students.

SECTION 2: ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Application Requirements

Admission to the Executive Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Business Administration requires the submission of all of the following materials to the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies:

1. Wiley University Admissions Application and Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies Doctoral Application (non-refundable application fee of \$50)
2. A master's degree in business administration, management, or a closely related field from a regionally accredited institution with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale. Applicants with a GPA between 3.0 and 3.24 may be considered for probationary admission.
3. A minimum of five (5) years of substantive professional or executive-level work experience, preferably with progressive leadership responsibility
4. Official transcripts from all previously attended colleges and universities, sent directly from the Office of the Registrar to the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies
5. A current curriculum vitae or professional resume
6. Three (3) letters of recommendation from professionals in academia, industry, or executive leadership who can attest to the applicant's scholarly potential, leadership capacity, and readiness for doctoral study
7. A Statement of Purpose (1,500–2,000 words) articulating the applicant's research interests, professional goals, rationale for pursuing the Executive Ph.D., and preferred concentration
8. A scholarly writing sample or professional publication (recommended but not required)
9. An admission interview with doctoral faculty and/or the Dean of the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies
10. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) scores — may be waived for applicants with a master's degree GPA of 3.5 or higher, or with a minimum of ten (10) years of executive-level professional experience

2.2 Admission Categories

Unconditional Admission

Applicants who meet all admission criteria with a master's GPA of 3.25 or above and demonstrate strong evidence of scholarly readiness and executive experience are admitted unconditionally and may begin coursework immediately.

Probationary Admission

Applicants whose credentials do not fully meet admission criteria (e.g., master's GPA between 3.0 and 3.24) may be considered for probationary admission. Students admitted on probation must earn a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above in the first 9 credit hours of doctoral coursework to be removed from probationary status and continue in the program. Failure to meet this threshold will result in administrative withdrawal from the program.

2.3 Requirements for Continued Enrollment and Good Standing

To remain enrolled and in good standing in the Executive Ph.D. program, students must meet all of the following requirements:

- Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.25 on a 4.0 scale throughout the program

- Earn no grade lower than a 'B' in any doctoral course. Any grade below 'B' requires course remediation as determined by the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies
- Maintain continuous enrollment each term unless an approved Leave of Absence is on file
- Complete the Comprehensive Examination by the end of Term 5
- Submit the Dissertation Proposal for committee approval by the end of Term 7
- Demonstrate satisfactory progress on dissertation research and writing, as documented in the Dissertation Progress Tracking Form submitted each semester
- Comply with all academic integrity policies as outlined in Section 6 of this handbook and in the Wiley University Faculty Handbook
- Maintain professional conduct consistent with the standards of executive scholarship and Wiley University's community standards

2.4 Academic Warning and Dismissal

Students whose GPA falls below 3.25 will receive an Academic Warning and must meet with the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies within two (2) weeks to develop an Academic Improvement Plan. If a student's cumulative GPA remains below 3.25 after completing the subsequent term, the student may be dismissed from the program.

Academic dismissal may also result from: failure of the Comprehensive Examination on the second attempt; failure to achieve a successful Dissertation Proposal Defense by the end of Term 8; or violation of academic integrity policies at the doctoral level as described in Section 6.

Students dismissed from the program may be eligible, at the discretion of the Dean, for an off-ramp credential — the Master of Science in Applied Business Research — subject to program approval and credit transfer evaluation.

SECTION 3: PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

3.1 Credit Hour Summary

Curriculum Component	Number of Courses	Credit Hours
Research Foundation Courses	4 courses	12
Advanced Business Core Courses	5 courses	15
Concentration Courses	5 courses	15
Dissertation Sequence (BUSA 7910–7960)	6 enrollments	18
TOTAL		60

Approximately 30% of the program's coursework (18 of 60 credit hours) is cross-referenced from Wiley University's existing Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, carrying distinct doctoral-level course codes in the BUSA 7xxx series with enhanced doctoral expectations, including peer-reviewed literature analysis, doctoral-level research papers, integration with dissertation topics, and oral scholarly presentations. The remaining 42 credit hours (70%) are uniquely doctoral.

3.2 Program Term Schedule (10-Term Sequence)

The program is delivered in 10 consecutive 8-week terms. Students are expected to enroll each term unless an approved Leave of Absence is on file. Below is the standard progression sequence:

Term	Focus Area	Key Milestone
Term 1	Research Foundations I	Orientation & Research Interest Statement
Term 2	Research Foundations II	Literature Review Development
Term 3	Advanced Business Core I	Dissertation Topic Selection
Term 4	Advanced Business Core II + Concentration I	Dissertation Prospectus
Term 5	Concentration II–III	Comprehensive Examination
Term 6	Advanced Core III + Concentration IV–V	Candidacy Declaration
Term 7	Dissertation I (BUSA 7910)	Dissertation Proposal Defense
Term 8	Dissertation II–III (BUSA 7920–7930)	IRB Approval
Term 9	Dissertation IV–V (BUSA 7940–7950)	Draft Defense
Term 10	Dissertation VI (BUSA 7960)	Final Dissertation Defense

3.3 Dissertation Sequence Course Codes

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours
BUSA 7910	Dissertation I: Proposal Development	3
BUSA 7920	Dissertation II: Literature Review and Framework	3
BUSA 7930	Dissertation III: Research Design and IRB	3
BUSA 7940	Dissertation IV: Data Collection and Analysis	3
BUSA 7950	Dissertation V: Findings and Discussion	3
BUSA 7960	Dissertation VI: Defense and Completion	3

For the complete listing of all 30 course titles and codes across concentrations, students should refer to the Wiley University Course Catalog (current edition), which is incorporated by reference.

3.4 Delivery Format and Technology

The Executive Ph.D. is delivered primarily online through Wiley University's Learning Management System, D2L Brightspace. Certain intensive sessions, residencies, or dissertation defenses may be conducted via synchronous video conferencing or, when feasible, on campus. Students must maintain reliable high-speed internet access and access to a personal computer meeting minimum specifications communicated during orientation.

The AI, Data Science & Business Innovation concentration requires access to data analytics tools, statistical software, and AI/ML platforms. See Section 10 of this handbook (Technology and Research Software Plan) for a complete listing of required and provided software resources for each concentration.

SECTION 4: DISSERTATION PROCEDURES AND SUPERVISION

4.1 Dissertation Supervision Structure

Wiley University is committed to providing intentional, mission-aligned doctoral advising that reflects the institution's culture of academic excellence, mentorship, and student support. Dissertation supervision is a shared responsibility of the dissertation committee, the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies, and the Office of Academic Affairs.

Administrative Note — Program Administration Structure

The Executive Ph.D. in Business Administration is administered through the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies under the leadership of the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies. There is no standalone 'Doctoral Program Director' position. Administrative coordination, committee approvals, and progress monitoring are the responsibility of the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies in collaboration with the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. References in this handbook to program administration refer to this shared leadership structure.

4.2 Dissertation Chair Assignment

By the end of Term 2, students submit a Research Interest Proposal along with ranked preferences for potential dissertation chairs. The Dean of the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies, in collaboration with the Provost and the Office of Academic Affairs, evaluates student preferences, research alignment, and faculty advising capacity. Dissertation chairs are assigned based on:

- Demonstrated expertise in the student's area of inquiry
- Evidence of scholarly productivity
- Graduate faculty status as defined by Wiley University policy
- Previous mentoring effectiveness and available advising capacity

Dr. Melvia Scott serves as the primary Lead Dissertation Faculty for the Executive Ph.D. program. Students may be assigned to other qualified doctoral faculty based on research alignment and workload.

4.3 Dissertation Committee Formation

After a dissertation chair is assigned, students work with their chair to develop a Dissertation Committee Proposal, which is submitted to the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies for approval. Each committee must include three to five members who meet Graduate Faculty credentialing standards. Committee requirements are:

- The Dissertation Chair — primary advisor and committee lead
- At least one program faculty member with complementary expertise
- One additional internal or external member who expands interdisciplinary, methodological, or content-area depth

External members from other universities, research centers, or professional agencies may serve when their expertise enhances the student's research direction. External members must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies. Committee composition must reflect methodological breadth and scholarly rigor consistent with doctoral-level research expectations.

4.4 Regular Advisor–Student Meetings

Dissertation chairs must meet with their doctoral advisees no less than once per month throughout the dissertation phase. These meetings provide structured discussion of proposal development, data collection, analysis, and dissertation writing. Faculty advisors document progress using the Wiley University Dissertation Progress Tracking Form, submitted each semester to the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies.

4.5 Advising Caseload Limits

Faculty may serve as the chair of no more than five (5) active dissertation committees at a time and may participate as committee members on up to eight (8) dissertations concurrently. The Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies reviews caseloads annually as part of the Faculty Workload Review Process.

4.6 Comprehensive Examination

The Comprehensive Examination is administered at the end of Term 5 and is the primary gateway to doctoral candidacy. The examination assesses the student's mastery of research methods, theoretical foundations, and concentration-specific content.

Outcomes

- Pass: Admitted to doctoral candidacy; proceeds to dissertation proposal development
- Conditional Pass: The student must remediate specific areas identified by the committee within 30 days before proceeding
- Fail: The student may retake the examination one additional time (Term 6). A second failure results in dismissal review. Students who fail may be eligible for the off-ramp Master of Science in Applied Business Research

4.7 Dissertation Proposal Defense

Students must complete a successful Dissertation Proposal Defense by the end of Term 7. The proposal must be approved by the full dissertation committee and submitted to the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (as applicable) must be secured before data collection commences. See Section 9 (IRB and Research Compliance) for details.

4.8 Final Dissertation Defense

The final dissertation defense is conducted before the full dissertation committee and is open to the university community. Upon successful defense and acceptance of all revisions, the student must submit the final bound dissertation to the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies and complete all degree clearance requirements through the Office of the Registrar.

4.9 Milestones Tracking System

The Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies maintains a centralized Doctoral Milestones Tracking System, managed through the Wiley University Graduate Portal, to monitor progress from matriculation to degree completion. The system records:

- Coursework completion and GPA standing
- Comprehensive Examination completion and outcome
- Dissertation committee formation and approval
- IRB approval (where applicable)
- Dissertation proposal defense
- Dissertation research and writing phases
- Final dissertation defense and submission

SECTION 5: ACADEMIC PROGRESS MONITORING

5.1 Annual Doctoral Progress Review

Every spring, doctoral candidates submit an updated Progress Portfolio, which includes a summary of completed coursework, research activities, program milestones, professional development engagement, and plans for the upcoming academic year. The Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies, in consultation with the student's Dissertation Chair and the Office of Academic Affairs, evaluates each portfolio using a standardized rubric measuring academic performance, research readiness, professional engagement, and adherence to program timelines. Students receive written feedback summarizing their progress, strengths, and recommendations. Students whose progress is unsatisfactory must develop a formal Academic Improvement Plan.

5.2 Early Alert System

Wiley University employs an Early Academic Alert system embedded within the Student Retention Portal and D2L Brightspace Performance Plus Analytics. Faculty advisors, course instructors, and committee members may issue alerts when concerns arise related to academic performance, research delays, missed advising appointments, or other obstacles. Alerts are reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies, who contacts the student to assess the situation and determine appropriate supports.

5.3 Intervention Strategies

When a student is identified as needing support, Wiley University implements targeted intervention strategies:

- Increased advising frequency with the Dissertation Chair
- Tutoring or academic coaching focused on writing, research methods, or content mastery
- Referral to counseling, disability services, or time management coaching
- Creation of a short-term research action plan with weekly deliverables
- Faculty-led research workshops or peer-mentoring sessions
- Temporary modification of course or research load, when appropriate and approved

All interventions are documented in the student's advising record and reviewed during the next progress evaluation.

5.4 Mentorship Program

Beyond dissertation supervision, Wiley University provides doctoral students with holistic support through the Wiley University Graduate Mentorship Network. During the first semester, each student is paired with a Faculty Mentor—distinct from the dissertation chair—who offers guidance on:

- Navigating graduate studies and academic culture
- Academic and professional identity development
- Conference participation and scholarly presentations
- Publication strategies and academic writing
- Career pathways in academia, industry, and community leadership

Mentors meet with students at least once per semester and participate in the Annual Doctoral Student Progress Review.

SECTION 6: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT THE DOCTORAL LEVEL

6.1 Standards of Scholarly Integrity

Doctoral students are held to the highest standards of scholarly integrity. Academic dishonesty at the doctoral level is a fundamental breach of professional ethics and scholarly trust. All students are expected to comply with Wiley University's Academic Integrity Policy as published in the Faculty Handbook and Course Catalog, as well as the additional doctoral-specific standards below.

6.2 Prohibited Conduct at the Doctoral Level

The following constitute academic integrity violations at the doctoral level and may result in dismissal from the program:

- Plagiarism in coursework, the comprehensive examination, dissertation proposals, or the final dissertation — including self-plagiarism (reuse of previously submitted work without disclosure)
- Fabrication or falsification of research data, findings, or citations
- Misrepresentation of authorship in co-authored works
- Unauthorized collaboration on individually-assessed work
- Violations of IRB protocols or research ethics standards (see Section 9)
- Submitting work generated by artificial intelligence tools as one's own original scholarship without appropriate disclosure, in violation of faculty guidelines
- Ghostwriting or third-party completion of any portion of the dissertation

6.3 Reporting and Investigation

Any member of the university community may report a suspected academic integrity violation to the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Dean will conduct a preliminary review and, if warranted, refer the matter for formal investigation under the procedures described in the Wiley University Faculty Handbook and the doctoral-level grievance procedures in Section 8 of this handbook.

Students found responsible for academic integrity violations may receive sanctions ranging from course failure to permanent dismissal from the program, depending on the severity and nature of the violation. All findings are documented in the student's academic record.

SECTION 7: DISTANCE AND CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

7.1 Faculty Oversight of Distance Education

Wiley University entrusts faculty with primary responsibility for the development, delivery, and continuous improvement of all distance education courses. Faculty maintain full academic oversight of curriculum design, learning outcomes, assessment measures, and instructional materials to ensure that online doctoral courses retain the same academic rigor, integrity, and disciplinary depth as traditional on-campus offerings. All curriculum changes undergo review through the established governance process, including approval by program faculty, the Wiley University Accreditation Council (chaired by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), and the Office of Academic Affairs.

7.2 Technology and Learning Management

The Executive Ph.D. program is delivered through D2L Brightspace, Wiley University's Learning Management System. D2L Brightspace provides the primary platform for course delivery, collaboration, assignment submission, grade management, and early alert analytics. Additional approved technology tools are described in Section 10 (Technology and Research Software Plan).

7.3 Academic Support Services for Distance Learners

- Virtual writing and tutoring services (Tutor.com, integrated via LTI 1.3)
- Online library databases and research assistance through the Thomas W. Cole, Sr. Library
- Academic advising and degree planning through remote modalities
- Technical support services for D2L Brightspace and instructional tools
- Accessibility services for students requiring accommodations (see also the Wiley University Attendance Accommodation Policy, ADA/Section 504 aligned)

7.4 Credit Hour Assignment, Term Length, and Student Workload Expectations

The Executive Ph.D. in Business Administration is delivered in an accelerated 8-week term format. This section explains how Wiley University assigns credit hours to doctoral courses delivered in this format, what the credit hour means in terms of student workload, and how the 8-week term satisfies federal and SACSCOC credit hour requirements.

7.4.1 Federal Credit Hour Standard and Institutional Policy

Wiley University's Credit Hour Policy (ADM Policy #03-10-02) governs the assignment of credit hours to all courses, including doctoral courses, across all delivery formats. The policy conforms to the federal definition of a credit hour under 34 CFR 600.2, which defines one credit hour as an amount of work that reasonably approximates:

- Not less than one hour of classroom, online, or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work per week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester hour of credit; or
- The equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.

The Executive Ph.D. program operates under the second provision — equivalent work over a different (compressed) amount of time. All doctoral courses are designed so that the total student effort required over an 8-week term is equal to the total effort that would be required in a standard 15-week semester course carrying the same credit hours.

7.4.2 8-Week Term Credit Hour Equivalency

The following table demonstrates how a 3-credit doctoral course delivered in an 8-week term meets the federal and institutional credit hour standard by compressing the same total contact and out-of-class hours into a shorter, more intensive weekly schedule.

Component	15-Week Standard	8-Week Executive Ph.D. Term	Equivalency
Direct instruction per credit hour	50 min/week × 15 wks = 750 min (12.5 hrs)	93.75 min/week × 8 wks = 750 min (12.5 hrs)	✓ Equal
Out-of-class work per credit hour	120 min/week × 15 wks = 1,800 min (30 hrs)	225 min/week × 8 wks = 1,800 min (30 hrs)	✓ Equal
Total student effort per credit hour	2,550 min per credit (42.5 hrs)	2,550 min per credit (42.5 hrs)	✓ Equal
Direct instruction — 3-credit course	150 min/week × 15 wks = 2,250 min (37.5 hrs)	281.25 min/week × 8 wks = 2,250 min (37.5 hrs)	✓ Equal
Out-of-class work — 3-credit course	360 min/week × 15 wks = 5,400 min (90 hrs)	675 min/week × 8 wks = 5,400 min (90 hrs)	✓ Equal
Total student effort — 3-credit course	7,650 min (127.5 hrs)	7,650 min (127.5 hrs)	✓ Equal

In practical terms, a doctoral student enrolled in one 3-credit course in an 8-week term should expect to invest approximately 16 hours per week in combined direct instruction and out-of-class scholarly work. Students typically carry 6 credit hours (two courses) per term, yielding an expected weekly investment of approximately 32 hours of academic engagement per term — consistent with full-time doctoral study expectations for working professionals.

7.4.3 Expected Weekly Workload by Enrollment Load

Term Credit Load	# of Courses	Est. Direct Instruction/Week	Est. Out-of-Class Work/Week	Total Weekly Hrs (Approx.)
3 credit hours (1 course)	1	~1.6 hrs	~3.75 hrs	~5.4 hrs
6 credit hours (2 courses) — Standard	2	~3.1 hrs	~7.5 hrs	~10.6 hrs
Note: Doctoral seminars require substantial independent reading, research, writing, and scholarly reflection beyond minimums above.				

Important: Doctoral-Level Workload Expectation

The figures above represent minimum federal equivalency thresholds. Doctoral seminars in the Executive Ph.D. program are research-intensive and typically require substantially more than the minimum out-of-class engagement. Students should expect weekly reading loads of 80–150 pages, original written scholarship, research design work, and progressive dissertation development embedded throughout the curriculum. The 8-week term is intensive by design, consistent with the executive professional audience the program serves.

7.4.4 Dissertation Research Credit Hours (BUSA 7910–7960)

Dissertation sequence courses (BUSA 7910 through BUSA 7960) are independent scholarly research credits delivered under sustained faculty supervision. These credits do not follow the lecture/seminar model but are assigned on the basis of documented student work consistent with Wiley University's Credit Hour Policy provisions for independent study:

- Each credit hour of dissertation research requires a minimum of three (3) hours of combined student work per week for the duration of the 8-week term — totaling a minimum of 24 hours of documented scholarly activity per credit hour
- Each 3-credit dissertation course requires a minimum of 72 hours of documented scholarly work per term, including dissertation writing, data collection, analysis, advisor meetings, and revision
- Dissertation chairs document student progress each term using the Wiley University Dissertation Progress Tracking Form, which serves as evidence of credit hour compliance for independent research courses
- Students must demonstrate measurable advancement on dissertation milestones each term to receive credit (In Progress — IP — grade); courses not demonstrating satisfactory progress may result in a grade of Unsatisfactory and loss of credit

7.4.5 Syllabi and Workload Documentation

Each doctoral course syllabus explicitly states the credit hours assigned, the estimated weekly hours of direct instruction, and the expected out-of-class workload. This documentation is required for all BUSA 7xxx series courses and is reviewed during the curriculum approval process by program faculty and the Office of Academic Affairs. Syllabi for all 30 doctoral courses are maintained on file and are available as evidence for accreditation review.

Students experiencing difficulty meeting the expected workload should contact the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies promptly. Early intervention is available through the supports described in Section 5 of this handbook.

7.4.6 Reference to Institutional Credit Hour Policy

The full Wiley University Credit Hour Policy (ADM Policy #03-10-02, administered by the Office of the Registrar) is incorporated by reference into this handbook. Students may access the current version through the Wiley University Policy Library or by contacting the Office of the Registrar. The Credit Hour Policy governs all credit hour assignments across all programs and delivery formats at the University.

7.5 Protection of Personal Information and FERPA

Wiley University maintains strict policies and documented procedures to safeguard student privacy consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Student records, assessment results, advising notes, and personal information are stored in encrypted systems with restricted access controls. The Information Technology Services division regularly

updates cybersecurity protocols and ensures that faculty and staff are trained in FERPA compliance and data privacy practices.

SECTION 8: DOCTORAL STUDENT COMPLAINT AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

SACSCOC Compliance Note

The Wiley University Student Handbook grievance procedures govern undergraduate and master's students. This Section establishes a distinct doctoral-level grievance policy covering dissertation disputes, committee conflicts, academic integrity findings, and other matters specific to doctoral education, as required for SACSCOC compliance at the doctoral level.

8.1 Scope and Purpose

This policy governs formal complaints and grievances filed by students enrolled in the Executive Ph.D. in Business Administration program. It applies to disputes arising from: (a) grading or academic evaluation decisions in doctoral coursework; (b) dissertation committee conflicts, including chair removal requests or committee reconstitution; (c) academic integrity findings at the doctoral level; (d) allegations of discriminatory treatment, harassment, or hostile academic environment; and (e) programmatic or administrative decisions that materially affect the student's academic progress.

Informal resolution is encouraged as a first step. Students are encouraged to first address concerns directly with the faculty member, dissertation chair, or other party involved. If informal resolution is not possible or appropriate, students may pursue the formal procedures below.

8.2 Informal Resolution (Step 1)

The student should first attempt to resolve the concern directly with the faculty member, committee member, or administrator involved within 10 business days of the event giving rise to the concern. A written record of the informal resolution attempt is recommended and may be required if the student proceeds to a formal complaint.

8.3 Formal Complaint to Dean (Step 2)

If informal resolution fails or is not appropriate, the student may file a written formal complaint with the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies within 30 calendar days of the event or of the failure of informal resolution. The written complaint must include:

- A clear description of the issue, including dates, parties involved, and relevant documentation
- A summary of informal resolution attempts, if applicable
- The specific relief or remedy requested

The Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five (5) business days and conduct a review within 30 calendar days, which may include meetings with the student, faculty member(s), and/or other relevant parties. The Dean will issue a written decision with findings and any remedial actions.

8.4 Appeal to the Provost (Step 3)

A student who is dissatisfied with the Dean's decision may appeal in writing to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs within 15 calendar days of the Dean's written decision. The appeal must clearly state the basis for appeal (e.g., procedural error, new evidence, or disproportionate outcome) and attach all prior documentation. The Provost's decision is final at the institutional level.

8.5 External Complaint Channels

Students who have exhausted the institutional grievance process and believe their complaint involves a violation of SACSCOC standards may contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) pursuant to its published complaint procedures. The University is also subject to applicable state and federal complaint procedures, including those administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

8.6 Dissertation Committee Conflicts

Disputes involving dissertation committee composition, chair removal, or committee conduct are addressed as follows: The student must first discuss concerns with the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies. If the concern involves the chair, the Dean may convene an ad hoc review panel consisting of the Provost (or designee) and two faculty members with graduate faculty status. The panel will issue a written recommendation within 20 business days. Committee reconstitution, if warranted, will be effectuated by the Dean.

8.7 Non-Retaliation

Wiley University prohibits retaliation against any student who files a good-faith complaint under this policy. Any student who believes they have experienced retaliation should report the concern immediately to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

8.8 Records

All formal grievance records are maintained confidentially by the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies for a minimum of seven (7) years and are incorporated into institutional effectiveness reporting as required by SACSCOC.

SECTION 9: IRB AND RESEARCH COMPLIANCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Status Notice

Wiley University has initiated the Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) filing process with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The Presidential Authorization Letter authorizing the FWA filing has been prepared for the signature of Dr. Herman J. Felton, Jr., President. Upon receipt of the executed FWA, the FWA number will be inserted into this handbook and all SACSCOC submission documents. Students and faculty should contact the Office of Academic Affairs for the current FWA status prior to initiating any human subjects research.

9.1 Institutional Review Board (IRB) — Purpose and Authority

Wiley University has established an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research conducted by faculty, staff, and students. Doctoral students conducting research involving human subjects — including surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation, or secondary data involving identifiable individuals — must obtain IRB approval before commencing data collection.

9.2 Federal Wide Assurance (FWA)

Wiley University is in the process of obtaining a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The FWA formally establishes the University's commitment to complying with the federal regulations governing the protection of human research subjects (45 CFR Part 46, the 'Common Rule'). Upon completion of the FWA filing, the FWA number will be recorded here:

FWA Number: *[To be inserted upon OHRP confirmation]*

9.3 IRB Submission and Review Process

Doctoral students must submit an IRB application through the Wiley University Office of Academic Affairs before collecting any data from human subjects. The IRB will review applications under three possible categories:

- Exempt Review: Research posing minimal risk and meeting specific federal exemption criteria
- Expedited Review: Research involving no more than minimal risk that does not meet exemption criteria
- Full Board Review: Research involving more than minimal risk or vulnerable populations

Students must obtain written IRB approval (or exemption determination) before commencing data collection. IRB approval is recorded as a milestone in the Doctoral Milestones Tracking System (BUSA 7930, Term 8).

9.4 Research Ethics Training

All doctoral students must complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program — Human Subjects Research module — prior to submitting an IRB application. Completion of CITI training must be documented and submitted with the IRB application.

9.5 Responsibility for Research Compliance

The dissertation chair bears primary faculty responsibility for ensuring that student research is conducted ethically and in compliance with IRB approval. Students who collect data without IRB

approval or in violation of IRB protocols are subject to academic integrity sanctions under Section 6 of this handbook and may face dismissal from the program.

SECTION 10: TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH SOFTWARE PLAN FOR DOCTORAL CONCENTRATIONS

Status Note

Wiley University is committed to providing doctoral students with the technology tools necessary to conduct rigorous research in their chosen concentration. The tools listed below represent the University's current and planned software environment. Procurement timelines and budget allocations are detailed in the Five-Year Financial Pro Forma for the Executive Ph.D. program. Students will receive specific technology setup instructions during orientation.

10.1 Core Technology Infrastructure (All Concentrations)

Platform / Tool	Purpose
D2L Brightspace (LMS)	Course delivery, assessments, early alert analytics
Microsoft Office 365	Word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, collaboration
Zoom / Microsoft Teams	Synchronous sessions, dissertation defenses, advising meetings
JSTOR, EBSCOhost, ProQuest	Academic database access via Thomas W. Cole, Sr. Library
Tutor.com (LTI 1.3)	Writing and research tutoring support
Watermark / Outcomes Platform	Student learning outcomes assessment and accreditation data
Jenzabar EX / ERP	Student information system, enrollment, records
CITI Program	IRB / Human subjects research training

10.2 AI, Data Science & Business Innovation Concentration — Specialized Tools

Platform / Tool	Purpose / Notes
R / RStudio	Statistical analysis and visualization (open source, no cost)
Python (Anaconda distribution)	Data science, machine learning, AI development (open source)
IBM SPSS Statistics (site license)	Quantitative research and survey data analysis
Tableau (academic license)	Data visualization and business intelligence
Microsoft Azure or AWS (academic tier)	Cloud computing for AI/ML experimentation
NVIVO or ATLAS.ti	Qualitative data analysis (as needed for mixed methods)
Google Colab / Jupyter Notebooks	AI/ML experimentation (cloud-based, no cost tier)

Procurement Status — AI Concentration Tools

Licensing for IBM SPSS and Tableau academic editions are included in the doctoral program budget beginning Spring 2027. Students will receive access credentials during Term 1 orientation. Open-source tools (R, Python, Google Colab) are available immediately at no cost.

10.3 Entrepreneurship Concentration — Specialized Tools

Platform / Tool	Purpose / Notes
Business Model Canvas (Strategyzer)	Business model design and analysis
Qualtrics (institutional license)	Survey design and data collection
SimVenture or similar simulation	Business simulation and scenario modeling
LinkedIn Learning	Professional development and entrepreneurship content
IBM SPSS or R (shared with AI concentration)	Quantitative and financial analysis

10.4 Faith-Based Administration Concentration — Specialized Tools

Platform / Tool	Purpose / Notes
NVIVO or ATLAS.ti	Qualitative research, interview/text analysis
Qualtrics (institutional license)	Survey and community research instruments
Logos Bible Software (academic tier)	Theological and biblical research resources
Zotero / Mendeley	Citation management (open source)
IBM SPSS or R	Program evaluation and quantitative data analysis (as applicable)

10.5 Cybersecurity and Data Protection

All doctoral research data involving human subjects must be stored in compliance with the University's data security standards. Students must: (a) store research data on encrypted drives or the University's approved cloud storage platform; (b) not store identifiable human subjects data on personal unencrypted devices; (c) follow all IRB data management plans as approved. Violations of data security protocols may constitute research misconduct.

SECTION 11: DOCTORAL ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE

SACSCOC Governance Note

SACSCOC requires evidence of documented doctoral governance structures. Wiley University's Accreditation Council, established under the authority of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, serves as the institution's governing body for academic program oversight and SACSCOC compliance across all levels, including doctoral education. No new governance entity has been created; the existing Accreditation Council has been charged with doctoral-level oversight responsibilities as documented in this section.

11.1 Governance Structure

Doctoral academic governance at Wiley University is provided through the Wiley University Accreditation Council, a standing institutional governance body chaired by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Accreditation Council was established to institutionalize and operationalize accreditation expertise across the institution, promote academic excellence and continuous improvement, and ensure compliance with required accreditation standards and best practices. Its charge encompasses all levels of academic programming, including doctoral education. No separate Graduate Faculty Council has been established; the Accreditation Council absorbs all doctoral-level governance responsibilities as described in this section.

11.2 Doctoral Governance Responsibilities

With respect to the Executive Ph.D. in Business Administration and all future doctoral programs, the Accreditation Council is responsible for the following doctoral-level governance functions:

- Reviewing and recommending approval of new doctoral courses, concentrations, and program modifications, in consultation with program faculty and the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies
- Establishing and reviewing doctoral admissions standards, academic policies, and graduation requirements
- Reviewing Graduate Faculty status applications and renewals in accordance with the Wiley University Faculty Handbook
- Overseeing the quality and integrity of dissertation supervision, comprehensive examination processes, and doctoral milestones tracking

Reviewing outcomes assessment data for doctoral programs and recommending improvement actions to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

11.3 Operational Role of the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies

The day-to-day administration of doctoral governance is the operational responsibility of the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies, in collaboration with the Provost. The Dean serves as the primary administrative officer for the Executive Ph.D. program and is responsible for:

- Dissertation committee approvals, chair assignments, and progress monitoring
- Academic progress monitoring, early alerts, and Academic Improvement Plan administration
- Administration of doctoral grievance procedures (see Section 8) and non-retaliation protections
- Recommending updates to this Doctoral Student Handbook for review and approval by the Accreditation Council and Provost

- Ensuring ongoing compliance with SACSCOC standards applicable to doctoral programs and reporting to the Accreditation Council
- Centralized student registration, admissions coordination, and doctoral enrollment management
- Graduate program marketing, recruitment strategy, and coordination with Enrollment Management

11.4 Faculty Involvement in Doctoral Governance

Faculty holding Graduate Faculty status participate actively in doctoral program governance through curriculum review, dissertation committee service, comprehensive examination design, and annual progress evaluations. Program faculty bring recommendations for curriculum modifications, policy revisions, and doctoral milestone adjustments to the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies, who coordinates review with the Provost and, as appropriate, brings matters to the Accreditation Council. The Accreditation Council meets at minimum once per academic term, with an annual retreat each August to review program outcomes data, assess SACSCOC compliance, and plan for the upcoming academic year.

11.5 Graduate Faculty Status

Faculty who teach in, advise students in, or serve on dissertation committees for the Executive Ph.D. program must hold Graduate Faculty status as defined in the Wiley University Faculty Handbook. Graduate Faculty status is granted by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs based on terminal degree credentials, scholarly productivity, relevant professional experience, and commitment to graduate-level mentorship. Graduate Faculty status is reviewed every three years. For the full criteria, refer to the Faculty Handbook (Section 4.1.1 — Definition of Faculty).

11.6 [Reserved for Future Doctoral Programs]

As Wiley University expands its doctoral offerings, this section will document governance provisions applicable to additional doctoral programs. All future doctoral programs are subject to Accreditation Council oversight and the Graduate Faculty status requirements described in Section 11.5.

SECTION 12: DOCTORAL STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

12.1 Orientation Program

Wiley University offers a structured Doctoral Orientation Program for all newly admitted students, held at the beginning of each academic year. Orientation covers program structure, academic advising, research expectations, technology platforms (including D2L Brightspace), dissertation milestones, student support services, academic integrity, IRB procedures, and university policies. Students also meet faculty members, learn about research pathways, and receive training on the Wiley University Graduate Portal, library databases, and academic writing resources.

12.2 Cohort Model

The doctoral program is delivered using a cohort model. Students enter as part of a designated cohort and progress through foundational coursework together. The cohort model fosters intellectual collaboration, accountability, and academic consistency. Faculty leverage the cohort model to strengthen engagement and build a vibrant doctoral learning community that reflects Wiley University's values of leadership, scholarship, and service.

12.3 Library and Research Resources

The Thomas W. Cole, Sr. Library provides doctoral students with access to online databases, e-journals, e-books, interlibrary loan services, research consultation, and 24/7 access to digital collections. Reference librarians with graduate-level subject expertise are available for research consultations. Students are encouraged to establish a relationship with their subject librarian early in their program.

12.4 Writing and Academic Support

Writing support is available through the Henry Cecil McBay Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE) and through the Tutor.com virtual tutoring platform (integrated via LTI 1.3 in D2L Brightspace). Support is available for academic and dissertation writing at all stages of the program.

12.5 Counseling and Wellness

Wiley University provides confidential individual and group counseling services through the Office of Student Health, Counseling, and Wellness. Services include mental health counseling, stress management workshops, mindfulness training, work-life balance coaching, and health services. Doctoral students are encouraged to proactively engage these resources, particularly during intensive research and dissertation phases.

12.6 Disability and Accessibility Services

Students requiring academic accommodations based on disability must contact the Office of Disability Services and provide appropriate documentation. Accommodations are implemented in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Doctoral students should refer to the Wiley University Attendance Accommodation Policy (ADA/Section 504 aligned) for full procedures.

12.7 Family-Friendly Policies

Wiley University upholds family-friendly academic policies supporting doctoral students during key life events, including parental leave accommodations, modified coursework timelines, and

flexible scheduling for advising and committee meetings. Students should discuss accommodation needs with the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies.

SECTION 13: GENERAL ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

13.1 Continuous Enrollment

Doctoral students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment each term until all degree requirements are complete. A student who does not enroll in a term without an approved Leave of Absence on file will be considered to have withdrawn from the program and will need to re-apply for admission.

13.2 Leave of Absence

Students experiencing extenuating circumstances (medical, military, family emergency, or other compelling reasons) may request a Leave of Absence of up to one academic year. Requests must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies before the start of the term in question. Students on Leave are not eligible to receive advising or committee services during their leave period and must pay applicable re-enrollment fees upon return.

13.3 Transfer Credit

The Executive Ph.D. does not accept transfer credit from other doctoral programs. All 60 credit hours must be earned at Wiley University, consistent with SACSCOC residency requirements. Students with prior doctoral coursework who seek credit evaluation should contact the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies for an individual review.

13.4 Grading Scale

Grade	Meaning
A (90–100)	Excellent — Doctoral standard of achievement
B (80–89)	Satisfactory — Minimum passing grade at doctoral level
C (70–79)	Below Standard — Requires remediation; does not satisfy doctoral requirement
F (Below 70)	Failure — Course must be repeated
IP (In Progress)	Dissertation courses in active progress
W (Withdrawal)	Official withdrawal within the published drop period
I (Incomplete)	Incomplete — Must be resolved within one term

Note: Any grade below 'B' requires remediation as determined by the Dean of Graduate Programs and Online Studies. A cumulative GPA below 3.25 triggers Academic Warning procedures (Section 2.4). For full grading policy, refer to the Wiley University Course Catalog.

13.5 Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, and Use of AI Tools

All work submitted in the Executive Ph.D. program must represent the student's own original scholarship. The use of artificial intelligence tools (e.g., large language models) must be disclosed consistent with individual faculty guidelines. Unauthorized use of AI-generated content as one's own work constitutes academic dishonesty under Section 6 of this handbook. Violations may result in dismissal from the program.

13.6 NC-SARA and Out-of-State Students

Wiley University participates in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), enabling the University to offer distance education to students in participating states. Students enrolled from outside Texas should ensure their state is a participating NC-SARA member. For SARA compliance documentation, contact the Office of Academic Affairs.

13.7 Student Records and FERPA

Student education records are maintained and protected in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students have the right to inspect and review their education records and to request amendment of inaccurate records. For full FERPA rights and procedures, refer to the University Course Catalog or contact the Office of the Registrar (Mrs. Gloria Mitchell, AVP & University Registrar).

13.8 Advertising, Recruiting, and Admissions Accuracy

All program information published in advertising, recruitment materials, and this handbook reflects accurate and current program details. The Office of Academic Affairs, Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies, and Enrollment Management jointly review all recruiting materials to ensure accuracy and alignment with program requirements. Prospective students should contact the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies directly for questions about program requirements, tuition, and timelines.

APPENDIX: KEY CONTACTS AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

A. Key Program Contacts

Role	Name / Office
Provost & VP for Academic Affairs	Dr. Morris Thomas, Ph.D., MBA, PMP
Dean, Graduate Programs & Online Studies	Dean Brandon Lacey
Assistant Dean, Graduate Programs & Online Studies	Dr. Racquel Cunningham
Lead Dissertation Faculty	Dr. Melvia Scott
Assistant Provost for Innovation	Dr. Ouida McAfee
Assistant Provost for Academic Administration	Prof. Morgan King
AVP & University Registrar	Mrs. Gloria Mitchell
Dean of Academic Student Services	Dr. Gaëlle Amazan

This handbook was prepared under the direction of the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Questions should be directed to the Division of Graduate Programs and Online Studies.

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