Application Package

DBA Program

Academic Year 2026-2027
Hitotsubashi University Business School
School of International Corporate Strategy

Application Package for the DBA Program
(2026-2027)

Program Overview

Hitotsubashi ICS has offered since 2002 a doctoral degree program aimed at developing scholars who can serve as "one bridge" between the worlds of scholarship and practice. The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program is conducted in English at Hitotsubashi ICS's campus in Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo.

The DBA program places particular emphasis on business problem-solving and its practical implications, while providing a theoretical and scientific foundation that adds academic rigor to research. DBA candidates combine insights from their own business experience with new knowledge gained through a rigorous program of independent research and exposure to state-of-the-art ideas discussed at business schools. DBA candidates are required to produce distinctive, original output at the leading edge of applied management research. Successful DBA theses combine original theories and methods as well as offer practical relevance and insights that will influence how managers think about business issues.

The DBA program relies heavily on individual initiative. Each DBA candidate spends a minimum of three years designing and executing a research project under the academic supervision of Hitotsubashi ICS faculty. This work results in a thesis targeting publication as an academic paper or a research-oriented management book. DBA candidates are required to complete three mandatory courses (two required and one special lecture) and seminar, and can choose from among a range of elective courses as many as which support implementation of their research. A candidate's academic milestones in the program include A) successful defense of their thesis proposal at a hearing, and B) successful completion and defense of their doctoral thesis. DBA candidates are permitted to audit MBA courses with the approval of their advisor and the course instructor. During the program, there are opportunities to work as a research assistant (RA) or teaching assistant (TA) for their advisor or other faculty members.

Successful applicants to the DBA program must have two or more years of full-time work experience. While an MBA degree or other master's degree is generally required for admission, the Admissions Committee may grant waivers for exceptionally qualified applicants.

The types of qualified applicants Hitotsubashi ICS seeks to attract to its DBA program include:

(1) Professionals with a master's degree seeking an early career change into academia as a faculty member of a business school. As standards for academic performance continue to rise among hiring business schools, more rigorous academic training is required for full-time faculty positions. Hitotsubashi ICS strongly recommends that candidates seeking a career in academia

enroll in the program full time and contact the school one or two years prior to applying to the DBA program. This course of action improves the likelihood of a full-time doctoral student securing funds from their first year via external research fellowships such as the Research Fellowship for Young Scientists of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS).

(2) Faculty members and instructors at other business schools currently not holding a doctoral degree (e.g., *Jitsumuka-kyoin* at Japanese business schools) and seeking to develop their research, education and academic careers at a higher level as doctoral degree holder.

(3) Experienced senior management practitioners who have already formulated clear research ideas through their own work experiences and are envisioning the DBA degree as an integrated part of their business careers.

DBA candidates must maintain residency in Japan while enrolled at Hitotsubashi ICS in order to participate in the program's courses and meetings with faculty members.

Professor Satoshi Akutsu is the DBA Program Director. Students may request any member of the DBA faculty to be their thesis advisor, contingent on obtaining approval from the DBA Program Committee and the faculty member concerned.

Admissions Policy

The DBA Program in School of International Corporate Strategy, Graduate School of Business Administration at Hitotsubashi University (hereafter referred to as the DBA Program) is designed for students who wish to engage in research or education in the fields of commerce and business administration as instructor, researcher, or practitioner in the future. Students must: (1) demonstrate genuine interests in the field of commerce and business administration through their professional experience, (2) be motivated to formulate and respond to their own research questions, (3) possess the literacy (in-depth academic knowledge in their discipline and high level of language competence) and clarity to start research project in the field of their choice, (4) possess a high level of research ethics to contribute to the sound development of social sciences, and (5) demonstrate a strong motivation to contribute to the development of academia and industry as a DBA holder.

In order to select our candidate, we evaluate the ability and motivation of candidate based on dossier which includes research plans, and by conducting interview to attest their clarity and research plans, in addition to TOEFL (exempted for native English speakers and those who have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in an English language program) and GMAT or GRE scores. One important prerequisite for the admission is to have at least two years of professional experiences and a master's degree in a related field, such as an MBA, or equivalent experience and knowledge.

Application and Admissions Procedures

(1) Maximum number of students to be admitted for 2026

Four (4) students

*If the number of applicants reaches the enrollment capacity in the first round, the second round will not be held.

The number of past applicants, successful applicants, and enrollees is available on the ICS website.

https://www.ics.hub.hit-u.ac.jp/jp/admissions/dba/admissiondata.html

(2) Qualification of applicants

● An MBA or other master's degree is required for admission. Applicants requesting an exemption must seek approval from the DBA Program Committee beforehand.

● Two or more years of full-time work experience, or approval for exemption from the DBA Program Committee.

● Applicants with no MBA or master's degree, or who have less than 2 years of full-time work experience who believe that they have equivalent professional experience must write beforehand to the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office (ics-opencampus@ics.hub.hit-u.ac.jp) the intention for the pre-screening. Required documents for the pre-screening must be submitted to the Admissions Office by the following deadline.

Round 1 applicant: August 1, 2025;   Round 2 applicant: January 23, 2026

● A good command of English, with a score above 109 in TOEFL iBT or 7.5 in IELTS Academic or equivalent (see Section 3 below).

● **GMAT score or GRE score is mandatory for all applicants.**

GMAT 10th Edition score of 600 or higher, or GMAT Focus Edition Score of 555 or higher, or GRE score of 160 or higher on Quantitative Reasoning and 150 or higher on Verbal Reasoning.

GMAT scores and GRE Scores are valid for up to five years after the exam date.

*We accept score(s) of GMAT Focus Edition or GRE with shorter overall test time.

(3) Required application documents

All documents must be submitted via the Hitotsubashi ICS Online Application System by the application deadline.

1) **Please be noted that applications will not be submitted until the applicant clicks the "Submit" button in the bottom of the page of the application system.**

2) Applicants may start uploading documents once these are available. It is also possible to re-upload documentation in the event of you needing to update contents but please note that documentation uploading/re-uploading MUST be done **by the application deadline**.

3) Online Application System is accessible only during the application period.

4) Only the documents specified in this application package will be reviewed.

5) **Only complete applications will be screened. If there are any deficiencies, the application cannot be accepted.**

6) A checklist is provided from page 12 . Please also refer to the checklist along with the following document list before submission, and create a complete application.

Please refer to "How to apply": https://www.ics.hub.hit-u.ac.jp/admissions/dba/apply.html

Documents	Details
Master's degree Certificate(s)	Degree certificate or certified copy of a diploma signed by the president or dean of the university. If the document is written in a language other than English, **English translation must be accompanied with the original certificate**. *Successful applicants must submit **the original document(s)** to the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office within the enrollment period. **For graduates of Chinese universities Graduates of Chinese universities are encouraged to submit a PDF of the English version of the "Online Verification Report of Higher Education Qualification Certificate" downloaded from the China Higher-education Information and Student Information (CHSI), in addition to their degree certificate. https://www.chsi.com.cn/xlcx/bgcx.jsp
Official transcript(s) of MBA or master's degree	A document that certifies the applicant's courses attempted, earned credits and grades. Official or certified copy of transcript signed by the president or dean of the university. If the document is written in a language other than English, **English translation must be accompanied with the original certificate**. *Successful applicants must submit **the original document(s)** to the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office within the enrollment period.

Essay (Career accomplishments, Personal statement)	Please download the format at "How to apply": https://www.ics.hub.hit-u.ac.jp/admissions/dba/apply.html Prepare the Essay as directed on the first page of the format. All of the questions must be answered. The first page must not be deleted.

Official GMAT or GRE score report	Scores must be dated **within five years** after the exam date.
	
	 (1) Applicants are to have their following document **uploaded** to the online application system.
	
	    - GMAT: test takers score report,
	                  or screenshot of the scores on GMAC portal
	                  (Appointment ID and Score)
	    - G R E: test takers score report
	
	 AND
	
	 (2) Applicants are to have GMAC/ETS send the official score report **directly** to Hitotsubashi ICS.
	
	    - GMAT: University Code No.: **F6R-Q5-52**
	    - G R E: University Code No.: **1617**
	
	 (3) Hitotsubashi ICS strongly recommends that candidates take the GMAT or GRE at least one month before the application deadline to ensure that the official score report is received in time.
	 Please request GMAC/ETS early as possible to ensure that it reaches the university by the application deadline.

Proof of application fee payment (JPY 30,000)	See page 11 for payment procedures.
	 • The application fee is exempted for the following individuals.
	   (1) Individuals who graduated from a master's program of Hitotsubashi University after September 1, 2025.
	   (2) Individuals who are expected to graduate from a master's program of Hitotsubashi University after September 1, 2025.
	 • Japanese government-sponsored students (*Kenkyusei*) are not required to pay the application fee; please enclose the government scholarship certificate issued by the enrolled university.

| Official TOEFL or IELTS score report | Scores must be dated **within two years** after the exam date.

(1) Applicants are to have their test takers score report **uploaded** to the online application system.

AND

(2) Applicants are to have the ETS/IELTS test center send the official score report **directly** to Hitotsubashi ICS.

    - **TOEFL**   University Code No.: **8682**
    - **IELTS**   Organization Name: Hitotsubashi University - School of International Corporate Strategy

    If sending in paper score report:
    Address: National Center of Sciences, 2-1-2
    Hitotsubashi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8439, Japan

(3) Hitotsubashi ICS strongly recommends that candidates take the TOEFL/IELTS at least one month before the application deadline to ensure that the official score report is received in time.
Please request ETS/IELTS early as possible to ensure that it reaches the university by the application deadline.

*The following applicants are not required to include this item.
(4) Applicants whose native language is English
(5) Applicants who graduated with a bachelor's or higher degree from a program conducted entirely in English (Applicants who graduated with a bachelor's or higher degree from a program conducted entirely in English in a country other than Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK or the US must notify the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office by email (chiyoda-info@hub.hit-u.ac.jp) no less than ten days before the application deadline.)
(6) Applicants who have worked for over three years in an English-speaking country |
| Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) Certificate (Optional) | Applicants are to upload the official certificate "Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Certificate of Result and Score（日本語能力試験認定結果及び成績に関する証明書）" issued by the Japan Educational Exchanges and Services (JEES) to the online application system. |

Identity document	Photocopy of the passport of relevant page(s) of the applicant's identity document indicating applicant's name, photograph, passport number. (Japanese applicants only) Or Japanese driver's license number, date of birth, etc. *Must be within the expiration date.
Up to two letters of reference <u>(Optional)</u>	**Hitotsubashi ICS highly recommends that applicants submit one or two reference letters to enable the school to learn more about the applicant via the objective evaluations provided by referees.** A reference should be from a person who has been directly responsible for assessing the applicant's work and/or academic performance. It is desirable that a reference be from a supervisor within the applicant's current company/employing organization. **Applicant must register the referee(s) on the online application system.** **The Hitotsubashi ICS Online Application System will send the form to the applicant's referees directly by email after completion of online registration.** **Only refence letter(s) submitted via online application system will be accepted.** Applicants wishing to support their application with a reference letter/reference letters should ensure that their nominated referee(s) have uploaded the reference letter(s) to the online system before the application is submitted. **Reference letter(s) must be uploaded before the applicant clicks the 'Submit' button in order for the reference letter(s) to be included as application documents.** **Reference letter(s) cannot be sent after the application submission.** *Depending on the email security settings at your referee's organization, email service used, referee request emails may sometimes be rejected, or classified as spam. We recommend applicants to confirm the situation with your referee(s) once after the request is sent.

Notes:

- All documents should be uploaded in a readable orientation.

- All documents must be written in English. For any documents or certificates written in another language, please attach an English translation.

- **The online application system's 'Submit' button becomes available for selection ONLY when ALL mandatory documents above have been uploaded.**

- As the online application system can accept individual documents whenever they are ready and is also able to accept uploading of the same document multiple times, **please start uploading individual documents to the online system as soon as these are available**. In the case of needing to update an already-uploaded document, applicants may simply upload the document again. **Please be sure to upload all documentation by the specified application deadline.**

- Maximum of 10 items can be uploaded and stored in each section.

(4) Admissions Schedule

For the 2026 intake, please note the following:

● <mark>**If the number of applicants reaches the enrollment capacity in the first round, the second round will not be held.**</mark>

● The selection process involves two screenings. The first screening consists of a review of the written application documents, including the research proposal. The second screening consists of an interview.

1st Round	2nd Round	Note
Application period		
Thursday, September 11 2025 to Wednesday, September 24 2025	Thursday, March 12 2026 to Wednesday, March 25 2026	**Applications must be submitted via the Hitotsubashi ICS Online Application System.** **An application is regarded as officially received if the applicant has pressed the 'Submit' button on the system no later than <u>14:59 JST</u> on the respective deadline date.**
Announcement of first screening result		
Friday, October 10 2025	Friday, April 10 2026	Screening criteria include the candidate's level of academic aptitude and writing ability. **Applicants will be communicated by email** whether they have passed the first screening and are eligible to proceed to the second screening (interview) and, in the event of being invited to interview, the exact time of the interview, shortly after this date. In addition, Announcement of Acceptance will be posted on the ICS website, https://www.ics.hub.hit-u.ac.jp/whatson/
Second screening (interview)		
Friday, October 24 2025	Friday, April 24 2026	• 20 minutes per applicant • Interview based on the application documents • Location: Hitotsubashi University Chiyoda Campus (National Center of Sciences) or online • The interview method and location are subject to change depending on circumstances.
Announcement of final result		

Friday, November 21 2025	Thursday, May 28 2026	Applicants will be notified of the admissions decision by email on the dates shown on the left. Decisions will not be communicated by telephone. In addition, Announcement of Acceptance will be posted on the ICS website, https://www.ics.hub.hit-u.ac.jp/whatson/
1st Round	**2nd Round**	**Note**
Periods for completion of enrollment		

Tuesday, November 25 2025 to Monday, December 1 2025	Monday, June 1 2026 to Friday, June 5 2026	Successful applicants must remit the **non-refundable** matriculation fee and submit the original documents in accordance with instructions from the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office within the relevant enrollment period.
		
		(a) **Matriculation fee**: JPY **282,000** (preliminary estimate)
		• The matriculation fee is exempted for the following individuals.
		  (1) Individuals who graduated from a master's program of Hitotsubashi University after September 1, 2024
		  (2) Individuals who are graduates of a master's program of the Graduate School of Business Administration, the Graduate School of International Corporate Strategy, or the Graduate School of Commerce and Management.
		• For all other applicants, the matriculation fee must be paid through a bank transfer using the prescribed method provided by Hitotsubashi University.
		• For applicants in Japan, a transfer request form will be sent with an acceptance letter.
		
		(b) **Degree certificate and Official transcript**:
		Copies of original documents must be sent in one envelope to the following address by either registered mail or courier service, within the enrollment period. Please write "DBA Application Documents" in red on the envelope. Both documents must be originals; photocopies are not acceptable. **Applicants should NOT send your original diploma**, as documents will not be returned to applicants.
		
		Address: Admissions Office
		        Hitotsubashi University Business School
		        School of International Corporate Strategy
		        National Center of Sciences, 5th Floor
		        2-1-2 Hitotsubashi, Chiyoda-ku
		        Tokyo 101-8439, Japan

(5)   Notes for Admissions

●   Admissions enquiries should be made only by email (chiyoda-info@hub.hit-u.ac.jp). We do not accept inquiries by phone.

●   Applicants who have disabilities or special needs that require accommodating in the application process should notify the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office **two months** prior to submitting their DBA Program application.

Although the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office will accept such notifications after this date, it may not be possible to make arrangements necessary to accommodate disabilities/special needs in time for the screening.

Requesting such accommodation for the application process as per the above does not constitute an obligation to apply to Hitotsubashi ICS. A person who is undecided about whether to apply for the DBA Program may still submit such accommodation requests.

Note: Depending on the type(s) of accommodation requested, it may take some time for the Hitotsubashi ICS Admissions Office to respond.

(6)   Notes for Student Life in Hitotsubashi ICS:

●   The annual tuition fee is **JPY 642,960,** payable in two installments of **JPY 321,480** each in October 2025 and May 2026 for AY2025-2026 (preliminary estimate).

The tuition fees above are preliminary estimate. Should the actual amount become subject to revision at the time of admissions or during enrollment, the new revised amount shall be applied and go into effect from the time of revision.

●   Please be aware that a health examination taken at the Chiyoda Campus is mandatory for all students newly enrolled at Hitotsubashi ICS in the autumn term of 2026 (except for students who have taken a health examination within one year from October 2025).

Please read the information at the link below from the Hitotsubashi University Health Center regarding medical requirements while staying in Japan:
http://www.hit-u.ac.jp/hoken/healthexam.html

●   The contact point for inquiries regarding accommodations during the study at Hitotsubashi University for students with disabilities or other special needs is as follows:
https://www.hit-u.ac.jp/shien/counseling/shougai/shougaishien.html

Application Fee

Applicants are to pay the application fee of JPY 30,000 **during the application period**.

Applicants in Japan

■ Payment at a convenience store / Payment via Pay-easy, internet banking or credit card
Instructions can be found at the following link:
https://www.hit-u.ac.jp/faculties/graduate/examfee.html

*Please select "受験料・選考料のお支払い" >"大学・短大" >"一橋大学大学院（国立大学法人）" >"経営管理研究科" > "博士後期課程" > "国際企業戦略専攻" > "DBA プログラム" when selecting the category.

■ Payment by bank transfer
Payment can be made by bank transfer to the account below.

    Bank name: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
    Branch: Kunitachi Branch
    Account name: Hitotsubashi University
    Savings A/C no.: 7761795

Applicants are to upload the "入学検定料・選考料・取り扱い明細書" received at the convenience store or "収入証明書" (printed from the "申込内容照会" page) to the online system.

DO NOT upload the screenshot of the "申込内容照会結果画面".
Please attach a document showing the date of the transfer.

Applicants outside Japan

■ Payment by credit card
Instructions can be found at the following link:
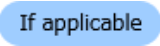https://www.hit-u.ac.jp/faculties/graduate/examfee.html

*Please select "Examination Fee" > "Hitotsubashi University (Graduate School)" > "Graduate School of Business Administration" > "Doctoral Programs" > "School of International Corporate Strategy" > "HUB ICS DBA Program" when selecting the category.

Applicants are to upload the printed "result" page to the online system.

Notes:

- The application fee of JPY 30,000 is **non-refundable**.
- Japanese government-sponsored students (*Kenkyusei*) are not required to pay an application fee; please submit a government scholarship certificate issued by the enrolled university.
- Bank cheques are not an acceptable form of payment.
- In the event of the full amount of the application fee not being transferred within the application period, the application will not be accepted.

Application Document Check List

1. Personal data	☐	"Photo for admission's clerical use" should be a headshot photo that clearly shows your face.
2. Referee information	☐	If you wish to support your application with a Reference letter(s), reference letter(s) must be submitted by your referee(s) before the application submission. Once the applicant has submitted the application, reference letter(s) can no longer be submitted. If the referee input is complete, a green "OK" icon will be displayed to the right of "8. Referee 1 - Reference form" and "9. Referee 2 - Reference form" on the top page. If applicable ⟹ ✓ OK
3. Professional background	☐	Do you have at least two years of full-time working experience at the time of September 1 of the enrollment year? *If your working experience is less than two years (24 months), you must apply for a pre-screening by the designated date and obtain an approval from the ICS DBA Admission Committee before submitting your application, as stated on page 3.
	☐	Part-time work and internships (whether paid or unpaid) will not be counted as the working experience required above.
4. Educational background	☐	Do you have an MBA or other Master's degree? *If not, you must apply for a pre-screening by the designated date and obtain an approval from the ICS DBA Admission Committee before submitting your application, as stated on page 3.
7-1. Degree certificate(s)	☐	If the certificate is not in English, have you uploaded an English translation along with it?
	☐	(If you have more than two master's degrees) Have you uploaded all degree certificates you have obtained for master's degrees?
	☐	(For graduates of Chinese universities) Graduates of Chinese universities are encouraged to submit a PDF of the English version of the "Online Verification Report of Higher Education Qualification Certificate" downloaded from the China Higher-education Information and Student Information (CHSI), in addition to their degree certificate. https://www.chsi.com.cn/xlcx/bgcx.jsp

7-2. Official transcript(s)	☐	The transcript must cover all earned credits, not just the final year.
	☐	If the certificate is not in English, have you uploaded an English translation along with it?
	☐	(If you have more than two master's degrees) Have you uploaded all the transcripts you have obtained for master's degrees?
7-3. Essay	☐	Does the format follow the instructions written on the first page?
	☐	Have you started writing your essay from the second page? Do not delete the first page.
7-4. Official GMAT/GRE score report	☐	Is your test score within five years of the exam date as at the deadline of the applicable Round?
	☐	Have you requested GMAC/ETS to send the Official Score Report to the university? Official Score Reports take a few business days to arrive to the university after your request to GMAC/ETS; please apply them early enough to ensure the Official Score Report reaches the university by the application deadline.
7-5. Proof of application fee payment	☐	Have you uploaded the required documents specified on page 11? Your name and the transfer date should be indicated on the document.
7-6. TOEFL or IELTS score report	☐	Is your test score within two years of the exam date as at the deadline of the applicable Round?
	☐	Have you requested ETS/IELTS to send the Score Report to the university? Score Reports take a few business days to arrive to the university after the request to ETS/IELTS; please apply early to ensure it reaches the university by the application deadline.
7-7. JLPT score	☐	If you have your JLPT score, a copy is acceptable to submit the result as an optional supporting document.
7-8. Identity document	☐	If you are not Japanese, does the document confirm your nationality?

Contact Us

Email address: chiyoda-info@hub.hit-u.ac.jp

Location and address

Hitotsubashi ICS is housed within the *Gakujutsu Sogo Center* (National Center of Sciences).

Hitotsubashi University Business School
School of International Corporate Strategy
National Center of Sciences
2-1-2 Hitotsubashi, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 101-8439 JAPAN
Admissions Office: 5th Floor

Getting to Hitotsubashi ICS by Train

From Takebashi Station

Take the Tokyo Metro Tozai line to Takebashi Station. Approximately a four-minute walk from Exit B1.

From Jimbocho Station

Take the Tokyo Metro (Hanzomon line) or Toei Subway (Shinjuku or Mita lines) to Jimbocho Station. Approximately a three-minute walk from Exit A8.

International Arrival

From Narita Airport

Take the Narita Express train to Tokyo Station (approx. 60 minutes), walk to Otemachi Station (approx. 5 minutes), then take the Tozai line to Takebashi Station. Alternatively, take the Mita line from Otemachi Station to Jimbocho Station.

From Haneda Airport

Take the Keihin Kyuko line to Mita Station (approx. 28 minutes), then change to the Toei Mita line and get off at Jimbocho Station.