Program Goals and Structure

The Strategy & Innovation Doctoral Program provides graduates with the theoretical, methodological, and substantive expertise needed for successful scholarly careers in strategic management and innovation. The Program offers students an interdisciplinary environment that draws from economics, sociology, and strategy to generate creative research ideas, the analytic skills to evaluate and execute research studies, and experience communicating findings, all through published articles, in conferences and seminars, and inside the classroom.

The PhD Program is a full-time, four year commitment that extends across fall, spring, and summer terms. Training in the Program involves coursework that provides necessary foundations while also meeting individual needs and interests; collaborations with faculty members on research projects; a series of original research projects, which ultimately lead to a dissertation; and a chance to practice teaching skills in a undergraduate course. Program milestones include a second-year paper, qualifying exam after the second year of coursework, a doctoral dissertation proposal, and the completion and defense of original thesis research.

Strategy & Innovation Department

The Department focuses on how new and established firms generate and sustain performance differentials over competitors. We are interested in exploring not just the appropriate strategy for conditions but how firms execute on that strategy and the practices that most effectively enable implementation. We place particular emphasis on the study of innovation in different kinds of organizations and the role of technological change in creating new industries and reshaping existing ones.

The Department invites PhD applications from individuals interested in pursuing research closely related to the interests of the faculty. Faculty members mentor students through research assistantships that help formulate their dissertation proposals. This process involves theory development, focusing on a research question, designing a methodology, collecting and analyzing data, formulating the contribution to the field, and discussing the implications of the research findings. As a school of management, we emphasize the translation of studying and testing theories into practical application. As a result of this rigorous training, our graduates are highly qualified to launch academic careers at prominent institutions.

DOCTORAL REQUIREMENTS

Major Area Coursework
Strategy & Innovation PhD students must complete a minimum of five advanced strategy and innovation courses. These typically include doctoral seminars that cover major theoretical concepts of strategy and innovation; recent empirical studies in the field; theories of organizations and environments; advanced elective courses such as international management or entrepreneurship; and one-on-one directed studies with individual faculty members.

Minor Area Coursework
Students must complete four courses in a related area of interest, chosen by the student in consultation with his or her advisor. These courses may be taken within other School of Management departments, other graduate programs within the University, or may include directed studies. Examples of minor areas of concentration include business economics, sociology, organization theory, and international management.

Research Methodology Coursework
Students must complete five advanced methodology courses, typically including multivariate data analysis, experimental design, and field methods. These courses are chosen in consultation with the faculty.

Scholarly Coursework
Students are also expected to take courses on the principles of scholarly research, a teaching and learning seminar, electives chosen in consultation with their advisors, and regularly attend Department research seminars.

Research Paper
All students work with faculty to prepare a publishable paper during the course of the Program. This paper may be an extension of a paper that fulfills a course requirement. It is expected that a suitable first draft of this research paper is submitted at the end of the second year.

Cross-disciplinary Courses
In addition to the required courses in their major, minor, and research areas, doctoral students are required to take eight credits in cross-disciplinary courses:
1. DS906 Philosophy and Science of Research: 4 credits
2. DS907 Teaching, Publishing, and the Dissemination of Knowledge: 4 credits
Qualifying Examination
Upon satisfactory completion of all course requirements and the research paper, students are eligible to sit for the qualifying examination. This examination has both written and oral components and is conducted by a committee of three faculty members appointed by the Department. The exam is designed to accomplish four objectives:

1. Test knowledge and understanding of the literature and research in strategy and innovation.
2. Assess a student’s ability to apply the literature to issues, research topics, and practical problems.
3. Understand the relationship between the core literature of the field and sub-fields.
4. Evaluate a student’s ability to explore and articulate implications of theory and research as these relate to a potential dissertation topic.

Successful completion of required coursework should be viewed as a necessary but not sufficient condition for preparation of the qualifying examination. To perform well, additional reading and thought is required.

Dissertation
Once students pass the qualifying examination, they become doctoral candidates. Earning a PhD requires conducting a major piece of independent research that makes a theoretical contribution to the literature of strategy and innovation: the dissertation. Students must write and orally defend a dissertation proposal as well as the completed dissertation. The dissertation must be based on original, empirical investigation that makes a substantive theoretical contribution to the strategy and innovation field.

Student-Faculty Research Collaborations
Doctoral student collaborations with faculty are a critical Program component and a primary venue for learning the art and craft of academic research. We encourage students to collaborate with faculty on substantive research projects as early as possible. These collaborations can be originated by either students or faculty. Exemplary joint research projects involving faculty and students include:


Grodal, S., Suarez, F., & Gotsopoulos, A. Entry timing advantages and the categorical dynamics of the industry life cycle. Boston University working paper.

Postdoctoral Research
The S&I Department also looks for high-potential recent PhD graduates that can benefit from our dynamic research environment and are willing to contribute their talent to strengthen our research community. We recruit a selected number of postdoctoral fellows who work directly with one or more of our faculty members. These positions are competitive. Recent exemplary postdoctoral research includes:


Gotsopoulos, A. Fools enter late? Contagious entry and firm survival in emerging industries. Boston University working paper.

STRATEGY & INNOVATION FACULTY
Iain Cockburn, Richard C. Shipley Professor of Management and Department Chair
Cockburn earned his PhD in economics from Harvard University, and his BSc degree from Queen Mary College, University of London. His research interests include industrial organization, competitive strategy, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, economics of technical change, and intellectual property.

Kira Fabrizio, Assistant Professor
Fabrizio, who comes to the School from Duke University Fuqua School of Business, received her PhD and MA from the University of California at Berkely Haas School of Business and her BA from Wesleyan University. Her areas of interest involve knowledge exploitation, firm strategy, and intellectual property rights. In addition, she has received various awards for her scholarly work, including the Crawford Dissertation Fellowship and the Sloan Foundation Research Fellowship.

Jeffrey Furman, Associate Professor
Furman earned his PhD in strategy and innovation from MIT. He received his BS and BA degrees from the University of Pennsylvania. Furman’s research examines the impact of institutions on the accumulation of scientific and technical knowledge and the strategic management of science-based firms.

Stine Grodal, Assistant Professor
Grodal completed her PhD in management science and engineering at Stanford University and her MS and BS degrees in psychology at the University of Copenhagen. Her main research examines institutional change, the meaning and interpretation of technology, organizing for innovation, strategic action, and industry emergence.

Samin Karim, Assistant Professor
Karim earned her PhD in corporate strategy and her MAE in applied economics from the University of Michigan. She received her EdM in education from Harvard University and her BS in electrical engineering from Cornell University. Her research interests include reorganization and restructuring, mergers and acquisitions, innovation by incumbent firms, and post-acquisition integration.
Siobhan O’Mahony, Associate Professor
O’Mahony earned her PhD in management science and engineering from Stanford University. She received her MPA in public affairs as well as her undergraduate degree from Cornell University. Her research interests include organizing for innovation, design and business, managing and leading creative and technical projects, network and distributed models of innovation, and coordinating technical and creative work.

Timothy Simcoe, Assistant Professor and PhD Liaison
Simcoe's research covers topics in innovation, science and technology policy, intellectual property and corporate strategy. He is an expert in the area of compatibility standards. Simcoe received his PhD in business administration and MA in economics from the University of California at Berkeley and an AB in applied math and economics from Harvard University.

Fernando Suarez, Associate Professor and Dean's Research Fellow
Suarez earned his PhD in management (strategy) and MCP from MIT, and completed his undergraduate degree in economics at the University of Chile. His research interests include technology strategy, entry timing strategies, standards and dominant designs, industry evolution, innovation and creativity, strategic turnarounds, and the role of services in product firms.

Sushil Vachani, Professor and Special Assistant to the President
Vachani received his doctorate in international business from Harvard University. He completed his postgraduate diploma in management at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad and his bachelor's degree at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. His research interests include the impact of Climate Change on India, the role of governments, NGOs, and multinational enterprises (MNEs) in reducing poverty, the impact of globalization and global governance on MNEs, MNE-government relations, and management of diversified MNEs.

Yanbo Wang, Assistant Professor
Wang holds a PhD from MIT, a master's degree from the University of Arizona, and a bachelor's degree from Peking University. Wang's research on international entrepreneurship focuses on the role of two different but crucial factors in shaping entrepreneurial behaviors: individuals' social relationships and the institutional context. He also conducts research on foreign direct investment.

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DOCTORAL ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

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