

<https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/lifestyle/society/What-to-look-out-for-when-choosing-a-PhD-programme/3405664-4487642-t4nwbyz/index.html>

What to look out for when choosing a PhD programme

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PhD graduands at a past ceremony at Kenyatta University. PHOTO | ANTHONY OMUYA | NMG

In one scenario, the pursuit of knowledge represents the very essence of a self-actualised person. On the other hand, gaining recognition from knowledge acquisition represents a pugnacious display from a self-esteem power obsessed individual.

Many knowledge seekers desire not only to learn new information but also to conduct research and create new groundbreaking knowledge.

Attainment of a doctorate represents a key training regime for aspiring researchers that contributes to both theory and practice.

Unfortunately, many pursuing business-related Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) designations often do not understand how to choose an appropriate quality programme. Inasmuch, please utilise the following three steps. First, check the accreditation of your prospective doctoral programme.

Disturbingly, someone could literally set up an accreditation body overnight on River Road in Nairobi and carry about as much credibility as many of the agencies touting their ratings, rankings, or accreditations.

The most sought after and credible accreditation body for business schools is the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). It holds rigorous standards that far exceed nation-based or government guidelines and rules.

Only the top-most prestigious universities meet the requirements and business schools across North and South America, Europe, Asia Pacific, Australia, and of course right here in Africa apply for, get inspected by, and become accredited by AACSB.

Check whether your university is AACSB accredited by checking the following link:
<http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/accredited-members/global-listing>.

If you do not obtain your doctorate from an AACSB accredited university, then most international business schools will not let you join their faculty if you decide one day to go into lecturing.

An equivalent accrediting body for psychology programmes, including industrial psychology that holds business crossover appeal, is the American Psychological Association (APA) that accredits only doctoral psychology programmes.

Second, notice the ranking. Many Kenyans like to observe the widely used but deemed non-credible and useless Webometrics rankings. Instead, look to the Times Higher Education World University Rankings here: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings>.

If your doctoral programme does not fall within the top 500 universities in the world, then your time and money may not produce much credible benefits to you on the international stage.

Other credible global rankings entities include the US News and World Report for most doctoral subjects and the Financial Times for business disciplines.

Third, select a supervisor. Your supervisor's credibility stands just as important as the university choice. Investigate supervisors that you desire by exploring the research publications that they produce.

If a faculty prides him or herself in publishing a scholarly article but it is not published in a credible academic journal, then you should ignore their bloviating pride and select someone else.

Check the status, rigour, and credibility of the research conducted by the faculty of your target school on the following website: <http://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>. In your particular discipline, only choose a doctoral supervisor whose publications appear in the top 100 ranked journals.

Other criteria also exist such as checking the completion rates and average completion times for doctoral candidates.

Also, if doctoral dissertations jumble variables together in conceptual frameworks that load on different factors or if only simple multiple regression in the dissertation can get you a doctorate, then it is best to look elsewhere.

However, universities and supervisors who meet the above three main criteria would almost always meet additional criteria.

So, check the university accreditation and ranking as well as the journal quality of your prospective supervisor for a programme worth time and money.

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