

Oxford Brookes/ACCA partnership



BSc in Applied Accounting

Faculty of Business
Oxford Brookes University

ACCA ASEAN Learning
Conference
Vietnam 2013

Oxford Brookes/ACCA partnership

‘How to be a successful mentor’

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Programme for today

- ✚ Oxford Brookes University and the BSc in Applied Accounting programme
- ✚ Key features of the Research & Analysis Project (RAP)
- ✚ Relationship between student, ACCA, OBU and Tuition provider
- ✚ Role of the mentor in the RAP
- ✚ Skills for effective mentoring
- ✚ Mentor/student meetings
- ✚ Benefits of mentoring for students & mentors
- ✚ Benefits of completing the RAP for students

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

- Originally founded in 1865 as the Oxford School of Art
- **In 2015 we will be 150 years old**
- Established as a University in 1992, named after John Henry Brookes
- **‘Lives of consequence’**
- **18,000 students** and 2,500 staff in 4 academic Faculties
- **77% Undergraduate; 23% Postgraduate**



ACCA and Oxford Brookes University: partnership provides

- ❑ Opportunity for ACCA members and students to gain recognition in Higher Education for further academic skills development by achieving
- ❑ **BSc (Honours) in Applied Accounting**

BSc degree activity

As at 2013

- Over 17,000 BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting graduates
- Current pass rate - 54%
- Major markets UK, Singapore, Malaysia, Pakistan
- Growth markets Africa, Vietnam

BSc Academic Awards Ceremonies in the UK, Singapore/Malaysia, Kenya

BSc degree activity

BSc Academic Awards Ceremonies in the UK,
Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai.



BSc in Applied Accounting

BSc only available to individuals studying or completed accountancy examinations.

Award is currently achieved through passing ACCA Fundamentals Stage, taking the Professional Ethics Module and an Oxford Brookes research project.

BSc(Hons) in Applied Accounting

- ✓ To meet UK QAA BSc Honours degree requirements, graduates must demonstrate technical understanding & skills AND personal/transferable skills:
- ✓ ACCA Fundamentals papers (F1-F9) fulfill all technical requirements, but not all of the required personal/transferable skills:
- ✓ OBU RAP (Research Report + Skills and Learning Statement) designed to bridge “gap” between outcomes of a professional programme and an undergraduate degree.

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting

- Oxford Brookes participates in the setting and assessment of these ACCA examination papers.
- Oxford Brookes has a robust quality assurance system covering ACCA examination papers F1 to F9 (Fundamentals)
- The total of 360 credits fulfils UK QAA Accounting Benchmark requirements and Honours level descriptors

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting

- ACCA enrolled students are also Oxford Brookes registered students, unless they “opt out” on ACCA registration.
- ACCA Fundamentals examination papers are also Oxford Brookes examination papers.

Government recognition of the BSc in Applied Accounting

- Oxford Brookes University has degree awarding powers in the UK (approved by the Privy Council)
- The degree is quality assured by the Quality Assurance Agency in the UK
- Outside of the UK the degree is widely recognised by governments across the world
- There are some exceptions to recognition and therefore it is important for students to refer to country specific Ministry of Education information

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting

For the award of the BSc students must

- Complete the degree within ten years of **initial** registration for the ACCA professional examinations.
- Hold university entry requirements including an appropriate English Language qualification.
- Must have not “opted out” before passing any of the papers F7, F8 or F9.

Programme structure

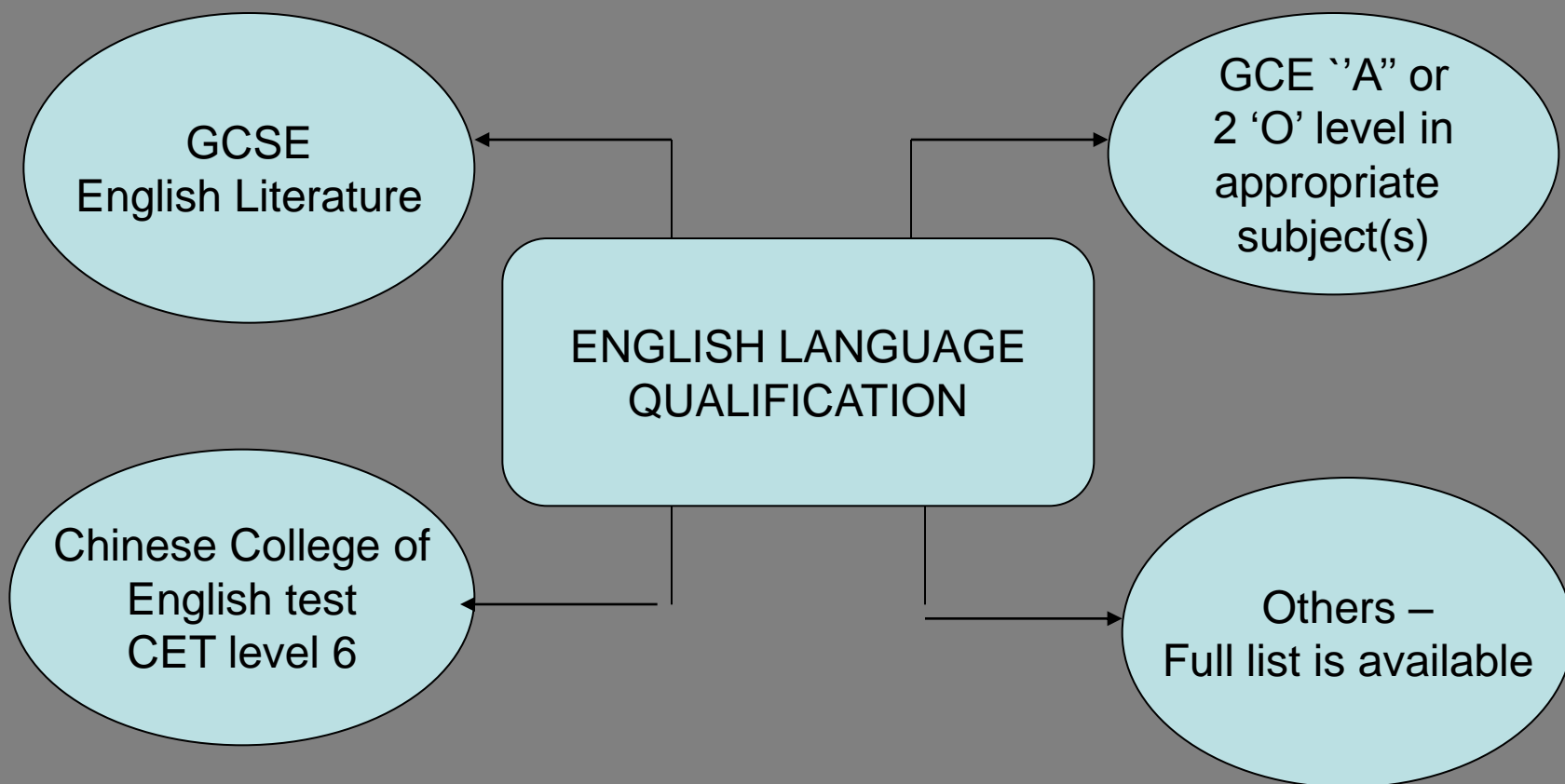
Papers F1 to F6 exemptions granted by ACCA are recognised by Oxford Brookes

Papers F7 to F9 **must** be passed. No exemptions are available

Professional ethics module **must** be completed

Research and analysis project must be submitted to Oxford Brookes and passed

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting



BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting Papers F1 to F9

<u>ACCA Paper</u>	<u>Paper Title</u>	<u>OBU Module code</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Credits</u>
F1	Accounting in Business	OBU CA31	4	30
F2	Management Accounting	OBU CA32	4	30
F3	Financial Accounting	OBU CA33	4	30
F4	Corporate & Business Law	OBU CA34	6	40
F5	Performance Management	OBU CA35	6	40
F6	Taxation	OBU CA36	6	40
F7	Financial Reporting	OBU CA37	6	40
F8	Audit & Assurance	OBU CA38	6	40
F9	Financial Management	OBU CA39	6	<u>40</u>
				<u>330</u> credits

Students must then complete the Professional Ethics module which has the OBU module code of OBU CA80

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting

The BSc (Hons) degree requires a total of 360 credits. The remaining 30 are obtained by taking and passing:

Research and Analysis Project

OBU module code OBU CA98 which is level 6 and worth 30 credits

Transcripts for the above are available to graduates detailing the modules taken and the mark achieved

360 credits equate to a 3 year undergraduate degree programme

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting

Classification of BSc degree Honours

(First Class, Upper Second, Lower Second, Third Class)

Degree classification based on ACCA average mark **AND** RAP Pass Grade (A or B or C).

ACCA average mark is still primary determinant of BSc degree class.

Many students will not be affected by RAP Pass Grade but incentive to do well exists.

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting

Classification of BSc degree Honours

(First Class, Upper Second, Lower Second, Third Class)

ACCA average mark determined from marks in **Papers F4, F5, F6, F7, F8 and F9 only. F1-F3 not included.**

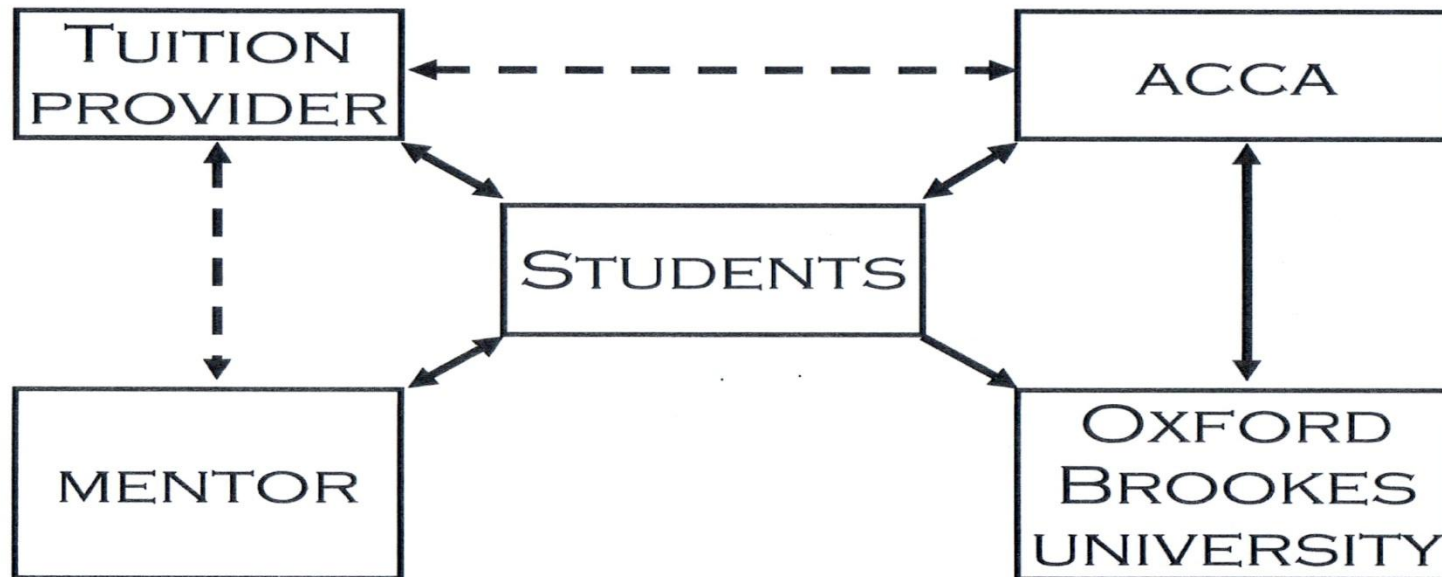
Any papers credited in are not included in the calculation for the degree classification

Papers F7, F8 and F9 must be passed. Any other marks from non-exempt papers in F4-F9 will be included.

BSc degree classification

ACCA average mark	BSc degree class			
	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

BSc in Applied Accounting



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTIES TO ACCA AND BSc

RAP

- RAP is a “guided enquiry”
- Student chooses from the approved list of 20 topics
- Student benefits from guidance on ACCA website, articles in “Student Accountant”, published texts on RAP and MEETINGS WITH THEIR MENTOR
- Student actively reflects on the experience of undertaking the RAP and knowledge, skills and behaviours developed through “learning from experience”
- Mentor encourages and supports student initiative and reinforces students responsibility for self directed learning

Key features of the RAP

RAP consists of 2 parts:

1. A Research Report (RR) based on a topic chosen by the student from an approved list of topics based on the curriculum covered in Papers F1-F9. 7,500 word maximum length, and a recommended structure and content: graded A,B,C (Pass) or F (Fail)
2. A Skills and Learning Statement (SLS) 2,000 word maximum length - pass or fail.

Both parts must be passed: they are designed to enable students to demonstrate the required personal/transferrable skills.

Key features of the RAP

Transferable skills on successful completion of RAP:

- problem solving/analysis/evaluation
- effective written/oral communication
- self managed learning
- completing an independent research project
- information gathering/referencing
- using information technology

NB all the above primarily evaluated in research report reflecting on learning/effects on future professional development & employment roles-evaluated in skills and learning statement.

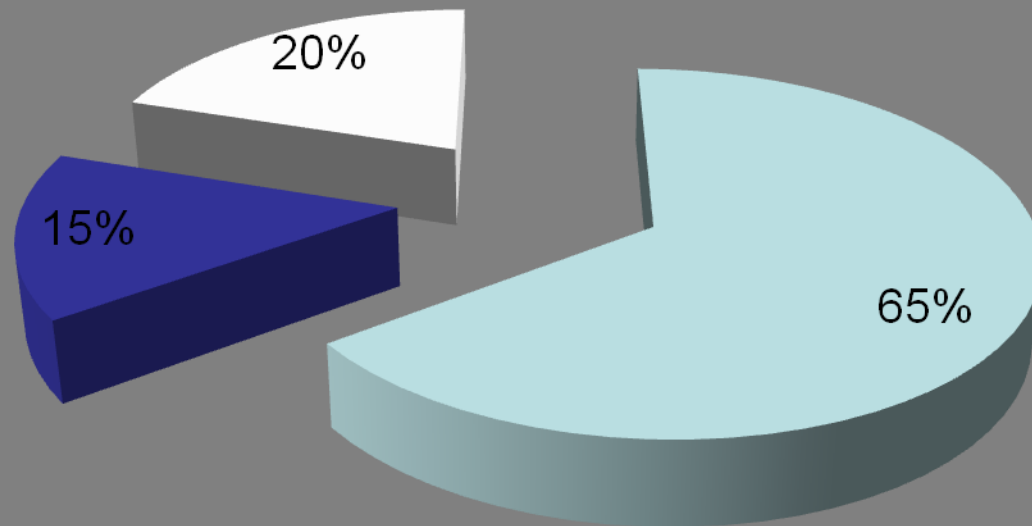
RAP Structure and Content

Students must

- ✓ read all of the project information on the ACCA website and clarify any outstanding project issues with the ACCA office at Oxford Brookes
- ✓ identify a **Project Mentor**
- ✓ submit and pass a **Research Report** and a **Skills and Learning Statement**



Most popular topics

- 8 an analysis and evaluation of the business and financial performance of an organisation over a 3 year period
- 6 a critical review of key factors or indicators in the motivation of employees in an organisation
- Other topics



Research report (RR)

Assesses 4 technical and professional skills-

- ✚ *Understanding of*  *accountancy and*
- ✚ *Application of*  *business models*
- ✚ *Evaluation of information – analysis/conclusions*
- ✚ *Presentation of project findings*

And 3 graduate skills

- ✚ *Communication*
- ✚ *Information gathering and referencing*
- ✚ *Use of information technology*

Graded A, B, C (pass) or F (fail)

Skills and learning statement (SLS)

Assesses:

- ✚ Self reflection – answers 4 specific questions in a reflective manner related to the RAP experience
- ✚ Communication skills including making a 15 minute presentation to the mentor

Research & analysis project

Overall assessment

- Grade attained for RR determines overall grade
- If student passes RR but fails SLS, RR grade is applied to successful resubmission of SLS
- If student passes SLS but fails RR, resubmitted RR is capped at grade C
- If student fails both, passes on individual criteria are carried forward if same project resubmitted but NOT if a new project is submitted
- **ONLY 3 ATTEMPTS ARE PERMITTED**

Research Report Structure

Title page	→	The title of the project and student details etc
Contents page	→	List of contents and page numbers
Part 1 Approx 1,000 words	→	Project objectives and overall research approach
Part 2 Approx 1,500 words	→	Information gathering and accounting and business techniques used
Part 3 Approx 4,000 words	→	Results, analysis, conclusions and recommendations
References	→	List of references NOT a bibliography
Appendices	→	Accounts and other supporting information

Research Report – Part 1

Project objectives and overall research approach

- *Reasons for choice of topic and organisation*
- *Project objectives and research questions – what you wanted to find out*
- *Explanation of overall research approach so that reader is able to understand the overall framework developed to meet project objectives and answer research questions*

Research Report – Part 2

Information gathering and accounting and business techniques used

- *Sources of information*
- *Description of methods used to collect information including on line access*
- *Discussion of limitations of information gathering*
- *Identification of any ethical issues arising during information gathering and how they were resolved*
- *Explanation of accounting/business techniques used including a discussion of their limitations*

Research Report – Part 3

Results, analysis, conclusions and recommendations

- *Description of results obtained and discussion of limitations*
- *Presentation of results in appropriate form such as tables, graphs, pie charts etc.*
- *Critical analysis/evaluation of results including explanations of significant findings*
- *Conclusions – how well do findings meet project objectives and answer research questions*
- *If appropriate, recommendations on specific actions to named person in chosen organisation*

Skills and Learning Statement structure

1. What did you learn from the meetings with your project mentor, including the presentation that you gave to your project mentor?
2. How well do you think that you have answered your research questions?
3. How have you demonstrated your interpersonal and communication skills during the project work?
4. How has undertaking the RAP helped you in your accountancy studies and/or current employment role?

Referencing

We expect them to use Harvard style referencing clearly indicating the sources of the information they are using.

Why?

Because we need to identify what sources of information they have used and identify their analysis and interpretation of that information

What do we mean by analysis?

It is not enough to just present data or even calculate ratios as they tell us very little.

Neither is it enough to say that the organisation has done better/worse than before.

We need explanations

To analyse is to explain!

Qualities of Excellent Research Reports

- ❁ Specific and achievable report objectives
- ❁ Logical structure underpinned/guided by a clearly explained appropriate overall research approach
- ❁ Systematic approach to information gathering, relevant to the topic, issues in the organisation studied and report objectives.
- ❁ Analytical/evaluative approach, applying relevant concepts/theories /models etc. from accounting/business literature both in the design of the overall research approach AND in an overall evaluation which meets the stated report objectives.
- ❁ Accurate and complete referencing of all information sources- both in the text and a list of references.

The Project Mentor

- ✓ The Mentor should be one of the following
 - An ACCA Member
 - Employer / line manager
 - Tutor at Learning Provider (College or University)

- ✓ Hold three 30 minute meetings with the student

- ✓ Certify on request that
 - the meetings have taken place, and
 - the work submitted is the student's own work

Role of the mentor

- ✓ to encourage students to think about what they plan to do;
- ✓ to ask students probing and challenging questions- which test their understanding of what is required;
- ✓ to explore how students plan to meet their stated research report objectives;

Role of the mentor

What is a mentor ?

“an experienced and trusted adviser”

- guide; definitely
- guru; maybe
- counselor; yes
- consultant; to some extent
- tutor. Most definitely not

Role of the mentor

An experienced adviser who provides guidance and support to a student engaged in planning, preparing and submitting the required Research and Analysis Project (RAP) to OBU Business School.

RAP Mentor should be fully informed/aware of the guidance available to students - see the Information Pack details on the ACCA website.

Role of the mentor

1. Providing support during process of undertaking RAP:
guiding/advising/challenging/giving feedback to student
2. Confirming to OBU that:
you have acted as mentor; the submitted RAP is the student's own work; required 3 meetings (normally approx. 30 minutes each) were held; student provided a progress report and delivered a presentation on Research Report.

Role of the mentor

Remind students to retain ALL information collected during project work until they have received official notification of grade from OBU.

Remind students of University regulations regarding any form of cheating- see cheating statement on ACCA website

Remind students that Turnitin (web-based tool for checking improper use of sources/potential plagiarism) will be used on a sample of projects

Role of the mentor

- not required/expected to have specialist knowledge of either topic area chosen or research methods;
- not required/expected to teach students how to pass the RAP/conduct their research;
- not required to answer detailed questions about assessment.

Role of the mentor

- ✓ to encourage students to think about what they plan to do;
- ✓ to ask students probing and challenging questions- which test their understanding of what is required;
- ✓ to explore how students plan to meet their stated research report objectives;

Skills for effective mentoring: 1

- ✦ Establishing rapport/being approachable/wanting to help students to succeed;
- ✦ Effective listening and questioning techniques: asking probing/challenging questions/testing students understanding/helping them to think systematically, set appropriate objectives and evaluate what they are doing/have done/need to do
- ✦ Giving helpful feedback, guidance when required
- ✦ Modeling and reinforcing appropriate student behaviours- agenda setting; note taking; action planning; progress reporting; reflecting on the research process- what went well/less well (and why?); their own strengths and weaknesses etc.

Skills for effective mentoring: 2

Helping students to develop reflective skills. Applied to the RAP context, this means encouraging students to think carefully about:

- ❖ what they plan to do;
- ❖ how they plan to do it;
- ❖ their strengths and weaknesses;
- ❖ choice of topic/organisation/report objectives;

Asking questions will help them to reflect and clarify their thoughts/justify their reasons

Skills for effective mentoring: 3

Reflecting implies thinking deeply and carefully :
applied to the RAP it could mean :

- thinking before acting: assessing and planning what they plan to do & how they plan to do it;
- thinking while acting: “thinking on their feet”-e.g. while presenting the draft report to mentor;
- thinking after acting -reviewing and evaluating what they did & how well they did it;

Skills for effective mentoring: 4

Using a “learning diary” can help students to develop reflective skills:

Taking notes during meetings/recording thoughts and feelings about the meeting; later, evaluating in terms of what went well, and why? What did not go well -and why?. It will help them to learn from their experiences.

Experience can be a great teacher- if we can develop the reflective skills to learn from our mistakes- by constantly reviewing and evaluating what we do and how we do it.

Most important of all, if students become reflective practitioners, they will strengthen their professional practice throughout their whole careers.

Mentor/Student Meetings meeting 1 planning/preparation

Before Meeting student should have :

read the guidance in the Information Pack thoroughly; identified topics/objectives/organisation for study; considered how to conduct research; prepared a draft RAP timetable.

Student advised to send draft proposals to mentor prior to meeting, agenda for the meeting specifying issues for discussion/objectives to achieve. Students also advised to take notes of meeting, and reflect on what went well/not so well.

Mentor: will have read guidance in Information Pack ,and details submitted by student: role is one of questioning for further information/clarification: checking student understanding of guidance, assessment criteria; are plans realistic given constraints?

Mentor/Student Meetings

meeting 2: review of progress

Students should have submitted, along with an agenda of issues for discussion, a word processed draft in recommended structure/format:
Part 1: project objectives and overall research approach;
Part 2: Information gathering and accounting and business techniques, plus a brief outline of preliminary findings.

Mentor : explores student concerns/issues; encourages students to think about :

- ✦ how far progress report meets aims/objectives;
- ✦ extent to which assessment criteria are met;
- ✦ quality of information gathering/analysis;
- ✦ work to be completed/improvements to be made;
- ✦ reflection on learning to date/completing skills and learning statement

Mentor/Student Meetings

meeting 3: presentation and review

Student submits draft research report (RR) to mentor before meeting; presentation includes overhead/PowerPoint slides.

Mentor reviews RR /presentation:

- ✚ Is presentation effective? consistent with RR findings?
- ✚ Is there a clear link between the parts of the RR-objectives, framework, concepts, theories, models, findings, analysis, evaluation, conclusions, recommendations?
- ✚ Does analysis/evaluation meet the standard required?
- ✚ What might be changed before submission of final RAP to OBU-including skills and learning statement?

On line mentoring

Oxford Brookes offer an online mentoring course details of which can be found on <http://www.oxfordbrookesmentoring.co.uk>

This will help mentors to be accessed by mentees both face to face and online

A brief handout is available for those interested

Benefits of the mentoring process for the student

- ✦ improved critical thinking- have to explain and justify actions/decisions taken/planned
- ✦ strengthened reflective skills- required to think about each meeting with mentor- before, during and after, and on what went well/not so well and why?
- ✦ meetings with and feedback from mentor have a positive effect on student motivation- helps them to sustain their efforts and complete the project.
- ✦ develops and strengthens independent learning skills within a supportive environment; students generally are very positive about the experience of being mentored

Benefits of the mentoring process for the mentor

- helping students to develop skills of independent learning/learning effectively
- personal and career development through experience in mentoring- a noted method of management development
- developing skills in agreeing goals/targets, monitoring and evaluating the work of others- a vital skill for all who have responsibilities for managing staff
- enhancing communication and interpersonal skills -highly relevant to most jobs and non-work life.
- most mentors find the experience of mentoring satisfying and also learn a lot in the process!!

Project Failure

- ❑ Haven't read Project Guidelines
 - Should be specific to an organisation
 - SLS does not answer the questions
- ❑ Within individual Projects
 - Inadequate analysis and explanation, over descriptive
 - No link between evidence and conclusions
 - Poor referencing (plagiarism?)
 - No SLS presentation

Benefits to students of completing RAP

- ✓ Adding a degree to professional qualifications
- ✓ Continuing personal and professional development
- ✓ Developing transferable skills
- ✓ Better prepared for continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning
- ✓ Developing the skills of a reflective practitioner
- ✓ In addition to personal satisfaction and achievement, it will strengthen students position in a very competitive labour market

RAP: Mentor Development

Guidance for students: ACCA website April 2009

Full details in RAP Information Pack,

www.accaglobal.com/students/study_exams/qualifications/degree

Section 6: The role of the project mentor

- Choosing Your mentor
 - Meetings with your project Mentor
 - Contribution to Skills and Learning Statement
-
- + Appendix 2: Notes to Help Your Mentor
 - + Articles in Student Accountant

Information Sources

ACCA website

www.accaglobal.com/students/study_exams/qualifications/degree

Oxford Brookes University

acca@brookes.ac.uk

Research and Analysis Study Texts

BPP

ACCA Student Accountant magazine

Any Questions

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