

**BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting
Research and Analysis Project**

RESUBMISSION GUIDE

Submission Periods 33 & 34

2016-17

CONTENTS

1. How to use this guide	page 1
2. Eligibility	2
3. Conversion arrangements	2
4. Resubmission Rules	3
5. Resubmission Fees	4
6. Submission Period and On-line Submission	4
7. Determination of class of degree	6
8. Your Project Mentor	7
9. Your Project	8
10. The Research Project: why students fail	9
11. The Skills and Learning Statement: why students fail	14
12. Oxford Brookes University policies and procedures	20
13. Oxford Brookes University contact details	20
Frequently Asked Questions	21
APPENDIX 1 Resubmission statement	23
APPENDIX 2 Marking Criteria	24
APPENDIX 3 Checklist	26

1. How to use this guide

Introduction

The principal aim of the BSc degree programme is to widen access to Oxford Brookes University (OBU) and afford ACCA students across the world the opportunity to obtain an OBU degree.

The degree aims to enhance and extend knowledge and skills gained by ACCA students in their ACCA studies and so to improve student's effectiveness as professional accountancy students and/or practitioners. The degree is awarded to students who are Oxford Brookes University registered students, who have passed all nine ACCA Fundamentals papers, completed the ACCA Professional Ethics Module and passed the Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project (RAP)

For full requirements and details of the degree see:

<http://www.accaglobal.co.uk/en/student/acca-qual-student-journey/bsc-degree.html>

Sources of information

This guide is intended for students who have failed one or both parts of their RAP and are re-submitting. It should be read in conjunction with the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting Research and Analysis Project Information Pack found at the website link above.

The Information Pack contains crucial project guidance. It really is impossible to pass the Research and Analysis Project unless this document is fully understood. Another excellent source of support are the study guides published by BPP and Kaplan.

Also, all students that fail are provided with marker and moderator comments and these are designed to help students. Students should pay particular attention to these comments and seek to address them.

Important Notes

As a student who prepares and submits a Research and Analysis Project, you are subject to the Oxford Brookes University academic regulations, including those on cheating.

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/core/a3/a3-13/>

The Faculty of Business will forward all confirmed cases of Academic Misconduct to the ACCA with all relevant evidence for possible disciplinary action by the ACCA.

Where a student is as a result, excluded by ACCA, it is for a maximum of 5 years, after which they are entitled to apply for readmission to ACCA

2. Eligibility

To be awarded the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting you must:

- Be eligible for the degree. This means you must be registered with Oxford Brookes University i.e. opted-in to the BSc degree scheme before passing any of the three ACCA Fundamentals papers, F7, F8 and F9
- Pass the three ACCA Fundamentals papers F7, F8 and F9 and pass (or gain exemption from) other papers as required to successfully complete all nine Fundamentals level papers at least two months prior to the start of the submission period in which you are seeking to submit.
- Hold a recognized English language qualification certificate and transcript (if applicable), which must be submitted to and approved by ACCA, **before** passing any of papers F7, F8 or F9.
<http://www.accaglobal.com/gb/en/student/exam-entry-and-administration/oxford-brookes-bsc-hons-in-applied-accounting/eligibility-for-the-oxford-brookesbsc.html>
- Complete the ACCA Professional Ethics module by the published deadline before submitting a Research and Analysis Project to Oxford Brookes University (for deadlines see section 6 Submission Periods)
- Complete and pass the Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project (RAP)

The degree must be completed within 10 years of the earliest of the date of your first ACCA examination pass or the date of your first ACCA exemption being granted otherwise your eligibility will be withdrawn.

3. Conversion Arrangements

ACCA exam conversion arrangements

Oxford Brookes University will recognise any passes or exemptions from Part 1 and Part 2 exams in the ACCA Professional scheme that are converted to the Fundamentals level of the ACCA Qualification, as contributions towards the award of the BSc degree, except for papers F7, F8 and F9 or equivalent.

All students are required to sit and pass papers F7, F8 and F9.

4. Resubmission rules

The following rules will apply to RAP resubmissions:

- If you do not pass the RAP after a third submission, unfortunately you will no longer be eligible to complete the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting degree;
- If you pass the Research Report (RR) at the first attempt, but are awarded a Fail grade in the Skills and Learning Statement, you only need to resubmit the SLS. You cannot submit a revised RR in any further RAP submission. The Grade awarded in your RR will carry forward and become the Research and Analysis Project grade if you are subsequently successful in your SLS;
- If you fail the RR on the first submission you will be awarded a grade C for any successful subsequent RR, even if the resubmitted RR is initially assessed as being of a higher pass grade;
- If you fail the RR but are awarded a pass in the SLS, then you need only submit the revised RR and not the SLS;
- If you have changed topic or organisation but have not passed both sections of the SLS (sections 8&9 of the feedback sheet) then you will need to resubmit the SLS in full.
- You are NOT required to resubmit at the next submission period, students often find benefit from taking time to consider what was wrong with their previous submission first
- You must resubmit within the 10 years limit;
- If you are re-submitting your RR and have decided to change the organisation or topic then you will have to comply with the industry sector requirements in place at the time of the resubmission in respect of topics 8 and 15 (which can be found in the information pack) If your RR is on the same organisation and topic and you previously submitted in period 31 or earlier then you do **NOT** have to limit yourself to the current industry sectors.
- From period 33 onwards, anonymous marking is being introduced to the programme therefore please identify yourself in any documentation using **ONLY YOUR ACCA NUMBER and NOT YOUR NAME.**

5. Resubmission fees

- You are required to pay a project submission fee to Oxford Brookes University with any project submitted through the Submission website.
- Resubmissions will require the full current period project fee to be paid.
- The Oxford Brookes University RAP submission fee for Period 33 is **£225 GBP** and for Period 34 will be **£250 GBP**. This will be subject to increase in subsequent submission periods.
- The required fee is paid on-line when making your submission.
- There will be an increased submission fee of **£550 GBP** where a student's earlier submission has been found to have involved academic misconduct.

6. Submission period and online submission

Submission period

Oxford Brookes University has two submission periods each year in May and November during which you may submit an OBU RAP or resubmission. An OBU RAP cannot be submitted outside this period.

The next RAP submission periods, and the dates on which RAP grades and BSc degree results will be dispatched, are as follows:

Period 33

Latest date to complete the Professional Ethics module	28 September 2016
Earliest submission of RAP online	01 November 2016
Latest submission of RAP online	16 November 2016
Results released online	22 March 2017

Period 34

Latest date to complete the Professional Ethics module	29 March 2017
Earliest submission of RAP online	01 May 2017
Latest submission of RAP online	17 May 2017
Results released online	20 September 2017

Please note that projects must be submitted online at the Oxford Brookes University website by the date of latest submission.

<http://www.obusubmissions.co.uk>

Online submission can only be accessed during the submission periods.

After this date, the online submission facility will close and you will have to wait until the next session before you can submit.

7. Determination of class of degree

The class of BSc degree will be based on both:

- The ACCA average mark determined from the exam marks in the Fundamentals Skills papers (F4–F9)
- The grade achieved for the Research and Analysis Project.

The ACCA average mark will be calculated by taking the numerical average of the marks achieved in the Fundamentals Skills papers (F4–F9) that you have sat and passed.

Where the calculated average mark is not a whole number, the calculated average will be rounded up or down accordingly. If you have been given an exemption from any of the three papers F4–F6, no mark is available and so will not be included in the calculation of the ACCA average mark.

The class of degree for each combination of ACCA average mark and Research and Analysis Project grade is shown below.

	Class of Degree			
ACCA average mark	First	Upper Second	Lower Second	Third
68 or more	A, B, C	-	-	-
67	A, B	C	-	-
66	A	B, C	-	-
60-65	-	A, B, C	-	-
59	-	A, B	C	-
58	-	A	B, C	-
54-57	-	-	A, B, C	-
53	-	-	A, B	C
50-52	-	-	-	A, B, C

EXAMPLES

- A student with an ACCA average mark of 69 and a grade B for the Project will be awarded the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting with First Class Honours
- A student with an ACCA average mark of 67 and a grade C for the Project will be awarded the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting with Upper Second Class Honours
- A student with an ACCA average mark of 59 and a grade B for the Project will be awarded the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting with Upper Second Class Honours
- A student with an ACCA average mark of 55 and a grade A for the Project will be awarded the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting with Lower Second Class Honours

- A student with an ACCA average mark of 53 and a grade C for the Project will be awarded the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting with Third Class Honours.

8. Your Project Mentor

If you passed your Skills and Learning Statement you do not have to meet your mentor again. However, you may find it useful to meet with your mentor if:

- a) You decide to submit a different Research Report.
- b) You feel generally that you need help from your mentor.

However, if you failed your Skills and Learning Statement then you do not need to have three further meetings with your mentor but you do need to meet them at least once. This will help you to re-consider where you went wrong in your Skills and Learning Statement.

The system will require you to enter the registered email of your Mentor in order to submit. If your original submission was in Period 30 or earlier, you are permitted to use your previous mentor even if that person is not registered with Oxford Brookes. If your original submission was in Period 31 or later, then your mentor **MUST** be a Registered mentor with Oxford Brookes.

You do not have to physically meet with your mentor – you can use conferencing facilities/Skype instead. Telephone calls and emails are not sufficient for presentation purposes.

You do not have to use the same mentor for a resubmission. If you decide to change your Mentor you will have to ensure that you have chosen a Registered Mentor from the list.

9. Your project

a. Your project title

- As a resubmission you can choose either to keep the same project title or to choose another topic title from the twenty approved project topic areas.
- If you decide to change the company you are researching and analysing or the topic then the Research Report passes previously achieved will not be carried forward.
- If you have previously had an Academic Conduct case upheld against you, you may be required to change topic and/or organisation.

b. Updating your project

- Make sure that you read the marker and moderator feedback and that you attempt to respond to this feedback.
 - If you have previously had an Academic Conduct case upheld against you, you may not be able to see your feedback.
- If you are re-submitting project 8 'The business and financial performance of an organisation over a three year period' then you need to update your project to reflect the most recent financial statements. For companies where financial information is no longer available (for example the company has been privatised) then update with accessible information such as press releases and detail the reasoning behind this in your RAP.
 - The programme requirement for the BSc Project is to use the last 3 financial reports that are available, or will be available, at the start of the submission period. If the results are not going to be published in time for you to include them in your report, then you should use the previous 3 year's results.
- For other Topics you need to ensure that you have updated your resubmission to reflect changes in relevant legislation/statements/standards etc. where appropriate.
- When re-submitting your RAP you should include a statement of 500 words explaining how you have addressed the feedback provided by the marker and moderator and where you have made changes (see APPENDIX 1).

c. Word count

- The Research and Analysis Project (RAP) is the final component of the BSc degree and consists of two separate documents; a **7,500** Research Report (RR) and a **2,000** word Skills and Learning Statement (SLS).
- The word count for the RR includes everything from the start of the title page, to the end of the conclusions. The 7,500 word count for the RR does not include appendices or lists of references.

10. The Research Project: why students fail

a. The RAP guidelines

Students should refer to the Research and Analysis Project Information Pack guidelines in order to avoid failing the project.

b. Insufficient word count

- The RAP requires that the Research Report is a maximum of 7500 words and that the Skills and Learning Statement is a maximum of 2000 words. These word counts are meant to guide students and it is strongly recommended that they are adhered to. If your project is only 4000 words you are unlikely to have sufficient detailed information in order to be able to pass.

c. Weak referencing

- Weak referencing continues to be a cause for failure. Students need to ensure they reference their work preferably using the Harvard referencing system, thereby acknowledging the source of their information.

For details of how to reference see:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/skill/skill1d.html>

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/upgrade/study-skills/referencing/>

To fail to do so is deemed to be plagiarism, a serious academic offence. All RAPs will be passed through the web-based tool Turnitin. This is a text-matching tool that allows academic staff to check students' work for improper use of sources or potential plagiarism by comparing it against continuously up-dated databases. For more information on the University's regulations on cheating, see:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/core/a3/a3-13/>

The University requires that your project is all your own work. Specifically that you have not copied your work from any other student, your Mentor, textbook, journal or similar source, either in small or large amounts. Students are permitted to use small

amounts of quoted text, which must be fully referenced, but must not copy large sections of text and pass this off as their own work.

The University recommends that students check their own work against standard databases, and has identified WriteCheck™ (<http://www.writecheck.com>) as a suitable product for formative checking as this does not permanently place the work in the database.

d. Research and analysis

- Primary research is not a requirement; however, if it is undertaken then good practice should be implemented.
- In relation to theories it is not sufficient to include the theory by itself, analysis needs to be included which relates the theory to research project.
- Some students are under the misconception that particular topics are easier than other topics. This is not the case, there is no easy topic.

Topic 8: An analysis and evaluation of the business and financial performance of an organisation over a three year period.

Topic 8 continues to be the most popular topic amongst students. According to the Information Pack students must look into the company's business environment and identify those actions taken by the company, its competitors, government etc which have led to changes in the company's business performance. Students should note that for every submission they should use the latest financial figures available at the start of submission – for resubmission this can mean reworking all your figures.

A significant number of students that fail the project do so because they did not recognise the need for the business context and the implicit requirement from this that they need to include a comparator. The comparator can be that of a competitor business or industry averages. The external examiner suggested the following advice:

'for a sound financial analysis report' this should 'put the analysis in the context of the industry or industries concerned, the relative risk of the industry, trends in the industry where appropriate and the impacts of changes in the economic, political and regulatory environment. Due cognisance should be accorded to environmental factors and sustainability in arriving at conclusions and recommendations.'

Topic 6: A critical review of key factors or indicators in the motivation of employees in an organisation.

Below is an extract of an article written for the Student Accountant in relation to this topic.

'How do Markers apply the Assessment Criteria? the motivation topic

Let us consider how markers interpret the RAP Assessment grid in assessing a specific topic: "The key factors or indicators in the motivation of employees in an organisation". This is the second most popular topic, normally representing 10-11% of all submissions.

1. Understanding of Accountancy/Business Models:

The starting point is the grade descriptor, and for our purposes we will consider in all cases what markers are looking for in a grade A submission. The generic A grade descriptor (see RAP Assessment Grid) is: "highly appropriate choice of theory /concepts; very clear relevance and shows evidence of wider reading".

This provides a general guideline; more specifically, markers will be looking for evidence of understanding of concepts, theories models etc.

Understanding implies that you can define concepts, explain, interpret and critique theories selected, and draw appropriate inferences from them. Thus a clear definition of "motivation", and explanations of "factors of motivation" (what motivates employees?) and "Indicators of motivation" (evidence that employees are motivated) must be provided. A range of relevant theories must be reviewed, and their implications considered. Explanations must demonstrate understanding, and be linked appropriately to the organisation studied. Similarities and differences between theories should be explained, for example between "content" theories –which focus on what motivates employees and "process" theories ,which focus on how employees are motivated .

Where there is little evidence of understanding of concepts/theories of motivation, incorrect interpretation of theories, and no discussion of factors or indicators of motivation, then the project will fail.

2. Application of Accountancy/Business Models:

The generic A descriptor is: "insightful and critical application of models to the project topic". Application implies that the theories chosen can, and must be, related to the organisation studied.

Markers expect to see theories used to design appropriate research tools about motivation in the organisational context (e.g. in a questionnaire or suitable questions for interviews) which enable conclusions to be established. Any limitations to the application of theories should be discussed, and the theories chosen should be applied in identifying /defining issues in the organisation studied.

Markers fail projects where theories have not been used to design the research instruments, and are not used to identify key issues in the organisation studied.'

e. Not including presentation slides

- If students do not include copies of their PowerPoint presentation slides used in the presentation to the project mentor then they will fail their Skills and Learning Statement. The presentation needs to reflect the full findings of the project.

Below is an extract of an article written for the Student Accountant:

'The SLS is also made up of two parts, one being a reflective statement covering four specific questions and the other a requirement to give a fifteen minute presentation to the student's mentor and provide evidence of this presentation.

There are two areas where students appear to be unclear regarding the presentation.

- It is not a presentation of AT LEAST fifteen minutes. Students are required to complete the presentation WITHIN fifteen minutes;
- It is not a presentation about how the student went about the process of writing the report, it is a presentation on the TOPIC of the report, for example "*The business and financial performance of Tesco plc for the years 2011 to 2013*"

The mentor will be asked to confirm that the presentation has taken place effectively and Oxford Brookes University will also require evidence to be submitted with the RAP. This evidence will consist of copies of slides used in the presentation. Usually, these slides use PowerPoint but they can also be copies of slides prepared using some other medium.

Contents of the slides

The slides should be designed to support the verbal presentation given by the student. They should also be designed to appeal to an audience which means that they must be clear and easy to read. Graphs, pictures and charts are always good ways of conveying information provided that it is clear what they are trying to portray.

Slides that contain lots of words, perhaps taken straight from the Research Report are not very appealing and usually difficult to read.

The markers and moderators at Oxford Brookes see a whole range of slides from ones that appear to be trying to set a new world record for how many words can be fitted in one slide to very animated ones that are almost an entertainment package on their own!

So here are a few guidelines:

- Always start with a clear opening slide with the title of the presentation and the student's ACCA number to identify the presenter.
- It can often be helpful if the next slide lists the areas to be covered by the presentation.
- Remember that the presentation is NOT about how the topic was decided upon or how the research was carried out – that is part of the RAP. This is a presentation on the topic.
- Include relevant findings from the analysis carried out. This could be graphical (with explanations) or in chart or tabular form where key numbers are concerned.
- The analysis and findings will have led to conclusions being drawn by the student and recommendations being made. These conclusions and recommendations are a key part of the presentation so should be shown on the slides.

How many words and slides?

Whenever I or any of my colleagues deliver workshops on the degree, we are always asked the same two questions among others: Those questions are:

1. The word limit for the RR is 7,500 but what is the maximum tolerance allowed?
2. How many slides should be included?

The answer to question 1 is always to remind students that the word limit is 7,500 and that if we were prepared to accept 8,000 we would say so but then a student would ask if 8,500 would be OK and so on. It would not be long before we were asked to accept 10,000 words and yes we do receive reports that long and YES THEY WILL FAIL.

The answer to question 2 is always that we cannot answer as it depends on the way the presentation is delivered. The least slides I have personally seen is one which was just a title slide and the most is almost 90 which would be impossible to present in 15 minutes, requiring an average of 6 slides every minute or one every 10 seconds! That would not leave enough time for the slide to be read or for the presenter to talk and present.

The markers and moderators are very experienced at being the recipients of presentations and so can easily make a judgement as to the likelihood of

the slides being presented during a 15 minute presentation. It is not just the number of slides, it is also the content.

SO REMEMBER –

- The presentation should be no more than 15 minutes
- It should be about your topic not the process of writing the report
- The slides should SUPPORT your presentation
- The slides should be interesting and clearly understandable
- The presentation and slides should contain the results of your analysis, your conclusions and recommendations
- The slides MUST be your own work

f. Use of information technology

- Students will fail if they do not include reasonable evidence that a spreadsheet has been used.

11. The Skills and Learning Statement: why students fail

Not answering the four specific questions required to meet the assessment criteria for the “self reflection” element of the SLS

- The purpose of the Skills and Learning Statement is for students to show that they have developed the key ‘graduate’ skills of self-reflection and communication.
- It is not sufficient to make a description of events without any element of reviewing and evaluating the process of completing the RAP, which is essential to meet the assessment criteria.
- This must be **your own reflection** on what you experienced and learned undertaking the Research Project

Further to this the following is taken from an article written by Al Neilson OBU/ACCA marker for the Student Accountant on preparing your Skills and Learning Statement and is useful to support your learning in this area:

‘Careful reading of the guidance contained in the Information Pack on the ACCA website should enable students to attain a pass in the SLS. However, there is already sufficient evidence to support the view that a significant number of students either do not understand the concept of “self reflection “ or do not see why such importance is attached to it in the assessment process. The remaining part of this section will address these points and should help students to prepare a successful SLS.

i. Understanding the concept of “self reflection” and its importance.

There are a number of definitions of ‘reflection’, but applied in the context in which it is used in the SLS, all are concerned with:

- thinking,
- considering,
- contemplating,
- meditating
- about your experience of engaging in and completing your research report

Producing a research report is a major task, and also a significant learning opportunity.

The purpose of the SLS is to give you an opportunity to think about what you did and why, how you did it, what went well /not so well and why ,and what you would do differently if you have to write such a research report in the future. It is an opportunity for you to demonstrate that you have learned from the experience. This is important, as experience is a great teacher – If you can develop the skills to learn from it.

Failure to develop the requisite skills means that mistakes will be repeated- the lessons are not learned. Sometimes the phrase “reinventing the wheel” is used to indicate such a lack of learning from the experiences and work of others – but more importantly, it is all too possible to “reinvent the flat tyre” - that is, something which does not work at all!!

The skills of “self reflection” imply a capacity to look at ourselves objectively and assess our strengths and weaknesses, our predispositions - at what we do and how we do it- and to see where we can continue to develop and improve. It implies a capacity to review and evaluate what we do on a continuous basis, to judge what is good /less good, and to learn from our experiences.

For example some people have a very strong “action orientation” – they want to start “doing things” immediately; others are much more thoughtful and reflective – they spend a great deal of time before they act - or do things.

Taken to extremes, both can cause major problems: doing before thinking (the “ready, fire, aim syndrome) causes major problems, while too much thought and too little action (the “paralysis by analysis” syndrome) can also be problematical. Too much of either orientation will not produce the best possible research report: an appropriate balance between thought and action is required.

Self reflection is an important graduate skill .It enables us to “learn how to learn”. In a world characterised by rapid change, knowledge can become obsolete very quickly, and we need to develop skills which will equip us for lifelong learning. Completing the SLS will assist you to develop those reflective skills which will

stand you in good stead throughout your professional career, and help you to become a thoughtful and reflective practitioner in the future.

ii. Applying reflective skills to answering the four specific questions

Answers to the four questions will be personally based, related to your own strengths and weaknesses and your experience of conducting your research. You may find it helpful to distinguish between three different types of “reflection.”

The **first** is reflection as thinking about what you propose to do before you do it: reflection as “thinking before action” – or “look before you leap”. You may have attempted some overall assessment of the task to be completed. This might have included

- choice of topic and organisation,
- consideration of your interests,
- learning needs,
- resources required,
- problems of accessing information,
- your own strengths and weaknesses.

This overall ‘helicopter approach’ can be a very useful precursor to the more detailed planning and scheduling activities required to complement the initial overall assessment of the task requirements, constraints and your own capabilities and interests.

Second, there is reflection as “thinking in action” - that is while actually engaged in carrying out some aspect of producing your research report. This is sometimes referred to as “thinking on your feet”.

For example, you will have to exercise this skill in meetings with your mentor - you will have to respond to questions asked and issues raised as the meeting progresses. Or you may be using interviews as part of your information gathering approach and you have to follow up responses to answers given by asking further probing questions.

Similarly, when delivering your presentation, you may have to respond to unanticipated questions. These examples of reflection as thinking in action arise from some aspect of implementing your research approach – actually carrying out the required tasks - which have themselves originated in your own prior assessment and planning activities.

Third is reflection as “thinking on action”; this is after the event /process has been completed. It involves looking backwards, and trying to make sense of what happened and why and is concerned with the processes of reviewing and evaluating what you did and attempting to learn the lessons from the experience.

This is perhaps what is most commonly understood by reflection, but it is important to emphasise that the other aspects are also important. It is also important to remind you that these processes are known to us all in everyday life- they are not strange or unusual experiences of themselves. What is unusual is that you are required to think in a serious and disciplined way about these processes applied to a specific context – that of conducting your research and analysis project – which is itself somewhat different from your everyday tasks and activities.

The point is that you will have had experiences when you have ‘reflected’ that “ I did not plan that very well” or “I could have answered that question better” or “if only I had.....!!”

It is precisely this aspect of reflection which leads to statements such as “hindsight is twenty-twenty vision” or “if only I knew then what I know now”.

iii. Reflecting on the four Questions

Let us now consider the four specific questions.

1. What did you learn from the meetings with your Project mentor including the presentation that you gave to your Project Mentor?

Question 1 asks what you learned from meetings with your mentor, including the presentation you gave: it will be of great help to you to keep notes of the meetings held with your mentor, and note any specific learning points.

This can be used as evidence to demonstrate the learning acquired – one would expect to see some development in some of the skills areas over the course of the three meetings, noting improvement over the period.

Students failed on this because that did not link the presentation clearly to their Research Project findings. Students also fail because they do not reflect adequately on what went well or not so well, and are unable to illustrate what was learnt from their experiences

2. How well do you think you have answered your research question?

Question 2 relates to how well you think you answered your research questions.

Some students misinterpret this, and relate the “questions” either to those raised in discussions with the mentor, or those in their questionnaires /interviews with their respondents. This is wrong: the research questions are those related to the research report objectives and questions.

In essence, it means to what extent you have met the objectives of your research report, and answered the questions your report was designed to answer. You therefore need to look again carefully at your conclusions and

recommendations and judge how well you think you have answered the research questions/met the research report objectives , and say why this is the case. This is reflecting on the completed report and how well it has served its intended purpose.

3. How have you demonstrated your interpersonal and communication skills during the project work?

Question 3 requires you to provide evidence of demonstrating your interpersonal and communication skills during your project work.

Evidence can be drawn from a range of situations: from all interactions with your mentor, with people from the organisation studied /respondents to interviews /questionnaires, from the audience present at your presentation.

You will note that much of the material contained in the earlier key skills statement can be relevant to all of the questions, but it must be tailored to answer the specific purposes of the question set. For example, rather than outlining a theoretical model of the communication process, or the various types of questions and their uses, you must show how you have applied such knowledge to demonstrate the specific skill.

Exactly the same is true in relation to what you have learned - rather than outlining a general statement about planning and its uses, you must be able to apply such knowledge and understanding to a specific context and show how it has provide evidence of your learning and development.

4. How has undertaking the RAP helped in your accountancy students and/or current employment?

Finally, **Question 4** relates to how undertaking the RAP has helped you in your accountancy studies, and /or current job. This question is generally quite well answered, perhaps because it seems to be easier for students to cite specific examples about what they have gained in terms of knowledge and understanding. They find it easier to relate this to either current work roles or perhaps even future work roles-for example, to future roles more managerial in nature.

Generally, a good SLS answers the questions and provides evidence of considerable thought and deliberation given to what has been done, what has been achieved, and a higher level of understanding of the experiences involved in the process of completing the RAP.

One final tip: it can be very helpful to students to keep a “learning diary” when embarking on the RAP; taking note of key experiences, recording your thoughts

/feelings, what was good /bad and why, what you might do differently and how this might benefit you both in terms of your accountancy studies or current /future employment roles.

In this way, you will be building up your SLS as you work on your research report, and important points and issues will be noted at the time. You will then be in a good position to finalise the SLS after your last mentor meeting, when the presentation has been completed, and you are also making adjustments to your draft research report prior to submission. This will strengthen your SLS, making it an integral part of the RAP experience, rather than an element “bolted on “ after the report is completed.

The approach outlined should help you to submit a SLS which satisfies the assessment criteria, and thus enable you to pass the Research and Analysis Project - you can not obtain the degree without passing both the research report and the SLS.

Much more significantly, adopting a reflective approach to your professional practice will benefit you throughout your future professional career, and equip you with important skills which enable you to manage your continued professional development.’

12. Oxford Brookes University policies and procedures

Academic Appeals, Student Complaints and Conduct Regulations

Please see the following link for the University regulations:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/>

13. Oxford Brookes University contact details

If you have an enquiry concerning the BSc degree in general, or the Research and Analysis Project please read the information above first. If you still have a query then please contact the ACCA office at:

ACCA Office, Faculty of Business
Oxford Brookes University
Wheatley Campus,
Wheatley
Oxford OX33 1HX ,
United Kingdom

Email: acca@brookes.ac.uk
tel: +44 (0) 1865 485702

Frequently Asked Questions

What is anonymous marking and how does it affect me?

For all submissions from period 33 onwards the university is adopting anonymous marking of the RAP. This means you should avoid any mention of your name in the documents submitted to the university. We will identify students solely from their ACCA student number.

How do I get help in preparing for the project?

Many ACCA providers also offer tuition for this project. There are also Project Guides to the Research and Analysis Project published by BPP and Kaplan.

When do I submit the Project?

There are two submission periods a year, in May and November.

Do I have to re-submit immediately?

No, as long as you continue to satisfy the eligibility criteria, you are encouraged to take time to reflect on what was wrong (read the feedback carefully) and amend your project. There is no obligation to resubmit in the next period.

What is included in the Word Count?

Everything from the start of the Title page to the end of your Conclusion is included. The List of References and any Appendices do not form part of the word count

How important is the IT requirement?

Extremely important: If you do not show evidence of using a spreadsheet you are almost certain to fail.

How important is it to reference properly?

Along with IT, failure to reference properly is the most common reason for failing the project. The references must be both in the text, in the correct format and in the List of References. One reason for this is to avoid plagiarism.

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/skill/skill1d.html>

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/upgrade/study-skills/referencing/>

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when you produce someone else's work within your report without acknowledging the fact. Clearly if you fail to provide a reference for a sentence or paragraph that you took from another text then that is plagiarism. This is a serious disciplinary issue and may result in being permanently excluded from Oxford Brookes University and action from the ACCA may result.

What happens after I submit the project?

You will receive an acknowledgment by email. The timetables for project submissions and despatch of results are given on the ACCA website.

What happens if I have passed?

You will receive a certificate, normally within 3 months of the results letter and you will be invited to the next graduation ceremony either at Oxford Brookes University in Oxford or at a regional centre near you – currently offered at Malaysia, Singapore and Dubai.

If I fail, do I get told why?

You will get feedback on your on-line mark sheet, which will indicate which areas you passed and which areas you failed.

What are the most common reasons for failure?

The most common reasons for failure are

- Insufficient analysis of the information that the student researches, often because insufficient information of the right kind has been researched.
- Not referencing the work properly
- IT - in particular not including reasonable evidence that a spreadsheet has been used

If I fail do I have to start with a completely new topic?

Not necessarily – it may be that you just have to remedy the deficiencies indicated in your mark sheet. In that case you may resubmit an amended report. However please note that if you fail and resubmit the same topic but with an attempt to rectify the deficiencies, you will often have to hold three mentor meetings again. However these meetings may well take an abbreviated form.

However, if your fail grade was purely for failing to include the presentation, then three further mentor meetings will not be necessary, although it is recommended that you meet at least once with your mentor.

The Research and Analysis Project is in 2 parts – the Research Report and the Skills and Learning Statement. If you pass one of these you do not have to resubmit that part.

How many times can I submit the project?

You may submit the project a maximum of three times. For normal resubmission the standard fee must accompany every submission.

If I analyse some published financial statements, do I have to include them with my project?

No, not the complete publication, but you should include a copy of the key financial statements including those of your comparator as an Appendix. However, each Appendix should be limited to eight sides.

I intend to analyse some questionnaires – do I have to include them all in my project?

No, but you must include a copy of the questionnaire and a summary of the responses as an Appendix.

APPENDIX 1 - RESUBMISSION STATEMENT

Research and Analysis Project Resubmission Statement

You **MUST** upload either this form or a similar Word document with your resubmitted project. If you have changed your topic/organisation then you will still need to upload this form stating that you have changed your topic/organisation. ***Please upload as a separate document.***

I can confirm that my project has been carried out in accordance with the 2016-17 *Information Pack* and the Resubmission Guide. Yes

ACCA number:	Topic Number:	Organisation:
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Previous period submitted:

Please explain in 500 words how you have addressed the feedback on your mark sheet and responded to the markers/ moderators comments:

APPENDIX 2 - MARKING CRITERIA

Research Project	Pass - Grade A	Pass - Grade B	Pass - Grade C	Fail - Grade F
Technical and Professional Skills				
Understanding of accountancy / business models	Highly appropriate choice of theory/concepts. Very clear relevance and shows evidence of wider reading	Appropriate choice of theory and concepts. Significant evidence of understanding.	Some, but limited choice and use of theory and concepts. Some evidence of understanding.	Poor choice of theory / concepts, very limited understanding. Reliance on narrow range of material.
Application of accountancy / business models	Insightful and critical application of models to the project topic.	Mostly correct application of theory to the project topic.	Some application of theory, but lacking a coherent approach.	Poor use of theory / models and confused understanding of application.
Evaluation of information, analysis and conclusions	High level of critical thought shown in the analysis and a rigorous approach to the evaluation of information.	Strength shown in some areas of critical review of the information. Good evaluation of information.	Some analysis but a tendency towards description rather than analysis and evaluation	Descriptive and lacking in analysis. Inaccuracies. Little or no critical evaluation
Presentation of project findings	Can engage reader in a professional manner and produce a relevant and coherent project report with appropriate structure.	Can communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the report. Clear and concise manner with all relevant information.	Some communication is effective. Can report practical applications in a structured way.	Communication is only partially effective and project is poorly structured.
Graduate Skills	Competent	Not competent		
Communication	Language mostly fluent. Grammar and spelling mainly accurate.	Meaning often unclear. Grammar and / or spelling contain frequent errors.		
Information gathering and referencing	Clear evidence of a range of relevant information sources. Clear evidence of correct referencing methodology.	Very few and / or irrelevant information sources used. Referencing is mostly absent or unsystematic.		
Information technology	Shows reasonable evidence of having accessed online information sources and having used a spreadsheet and / or other software in preparing the project report.	Little evidence of use of IT during preparation of project. Little online access, no evidence of spreadsheet / other software use.		

Skills and Learning Statement	Competent	Not competent		
Self reflection	<p>Makes a reasonable attempt to address all four questions. (see below *)</p> <p>Shows ability to reflect on judgements made / actions taken during project work.</p> <p>Evidence of recognising own strengths and weaknesses</p>	<p>Overly focused on only one or two questions.</p> <p>Emphasis on description of events, little evaluation of self-development etc.</p> <p>Little discussion of own strengths and weaknesses</p>		
Communication skills	<p>A copy of the presentation to the project mentor is included.</p> <p>Presentation has appropriate structure. Content is clearly linked to project report findings.</p>	<p>A copy of the presentation to the project mentor has not been included.</p> <p>Presentation is poorly structured and / or content is not relevant to project report findings.</p>		

* In the SLS, the student will be asked to reflect on the following four questions.

1. Reflect on what you have learnt from the meetings with your project mentor, including the presentation that you gave to your project mentor?
2. To what extent do you think you have achieved the RAP research objectives you set?
3. How have you demonstrated your interpersonal and communication skills during the project work?
4. Reflect on how undertaking the RAP helped you in your accountancy studies and/or current employment role?

APPENDIX 3 - RESUBMISSION CHECKLIST

Research and Analysis Project Checklist - this is for your reference and does not need to be submitted. Please note that this checklist must be used in conjunction with the feedback that you have received from your previous submission

All marking is now anonymous so please ensure you have you NOT included any mention of your name in any of the project documentation submitted	
Have you included a Reference List and cited it within the project correctly? (See http://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/resources/harvard.doc for details)	
Is there evidence of a spreadsheet and/or IT within the project? (Spreadsheet formulae should be included)	
If you used a questionnaire as a means of gathering data, have you included your results as well as a sample questionnaire as an Appendix?	
Have you included the relevant pages of the company's Financial Statements (if necessary)? (Please do not submit the entire document, copies of the relevant sections are adequate)	
Have you used the most up-to-date financial statements for review if you have based your RAP on topic 8?	
If you have chosen either topic 8 or topic 15 and you have changed topic or organisation, your Research Report must be based on one of the three current specified industry sectors? (i.e. current at the time of submission).	
If you have focused on topic 8, have you used a comparator for the ratios of another company or industrial averages in your work?	
Have you answered the 4 specific questions required in the Skills and Learning Statement (SLS)? (You may use the questions as headings to structure the SLS).	
Have you included copies of your PowerPoint presentation slides for your SLS?	
Have you included a title page with your ACCA number written on it as well as the word count? Please avoid using your name on any of the documents submitted as we now operate an anonymous marking system. We will solely identify students from their ACCA number.	
Is your Research Report more than 7000 words and your SLS more than 1800 words? Any submission under this word count is unlikely to pass.	
Is your Research Report 7500 words or less and your SLS 2000 words or less?	
Before logging on to submit, please ensure you have card details ready to pay the relevant submission fee.	
If you are resubmitting, have you included a 500 word 'Resubmission Statement'?	

Are you an active member of ACCA? If your account has been suspended you will need to resolve this before submitting a project to Oxford Brookes University.	
Please check that your name appears correctly on your ACCA records and on our Submission site, as this will be the name that will appear on your certificate should you be successful.	
Please note that you must inform Oxford Brookes University if you change your address before the date of results release. This can be done by emailing acca@brookes.ac.uk	
If you experience any difficulties in uploading your project, please email acca@brookes.ac.uk	