

PhD in Management Frequently Asked Questions

Here is a collection of frequently asked questions that can help you understand more about the program. If you have additional questions about the admissions process or the PhD program, please email phd@asb.edu.my.

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1. Program Structure & Delivery

1. What is the structure of the PhD in Management program?

The PhD in Management program is a research-based program that combines early-stage coursework in research methods with sustained independent research under faculty supervision. The initial coursework equips you with the methodological tools, skills, and techniques needed for advanced study, after which the focus shifts entirely to your dissertation research.

You will progress through three key milestones during the program:

- **Milestone 1: Recommended courses**
After admission, you will complete Research Methods courses and/or other relevant course(s), as recommended by your supervisor(s), and must demonstrate methodological competency, assessed by a panel of assessors.
- **Milestone 2: Proposal Defense**
You are required to prepare and present your detailed research proposal to a panel of assessors, typically held 1.5 years before your planned thesis submission.
- **Milestone 3: Thesis Submission & Viva Voce**
You are required to submit your doctoral dissertation within your candidature period and defend it in an oral examination (viva voce) before a panel of examiners. The thesis must demonstrate originality, scientific merit, and readiness for publication.

This structure ensures that you acquire both methodological skills and the ability to produce original, publishable research.

2. What is the mode of delivery for the PhD program?

It is offered by research.

3. What are the duration requirements for full-time and part-time streams?

Full-time streams: Minimum of 3 years and maximum of 6 years

Part-time streams : Minimum of 4 years and maximum of 8 years

4. Can I pursue the PhD on a part time basis?

Yes, if you are a local student, you may choose either full-time or part-time enrolment.

If you are an international student, you must pursue the PhD on a full-time basis in order for you to be granted a Student Visa by Immigration Malaysia. This visa must remain active throughout your candidature, even if parts of your PhD are conducted remotely.

5. Can I switch between full-time and part-time study?

Yes, if you are a local student, you may request to change from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) after enrolling to the program. Conversion is subject to the following conditions:

- The application must be made within your first year of study;
- You must continue to meet enrolment, coursework, and training requirements; and
- The request must be recommended by your supervisor and approved by the Deputy Dean of Research.

Kindly contact phd@asb.edu.my for further details.

6. Can I complete the PhD remotely?

Yes. The PhD in Management program allows you to complete your studies remotely. You are expected to meet regularly with your supervisor (online/in person, as agreed), remain engaged with ASB's research community, and demonstrate steady academic progress.

For international students: You must hold a full-time Student Pass throughout your candidature, even if most of your study is conducted remotely. Physical presence in Malaysia is required for initial visa endorsement (typically 2–3 weeks) and again for every renewal. Timelines and requirements are set by Immigration Malaysia/EMGS and may vary; ASB will guide you through the process. Maintaining continuous visa validity is important throughout your candidature, as the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) requires proof of continuous visa validity when attesting your degree after graduation.

7. When does the PhD program officially start?

The PhD in Management is designed to offer flexibility rather than fixed annual intakes. Students may begin their studies once they have received

and accepted an offer of admission, and supervisory arrangements have been confirmed.

International students may start their program once their Student Visa is approved by Immigration Malaysia.

8. How does grading and assessment work for PhD students?

The PhD program is assessed primarily through research milestones. The structure is as follows:

- **Milestone 1: Research Methods Course**

At the beginning of the program, you will be required to attend the Research Methods course and/or other relevant course(s), as recommended by your supervisor(s). If these courses are offered by ASB, they are on a pass/fail basis. In addition, you will be required to demonstrate methodological competency in research, which is formally assessed by a panel of evaluators. This milestone confirms that you have the necessary skills to proceed to the next milestone.

- **Milestone 2: Proposal Defense**

You are required to prepare and present your research proposal to a panel of assessors, which is also graded as Pass/Fail. If your proposal requires amendments, you will resubmit the revised version for verification by your supervisor or for re-assessment, depending on the extent of the changes. Candidates have a maximum of 3 attempts to pass the Proposal Defense. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal from the program.

- **Milestone 3: Thesis & Viva Voce**

At the final stage, you are required to submit your doctoral dissertation and defend it before a panel of examiners. Your thesis will be examined by (at least) two examiners, one of whom is an external examiner.

Possible outcomes include:

- Pass without correction
- Pass with minor or major corrections
- Re-examination (Re-viva)
- Fail

This assessment structure ensures that students demonstrate research readiness at each milestone and that their final dissertation meets international standards of academic quality.

9. What is stated on my PhD degree, and which institution awards it?

Graduates receive the degree of "Doctor of Philosophy in Management", conferred by the Asia School of Business.

10. Can I change my research area or topic after starting my PhD?

Yes. Candidates may adjust their research area or topic in consultation with their supervisor, especially as their work evolves. If the change involves a major shift in direction or arises from a disagreement with the supervisor, it may require further review and approval through the school's academic

process. This flexibility allows students to refine their research focus while ensuring proper oversight and continuity.

11. Does ASB accept transfer credits from other PhD programs?

Yes, ASB may consider transferring certain credits on a case-by-case basis, particularly if you have previously completed equivalent doctoral-level coursework such as Business Research Methods. Credit transfer decisions are subject to academic evaluation and internal approval to ensure alignment with ASB's program requirements. If you wish to explore this option, please contact phd@asb.edu.my for further details.

2. Admissions Requirements & Eligibility

12. Is a Master's degree required? Can I apply for the PhD only with a bachelor's degree?

Yes. Applicants are normally required to hold a Master's degree to be eligible for admission. This may be in related fields in business management, or in non-related fields (provided it is supported by relevant work experience and internal assessment), and subject to ASB's Senate's approval.

In exceptional cases, ASB may consider applicants without a Master's degree through:

- Direct entry from a Bachelor's degree (for candidates with first-class standing and strong research potential); OR
- The APEL pathway (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Access), as recognized by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) for experienced professionals with substantial prior learning.

If you are uncertain about your eligibility, please contact phd@asb.edu.my for guidance.

13. I have an MBA, can I apply for the PhD program?

Yes. An MBA is a Master's degree and therefore meets the minimum academic requirement to apply for the PhD in Management. In addition, the Admissions Committee will review your academic background, professional experience, and research proposal to ensure that you are prepared for doctoral-level research.

14. Do you accept applicants without a background in business management?

Yes. Candidates from non-business disciplines (e.g., engineering, public policy, or technical fields) are eligible to apply. However, applicants with a Master's in non-business-related fields may be required to demonstrate relevant work experience, pass prerequisite coursework, and undergo internal assessment to ensure preparedness for the program.

15. Can I apply to multiple areas of specialization?

Applicants should apply with one (1) main research focus area in their application. This helps ensure a clear match with potential supervisors and faculty expertise. After admission, you may refine or adjust your research focus in consultation with your supervisor. Major shifts across specializations will require formal approval.

16. Do I need to have a research proposal in mind before applying?

Yes. A research proposal is a mandatory part of the application. This should outline your intended research area, potential research questions, and its relevance to the field. While proposals are expected at admission, it is understood that the research direction may evolve as you progress through the program.

17. Do I need to contact a potential supervisor before applying?

You are not required to contact faculty in advance of your application. However, you are encouraged to review faculty profiles on the ASB website and, if you wish, reach out to potential supervisors to discuss your research interests. Doing so may help you refine your proposal and identify a suitable match. Please note that any prior contact with faculty does not guarantee admission or supervision. Supervisor assignments are only confirmed after the admissions process is complete.

18. What are the English language requirements?

All applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English. This is especially important for international students, as required by Immigration Malaysia. You can demonstrate English proficiency by submitting one (1) of the following test scores (taken within the last 2 years prior to your application):

- IELTS: minimum overall band 6.0
- TOEFL iBT: 60 or above
- MUET: Band 4 or above
- Cambridge English: 169 or above
- Pearson Test of English (PTE): 59 or above

You may be exempted from submitting a test score if:

- Your previous degree was fully taught in English. In such cases, you must provide official evidence (e.g., a letter from your institution), OR
- You are from a country where English is the official language (e.g., USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand)

Note: International applicants must meet these requirements for both admissions and student visa processing.

19. What type of references are accepted in the application?

You are required to submit one (1) recommendation, which must be provided directly by your referee through the online application system. This recommendation may come from either an academic referee (such as a professor or supervisor) or a professional referee (such as a manager or mentor).

Recommendations are especially valuable when the referee can provide a detailed assessment of your achievements, and research abilities/experience.

20. Do I need to submit GMAT or GRE? Can this be waived?

Submitting a GMAT or GRE score is not required for admission to the PhD in Management program. However, the Admissions Committee encourages applicants to provide a valid test score if available, as it can strengthen your application.

While ASB does not set a minimum score for admission, strong results may provide additional evidence of your academic readiness and are also taken into account when making scholarship decisions.

21. Do you need official transcripts for the application?

At the application stage, you may submit unofficial copies of your transcripts for review.

- If your transcripts are not in English, you must submit a notarized English translation as part of your application.
- If your institution does not use a 4.0 GPA scale, your transcript should also include an explanation of the grading system.

If you are offered admission, you will then be required to provide official, signed and sealed transcripts issued directly by your university.

These documents are essential for verifying your academic qualifications and ensuring compliance with admission requirements.

22. What is ASB looking for in a PhD candidate?

ASB seeks applicants who combine strong academic foundations with the curiosity and determination needed for doctoral research. Successful candidates typically demonstrate:

- Academic excellence, research motivation and readiness
- A clear and compelling research proposal with potential to contribute to the field
- Evidence of analytical, critical thinking, and methodological skills
- Personal qualities such as humility, perseverance, curiosity, and openness to feedback
- Alignment with ASB's core values: Respect, Continuous Learning, Excellence, Well-Being, and Collaboration.

Ultimately, ASB looks for individuals who have the potential to become independent scholars capable of producing research of international quality — making an impact in academia, industry, and society.

3. Application Process

23. What is the application process for the PhD in Management?

The application process consists of four (4) stages:

1. **Pre-Apply:** You begin by submitting a pre-application form, which allows the admissions team to conduct a preliminary eligibility check.
2. **Apply:** Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and provided with a private link to submit the full application.
3. **Application Review:** Admissions will verify your eligibility, and faculty may reach out to you for an interview. The PhD Council then evaluates your application, research fit, and funding eligibility.
4. **Decision & Enrollment:** If successful, you will receive an official admission letter, details of funding (if applicable), and instructions on the next steps for onboarding and enrollment.

24. Do you provide individual feedback on applications?

No, we do not provide individual feedback on submitted applications due to the high volume of applications received. However, if you would like guidance or general advice before applying, you are welcome to contact the Manager of Faculty Administration at phd@asb.edu.my.

25. When can I expect to hear back on my application?

You can typically expect to receive an admissions decision within 8–10 weeks after submitting your full application and supporting documents. If interviews are required, the timeline may vary slightly depending on scheduling.

26. What is your reapplication policy?

If your application is unsuccessful, you may reapply in the year following the date of your rejection. Each application is reviewed independently on its own merits, and we strongly encourage you to strengthen your research proposal and supporting materials before reapplying.

Please note that you may reapply to the ASB PhD in Management program for a maximum of two (2) times in total. Applications submitted beyond the second reapplication will not be considered, even if successfully entered into the system.

4. Fees & Funding

27. Is there an application fee to apply for the PhD program?

No. ASB does not charge an application fee for the PhD in Management program.

28. What are the tuition fees (and available financial support) for the program?

Tuition fees and any applicable charges are confirmed individually in your official offer letter. A small number of merit-based fellowships (tuition waivers) and, in some cases, supervisor-recommended stipends are available and awarded competitively to the most qualified candidates, subject to internal approval. For current fee information and funding options, please contact phd@asb.edu.my.

29. What financial support is available, and what are the conditions?

ASB offers a limited number of merit-based fellowships to PhD students. These are awarded competitively as tuition fee waivers, approved by the PhD Council. Supervisors may also recommend students for a monthly stipend throughout the duration of their studies, subject to approval by the PhD Council.

Any fellowship or stipend awarded will be specified in the admission and fellowship award letter, along with the applicable terms and conditions. ASB reserves the right to revoke or suspend any fellowship or stipend if these terms are violated.

5. Supervision & Research

30. What happens if I need to change supervisors during the PhD?

A change of supervisor may be permitted in specific circumstances (e.g., a shift in research direction or supervisory availability). Please discuss the change with your current and proposed supervisors, then email phd@asb.edu.my with a brief written justification.

All replacement supervisors must be appointed from within ASB and are subject to review and approval by the PhD Council. Any change will be confirmed through the school's standard academic process to ensure continuity and appropriate supervision.

31. What happens to my PhD if my supervisor leaves ASB?

If your supervisor is leaving ASB, please discuss the situation with them and email phd@asb.edu.my as soon as possible. Your case will be reviewed by the PhD Council under the school's academic process. Where feasible, appropriate arrangements will be made to support continuity of supervision and research progress.