

Doctrine 06 — The ORBITAL Business Structure

One durable concept: every pursuit needs a skeleton, and the skeleton has seven ribs.

When an opportunity becomes a real pursuit, it needs structure — a place where the facts, decisions, and money can live together so that anyone (or any team) can look at the pursuit and understand it in an afternoon. This course teaches a specific skeleton for that structure, called the **ORBITAL**, because it is a durable, framework-shaped idea you can carry into any organization. The software you would use to hold the records changes; the skeleton does not.

Why a pursuit needs a skeleton

Unstructured pursuits have a recognizable failure mode: the details live in someone's head, the budget lives in a spreadsheet someone else owns, and the deadline is an email. When the capture lead gets busy — or leaves — the pursuit disintegrates. A structured pursuit has every important dimension written down in one place, owned, and visible. That is the ORBITAL.

The name is a deliberate piece of the cosmology this course shares with the wider doctrine: a **Dream** is a seed idea; an **ORBITAL** is a pursuit with momentum, structure, and a budget; a **World** is a fully realized enterprise. You will meet the lifecycle in Doctrine 07. Here, we meet the skeleton.

The seven axes

The ORBITAL is organized along seven axes, and each axis answers one practical question:

Axis	Letter	The question it answers
Objective	O	What are we trying to do, and what counts as success?
Resources	R	Who is on the team, and what do we bring?
Budget	B	What will it cost, and what is it worth?
Indicators	I	How will we know we are on track?
Transport	T	How do the pieces reach the customer — the vehicles, channels, and delivery path?

Axis	Letter	The question it answers
Activities	A	What work is actually going to happen, and in what order?
Logistics	L	What has to be true for the work to happen — facilities, clearances, agreements?

The seven letters spell **O.R.B.I.T.A.L.** — a deliberate memory device, the same way **DREAM** (Discover, Relate, Empower, Advise, Motivate) and **GROWTH** (Gauge, Research, Organize, Write, Target, Health) are memory devices for other layers of the doctrine. Acronyms are scaffolding for the mind; the concepts behind them are what matter.

What the skeleton is for

The ORBITAL's power is that it is **the single reference the whole pursuit points at**. Consider what becomes possible when the seven axes are real:

- The **objective** anchors every proposal section. A proposal that drifts from the objective is a proposal that loses.
- The **budget** makes the score honest. The value in Doctrine 05 is not a guess if the budget axis says what the work actually costs.
- The **indicators** make the pursuit auditable. A gate decision (Doctrine 04) can be evidence-based if the indicators say where the pursuit actually stands.
- The **activities** and **logistics** make the pursuit executable. A plan that cannot be scheduled is a wish.

In the wider doctrine, the ORBITAL is the source from which the proposal itself is built: the technical volume, the management volume, the past-performance evidence, and the pricing all trace back to the seven axes. You do not need to memorize that mapping now — you will exercise it in the capstone — but keep the direction: **structure first, document second**. The skeleton comes before the prose.

The business-structuring frame

The ORBITAL is also a lesson in business structuring — how a seed of an idea becomes a defensible, funded entity. Students from every background recognize the move: take a vague ambition and give it *an objective, a team, a budget, a measure of progress, a route to market, a plan of work, and the conditions that must hold*. That is not federal-contracting jargon; that is the anatomy of any serious venture. The ORBITAL is the government-market dialect of a universal language.

This is also where the **Dream** → **ORBITAL** → **World** lifecycle (Doctrine 07) becomes practical: an organization grows by turning ideas into structured pursuits, and by turning successful pursuits into entities. Every startup, every grant program, every business line you will ever work on benefits from being given a skeleton early.

What this means for your career

Business structuring is a transferable superpower. The student who can take a vague opportunity and produce a one-page structure with an objective, resources, budget, indicators, route, activities, and conditions is the student who gets asked to lead things. You will build one of these by hand in the capstone, from a real solicitation, with no software — and you will discover that the discipline of the skeleton is the point, not the tool that holds it.

For the MBA student, the ORBITAL is a business plan in miniature, and the budget axis is where the financial analysis lives. For the MPA student, it is a program design: objectives, resources, and indicators are the vocabulary of accountability. For the Strategic Initiative student, it is the portfolio unit: how the organization structures its bets so that attention and money can be allocated deliberately.

Self-check

1. What are the seven axes of the ORBITAL, and what practical question does each one answer?
2. Why is a structured pursuit more survivable than an unstructured one — what does the skeleton protect against?
3. How does the ORBITAL connect to the wider Dream → ORBITAL → World lifecycle?