



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

INFORMATION PACK

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1. About Oxford Brookes University

With an international reputation for innovation, high quality education and research, and global relationships, it is not surprising that Oxford Brookes University has been voted the best modern university in the *Sunday Times Good University Guide* for seven years in succession.

The Business School is one of the leading schools for teaching and learning in the UK, being a national Subject Centre in Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance, and Oxford Brookes University is one of only sixteen institutions across the UK to have received two multi-million pound awards to establish more than one Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Oxford Brookes University – like other UK universities – has degree awarding power, granted by Royal Charter. But what does this mean? Well, these powers are granted on the basis of Oxford Brookes University having appropriate procedures for assuring the quality and standards of its awards in both design and operation, and being subject to the scrutiny of the QAA, the body responsible to the UK Government's Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills for assuring the quality of UK Higher Education in the public interest. So although you don't physically attend Oxford Brookes University to gain the BSc (Hons) degree in Applied Accounting, the degree programme is of the same rigorous standard as other degrees offered by Oxford Brookes University and meets standards set by QAA.

In an independent assessment of teaching quality, the Business School was one of only two in the country to achieve the maximum score (24/24) across more than one subject area.

The School's reputation has also been recognised through the award of a national, multi-million-pound Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, which has developed a new learning centre on campus with the latest technology to support learning in a café-style environment.

In a recent QAA audit of Oxford Brookes University it concluded that it has 'broad confidence' (the highest category available) in the quality and standards of its awards.

So by gaining the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting, awarded by Oxford Brookes University, you will not only demonstrate to potential or existing employers that you possess all the relevant graduate skills to equip you for a brilliant career in accounting and finance, but that it is from a university that has a reputation for excellence.

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 other papers as required to successfully complete all nine Fundamentals level papers
- complete the ACCA Professional Ethics module *before submitting a Research and Analysis Project to Oxford Brookes University.*
- complete and pass the Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project

The degree must be completed within 10 years of your start date onto the ACCA's professional qualification otherwise your eligibility will be withdrawn

If you are unsure on your eligibility for the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting degree, then you should firstly refer to [myACCA](#) which will tell you whether or not you have opted in to the degree scheme and whether or not you are eligible.

If you are not eligible for the degree programme, then it will be for one of the following reasons:

You enrolled with ACCA before the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting degree was introduced

- When the degree programme was introduced in 2000/2001, all eligible registered students were required to opt into the degree scheme by November 2001. Any student who did not do so, would have been automatically withdrawn.
- If you registered with ACCA prior to 2001, have yet to complete Papers F7-F9 and are within 10 years of your start date, please contact *ACCA Connect* to opt into the degree programme.

You ticked the box on your ACCA registration form stating you did not wish to join the Oxford Brookes University degree programme

- If you are yet to complete Papers F7, F8 and F9, you may opt back in to the BSc degree by contacting *ACCA Connect*.
- If you have already passed ANY of Papers F7, F8 or F9, then unfortunately it is now too late to opt back into the degree programme.
- If you hold exemptions for any of Papers F7-F9, then you may contact ACCA Connect to forfeit these in order to remain eligible. This must be done before sitting any of the other core Papers of F7-F9 - **once you have forfeited your exemption you cannot reverse this decision.**

You do not hold a suitable English language qualification

- Providing you complete Paper F4, then this will be acceptable. Oxford Brookes University deems Paper F4 as proof of English proficiency therefore you should complete this exam and opt in with ACCA before passing Papers F7-F9.

You enrolled with ACCA over 10 years ago

- The BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting degree has a 10 year deadline starting from a student's start date with ACCA. If this has expired in your case, we regret that you are no longer eligible to complete the degree with us.

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.

ACCA Professional Scheme exam passes before June 2000

You will be subject to both the requirements of the 'transitional arrangements', published when the degree was introduced, and the requirements of these conversion arrangements.

4. Aims and outcomes

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

The BSc degree aims to enhance and extend the knowledge and skills gained by you in your professional studies, and to improve your effectiveness as a professional accountancy student and future finance professional.

4. a) Programme regulations

Admission

The minimum academic entry requirements for registering on the BSc degree are two A Levels plus three GCSEs (grade C or above) in five separate subjects including Maths and English. Oxford Brookes University recognises a number of other qualifications which satisfy the minimum English language requirement, including a Pass in ACCA Paper F4, Corporate and Business Law. Further details can be obtained from the ACCA office at Oxford Brookes University.

If you registered with ACCA under the mature student entry route (MSER) and do not have an acceptable English Language qualification, you will be permitted to register for the BSc degree only after you have passed Paper F4, Corporate and Business Law.

If you are a CAT student, and have passed the CAT Advanced level exam papers, you meet all the entry requirements for the BSc degree.

Exemptions

As a registered student, you may be given exemptions from one or more of the nine ACCA specified exam papers. Exemption decisions are made by ACCA and ACCA exemption policy is periodically reviewed by Oxford Brookes University. However, if you wish to achieve the BSc degree you must sit and pass all of the three ACCA subjects F7, F8 and F9.

No exemption can be given from the Professional Ethics Module or from the Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project (RAP).

Progression

When you register with ACCA to undertake the ACCA Qualification, you are automatically registered with Oxford Brookes University for the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting, unless you opted-out of the BSc degree programme at the time of initially registering with ACCA.

If you have opted-put, you may re-register for the BSc degree scheme provided you have not passed any of the three subjects – F7, F8 and F9. If you have passed any one of these three subjects you cannot then register on to the BSc degree.

Conversion arrangements have been developed for completion of the BSc degree if you have passed one or more ACCA professional scheme exams by, or at, the June 2007 ACCA exam sitting.

Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project

You must pass or be exempt from the ACCA Fundamentals exams, including sitting and passing all of F7, F8 and F9, and complete the Professional Ethics module before submitting a RAP to Oxford Brookes University.

You will need to find a project mentor to assist you with your RAP, by providing guidance and advice on your RAP and also to verify that you made an oral presentation at the end of your project research. Your project mentor should be a member of staff at an ACCA tuition provider, your line manager or an ACCA qualified member. Please note that this is different role to the role of the workplace mentor you need when completing your practical experience requirements, although you may find that your line manager is the most appropriate person to fulfil both these roles.

Oxford Brookes University has two submission periods each year during which you may submit an OBU RAP. An OBU RAP that is submitted after the end of a submission period will be returned unmarked to you, but it may be resubmitted in the following submission period.

You are required to pay a project submission fee to Oxford Brookes University with any project submission. See the section on Submission Periods for the current submission fee.

4. b) Programme learning outcomes

On completing the degree programme, you will have demonstrated a capability to:

Knowledge and understanding

- K1 Critically evaluate accounting concepts and principles and their application in solutions to practical accounting problems.
- K2 Prepare financial statements of entities, including groups of companies, using relevant financial information, accounting techniques and standards; and to analyse and interpret such financial statements.
- K3 Use relevant management accounting techniques with cost information, for planning, decision-making, performance evaluation and control, within different business settings.
- K4 Apply financial management techniques to issues affecting investment, financing, and dividend policy decisions of an organisation.
- K5 Understand the general legal framework, and apply specific legal principles relating to business, including taxation legislation as applicable to individuals, single companies and groups of companies.
- K6 Explain the process of carrying out the assurance (audit) engagement and its application in the context of the professional (audit) regulatory framework.
- K7 Describe the organisational context of the accountant and of the development of accounting information systems; to understand the need for the efficient use of resources within an organisation.
- K8 Understand the ethical responsibilities of professional accountants, including the principles of the ACCA code of conduct, and to reflect on ethical dilemmas and potential solutions.

Disciplinary and professional skills

- D1 Prepare non-complex financial statements using generally accepted accounting principles.
- D2 Evaluate and comment on the performance and financial situation of organisations using a range of interpretative techniques.
- D3 Select and apply appropriate accounting and financial management techniques to organisational business planning, decision-making and control.
- D4 Understand the limitations of accounting techniques and the implications of such limitations.
- D5 Understand the limitations of acquired knowledge of legal and taxation issues and recognise the need to seek further specialist advice where necessary.
- D6 Communicate analysis of accounting and financial information and recommendations to a variety of different audiences.

Transferable Skills

- T1 Solve problems through the identification of key issues, synthesis of information and analytical tools, and the presentation and critical evaluation of a range of options.
- T2 Communicate appropriately in writing and through an oral presentation.
- T3 Complete a programme of study through independent and self managed learning.
- T4 Undertake an independent Research Report relating to a single organisation or industry sector.
- T5 Prepare a written report which meets academic requirements of information collection and referencing of information sources.
- T6 Use information technology to record and analyse financial data, to collect information from a range of sources and to present research findings.
- T7 To reflect on the learning attained through completing the programme and its impact on future professional development and employment roles.

4. c) RAP learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of the OBU RAP are achieved through your experience of undertaking a research based project related to a single organisation or industry sector. The learning outcomes are achieved through completing the two components of the OBU RAP; the Research Report (RR) and the Skills and Learning Statement (SLS). There is no syllabus for the OBU RAP and none of the learning outcomes are based on direct teaching by OBU staff.

The purpose of the OBU RAP is to allow you to demonstrate certain specific transferable capabilities of the BSc degree programme:

- T4 Undertake an independent Research Report relating to a single organisation or industry sector.
- T5 Prepare a written report which meets academic requirements of information collection and referencing of information sources.

- T6 Use information technology to record and analyse financial data, to collect information from a range of sources and to present research findings.
- T7 To reflect on the learning attained through completing the programme and its impact on future professional development and employment roles.

And to use the experience gained by undertaking the OBU RAP to contribute to the development of other BSc programme capabilities:

Knowledge and understanding (K)

- K1 Critically evaluate accounting concepts and principles and their application in solutions to practical accounting problems.

Disciplinary and professional skills (D)

- D3 Select and apply appropriate accounting and financial management techniques to organisational business planning, decision-making and control.
- D4 Understand the limitations of accounting techniques and the implications of such limitations.
- D6 Communicate analysis of accounting and financial information and recommendations to a variety of different audiences.

Transferable Skills (T)

- T1 Solve problems through the identification of key issues, synthesis of information and analytical tools, and the presentation and critical evaluation of a range of options.
- T2 Communicate appropriately in writing and through an oral presentation.
- T3 Complete a programme of study through independent and self managed learning.

5. Assessment

The Research and Analysis Project (RAP) is the final component of the BSc degree and consists of two separate documents; a 6,500 word Research Report (RR) and a 2,000 word Skills and Learning Statement (SLS). You are also required to give a presentation on the project to your project mentor.

You have three attempts to pass the RAP. Unfortunately, if you fail the RAP on three separate occasions you will no longer be eligible to complete the BSc degree. Please note that you can either submit the same project topic three times or three different RAPs.

To pass the RAP you must pass **both** the Research Report (RR) **and** the Skills and Learning Statement (SLS). If you do not pass both components separately within the same RAP submission you will be awarded a Fail grade for the RAP.

You will be given one of three Pass grades (A, B or C) or a Fail grade (F) for the performance in the RR. You will be given either a Pass grade or a Fail grade for the performance in the SLS.

If you achieve one of the three Pass grades for the RR **and** the Pass grade for the SLS, then a pass in the RAP will be awarded. The grade awarded to you for the performance in the RAP will be that awarded to you for the RR ie A, B or C. Once you have been awarded one of the three Pass grades for the RAP, then you cannot make any further RAP submissions.

If you are awarded either a Fail grade in the RR or a Fail grade in the SLS, then you will be awarded a Fail grade for the RAP. If you are awarded a Fail grade on the first RAP submission you will be allowed up to two further RAP submissions.

5. a) Assessment criteria

Assessment of Research Report

The assessment of the RR, as follows, demonstrates the importance of the quality of the understanding of the accountancy/business models used in the RR and their application to the RAP project topic. Your 'graduate' skills will be assessed for a level of competence.

To achieve a pass in the RR you must gain one of the three Pass grades (A, B or C) for the 'Technical and Professional Skills' and demonstrate Competence in the 'Graduate Skills'. The overall grade you get for the RR is that which is awarded for the 'Technical and Professional Skills' component of the RR.

	Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>Technical and professional skills</i>		<i>Grade A, B, C or F</i>
Understanding of accountancy / business models	K1	
Application of accountancy / business models	D3	
Evaluation of information, analysis and conclusions	T1	

Presentation of project findings	D6	<i>Competence / Non-competence</i>
<i>Graduate skills</i>		
Communication	T2	
Information gathering and referencing	T5	
Information technology	T6	
<i>Research Report assessment</i>		<i>Grade A, B, C or F</i>

Assessment of Skills and Learning Statement

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

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 question(s)?
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?

The assessment for the SLS considers whether you have demonstrated competence in the 'graduate' skills of self-reflection and communication skills – specifically, the preparation and delivery of a presentation to your project mentor. To achieve a pass in the SLS you must demonstrate competence in both self-reflection and communication skills.

	Learning Outcome	Assessment
<i>Graduate skills</i>		<i>Competence</i>
Self reflection	T7	
Communication skills (including presentation)	T2	
<i>Skills and Learning Statement assessment</i>		<i>Pass/Fail</i>

Details of the full assessment criteria for both the Research Report and the Skills and Learning statement are available in APPENDIX 1

5. b) 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 RR at the first attempt, but are awarded a Fail grade in the SLS, you only need resbmit 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, then you need only submit the revised RR and not the SLS
- Resubmissions will always require the full project Fee to be paid

5. c) 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.

ACCA average mark	Class of Degree			
	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.

Additional transitional arrangements for degree classification

Following the introduction of the new exams in December 2007 and the revised project in 2008 the University has now clarified the transitional arrangements for degree classification for those students who started their studies before the changes were announced.

These transitional arrangements for degree classification ensure students who started this programme under the previous regulations are treated fairly.

'New' students

Students who opted in on or after 1 January 2007 will have their degree classified under the regulations set out above

'Old' students

Students who opted in before this date will have their degree classified either under the old regulations or under the new regulations, whichever is the better.

For clarification the old regulations for classification are as follows:

- The 'Average Mark' will be determined by the average of all Papers F1 to F9 or equivalent (except those that were credited, were internally assessed or converted from old papers prior to 2001)
- Students will then have to achieve a Grade A, B or C overall in the project
- The degree classification will then be calculated with reference to the old table:

ACCA average mark	Degree Classification
66 or more	First Class
58 – 65	Second Class upper Division
54 – 57	Second Class lower Division
50-53	Third Class
Below 49	Not eligible

These transitional arrangements have been designed to achieve a balance between the maintenance of the standard of the degree and to ensure students opted in before 1 January 2007 are treated fairly.

They will be in force for a period of **three years**, up to and including **Session 22 in March/April 2011** which, in addition to the information provided in 2007, will give students plenty of opportunities to pass the appropriate examinations and to submit their project under the previous regulations.

The ten year rule still applies, whereby students must complete the degree within 10 years of first starting.

If you have any comments or queries about this arrangements please contact the [ACCA office](#) at Oxford Brookes University

6. The role of the project mentor

If you wish to submit a Research and Analysis Project (RAP) to Oxford Brookes University then you must have a Project Mentor. The Project Mentor has two different roles. The first which is focused on you is to support your preparation of your RAP, by providing advice and feedback to you at appropriate times during your RAP activities.

Secondly, the Project Mentor will confirm to Oxford Brookes University that he or she has been your Project Mentor and that your RAP is your own work. Your Project Mentor will certify this on your RAP submission form and Oxford Brookes University will check a sample of Project Mentor certifications.

You will have three meetings with your Project Mentor. These meetings provide your Project Mentor with the opportunity to guide your RAP work and provide feedback to you. The meetings also provide you with the opportunity to develop your personal skills including questioning, listening and giving a presentation. You will reflect on this graduate skills development in your Skills and Learning Statement.

Your Project Mentor is not expected to have specialist knowledge within your project topic area or of academic research methods. Your Project Mentor does not play any part in the assessment of your RAP beyond the certification provided to Oxford Brookes University. You should not have to ask your Project Mentor what you have to do to pass – this is given in the assessment criteria for the RAP. You should not expect your Project Mentor to give you detailed advice on the structure and content of your Research Report or to write any of your RAP for you. Those decisions and actions are solely your own responsibility.

However it will be very helpful for your Project Mentor to understand what is required of you to prepare your RAP to the highest standard of which you are capable. You should provide your Project Mentor with as much information as you think useful about the Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project and what is required of you. This could include the information included in these web pages.

Your Project Mentor should encourage you to think about what you propose to do in your RAP work, challenge you to demonstrate that you are meeting your project objectives and that you will be able to meet your timetable for submission of your RAP to Oxford Brookes University. Your Project Mentor may also ask you to demonstrate your understanding of the issues that have arisen during your research, and may wish to question you on your conclusions and recommendations.

APPENDIX 2 comprises some additional notes that you may want to give your mentor to help them mentor you.

6 a) Choosing your Project Mentor

It is your responsibility to find someone to act as your Project Mentor and to arrange three meetings with him or her. It is not possible for Oxford Brookes University to provide a Project Mentor for you but Oxford Brookes University has identified three categories of individuals from which you should choose your Project Mentor.

The person you choose should be one of the following:

- Your tutor at College or University
- A senior colleague at work e.g. your line manager
- A qualified Chartered Certified Accountant.

If you identify somebody as a potential Project Mentor who does not fall into any of these three categories, then you should contact the ACCA office at Oxford Brookes University and provide a copy of your suggested Project Mentor's CV for approval. If the proposed Project Mentor is a member of a recognised professional body or institute and / or holds a recognised degree equivalent qualification then it is likely that approval will be given.

Oxford Brookes University has identified the following characteristics of an effective Project Mentor. You may wish to reflect on this list of attributes when making your own choice of Project Mentor.

- Is approachable and has genuine interest in helping student to succeed
- Listens and actively questions
- Respects confidentiality and is trustworthy
- Acts as a sounding board to explore ideas and issues arising from research
- Provides positive and constructive feedback on research being carried out
- Challenges and discusses effective communication
- Offers support and encouragement
- Helps the student meet their objectives
- Helps the student ask the right questions, to think systematically, to learn to apply appropriate evaluation techniques and to analyse and interpret the findings
- Remains neutral and not judgemental
- Provides subtle guidance but ensures student makes the decisions
- Is knowledgeable and competent
- Grasps the essence of the technicalities without becoming a subject matter expert.

6 b) Meetings with your Project Mentor

Oxford Brookes University requires that you have at least three meetings with your Project Mentor, each of which would normally be about 30 minutes in length. If your Project Mentor agrees, you could have additional meetings, or longer meetings, but you should negotiate this before you start your RAP work. We suggest a framework for the three meetings below.

The Project Mentor meetings should focus not only on the planning and research needed to prepare a good Research and Analysis Project (RAP), but also on the opportunity for you to develop skills in listening, questioning and presenting your findings. We suggest that your planning for each meeting includes the preparation of an agenda of issues which can be covered in the time available to you. Focus on the key issues and identify the desired outcomes from the meeting. Take notes to record the actions needed to progress your Research Report and to contribute to your reflection for your Skills and Learning Statement.

The first meeting - planning and your RAP title

Before your first Project Mentor meeting you should identify possible project topic areas and / or the organisation that you wish to study. You should also think about

the way in which you plan to undertake your research work and prepare a draft RAP timetable.

Remember that to get the best out of your Project Mentor, you need to give your Project Mentor some of your ideas so that they can provide you with some useful feedback. Give your Project Mentor sufficient time to read what you have written and be ready to give clarification of your ideas.

You can use the first meeting to discuss your possible choices of topic area and project objectives with your Project Mentor. It is very important to have a clear idea of the aims and objectives of your RAP at the beginning of your research work. This will determine how you collect information and how you evaluate data. Getting a robust structure within which the project research will be conducted is crucial to your success.

Your Project Mentor may focus on the following issues in the first meeting:

- Have you a clear view of what you want to do?
- Are your project ideas realistic given your previous learning?
- Do you know how you will undertake your research?
- Is your information gathering approach robust?
- How will you demonstrate your analytical and evaluative skills?
- Is your RAP timetable realistic?

Your desired outcomes from the first meeting may include the following:

- An agreed Research and Analysis Project title
- Clarification of your Research Report aims and objectives
- An agreed approach to undertaking your project research
- A robust and realistic timetable for completing your Research and Analysis Project
- Reflection on your personal skills for your Skills and Learning Statement.

The second meeting - Research Report progress update

The second meeting is the opportunity for you to get feedback from your Project Mentor on the indicative findings of your Research Report. Before the second meeting you should have gathered your information and data and done some evaluation to give you some insight into how well you are meeting your Research Report aims and objectives.

You should provide an update on your progress to your Project Mentor. This could include a word-processed document with the structure of your finished Research Report. This draft report could include the early chapters covering aims and objectives, why you have chosen to apply particular accounting or business techniques and how you have chosen to undertake the project research. Your findings may be provisional at this point but such a document will give your Project Mentor a very clear idea of your progress.

Your Project Mentor may focus on the following issues in the second meeting:

- Does your written work contribute towards meeting your aims and objectives?
- Does your written work meet the Research Report assessment criteria?
- Have you been able to do everything you planned?

- If you have had to change your approach, is it still consistent with your objectives?
- Is your evaluation of information and data in sufficient depth?
- What further work do you still have to undertake?
- Are you still confident that you will meet your RAP deadline?

Your desired outcomes from the second meeting may include the following:

- Reassurance that your Research Report is progressing well
- You are confident that you are fulfilling the Research Report assessment criteria
- You can identify changes that you will make following your Project Mentor feedback
- You can identify possible improvements to the quality of your work to date
- You feel confident that you know what else is required of you to complete the RAP
- Realisation that you are able to meet your RAP timetable
- Reflection on your personal skills for your Skills and Learning Statement.

The third meeting - the presentation

By the time you get to the third meeting, you should have completed your research and nearly finished writing your Research Report. You should provide a copy of your draft Research Report to your Project Mentor before the third meeting. This meeting includes a 15 minute presentation that you give to your Project Mentor and perhaps also to other students who have undertaken their own RAP.

You will need to investigate how to prepare an effective presentation, using PowerPoint or overhead slides. A copy of your presentation must be submitted as part of your Skills and Learning Statement. You will also gain experience of giving a presentation to an audience and responding to questions.

Your Project Mentor may focus on the following issues in the third meeting:

- Is the content of the presentation consistent with the Research Report findings?
- How effective was the presentation? Did it make sense?
- Are there satisfactory links between the different parts of the project, from objectives through to findings and conclusions?
- Is the quality of the analysis and evaluation sufficient to meet the required standard?
- If you were to do the RAP again, what might you do differently?
- Given the feedback and questions, will you make any changes to your Research Report before it is submitted to Oxford Brookes University?

Your desired outcomes from the third meeting may include the following:

- You are confident that you have produced a good Research Report which meets the assessment criteria
- You can identify further improvements to the quality of your Research Report
- Reflection on your presentation skills for your Skills and Learning Statement
- You have the required presentation to include in your Skills and Learning Statement.

Following the third meeting you will finalise your Research Report and Skills and Learning Statement. You will submit the completed Research and Analysis Project to Oxford Brookes University. Your Project Mentor will be required to complete a section of the Oxford Brookes University RAP submission form, so you may wish to have a copy of the RAP submission form available for your Project Mentor to sign at the third meeting if this is both convenient and acceptable for your Project Mentor.

6 c) Contribution to Skills and Learning Statement

You are required to respond to four different questions in the preparation of your Skills and Learning Statement. Two of these are directly related to your meetings with your Project Mentor:

- 'What did you learn from the meetings with your project mentor, including the presentation that you gave to your project mentor?'
- 'How have you demonstrated your interpersonal and communication skills during the project work?'

To pass the Skills and Learning Statement you have to show your ability to reflect on judgments that you have made and / or actions that you have taken during your project work. You also have to provide evidence that you recognise your own strengths and weaknesses.

It is very important that you think carefully about what you want to achieve in each of the three meetings. It is equally important to reflect after each meeting on what happened during the meeting and how effective you were in meeting your meeting objectives. If you make a note after each meeting, or keep a personal diary of reflections, then you will have developed some content for possible later use in your Skills and Learning Statement.

7 RAP preparation guide

Introduction

The Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project (RAP) is the final component of the Oxford Brookes University BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting degree. To reach this stage of the BSc degree you have already successfully completed at least nine demanding ACCA professional exams.

You have already demonstrated your undergraduate level abilities by passing the ACCA exams; the RAP provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate the remaining graduate level attributes necessary for the award of the BSc degree. Please read the RAP learning outcomes and assessment criteria carefully before you start your RAP work. This will help you understand what is expected of an ACCA student who wishes to submit a RAP to Oxford Brookes University.

You should understand that your research work and preparation of the RAP is covered by the Oxford Brookes University academic regulations. This includes the University's regulations on cheating which can be found on this website. If an ACCA student or member is found guilty of breaching these regulations this could lead to permanent expulsion from Oxford Brookes University and disciplinary action by ACCA.

In particular, your submitted RAP must be your own work and your research must have been undertaken specifically for the RAP. You cannot take a workplace research or consultancy report and adapt it for your RAP. Neither can you submit a piece of research work that has previously been submitted to another educational institution for a different academic award.

The RAP is very different to an ACCA written exam. You have many choices to make in order to produce a good quality RAP. You have to choose which organisation to study, what you want to find out, which information sources you will use and how to present your research findings. Each RAP is different and there is no 'model' answer to your project objectives. Your research findings may depend on how you collect and analyse information, and your findings may not be wholly definitive. Your conclusions may be unexpected or not what you might have anticipated before starting the RAP work. This is the nature of applied research.

In order to produce a successful RAP you have to evaluate and / or analyse information from a range of sources. This means creating some meaning of what you have found, or making a judgement or coming to a conclusion. If you only report the information that you have found or generated, you will not pass the RAP. The ability to evaluate and / or analyse information is a very important graduate attribute and the grade that you are awarded for your RAP will be significantly influenced by 'how well' you demonstrate your evaluative and / or analytical skills in your RAP.

You may be one of the many ACCA students whose overall class of BSc degree will not be directly affected by the grade awarded to your RAP (provided you pass). However, a good performance in the RAP will demonstrate to your family, friends, colleagues, tutors and employers that you are capable of undertaking good quality research. If your ACCA average mark puts you in a position where achieving a high grade in the RAP will gain you a higher class of degree, then you must aim for your first project submission to be the highest quality research work of which you are

capable. You cannot resubmit a passed RAP and the RAP grade will be capped for a resubmitted Research Report that originally failed.

Your RAP will focus on accounting and / or business issues within an organisation. It is very important to remember that the reported financial performance of an organisation – whether in the private or public sector – is the outcome of the organisation's business activities. A private sector company usually competes against other companies to sell its goods and services and its success in doing so is reflected in the company's financial statements and financial performance indicators. Therefore in order to explain why a company's financial performance has changed, you 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. To understand change, you may need to look outside of the organisation chosen for your RAP.

The remaining sections of the RAP Preparation Guide provide further guidance on the preparation of your Research Report and your Skills and Learning Statement. However, there are some other general issues that you should think about before starting your RAP work:

- The suggested RAP project topic areas are based on different aspects of the ACCA Qualification syllabus. The RAP is an opportunity for you to apply some of your learning from your ACCA exams. You may have to develop this learning in more depth to prepare a high quality RAP and this will enhance your knowledge and skills in accounting and business.
- You should consider your own strengths and weaknesses when considering what to do for your RAP. If you prefer financial accounting to management accounting, then would it be better to choose a RAP topic which is based on financial reporting? Or do you want to improve your knowledge and skills in your weak areas? If you want to use advanced statistical techniques, then do you really understand how to apply them and to explain the output in business terms?
- Your RAP must have a single organisation as its focus. However you do not have to work for an organisation in order to choose it for your RAP. If there are substantial external information sources for you to undertake a RAP then you may not need to contact individuals within your chosen organisation. If you are working for an organisation, then you may, if you wish, choose your own organisation as the basis for your RAP. However be sure that necessary internal information will be made available to you and can be included in your project report.
- Do not start your research work without having spent some time thinking about what you propose to do, how you propose to do it and when you propose to do it. Although Oxford Brookes University does not require you to submit an RAP outline for approval, we strongly recommend that you prepare a short outline for your RAP and a timetable within which you show when you expect to complete the different phases of the research work and how you will meet the Oxford Brookes University RAP submission deadline. Be realistic about what information may be available to you, what you can achieve and how long it may take you to complete the RAP documents.
- You must be independent and unbiased when undertaking research. You may think very favourably about a company and / or its products. However if you choose this company for your RAP you have an obligation to look at the range of differing views about the company that exists and to evaluate all of

these views within your Research Report. You should not only use those information sources that support your own view of the company.

Please read all of the RAP information on this website before starting your RAP work. It is easier to make changes to your proposed project work before you have collected all of your information rather than to try to make significant changes when writing your Research Report and Skills and Learning Statement.

Finally, from time to time there are articles in the Student Accountant which will provide useful information and more guidance on submitting a successful project.

7 a) Project topic areas and titles

If you intend to submit a Research and Analysis Project (RAP) to Oxford Brookes University, Oxford Brookes University strongly recommends that you should choose one of the following twenty approved project topic areas as the basis for your RAP.

1. An organisation's budgetary control system and its links with performance management and decision making
2. How the introduction of a new technology can assist an organisation in achieving its business objectives
3. The impact of an aspect of impending legislation on the operations and financial position of an organisation
4. The impact of e-business on an organisation
5. The effects of globalisation on an organisation
6. The key factors or indicators in the motivation of employees in an organisation
7. The restructuring of an organisation's operational activities and the effect on the organisation's financial performance
8. The business and financial performance of an organisation over a three year period
9. The planning and implementation of an information system in an organisation
10. The effectiveness of the use of costing techniques within an organisation
11. The financial and operational costs and benefits of the internal audit / internal review activities within an organisation
12. The possible effects of a proposed accounting standard on the financial statements and business activities of an organisation
13. The relationship between an organisation's human resources activities and its business objectives
14. The business and financial objectives of a strategic investment decision made by an organisation and its impact on key stakeholders
15. The management of an organisation's working capital over a three year period and its impact on the organisation's funding strategies
16. The financial and operational risk management within an organisation
17. The quality of the corporate governance within an organisation and the impact on an organisation's key stakeholders
18. The marketing strategy of an organisation and its effectiveness
19. The financial and operational consequences of a merger between two organisations or of the acquisition of one organisation by another
20. An organisation's corporate social responsibility policies, including business ethics, and their impact on business practice and key stakeholders.

The main focus of your project research must be an analysis / evaluation of the project topic area issues in the context of your chosen organisation

There are two crucial aspects to ensure success in this project:

- 1. Your RAP must be focused on one organisation.**
- 2. This analysis must be a business analysis not just a financial analysis.**

You should combine the analysis / evaluation requirement of the RAP with the project topic area and with your chosen organisation to produce your Research and Analysis Project Title.

For example, if you have chosen an organisation called 'OBU Co' for your research work, then some possible Research and Analysis Project titles are as follows:

- An analysis of the key factors that influence the levels of motivation of staff within OBU Co. (Topic 6)
- An evaluation of the business and financial performance of OBU Co between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2007 (Topic 8)
- OBU Co: A case study for the evaluation of the use of different costing techniques in the pricing of consultancy services (Topic 10)
- A business and financial analysis of the entry of OBU Co into the market for online postgraduate degree courses and the impact on teachers and learners (Topic 14)
- An evaluation of the quality of corporate governance within OBU Co and the impact on OBU Co professionally qualified accountants. (Topic 17)

Your actual choice of project topic area and organisation will depend on the access you have to internal and external sources of information about the organisation. This is discussed elsewhere in the RAP Preparation Guide.

Study of other project topic areas

If you believe that you face exceptional circumstances and cannot identify a suitable project from the list of approved project topic areas, then Oxford Brookes University will consider your request to undertake a RAP based on a different area of your previous academic study.

However you must obtain permission from the ACCA office at Oxford Brookes University before you start your RAP research work. You must provide an outline (minimum one page in length) of your proposed project research work, which includes the project title, the objectives of your research and how you will undertake your research to meet your objectives. The outline should also state how you will be able to demonstrate your evaluative and / or analytical skills.

Please email acca@brookes.ac.uk with your one page outline and allow 10 working days for a response.

7 b) Research Report

Before you start work on your Oxford Brookes University Research Report, you should read all of the information included in these web pages. In particular it is important that you have a good understanding of, or have finalised, the following matters before you start your research work:

- What is expected of you in preparing your Research Report?
- How will your Research Report be assessed?
- Who will be your Project Mentor?
- How do you ensure that your Research Report submission reflects your full abilities?
- What is the link between the Research Report and the Skills and Learning Statement?
- How do you ensure that you do not breach the Oxford Brookes University regulations on cheating?

The purpose of the Research Report is to give you an opportunity to demonstrate a range of *Technical and Professional Skills* in:

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

and *Graduate Skills* in:

- Communication
- Information gathering and referencing
- Information technology

All of these make a significant contribution to the learning outcomes of the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting degree programme. You will demonstrate this range of skills by applying some of your previous ACCA learning in an approved project topic area to a specific, identified organisation. There is a maximum of 6,500 words for the Research Report.

In this section we provide some guidance on how you could proceed to undertake your project work. We also give a recommended structure for your Research Report which should ensure that you have provided sufficient evidence for Oxford Brookes University to come to a judgement in each of the assessment criteria for the Research Report.

The Oxford Brookes University recommendations are not the only way in which a Research Report could be undertaken. It is your decision as to how you manage your project work and produce your Research Report. However in doing so you must be aware of how your Research Report will be assessed. If you do not include content which is relevant to one or more of the Research Report assessment criteria then you risk not meeting the required standards. Similarly, if you include content that is not relevant, then you risk not providing sufficient evidence for Oxford Brookes University to assess your abilities under one or more of the assessment criteria.

There are a number of issues that you must consider before you start your Research Report as they could have a significant impact on both the way in which you develop your project objectives and research questions and how you conduct your research activities.

7 b) i) Information gathering

Every Research Report requires information as the basis for analysis. Information sources can be categorised as either primary or secondary data. There is no requirement for you to collect primary data within your Research Report; it is wholly acceptable to undertake your Research Report using only secondary data. The difference between primary and secondary data is identified below.

Primary data is original data that has been collected by a researcher by whatever means appropriate in the answer of a specific research question. i.e. it has been collected specifically for the Research Report. Examples of primary data include questionnaires, interviews, e-mail contacts and surveys.

If you decide to collect primary data as part of your research work, then you should state and justify the following:

- The data collection techniques you intend to use e.g. questionnaires, interviews.
- Your sample size and an outline of your sampling strategy.
- The method you will use to select your sample and the likely response rate.

If you intend to collect primary data from staff within your chosen organisation you must obtain permission to do this from a senior member of staff within the organisation. You should do this as early as possible during your Research Report, since if you are denied access to your desired information sources you may have to reconsider how to meet your project objectives and research questions.

Secondary data is data that has been collected by others for their own purposes, but which may be used by a researcher for his or her different purposes. Examples of secondary data include reference material, books, CD ROMs and financial statements. You should always evaluate the appropriateness and relevance of secondary data sources. Information included in internet sources may not be reliable from an academic perspective and may not be appropriate for use in your Research Report.

If you decide to use secondary data as part of your research work, you should state and justify your choice to do so. Where you use published secondary data you must provide precise references using the Harvard Referencing System. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

You must retain all of the information that you collected during your project work until you have received official notification of your RAP grade from Oxford Brookes University. This includes any questionnaire responses, copies of financial statements, extracts from journals, reports, magazines etc. Oxford Brookes University may wish to ask you to provide additional evidence of your information gathering following the marking of your Research and Analysis project.

7 b) ii) Referencing of information sources

You are required to reference information sources in your Research Report. This is part of the graduate skills that you must demonstrate in preparing your Research Report. Referencing is essential for the following reasons:

- To acknowledge other people's ideas.
- To allow the reader of your work to locate the cited references easily, and so evaluate your interpretation of those ideas.
- To avoid plagiarism (i.e. taking other people's thoughts, ideas or writings and using them as though they are your own).
- To show evidence of the breadth and depth of your reading.

You must use the **Harvard Referencing System** for your referencing in your Research Report. This system and how you apply it to individual references in the text of your Research Report, and the preparation of your 'List of References' at the end of your Research Report, is explained in the Oxford Brookes University guide to citing and referencing for Business School students which can be found in APPENDIX 3

You should read this document very carefully. You must comply with its requirements to demonstrate your graduate skills in information gathering and referencing. If you identify the correct reference for every source that you use, at the time that you first identify the source, then it will be straightforward to prepare your list of references when you complete your research work.

7 b) iii) Research ethics

Oxford Brookes University requires all students undertaking research to comply with the University's Code of Practice 'Ethical Standards for Research involving Human Participants'. Before starting your Research Report you should consider the following questions:

- Does your proposed research involve any of the following:
 - Deception of participants,
 - Financial inducements,
 - Possible psychological stress,
 - Access to confidential information,
 - Any other special circumstances?
 If you have answered 'yes' to any of the issues identified above, how will you deal with these issues?
- Are you likely to need to preserve participants' anonymity and/or confidentiality?
If you have answered 'yes', how do you intend to do this?

Even if your Research Report will only use secondary data sources and will not involve any interaction with staff within your chosen organisation, you should still read the University's Code of Practice to ensure that you understand the possible ethical issues associated with undertaking research.

The Oxford Brookes University 'Ethical Standards for Research involving Human Participants' can be found in APPENDIX 4.

7 b) iv) Confidentiality and anonymity

In principle, Oxford Brookes University requires your Research Report to contain full details of the organisation that you have investigated in your research, the information sources that you used and the actual data that you collected. This provides reassurance to Oxford Brookes University about the originality and the genuineness of the information gathering and analysis in your Research Report.

If you intend to collect primary data from staff within your chosen organisation you must obtain permission to do this from a senior member of staff within the organisation. However, although you may gain such permission, the organisation may request that your research findings remain confidential because of concerns over confidentiality and / or commercial sensitivity. .

If you want your Research Report to be considered confidential, to satisfy the organisation who has sourced of your data, then you must write to the BSc programme director at acca@brookes.ac.uk and request permission. You should give the reasons behind your request and how you intend to resolve such issues in the preparation and presentation of your Research Report. In your request you will have to identify the organisation which is the focus of your Research Report. The BSc programme director will decide whether to give approval to your request and will set conditions which will have to be met to submit the requested project.

Note that it is not permissible to submit the project with data amended to try to disguise the organisation's identity.

However it may be helpful to note that all Projects are confidential, never published, seen only by a marker and moderator and sometimes by an external examiner, are kept in a locked office, and pass projects normally destroyed after 12 months.

This issue must be resolved before you submit your Research Report to Oxford Brookes University otherwise your project will be returned to you unmarked. In some cases the Programme Director may undertake to mark the project him/herself and allow only the Chief Moderator to moderate the project.

7 b) v) Information Technology

As part of your demonstration of graduate skills you have to show reasonable evidence of having accessed online information sources and having used a spreadsheet and / or other software in preparing your Research Report.

It is important that you consider how you will meet this requirement in your initial planning for your Research Report. Your choice of information sources may be influenced by this requirement and you should carefully consider the possible impact on your project objectives and research questions.

You have to word process your Research Report document and this contributes towards meeting this requirement. However Oxford Brookes University also needs evidence of the use of other software used to process data. For example, this could be done by using a spreadsheet to prepare financial ratios / performance indicators or by the preparation of graphs / tables / pie charts from a database that records questionnaire findings. You should include sample printouts of spreadsheet formulae or database queries to illustrate how you processed your data.

As part of your Skills and Learning Statement, you may wish to reflect on how you have used your existing IT skills or how they have been improved by doing your project research work.

7 b) vi) Preparing your Research Report

Oxford Brookes University has prepared a process model which identifies the key activities and their timing in undertaking the Research Report. It also shows links to the meetings with your Project Mentor. You do not have to follow this approach but we stress the importance of preparing a plan for how you will undertake your research and prepare your Research Report by the deadline that you have set yourself.

The Research Report process model can be found in APPENDIX 5.

7 b) vii) Structure, word count and presentation

The word limit for your Research Report is 6,500 words. Oxford Brookes University recommends the following structure and approximate word distribution for your Research Report. We believe that this will allow you to demonstrate all of the required technical and professional skills, and graduate skills in sufficient depth.

TITLE PAGE

CONTENTS PAGE

PART 1 - Project objectives and overall research approach - 1,000 words

The first part of your Research Report 'sets the scene' It should include the following:

- The reasons for choosing your project topic area and choosing the particular organisation that was the focus of your research work
- What you wanted to find out in your research work. i.e. your project objectives and research questions
- An explanation of your overall research approach. This should provide the reader with a understanding of the overall framework that you developed to meet your project objectives and answer your research questions.

PART 2 - Information gathering and accounting / business techniques - 1,500 words

The second part of your Research Report should provide more detail about (i) the information that you have gathered and (ii) the accounting and business techniques you have chosen to apply to this information. It should include the following:

- The sources of information from which you have obtained relevant data
- A description of the methods used to collect information, including online access
- A discussion of the limitations of your information gathering
- Identification of any ethical issues that arose during your information gathering and how they were resolved
- An explanation of the accounting and / or business techniques you have used, including a discussion of their limitations.

PART 3 - Results, analysis, conclusions and recommendations - 4,000 words

The third part of your Research Report should provide a detailed account of what you have found from the application of your chosen accounting and business techniques to the information that you have gathered. It should include:

- A description of the results you have obtained and any limitations
- Presentation of your results in an appropriate form e.g. tables, graphs, pie charts
- A critical analysis / evaluation of your results which includes an explanation of your significant findings
- Your conclusions about your research findings and how well you have met your project objectives and research questions
- If appropriate, recommendations on specific courses of action to identified individuals within your chosen organisation.

LIST OF REFERENCES APPENDICES

Word count and appendices

You must stay within the specified maximum word count. Oxford Brookes University reserves the right to fail Research Reports which contain more than the maximum 6,500 words. You will be asked to declare your word count of your project on the Oxford Brookes University RAP submission form.

The 6,500 word limit excludes the Title Page, the Contents Page, the List of References and the Appendices. Words used in tables and graphs and other forms of data presentation are not included in the word count. However, words used in section headings are included in the word count.

If you choose approved topic area 8 'The business and financial performance of an organisation over a three year period' then it is likely that you will use the published financial statements of the organisation as an information source. You must include appropriate extracts from the organisation's financial statements in either the main text of the Research Report or as an Appendix. However, these extracts are not included in the word count.

You should use appendices only for supporting data and information. You should not include written text that properly belongs in the main body of your Research Report. You should keep the number of appendices as low as possible and no more than 8 sides excluding any extracts from financial statements.

Presentation

Your Research Report must be word processed using A4 size pages. You should use black text on a white background. Avoid background graphics or pictures behind the text and remember that italics and heavy bold type are less easy to read.

You should use an appropriate standard business font such as Arial with a font size of 11 or 12. You may use a larger font size for section headings. We recommend a maximum of 1.5 line spacing. When using a spelling and grammar checker, be careful to ensure that you do not unintentionally change the meaning of your text.

Oxford Brookes University does not wish to prescribe all of the different aspects of presenting your Research Report and you should identify best practice in business report writing as part of your information gathering activities.

7 c) Skills and learning statement

The Skills and Learning Statement (SLS) is the opportunity for you to demonstrate that you have developed the key 'graduate' skills of self-reflection and

communication. You will provide evidence of self-reflection by answering a number of questions. Your communication skills will be developed through the preparation and delivery of a presentation to your Project Mentor. You will submit a copy of the PowerPoint presentation or overhead slides that you used in your presentation to your Project Mentor as evidence of skills development.

Your SLS must be based on the following four questions:

- What did you learn from the meetings with your Project Mentor, including the presentation that you gave to your Project Mentor?
- How well do you think that you have answered your research question(s)?
- How have you demonstrated your interpersonal and communication skills during the project work?
- How has undertaking the RAP helped you in your accountancy studies and/or current employment role?

What do we mean by reflection?

Self reflection, or critical reflection as it may also be called, is a key academic and professional skill. Reflection requires you to review and evaluate the experiences you have had and the learning you have acquired. You should note the emphasis on evaluation. Your Skills and Learning Statement should not be a description of what you did – it must be an evaluation of your experiences of doing your project work. You must try to make some meaning of what you have experienced, and make a judgement of how well you have achieved your objectives, and come to a conclusion about the value of undertaking your RAP.

Your evaluation should be honest. There is no model answer or right answer to any of these four questions. Not all your experiences will necessarily be positive, as things may not always go to plan or happen in the way that you might want them. Your evaluation should reflect on what actually happened, not an idealised version of what you might want Oxford Brookes University to think did happen. We know that applied research can be messy and unsatisfying at times, though we strongly believe that what you learn from doing this research will be valuable to you. We hope this will be reflected in your Skills and Learning Statement.

Preparing your SLS answers

An important aspect of study or working life is to actively evaluate your own performance and to identify your own personal development needs. Have you achieved what you intended to achieve? If not, then why not and what do you need to do better in the future? You may have to work with others to achieve your work or study objectives and your ability to make the best use of your resources - and to communicate effectively - are important personal attributes. Your ACCA education will give you knowledge of accountancy and business, and undertaking research will enhance your practical skills. What have been the benefits for you of doing the RAP?

By answering the SLS questions you will gain some important personal insight into these issues. Although there are four questions with a total word limit of 2,000 words, you do not have to write exactly 500 words to answer each of the four questions. You may find that you want to write more about one or two particular questions. You may write between 350 and 650 words on each question within the total word limit of 2,000 words.

SLS Assessment

Your Skills and Learning Statement will be assessed Pass or Fail, it will not be given

a grade. However you should give it equal importance to the Research Report since you must submit a Pass SLS in order to pass the Research and Analysis Project overall.

To pass the 'self-reflection' component of the SLS, you have to make a reasonable attempt to address all of the four SLS questions. If you do not, then you will not pass the SLS. You must demonstrate your ability to reflect on the judgements that you have made and the actions that you have taken while undertaking your RAP work. We want to see you provide evidence that you recognise your strengths and weaknesses. If you only provide a description of what happened while you were doing your RAP, then you will not pass the SLS.

Sources of SLS evidence

When you plan your project research work you should also plan to collect evidence to contribute to your Skills and Learning Statement, so that some of your self-reflection will 'fall out' of the activities undertaken for your Research Report. One important set of activities will be the three meetings with your Project Mentor. If you think about what happened in each of these meetings soon after they have taken place and record your thoughts, then you will be well on the way to writing your responses to two of the four questions.

Other sources of evidence could include meetings with individuals who you may interview as part of your project research or conversations / correspondence that you may have during your information gathering. You should think of every aspect of your project research work and how this may provide evidence for you to write your Skills and Learning Statement.

Communication Skills

You will give a presentation on your Research Report to your Project Mentor in your final meeting. The preparation of this presentation will further develop your ability to present the concepts and findings of an accounting / business research report to an audience. As evidence of this you must submit a copy of your presentation in your Skills and Learning Statement.

You will pass 'communication skills' if a copy of the Research Report presentation is included in the SLS and your presentation's structure and content is clearly linked to the Research Report findings. There are many sources of advice (online and hard copy) on how to prepare an effective presentation and we recommend that you follow best practice.

It is possible that your Project Mentor may comment on the quality of your presentation and suggest that improvements would be possible. If you wish to revise your presentation after the meeting with your Project Mentor, then that is acceptable to Oxford Brookes University. You should include a reference to this process and what you learned in your response to the first SLS question.

8 Submission periods

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

Period 19

Latest date to complete the Professional Ethics module	15 October 2009
Earliest receipt of RAP by Oxford Brookes University	01 November 2009
Latest receipt of RAP by Oxford Brookes University	30 November 2009
Oxford Brookes University BSc Examination Board	March 2010
RAP and BSc degree results despatched	Wednesday 31 March 2010

Period 20

Latest date to complete the Professional Ethics module	15 April 2010
Earliest receipt of RAP by Oxford Brookes University	1 May 2010
Latest receipt of RAP by Oxford Brookes University	31 May 2010
Oxford Brookes University BSc Examination Board	September 2010
RAP and BSc degree results despatched	Wed 29 September 2010

Please note that projects must arrive at the ACCA Office in Oxford Brookes University by the date of latest receipt. Any projects received after the date of latest receipt will be returned to students unmarked.

Students should make appropriate arrangements with postal services to ensure that their project arrives by the submission deadline.

8 a) Submission form

The submission form for the latest period can be found in the related documents section and downloaded.

There is a checklist to study before you send your project and the form – this is also in APPENDIX 6.

A RAP will not be accepted by Oxford Brookes University without the correct submission form. An OBU RAP that is submitted without the correct form will be returned unmarked to you.

Fee

You are required to pay a project submission fee to Oxford Brookes University with any project submission. The Oxford Brookes University RAP submission fee for period 19 is £80, though it may be subject to increase in subsequent submission periods.

The fee can be paid by cheque, bankers draft or credit card. Full details will be available on the submission form when available.

Submission

You should send your finished RAP together with your submission forms and assessment fee to:

ACCA Office
Oxford Brookes University Business School
Wheatley Campus
Wheatley
Oxford OX33 1HX
United Kingdom

Please note: you must successfully complete the Fundamentals level exam papers, F1–F9, and complete the Professional Ethics module before submitting a Research and Analysis Project to Oxford Brookes University.

9. Rules and regulations

You are subject to Oxford Brookes University's rules and regulations for the preparation, submission and assessment of the Research and Analysis Project and for the award of the BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting degree.

9. a) Oxford Brookes University policies and procedures

Equal opportunities

Please visit the Oxford Brookes University website for details of their equal opportunities policy. If you have special requirements for completing the Oxford Brookes University Research and Analysis Project you should contact the ACCA office at Oxford Brookes University.

Academic appeals

You may not appeal against the academic judgement of an examiner.

You may request a review of the decision to award a particular grade to your Research and Analysis Project. However disagreement with the academic judgement of an examiner is not grounds for such a review, which would normally only consider whether the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the RAP regulations. Further details of the regulations can be viewed on the Oxford Brookes University website.

Disciplinary procedures

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. The details of the regulations can be viewed on the Oxford Brookes University website.

Complaints procedure

Please visit the Oxford Brookes University website to view the complaints procedure.

9. b) Oxford Brookes University cheating statement

Cheating

All assessments are intended to determine the skills, abilities, understanding and knowledge of each of the individual students undertaking the assessment. Cheating is defined as obtaining an unfair academic advantage and any student found using any form of cheating, attempting to cheat or assisting someone else to cheat may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedure. The University takes this issue very seriously and students have been expelled or had their degrees withheld for cheating in assessments. If you are having difficulty with your work it is important to seek help from your tutor rather than be tempted to use unfair means to gain marks. Do not risk losing your degree and all the work you have done.

The University's regulations define a number of different forms of cheating, although any form of cheating is strictly forbidden. These are:

- **submitting other people's work as your own** - either with or without their knowledge. This includes copying in examinations; using notes or unauthorised materials in examinations
- **impersonation** - taking an assessment on behalf of or pretending to be another student, or allowing another person to take an assessment on your behalf or pretend to be you
- **plagiarism** - taking or using another person's thoughts, writings or inventions as your own. To avoid plagiarism you must make sure that quotations from whatever source must be clearly identified and attributed at the point where they occur in the text of your work by using one of the standard conventions for referencing. The Library has a leaflet about how to reference your work correctly and your tutor can also help you. It is not enough just to list sources in a bibliography at the end of your essay or dissertation if you do not acknowledge the actual quotations in the text. Neither is it acceptable to change some of the words or the order of sentences if, by failing to acknowledge the source properly, you give the impression that it is your own work
- **collusion** - except where written instructions specify that work for assessment may be produced jointly and submitted as the work of more than one student, you must not collude with others to produce a piece of work jointly, copy or share another student's work or lend your work to another student in the reasonable knowledge that some or all of it will be copied
- **duplication** - submitting work for assessment that is the same as, or broadly similar to, work submitted earlier for academic credit, without acknowledgement of the previous submission
- **falsification** - the invention of data, its alteration, its copying from any other source, or otherwise obtaining it by unfair means, or inventing quotations and/or references.

**Oxford Brookes University Academic Registrar
May 2002**

10. 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 Oxford Brookes University.

ACCA Office
Oxford Brookes University Business School
Wheatley Campus
Wheatley
Oxford OX33 1HX
United Kingdom

Email: acca@brookes.ac.uk
tel: +44 (0) 1865 485702
fax:+44 (0) 1865 485802

11. Frequently Asked Questions

Am I eligible for the degree?

Check on [myACCA](#) and, if still in difficulties, see the Section on Eligibility. The Oxford Brookes University ACCA office are not able to give you any answers on this issue directly.

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 opportunities each year to submit the project, the months of May and November, the next opportunity being November 2009.

What is included in the Word Count?

Appendices, Contents pages, Bibliography and the List of References 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. See Appendix 3 "A guide to citing and referencing for Business School students "

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.

If I want to do a different topic what do I do?

We strongly recommend that you use one of the Approved Topics. If you feel you are a special case then you must apply in writing to the ACCA Office at Oxford Brookes giving a one page outline of what you propose to do and the title of your project. You will only be successful in getting your title approved if it can be demonstrated that the project is applied to a particular organisation.

What happens after I submit the project?

You will receive an acknowledgment either by email or letter, normally within 1 month of submitting the project. 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 a graduation ceremony either at Oxford Brookes University in Oxford or at a regional centre near you – currently offered at Hong Kong, Malaysia or Singapore and Kenya. Your marksheet will not be returned to you.

If I fail do I get told why?

You will get a limited amount of feedback on your marksheet, 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

- IT - in particular not including reasonable evidence that a spreadsheet has been used
- not referencing the work properly
- not including copies of the PowerPoint/overhead slides etc used in the presentation to the project mentor.
- insufficient analysis of the information that the student researches.

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 was purely for failing to include the presentation, then three further mentor meetings will not be necessary.

The Research and Analysis Project is in 2 parts – the RR and the SLS. 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 3 times. 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 statements as an Appendix. Note that the Appendices do not form part of the word count.

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 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

<i>Research Project</i>	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.	Meaning often unclear.		

	Grammar and spelling mainly accurate.	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 soft ware use.		
Skills and Learning Statement	Competent	Not competent		
Self reflection	Makes a reasonable attempt to address all four questions. (see below *) Shows ability to reflect on judgements made / actions taken during project work. Evidence of recognising own strengths and weaknesses	Overly focused on only one or two questions. Emphasis on description of events, little evaluation of self-development etc. Little discussion of own strengths and weaknesses		
Communication skills	A copy of the presentation to the project mentor is included.	A copy of the presentation to the project mentor has not been included.		

	Presentation has appropriate structure. Content is clearly linked to project report findings.	Presentation is poorly structured and / or content is not relevant to project report findings.		
--	---	--	--	--

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

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 question(s)?
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?

APPENDIX 2

NOTES TO HELP YOUR MENTOR

PLEASE GIVE THESE THREE PAGES TO YOUR MENTOR

Thank you for agreeing to be a mentor for this programme. The notes below outline what the student will expect of you and what Oxford Brookes University would like you to do to help the student towards obtaining the Oxford Brookes University BSc (Hons) Applied Accounting degree.

You should be interested in the progress of the Project but you are not expected to be a tutor. You would normally listen to the student's plans and may ask questions to help them reflect. If you can help the student think clearly about what they intend to do, then it will be an enormous help to them.

The student will need to have at least three meetings with you and what the student has to do in these three meetings is detailed on the next page.

Attached, also, is a page of suggested questions that you could ask - and some questions that you would not normally be expected to answer.

You do not need to have expert knowledge of the field of the student's research or in research methods. You should not expect to give the student direction on the content of the Project, relevant references or the design of the research.

You are not the student's assessor but Oxford Brookes would like confirmation that you participated in three meetings with him/her, that the student provided a satisfactory progress update, and gave a presentation that you observed. This confirmation, along with a statement of the capacity in which you qualify to act as a mentor should be included on the second sheet of the student's Submission Form, that is whether you are employer, manager, tutor or ACCA member.

We would also like some confirmation that the Project is the student's own work and we ask you to certify this in Section D of the Research and Analysis Report form before the student sends their work to Oxford Brookes University.

Thank you again for participating in this Project.

**Programme Director, BSc (Hons) Applied Accounting
Oxford Brookes University**

Meetings with your mentor

The three meetings with your mentor, each of which should normally be about half an hour long, should follow the framework set out below.

Meeting 1 - at the outset

To prepare for this you should have some proposals on the choice of topic, for your Research and Analysis Report and have embarked on preliminary investigation into the research areas and methods you may want to use. You should therefore take from this meeting a clear proposal of your choice of topic, research method and draft aims and objectives for your Report.

Meeting 2 - midway through your report

At this stage you should have completed the gathering of information for your Report and have some initial views as to your findings. An interim update on your progress in the form of a word-processed document should be presented to your mentor. This will then provide the framework for your discussion at this meeting.

Meeting 3 - towards completion of your report

You are required to prepare and deliver a fifteen minute presentation on your Research Report to your mentor, and if applicable your peer group (see option below). You should use appropriate presentation techniques in conjunction with your talk. You should be prepared to answer questions and provide explanations when requested.

Your mentor will be asked to provide confirmation that the three meetings took place in accordance with the guidelines above.

If it becomes necessary for whatever reason to change your mentor part way through the above framework, you will have to start again at Meeting 1 to allow your new mentor to verify your participation in all three meetings.

You may, if your mentor is happy to participate, arrange for further appointments in addition to the three compulsory meetings outlined in the above framework.

NB: It may be useful for you to keep a personal diary of reflections on your meetings to help you when writing up your Key Skills Statement.

Peer Group Presentation Option

Where your mentor is working with more than one student, presentations in Meeting 3 can take place in a group. However, Meetings 1 and 2 must only involve the mentor and individual student. This will enable you to deliver your presentation to an audience, receive feedback from your peers and in turn, critically review the work of others.

NB: The Research and Analysis Report must nevertheless be the work of the individual student and should not be carried out in a group. See the Oxford Brookes University Cheating Statement for more information on regulations regarding plagiarism, syndication and other forms of cheating.

Example questions for student/mentor meetings

MENTOR

Questions a mentor might want to ask a student as they progress through the research, preparation and presentation of their Research and Analysis Report and Key Skills Statement

STUDENT

Questions a student might want to ask their mentor as they progress through the research, preparation and presentation of their Research and Analysis Report and Key Skills Statement

1ST MEETING - PLANNING

What is your Report going to be about?
How do you plan to do the Report?
Why are you doing it in this way?
What problems do you envisage?
When will you do x, y and z?

I have considered the following alternatives - can I talk them through with you?
This is my plan what do you think?

2ND MEETING - PROGRESS UPDATE

What difficulties have you had?
How will you/have you overcome them?
What are you going to do next?
Are you on schedule/do you need to reschedule?

I have had this problem. Could you offer some advice?

3RD MEETING - REVIEW

What went well/badly?
Does the Report meet its objectives?
Does it make sense?

What went well/badly?

Questions a student should not expect their mentor to provide the answers to

What do I have to do to pass?
What do I do next?
What shall I read on this topic?
What do you know about this topic?
Will you structure my project for me?

APPENDIX 3 A guide to citing and referencing for Business School students

This guide is divided into two sections. The first explains what citing and referencing are, and tells you when and how to cite and reference. The second section provides explanations and examples of the way references should be formatted/laid out. But first we need to ask...

1) Why Reference?

1.1 Why bother to reference?

Whenever you produce academic work you will be asked to provide references for your ideas. You will find this easier to do if you understand why it is seen as so important in British universities. Referencing is essential to:

- Acknowledge other peoples' ideas
- Allow the reader of your work to locate the cited references easily, and so evaluate your interpretation of those ideas
- Avoid plagiarism (i.e. taking other peoples' thoughts, ideas or writings and using them as though they are your own)
- Show evidence of the breadth and depth of your reading
- Avoid losing marks!

2) Section one – Citing in the text

2.1 Citing

When preparing a piece of written work, you will inevitably come across other peoples' ideas, theories or data, and you will want to mention or refer to these in your own work. And in referring to these authors, you will also need to create a list of who they are and where their published work is to be found.

This is placed at the end of your written work so that your readers can identify what is your work and what is that of other people, and so that they can get hold of those pieces of published work to read, should they wish to do so.

Making reference to other authors in your own written work is called **citing**. The names of the authors who are cited in your text are gathered together, and supplied as an alphabetical list at the end of your written work. This is a **reference list**.

There is no one-best-way to lay out the reference list, and much of it is a matter of tradition or preference. Broadly speaking, the process of citing authors (and the associated reference list) can be done in one of two main styles - the **Numeric**, where the list of authors is numbered in the order of mention in the text, or the **Alphabetical**, where the authors' names are listed in alphabetical order.

One of the ways in which alphabetical referencing is done has been given the name of the **Name and Date System** or the **Harvard Referencing System**. There are a number of ways in which the Harvard Referencing System can be presented, and all of these are therefore 'correct'. The Business School has chosen one of these as the method that we recommend you to use. The reason for this is that if you do take this advice:

- The problem of choosing an appropriate referencing system has been solved for you,
- Your referencing layout will be consistent and always 'correct', and
- It will conform to the way referencing is done by most business and management researchers and journals.

(Another convention that we urge you to comply with is that the University has chosen Arial as the font that it wishes all documents to be written in – as this one is.)

2.2 The difference between the reference list and the bibliography

Within your piece of written work, you will have cited a number of books, journals, newspaper articles (or whatever), using the author's name and the date of publication. At the end of the piece, you provide a list of all those authors, giving full details of what their work is called, and where it was published. This list is headed **References**, and provides all the information about the published works you have mentioned in your text, ALPHABETICALLY by the names of the authors (or originators). This list can be subdivided by year and letter if necessary. (*More about this later.*)

Also, during the course of your preparatory reading, you may use material that has been helpful for reading around the subject, but which you do not make specific reference to in your own work. It is important to acknowledge this material. Under the heading **Bibliography**, list all these items, again alphabetically by author, regardless of whether it is a book or journal, and include this list separately after the reference list.

The **Bibliography** indicates to your reader or examiner that you have read more widely than was strictly necessary to produce the piece of written work, and that you therefore have a better grasp of the area or the topic than if you had only used the works cited in your text and your reference list. Everything you cite (i.e. mention) in your piece of written work will be listed once alphabetically by author and subdivided by year and letter, if necessary, in your References.

The Bibliography would look the same as the reference list does. See **Section 2: Formats** for conventions that apply to all the different types of media - books, journals, newspapers, conferences etc.

Some people mix the list of references from within the text (References) and the references to wider reading (Bibliography) together in one list, which they then call the Bibliography. This is not recommended, because it creates difficulties for your examiner, who has to sort out which is which, in order to be clear about the accuracy of your referencing.

(Please note that when you are writing a (business) report, then all that is required is a list of references. When it comes to dissertations or theses, however, then both a reference list **and** a bibliography are required.)

Note: In the examples given below, pay attention to the punctuation, and in your own work, copy it exactly as it is set out – put the full stop in where it is placed in the example, and leave it out, if it isn't in the example.

2.3 Citing in your text

The **Harvard System** (sometimes called the **Name and Date System**) uses the name of the author of the work you wish to cite and the date it was published. These are incorporated into the text of your work each time you make reference to that person's ideas.

2.3.1 Citing a single author

The author and the date of publication are provided.

For example:

Seymour (2005) discusses learning emotion rules in service organisations.

or

Some commentators suggest that, in service organisations, it is necessary to learn emotion rules (Seymour, 2005), while others believe this is not the case.

Note the comma after Seymour in the second example.

2.3.2 Citing more than one author

If there are two authors, the names of both should be given in the text and in the reference list. If there are **more than two authors**, the name of the first author only should be given, followed by the abbreviation *et al.* (meaning 'and others' in Latin).

For example:

O'Donovan *et al.* (2004) showed that motivation...

Note that *et al.* is in italics and is followed by a full stop because it is an abbreviation.

In your reference list, however, you will list **all** the authors who compose the *et al.*

For example:

O'Donovan, B., Price, M. and Rust, C. (2004) 'Know what I mean? Enhancing student understanding of assessment standards and criteria', *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 325-336.

Or, if the full name has been used in the publication,

O'Donovan, Berry, Price, Margaret and Rust, Chris. (2004) 'Know what I mean? Enhancing student understanding of assessment standards and criteria', *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 325-336.

2.4 The required information

You will find all the information that you need to build up the reference from the title page of the book or document you are citing. Remember to:

- Keep the *order* of authors' names
- Cite the first named *place* of publication

And note that edition dates are *not* necessarily the same as reprint dates (new editions will have new text and must be cited as such). The copyright sign will often indicate the date of production.

Occasionally, a source (for example, papers presented at conferences, but not 'published') has not originated from a commercial publisher and lacks obvious title page data. If that is the case, try to find use as much information as you can from any part of the source.

A book's editor is referenced exactly as an author.

For example:

Harris, P.J. and Mongiello, M. (eds.) (2006) *Accounting and Financial Management: Developments in the International Hospitality Industry*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann

Note that the title of a book is in italics and uses upper and lower case.

2.4.1 Corporate authors

Sometimes it is impossible to find a named individual as an author. What has usually happened is that there has been a shared or 'corporate' responsibility for the production of the material. Therefore, the 'corporate name' becomes the author (often called the 'corporate author'). Corporate authors can be government bodies, companies, professional bodies, clubs or societies, international organizations.

For example:

Institute of Waste Management (1995) *Ways to Improve Recycling*. Northampton: Institute of Waste Management.

The 'corporate author' appears in the text in the usual alphabetical way.

For journal articles without authors the journal **title** becomes both author and cited journal title.

2.4.2 Chapters in edited books

An edited book will often have a number of authors for different chapters (on different topics). To refer to a specific author's ideas (from a chapter), cite him or her in the text, not the editors. Then, in your reference list, indicate the chapter details *and* the book details from which it was published.

For example:

Whitehead, C. (1991) 'Charismatic Leadership'. In: W. Harrison and D. Cole (eds.) *Recent Advances in Leadership Theory*. London: Waverley. pp. 73-89.

Bibbings, L. (2005) 'Learning Resources'. In: D. Airey and J. Tribe (eds.), *An International Handbook of Tourism Education*. Oxford: Elsevier Publications. pp. 426-435.

Note the use of 'in' to link the chapter to the book and the use of page numbers for the chapter, and that the initials of the editors come before their surnames. (In your text, you would put (Bibbings, 2005) i.e. the author of the chapter, not the editors of the books.

2.5 Secondary sources

A journal article or book which someone else cites that you have not seen is called a **secondary source**.

□ You should try and find this source for yourself and cite it in the normal way. It is important if you are criticising ideas that you do it 'firsthand'.

□ If you cannot locate the secondary source, you may cite it in your text using the reference that is provided in your primary source.

In your text and reference list, you must link these two items with the term 'cited in'. The format is:

Author of original work's surname, initials (or full name, if provided) (Year of original publication) *Title of original work*. Place of publication: Publisher. Cited in Author/editor initials (or full name) surname (Year) *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

For example:

The citation in the text:

A great deal of absenteeism in a firm is an indication that there is likely to be something wrong with the way that staff are managed (Murray, 2005, cited in Allan, 2006).

In the reference list:

Murray, A. (2005) *Absenteeism in the Public Sector*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. Cited in M. Allan (2006) *Public Sector Problems*. London: Butterworth.

2.6 Quotations

2.6.1 Short quotations

If you quote from the publication directly, then you must place the page number within the citation. Quotations within the text use single quotation marks and should be, at the most, two lines long. In the reference list, however, it is not necessary to indicate the page number, as it is already in your text.

For example:

'Literacy is important because people who are literate no longer have to be content with what other people choose to teach them, but can find out for themselves what they want to know'. (Brown *et al.*, 2006, p. 181).

2.6.2 Longer quotations

Quotations that are more than a couple of lines long should be distinguished from the rest of the text. Thus, indent quotations on both sides and format them in single spacing, while the rest of your text will be in 1.5 or double spacing. You could use a smaller typeface if you like to further distinguish the quote. Unlike the short quotations, indented longer quotes do not use quotation marks.

For example:

[Here is some text introducing the quotation]

Many financial offerings tend to be functional or utilitarian in nature, for example, insurance, where the benefits are distant or, perhaps, not even realized. This quality of financial services may require persuasion on the part of the provider to effect a sale. (Farquhar, 2003, p. 394).

[Here is more text following the quotation]

In your text, never split a quotation. If it doesn't fit on a page, then start a new page, so the whole quotation is kept together.

2.7 Distinguishing an author's several publications in the same year

Occasionally, authors publish two or more book or journal articles in any given year. This would make the text citation identical for both. To distinguish between different publications, letters (a, b, c etc.) are used *with* the date in the text:

For example:

Bowen (2001a) has researched tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Bowen, 2001b).

Within the reference list, the articles are presented alphabetically: 2001a, then 2001b, etc.

For example:

Bowen, D. (2001a) 'Research on tourist satisfaction and dissatisfaction: Overcoming the limitations of a positivist and quantitative approach', *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 31-40.

Bowen, D. (2001b) 'Antecedents of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction on long-haul inclusive tours - a reality check on theoretical considerations', *Tourism Management*, Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 49-61.

2.8 No publication details given

Occasionally, you will come across documents that lack basic publication details. In these cases, it is necessary to indicate to your reader that these are not available. A series of abbreviations can be used and are generally accepted for this purpose:

- author/corporate author not given use (Anon.)
- no date use (n.d.)
- no place (sine loco) use (s.l.)
- no publisher (sine nomine) use (s.n.)
- not known use (n.k.).

3. Section Two - Formats for the reference list and bibliography

Now that we have discussed how to mention the authors you have referred to in your text, this section tells you how to set out the reference list and bibliography at the end of your work.

There are many different types of material that you may use that will need referencing. Each different type has an accepted 'style' for presentation within the reference list and/or bibliography.

The following examples give the format style and are followed by an example. They are broadly separated into 'printed' and 'electronic' material.

Take special note of the way that punctuation has been used, as well as quotation marks, italics and upper and lower case. While the examples below are only one of many accepted styles, if you follow these examples exactly, you need have no worries that your referencing is in error.

3.1 Printed material

3.1.1 Books

Author/editor surname, initials or full name if you have it. (Year) *Title*. Edition. Place of publication: Publisher.

For example:

Brown, Reva Berman. (2006) *Doing Your Dissertation in Business and Management: The reality of researching and writing*. London: Sage Publications.

Note

- Usually, the title of the book is written using capital letters for each **significant** word. However, it is also acceptable to use a capital letter for only the first word of the title.
- There is a full stop at the end of the title.
- The title is in italics.
- The date is the year of publication **not** printing.
- The edition is only mentioned if other than the first edition.
- The place of publication is the City **not** the Country (normally the first stated).

3.1.2 Journal articles

Author surname, initials. (Year) 'Title of article', *Journal name*, Vol. Volume number, No. Issue number, pp. first and last page numbers.

For example:

Whyatt, G. (2004) 'Town centre management: How theory informs strategy', *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, Vol. 32, No. 7, pp. 346-353.

Note

- The title of the paper is between single quotation marks and in lower case, with a comma following
- Journal name is italicised, not the article title
- There are a number of other ways you could set out the volume no., issue no. and page nos., depending on the University or journal you are writing for (for example, **32(7)**, 346-353, or 32, (7):346-52). It is because this is the case that

we have suggested that you use the vol., no., pp. layout consistently. If you do so, then you won't get confused and you won't inadvertently mix up the various layouts, and thus you won't lose marks

- p. indicates only one page and pp. indicates a range of pages.

3.1.3 Corporate author

Format is the same as for a book, but uses the 'corporate' (company, business, organisation) author in place of a named author.

For example:

Royal College of Nursing (1983) *Guidance on the Handling of Patients in the Hospital and Community*. London: Royal College of Nursing.

3.1.4 Government publications

Available data may vary for these, but where possible include the following:

Government Department/Institute. Subdivision of department/institute (if known). (Year) *Title of Document*. (Name of chairperson, if it is a committee). Place of publication: Publisher.

For example:

Department of Health and Social Services (1980) *Inequalities in Health: Report of a research working group*. (Chairman: Sir Douglas Black). London: DHSS.

3.1.5 Conference papers

Conference papers are often unpublished Word-processed text, distributed at the conference. Thus it is necessary to include the name, place and date of the conference.

Author, Initial. (Year) 'Title of conference paper'. Paper presented at name of conference, place of conference, month of conference.

For example:

Slinn, J. (2005) 'Changing technology and ownership: A challenge too far. The Monotype Corporation in the 1970s'. Paper presented at the British Academy of Management Annual Conference, Saïd Business School, Oxford, September.

Conference papers are often published in book form or as a special issue of a journal. In this case, treat the reference as you would a normal book or journal paper, but include the fact that it is the publication of conference proceedings, if this is mentioned in the publication information.

Author, Initial. (Year) 'Title of conference paper', in *Conference Proceedings Title*. Place of publication: Publisher, month, page nos.

For example:

Smallbone, T. (2004) 'Can Britain really find a "way with waste"? A case study of the implementation of the WEEE Directive', *Proceedings of the 2004 Business Strategy and the Environment Conference*, Leeds, September, pp. 235-242.

3.1.6 Newspapers

Journalist name, initial. (Year) 'Title of news item'. *Name of newspaper*. Date, Page number.

For example:

Mintz, A. (2006) 'House prices continue to rise'. *Financial Times*. 4 June, p. 28.

Note that the name of newspaper is italicised.

If it is a news article and does not attribute an author, the newspaper name is used in the text and instead of the author in the reference list

For example:

The Guardian (2005) 'Lottery for breast cancer help'. *The Guardian*. 21 March, p. 10.

3.1 Legislation

3.2.1 Law reports

Names of parties involved in case. [Year] Volume number/Abbreviated name of law report/Page number on which report starts.

Dates are given in square brackets, not round.

For example:

Holgate v Duke [1984] 2 All ER 660

3.2.2 Statutes

The usual method of citing an Act of Parliament is to cite its title in your text. (Normally the country of origin is regarded as the 'author', but this is not always stated if you are discussing the law of the land you are actually in). The format is therefore:

Title of statute, year of statute. Place of publication: publisher.

For example:

Data Protection Act 1984. London: HMSO.

3.2.3 Statutory instruments

It is not necessary to put the country of origin if it is the UK. The format would be in this form:

Short title of the statutory instrument. Year (SI year: number). Place of publication: Publisher.

For example:

Lobster pots (size regulations). 1989 (SI 1989: 1201). London: HMSO.

3.2.4 Theses

Author, initials. (Year) *Thesis title*. Level of thesis. Awarding Institution.

For example:

Gibbs, A. (2004) *MBA Quality – An investigation into stakeholders’ perspectives*. PhD Thesis, Oxford Brookes University.

3.2.5 Unpublished material

Some printed materials are not produced by recognisable publishers, and may not be widely available. In this case, it is necessary to indicate this, and if the document is archival in nature - for example, a manuscript or personal letter - its location should also be included.

For example:

Arthur, C. (2004) *Childhood Vaccinations*. Health promotion leaflet, Temple Cowley Group Practice, unpublished.

3.3 Websites

NOTE: For journal articles and reports retrieved from library databases such as EBSCO, you do not need to include the full web address if your reference provides all the standard information relevant for the print-version of the article or report.

For websites, in addition to the usual information (such as name of author, date, title, and name of journal/newspaper if there is one) you also need to include:

- Retrieved from: + the full web address
- [Accessed + date of access]

Sometimes the word 'retrieved' is used instead of 'accessed'. Both are equally correct. You should also include the phrase [Online] as shown below. Note that square brackets are used with web references.

For webpages which are not from a newspaper or journal, the title is shown in italics, as shown in the two examples below.

For printed material, if you use a quotation, you include a page number in your reference. For webpages, there are no 'page numbers'. If you use a quotation from a webpage, please give as much information as possible so that the reader can find the quotation; for example, you could mention the section of the webpage containing the quotation.

If a Web page does not appear to have an individual author, use the corporate author (e.g. BBC). If there is no corporate author, use the title. The following examples have corporate authors.

- Library & Information Services (2003) *Electronic Resources: finding resources by subject* [Online].

Nottingham: The Nottingham Trent University. Retrieved from:

http://www.ntu.ac.uk/LLR/e_resources/index.html [Accessed 3 July 2003].

- Tesco Plc (2002) *Annual report and financial statements 2002* [Online]. Tesco PLC. Retrieved from: http://81.201.142.254/presentResults/results2001_02/Prelims/Report/pdfs/Tesco_Report2002.pdf [Accessed 30 June 2003].

If you cannot find the organisation responsible for the site, firstly consider whether it is wise to use information if you're not sure who is responsible for it, but if you must, use the first few words of the title page of the website and publication date.

Do NOT use the full web address in the citation in the body of the text. Instead, use (author, date); for example:

- (BBC, 2004)
- (Greenpeace, 2006)

3.4 Personal communication

Please avoid using lecture notes as a source - try and go back to the original sources.

Meetings and interviews should be referenced if they are important. Do not use other people's email addresses if this is personal (i.e. private) information. An example of a reference for a conversation would be: Smith, A.B. (2002) Personal communication, Happy Restaurant, Oxford, 15 May.

3.5 Database examples

Reports from databases such as Mintel and Thomson Gale Investext Plus are usually available in print as well as electronically. It is important to provide all relevant information (such as the date of the report) so that another person could find the report.

3.5.1 Mintel report

For example:

Mintel (2004) 'City breaks in the UK'. *Mintel Leisure Intelligence - UK* - April.

3.5.2 Stockbroker report

For example:

Shiret, T. (2006) Marks and Spencer Group plc., *Company Report., Credit Suisse – Europe*, 16th November 2006.

3.6 Other sources

There are a variety of other electronic sources that can be cited, for example:

3.6.1 Videotape

For off-air recordings, use this format:

Broadcast company (Year) *Title of programme*. off-air recording. Transmission date. Format. (e.g. film, videotape, DVD)

For example:

Channel Four (2003) *Great Paintings of the Renaissance*. Off-air recording. 10th June, 2003. Videotape.

Note: In your text, you refer to (Channel Four, 2003).

For an off-air recording of a film use this format:

Title (Year) Person or body responsible for production. Off-air recording. Format.

For example:

The Graduate (1969) Directed by Mike Nichols. Off-air recording. Videotape.

Note: In your text, you refer to (The Graduate, 1969).

3.6.2 Film

Title. (Year). Person or body responsible for production. Running time. Production company. Place of production or publication (if known). Format.

For example:

The Apartment (1960) Directed by Billy Wilder. 124 mins. United Artists. Videotape.

Note: In the text of your written work, refer to (The Apartment, 1960)

APPENDIX 4 Ethical standards for research involving human participants

Code of practice

1. Introduction

1.1 The integrity of any research depends not only on its scientific rigour, but also on its ethical adequacy. Ethical issues are many and varied, and may be quite complex. Research involving human participants is undertaken by many different disciplines and conducted in a broad range of settings and institutions. While some issues are specific to professional groups, all research should be guided by a set of fundamental ethical principles to ensure the protection of human participants.

1.2 Underpinning the standards are the ethical imperatives of DO NO HARM (nonmaleficence) and DO GOOD (beneficence). Consideration of risks versus benefits need to be weighed up by researchers. In medical research physically invasive procedures are easily defined, but what constitutes risk in social research is sometimes less clear cut. Questionnaires, observation and interviews can all be potentially intrusive and provoke anxiety in participants, or worse, involve psychological risk. It is important to think through carefully the likely impact on participants of any data collection methods. Certain groups are particularly vulnerable and may succumb to pressure, for example students, children or people with learning disability. Some participants are unable to give informed consent and are therefore less able to protect themselves, for example people with dementia. Research activities may be so unintrusive that individual consent is not warranted, such as in the case of some community-based studies.

1.3 The following standards have been developed to guide staff and students undertaking research involving human participants. They are intended to cover general principles, but they may not address all situations and the researcher should seek further advice from their School's Research Ethics Officer, the University Research Ethics Committee and their profession's code of practice for research ethics as appropriate.

2. No research should cause harm, and preferably it should benefit participants

2.1 A judgement needs to be made as to whether a particular intervention is likely to affect the well-being of participants and any potential risks to participants which might arise in the course of the research should be identified.

2.2 Procedures must be justified, explaining why alternative approaches involving less risk cannot be used.

2.3 The potential benefits of the research to participants, the scientific community and/or society must be clearly stated.

2.4 Any cultural, religious, gender or other differences in a research population should be sensitively and appropriately handled by researchers at all stages.

Ethical standards for research involving human participants 1 of 6

3. Potential participants normally have the right to receive clearly communicated information from the researcher in advance

3.1 Most research procedures should be explained on an information sheet written in simple language that is easily comprehensible by the potential research participant.

3.2 The information sheet should set out: the purpose of the investigation; the procedures; the risks (including psychological distress); the benefits, or absence of them, to the individual or to others in the future or to society; a statement that individuals may decline to participate and also will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason; and an invitation to ask questions.

3.3 The information sheet should also provide contact details of the School's Research Ethics Officer so that participants may report any procedures that seem to violate their welfare.

3.4 Participants should be given plenty of time to study the information sheet, and consult relevant parties.

3.5 The information sheet and the consent form (see Appendix) should form part of the application for ethics approval.

4. Participants should be free from coercion of any kind and should not be pressured to participate in a study

4.1 Promises of compensation and care for damage, injury or loss of income should not be considered inducements.

4.2 Inducements, such as special services or financial payments (other than reimbursement for travel expenses or in some cases time), and the creation of inappropriate motivation should usually be avoided.

4.3 Risks involved in participation should be acceptable to participants, even in the absence of inducement.

4.4 Reimbursement of participants' expenses, for example for journeys, is not payment in the sense of reward, and can be provided.

4.5 Participants must be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

5. Participants in a research study have the right to give their informed consent before participating

5.1 Participants should understand the purpose and nature of the study, what participation in the study requires, and what benefits are intended to result from the study (see section 6 for special guidance on vulnerable participants and section 7 for exceptional circumstances).

5.2 Voluntary informed consent, in writing, should usually be obtained from any participant who is able to give such consent (see Appendix).

5.3 It is the researcher's responsibility to seek ongoing consent during the course of a study.

5.4 Consent may be implied by the completion and return of many social survey questionnaires, removing the need for written consent.

Ethical standards for research involving human participants 2 of 6

5.5 Individual consent may be unnecessary for some research activities, such as community research, which may be quite unintrusive, for example studies involving observation of public behaviour.

6. Where third parties are affected by the research, informal consent should be obtained

6.1 When third parties, for example spouses, teachers or health care professionals, are directly involved in the care, education or treatment of the potential participants, consent should also be obtained from them.

6.2 Informal consent should involve sharing of information about the project.

6.3 If the proposed research is likely to interfere with the treatment or care being provided by a third party, it is necessary that they be fully informed and sign a consent to participate.

6.4 In certain situations, the affiliation of participants to particular organisations or special groups such as educational institutions, business organisations, or hospitals, may necessitate the granting of permission to conduct the research project and any relevant policies or guidelines should be followed.

7. The consent of vulnerable participants or their representatives' assent should be actively sought by researchers

7.1 If the involvement of children in a research study is justified, then parents or other legal guardians have the right to be informed and to give their assent for inclusion of the child in the study.

7.2 In the case of educational research, any special school policies or procedures should be followed.

7.3 To the extent that it is feasible, which will vary with age, the willing consent of participants who are children should also be sought. Generally, children over age 16 may be assumed to be capable of giving informed consent, but this will vary depending on the nature of research and special guidance may need to be sought.

7.4 In cases where people are unable to comprehend the implications of research, for example people with dementia, assent to participate may have to come from a representative, such as a legal guardian or immediate relative.

7.5 Witnessed consent is required for vulnerable participants who have intellectual or cultural difficulties in speech or understanding, but who are deemed capable of giving consent.

7.6 The quality of the consent of participants who are in a potentially dependent relationship with the researcher (e.g. students, employees and patients) requires careful consideration, as willingness to volunteer may be unduly influenced by the expectation of advantageous benefits.

8. Honesty should be central to the relationship between researcher, participant and institutional representatives

8.1 The deception of participants should be avoided.

8.2 The use of one-way mirrors for observation in any investigation must be clearly justified. Ethical standards for research involving human participants 3 of 6

8.3 If deception is necessary, the reasons should be explained to participants after the study.

9. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity should be maintained

9.1 Researchers should take precautions to protect confidentiality of participants and data.

9.2 The identity of the participant, or any information which may identify the participant, may not be revealed without the participant's adequate prior consent in writing.

9.3 Researchers and other collaborators should deal with all data obtained through their project in such a manner as not to compromise the personal dignity of the participant or to infringe upon the participant's right to privacy.

9.4 All information obtained in the course of a research project should be considered privileged information and should under no circumstances be publicly disclosed in a fashion that would identify any individual or organisation (except if subpoenaed by a court).

9.5 When personal identifiers are used in a study, researchers should explain why this is necessary and how confidentiality would be protected.

9.6 Procedures for protecting the confidentiality of participants should be followed and include:

- securing individual confidentiality statements from all research personnel;
- coding data with numbers instead of names to protect the identity of participants;
- using codes for identification of participants when transcribing audiotapes, and destroying the tapes on completion of transcription;

- storing data with any identifying information in a locked file to which only one or two persons have access;
- using pseudonyms for participants, agencies and geographical settings in the publishing of reports;
- disposing of information that can reveal the identity of participants or places carefully (e.g. burning or shredding rather than disposal in wastebaskets).

10. The collection and storage of research data by researchers must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998

10.1 Researchers should follow the University's Data Protection Policy and Guidelines.

10.2 Researchers should be aware of the risks to anonymity, privacy and confidentiality posed by all kinds of personal information storage and processing, including computer and paper files, e-mail records, audio and videotapes, or any other information which directly identifies an individual.

10.3 Participants must be informed of the kinds of personal information which will be collected, what will be done with it, and to whom it will be disclosed. 'Consent to process' may need to be obtained where information collected from individuals is to be used later for research purposes.

10.4 Measures to prevent accidental breaches of confidentiality should be taken (see section 9), and in cases where confidentiality is threatened, relevant records should be destroyed.

10.5 Provisions for data security at the end of a project must be made. Where the researcher leaves the University, this responsibility should usually rest with the relevant School.

Ethical standards for research involving human participants 4 of 6

11. Researchers have a duty to disseminate their research findings to all appropriate parties

11.1 Participants and relevant stakeholders should be offered access to a summary of the research findings.

11.2 Reports to the public should be clear and understandable, and accurately reflect the significance of the study.

HB/JC

25.3.00

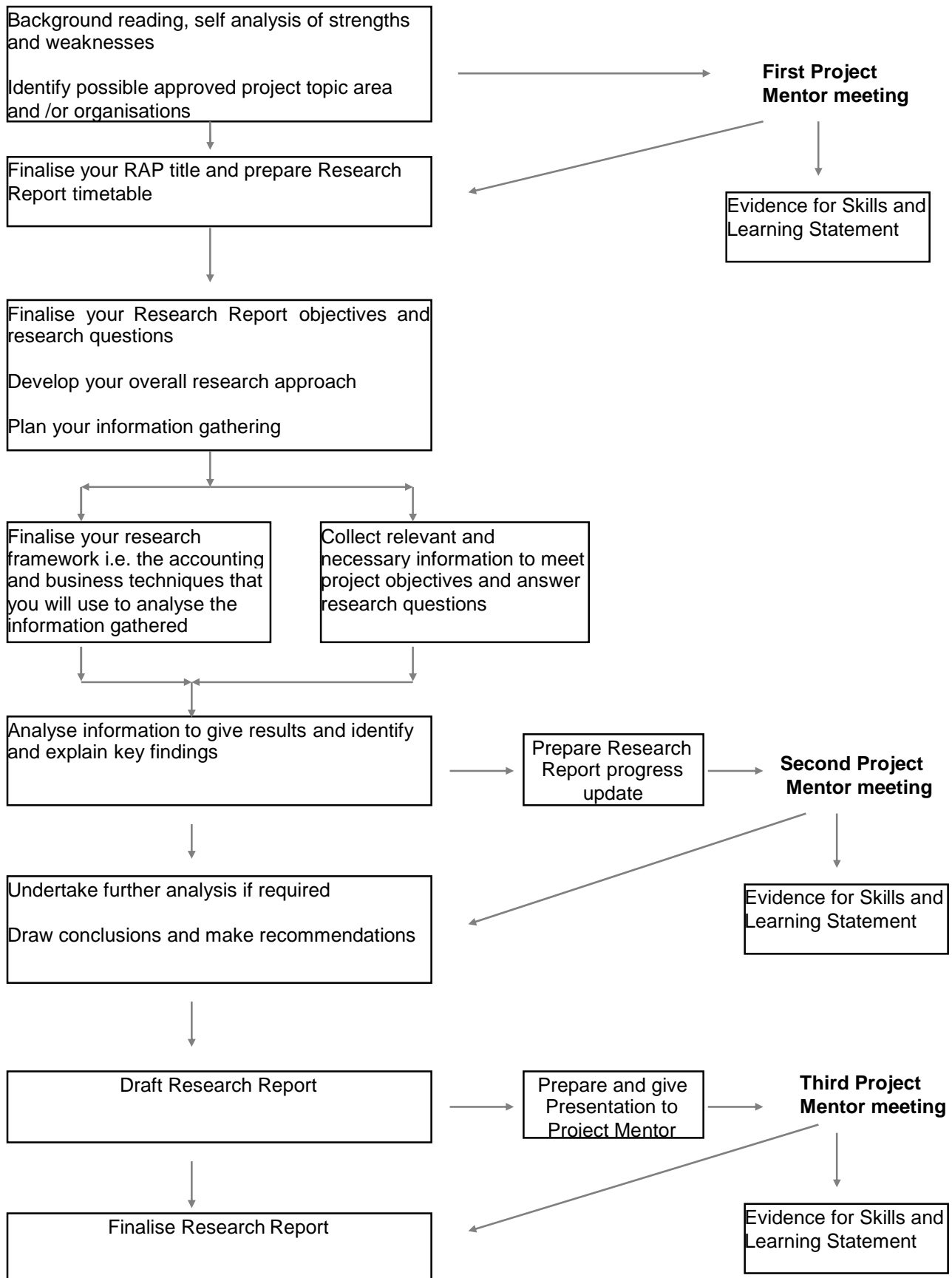
Appendix 1

Consent form guidelines

The following issues should be addressed in a consent form:

- Title of the study
- Purpose of the study
- Why participant was selected
- Description of procedures, purpose, length of time required and how participants will be involved
- Discomforts, inconveniences expected
- Risks, if any
- Benefits, if any
- Withholding standard care/treatment or an alternative, if any
- Compensation to be expected, if any
- How confidentiality, anonymity and privacy will be maintained
- Right of participant to refuse to participate or withdraw at any time for any reason
- Sources for information and assurances that researcher will provide further and ongoing information (e.g. name and contact phone number of the researcher)
- Signature of the researcher and the participant or the participant's representative
- Signature of the witnesses where appropriate.

APPENDIX 5 OXFORD BROOKES PROCESS MODEL



APPENDIX 6 SUBMISSION FORM AND CHECKLIST

The next period Submission Form will be available under “Related Documents” on the ACCA website.

Research and Analysis Project Check List

Please **DO NOT** include this form with your project – it is for your reference only

Have you completed the ACCA Professional Ethics Module? (accessed via myACCA)	
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 also be included)	
Have you included a print out summary of your presentation, including copies of your overhead/PowerPoint slides? (A disk will not be accepted)	
Have you explicitly addressed the four questions in the Skills and Learning Statement?	
Have you included a summary of your questionnaire results as well as a sample questionnaire in 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 bound your Research Project and Skills and Learning Statement as one document, with the project at the front? (Please do not use ring binders or staples. It must be either spiral or slide bound)	
Have you included a title page with your name and ACCA number written on it as well as the word count?	
Have you included the correct payment with your completed Submission Forms?	
Have you included a current email address on the Submission Forms so we are able to acknowledge receipt of your project? (Please note that you will not receive an acknowledgement if you do not provide an email address)	
Please do not include a CD / electronic version of your project, as these will be disposed of before the project is sent out for marking.	
Please check that your name appears correctly on your ACCA records, 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 of any changes in address that take place after submission of your project, and before the results date. The University does not receive this information from ACCA and therefore it is a student's responsibility to keep Oxford Brookes informed of their personal details. This can be done by emailing

acca@brookes.ac.uk