

# DBA Research Topic Selection Guide

A step-by-step framework to evaluate, narrow, and validate your research topic before supervisor submission.

## Purpose of this guide

Choosing the right research topic is one of the most critical decisions in your DBA journey. This guide helps you systematically move from broad interests to a supervisor-ready research topic that is relevant, feasible, original, and academically strong.

### Step 1: Clarify Your Professional Problem Area

- Identify key challenges from your professional or organizational context.
- List industries, functions, or processes you are deeply familiar with.
- Write 3–5 real-world problems that genuinely need investigation.
- Ensure the problem has managerial, organizational, or strategic relevance.

### Step 2: Convert Problems into Researchable Areas

- Transform business problems into research-oriented themes.
- Check whether the topic allows investigation through data collection.
- Avoid overly broad or purely descriptive topics.
- Frame your interest around relationships, processes, impacts, or decision-making.

### Step 3: Preliminary Literature Scan

- Search Google Scholar, Scopus, or university databases.
- Identify how much research already exists.
- Note dominant theories, models, and methodologies.
- Look for inconsistencies, gaps, limitations, or outdated contexts.

### Step 4: Narrow the Topic Strategically

- Define a specific population, industry, or geographical context.
- Clarify key variables or constructs.
- Reduce the scope so it can be completed within DBA timelines.
- Ensure alignment with your program specialization.

## **Step 5: Feasibility & Access Check**

- Can you realistically access data, participants, or organizations?
- Do you have time, skills, and ethical clearance potential?
- Is the methodology manageable at doctoral level?
- Is the topic stable enough for long-term research?

## **Step 6: Evaluate with the Doctoral Quality Test**

- Significance: Does it solve an important academic or professional problem?
- Originality: Does it add new insight, context, or perspective?
- Theoretical grounding: Can it be supported by solid literature?
- Contribution: Does it offer implications for theory, practice, or policy?

## **Step 7: Draft Provisional Research Titles**

- Write 3–5 potential titles.
- Ensure clarity, focus, and academic tone.
- Include key constructs and target population.
- Avoid vague or overly technical wording.

## **Step 8: Develop Topic Justification Notes**

- Problem background
- Why the topic matters
- What gap it addresses
- Expected academic and professional contribution
- Why you are suitable to research it

## **Step 9: Supervisor-Ready Validation Checklist**

- Clear problem statement
- Focused research direction
- Preliminary literature support
- Feasible scope and data access
- Alignment with DBA level and ethics

## **Final Note**

Before submitting to your supervisor, your topic should demonstrate clarity, feasibility, relevance, and contribution. Use this guide as a working document and refine each step until your topic withstands academic and practical scrutiny.

## Topic Development Worksheet (Optional)

- My professional problem area: \_\_\_\_\_
- Target population/industry: \_\_\_\_\_
- Key constructs/variables: \_\_\_\_\_
- Preliminary research gap: \_\_\_\_\_
- Data source & access plan: \_\_\_\_\_
- Provisional research title: \_\_\_\_\_