PhD in Organizational Behavior

Program Goals
The Organizational Behavior Department at Boston University addresses fundamental questions about the practice of management. We conduct research that has real-world impact, as well as intellectual sophistication. We teach topics with long-term significance as well as immediate importance. Organizational behavior research should both improve managerial effectiveness and benefit workers, customers, society, and other parties that affect or are affected by the organization.

To these ends, we equip our doctoral graduates with the research skills to generate new perspectives on management and the way it is taught. Doctoral graduates leave with expertise in their fields, broad perspectives, and an understanding of management across sectors, systems, and cultures.

Research Mission
The goal of the Organizational Behavior Doctoral Program is to prepare graduates to create and disseminate knowledge that will impact management practice. Hence, we focus on the individual, the group, the organization, and the environmental context, recognizing the important interactions across all four domains. In both our teaching and research, we strive to improve what and how organizations and individuals perform. We use a full range of research and teaching methods to accomplish that mission. Beyond the School, we maintain involvement in academic and professional organizations, government groups, corporate forums, and other associations that constantly bring us in contact with researchers, leaders, and managers who both influence and are influenced by our research and teaching.

Teaching Mission
The primary teaching mission of the Department is to train and develop prospective and practicing managers. We teach at the undergraduate, MBA, doctoral, and executive levels. We participate in team-taught, cross-disciplinary courses because managers must be able to apply multiple perspectives to solve complex problems and to manage across functions. We seek to build our students’ conceptual foundations and practical experience, enabling them to act as catalysts for team and organizational learning as well as their own future development. We also train future researchers and teachers in the PhD program. Overall, our approach to teaching reflects our conviction that people are the sources of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations.

Operating Strategies
• We provide leadership in developing educational programs that prepare students to understand quickly, act effectively, and learn rapidly in organizations that must navigate "continuous white water." Department faculty are at the forefront of developing educational innovations for undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and executive education programs, and we will continue to seek to innovate education strategies appropriate to changing managerial requirements.
• We encourage long-term programs of research that enable faculty to build knowledge and insights relevant to fundamental real-world problems. In practice, this often involves significant faculty commitment to ongoing programs with research centers and programs, such as the Executive Development Roundtable, the Human Resources Policy Institute, and the Institute for Technology, Entrepreneurship, and Commercialization (ITEC).
• We recruit and train PhD students to combine in-depth understanding of the field with creative research and teaching with practitioners and scholars from other disciplines. This strategy involves extensive collaborative research and teaching with doctoral students, initially as apprentices and later as important assets to research and education programs.
• We support faculty participation in external initiatives that contribute to the emergence of the School on the world stage and the application of their resources to solving critical national and international problems. Some faculty participate in academic projects such as the Task Force on Emotional Intelligence and the Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship. Some play leading roles in professional associations, such as the Academy of Management. Others become advisors to national policy formation, as in US AID’s Advisory Committee on Voluntary Foreign Aid. Others are involved in community change initiatives, with state agencies such as the Department of Children and Families.
DOCTORAL REQUIREMENTS

Dissertation
Competition of the PhD program requires a written and oral defense of both the dissertation proposal and the dissertation itself. After the qualifying exam, the candidate begins work on the doctoral dissertation. The candidate then selects and obtains the agreement of a faculty member to serve as their dissertation advisor. The dissertation must be based on original investigation that makes a substantive contribution to knowledge in the field of organizational behavior. The dissertation is complete once it has been defended successfully before School of Management faculty, approved by the dissertation committee, and accepted by the Boston University Library.

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR FACULTY

Lloyd Baird, Professor, Department Chair, and Faculty Director, PhD Program
Baird completed his PhD in organizational behavior and management, and his MBA, at Michigan State University. He earned his BS from Utah State University. His research focus is on leadership in a dynamic economy, executive education and continuous learning, and integrating performance and learning.

Michelle Barton, Assistant Professor
Barton earned her PhD in business administration (management & organizations) at the University of Michigan and her BA in psychology from Pomona College. Prior, she held management positions at Harvard Business School Publishing and Boston Consulting Group. Barton’s research explores how individuals and groups organize to manage uncertainty in real time, as events are unfolding. In particular, she focuses on practices that affect awareness of dynamic and complex events and that facilitate the capacity for flexible and adaptive performance.

Colin Fisher, Assistant Professor
Fisher earned his PhD in organizational behavior from Harvard Business School and an AM in social psychology from Harvard University. He also has an MA in individualized study from New York University and a BMus in jazz performance from the New England Conservatory of Music. Fisher’s research focuses on how teams and individuals improvise. He investigates improvisation in three contexts: team leadership and coaching, creativity, and negotiations.

Fred Foulkes, Professor and Faculty Director, Human Resources Policy Institute (HRPI)
Foulkes earned his DBA and MBA from Harvard University, and received his AB from Princeton University. His research interests include strategic human resource management, human resource outsourcing, global sourcing of talent, offshoring, and health care cost containment.

Karen Golden-Biddle, Senior Associate Dean, Professor, and Everett W. Lord Distinguished Faculty Scholar
Golden-Biddle completed her PhD and her MBA at Case Western Reserve University. She earned her BA from Denison University. Her research interests include cultural dynamics in change, the role of leaders in fostering organizational innovation and change, and the creation of desired social change by organizations.

Douglas Hall, Morton H. and Charlotte Friedman Professor of Management and MBA Program Faculty Director
Hall earned his PhD and SM at MIT Sloan School of Management, and his BS in industrial administration at Yale University. Hall was a Visiting Professor at IESE Business School in Barcelona. His research deals with careers and leadership development.

Emily Heaphy, Assistant Professor
Heaphy earned her PhD in management at the University of Michigan and her BA at Wellesley College. Her research focuses on positive work relationships and how they make a difference at work, and sources of individual agency at work.

William Kahn, Professor
Kahn earned his PhD in psychology and organizational behavior from Yale University. His research interests include caregiving organizations, work relationships, organizational change, leadership, group and intergroup dynamics, and action research.

Kathy Kram, The Shipley Professor in Management and Faculty Director, MBA Career Community Program
Kram received her PhD in organizational psychology from Yale University. She earned her BS and MS in behavioral sciences and management from MIT. Her research interests include mentoring and developmental networks, gender and leadership, executive coaching, adult development and career development, relational learning and its role in leadership development, and emotional competence at work.

John McCarthy, Associate Professor and Faculty Director, Executive Development Roundtable (EDRT)
McCarthy earned his DBA in organizational behavior from Boston University and his MBA in finance from Babson College. He completed his BA at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His research interests include leadership, executive development, international business, strategic change, case study research, narrative studies, storytelling, and the use of history, film, and experiential learning in teaching and adult development.

Aimin Yan, Professor, International MBA Faculty Director, and Research Director, Human Resources Policy Institute (HRPI)
Yan earned his PhD in business administration from Pennsylvania State University. His research interests include international strategic alliances and partnerships, organizational development in transforming economies, global HR strategies, and expatriation and repatriation management.
Recent and Forthcoming Publications


Doctoral Administration Program

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