

Oxford Brookes University BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting

Research and Analysis Project Guidelines

1 September 2005

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Requirements

ACCA and Oxford Brookes University have agreed to work in partnership to give students the opportunity to be awarded a BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting. To obtain this degree you must:

- a) Pass the appropriate ACCA examination papers
- b) Demonstrate your ability to research, analyse, and use key skills, by undertaking a business related **Research and Analysis Report** and preparing a **Key Skills Statement**

In fulfilling requirement b) it will be necessary to work with a mentor and information regarding this relationship can be found on page 4 and in Appendix 3.

This document is intended to provide students with guidelines on how to carry out, complete and submit their Research and Analysis Project in order to qualify for the Oxford Brookes degree. These guidelines contain details of all tasks relating to both the Report and Key Skills Statement and are considered sufficient for those students who feel confident in their ability in each of the skills areas assessed, (see pages 6 and 7). An approved tutorial text is available to those who feel they require further support and guidance in developing these skills and in completing the Project, (see Appendix 2).

The preparation of your Research and Analysis Report and Key Skills Statement will be monitored and verified by your mentor before submission to Oxford Brookes University.

Your Research and Analysis Report and Key Skills Statement will be assessed as either pass or fail according to the University's regulations.

NB: It is essential that you read and understand the regulations contained in the Student Guide, (available on-line at <http://www.accaglobal.com/students/professionalscheme/degreepartnership.com>) and that you study Appendix 4 on page 16. If you have any doubts over your eligibility and/or opt-in status in respect to the Oxford Brookes BSc degree, please contact ACCA Connect who will advise you. If you are not eligible and opted-in, then Oxford Brookes is not able to consider your Research and Analysis project and it will be returned to you unmarked.

1.2. Applying for the Degree

Students who have passed the appropriate examination papers required for the degree may submit their completed Research and Analysis Report and Key Skills Statement at any point in line with the Assessment Period Timetable published on the ACCA website (<http://www.accaglobal.com/students/professionalscheme/degreepartnership.com>). Students should send in their Research and Analysis Project together with their Submission Forms (see pages 21 and 22) and assessment fee to:

**The ACCA Office, The Business School
Oxford Brookes University
Wheatley Campus, Wheatley
Oxfordshire, OX33 1HX
United Kingdom**

Email: acca@brookes.ac.uk

NB: The Research and Analysis Report and Key Skills Statement should be word processed on A4 paper and presented in a plastic folder/wallet and clipped together in some way. Students should note that if they fail to meet any particular submission deadline, for any reason, then they should delay submission until the next period.

1.3. ACCA Membership Requirements

This Project enables you to record evidence of experience for purposes of the Oxford Brookes degree only and does not count towards ACCA membership. Further training regulations apply for membership purposes.

SECTION 2 TASKS

You are required to:

- Write a business related Research and Analysis Project Report (up to 5000 words)
- Participate in three meetings with your mentor, (see page 4), which will involve you in writing a progress update and delivering an oral presentation
- Reflect on your meetings with your mentor and write a Key Skills Statement (up to 1,500 words)
- Submit both the Research and Analysis Project report and the Key Skills Statement bound as one piece of work to Oxford Brookes. Do not submit the two documents separately.

2.1. Report

The Research and Analysis Project Report should be on a business-related topic (see page 9) which will demonstrate your ability to gather information, analyse the information you have collected and draw conclusions from your research. **Relevant spreadsheets must also be printed out and included within the project to show evidence of IT skills (see page 6).** A sample printout of the formulae for part of the spreadsheet is the best evidence for this and is highly recommended.

Your Report must be in four sections as set out below:

INTRODUCTION

- Topic chosen and its context
- Your reasons for choosing the topic
- Aims and objectives of the report

INFORMATION GATHERING

- Sources used, and reasons for their use (these must be secondary and may be primary)
- Description of methods used to gather information

ANALYSIS

- Analysis of information
- Presentation of findings

CONCLUSIONS

- What the report has shown in relation to aims and objectives

Guidance on the length of each section is given below. Please bear in mind that these are suggested word counts rather than requirements. However, the overall total of 5,000 words must not be exceeded. Oxford Brookes University reserves the right to fail any projects over **5000** words.

The **5000** word limit excludes the contents page, the appendices and the bibliography. However, your appendices should not consist of more than five sides of A4 including your spreadsheet data. There is no specific requirement on line spacing.

a)	Introduction +	
b)	Information gathering	up to 1500 words
c)	Analysis	up to 2500 words
d)	Conclusions	up to 1000 words

NB: Your total word count for the Report should be indicated on the title page of your Report for submission to Oxford Brookes University, and on your Submission Form.

2.2. Choosing Your Mentor

Your mentor will monitor your progress throughout this Project. He/she will be asked to verify your participation in the three meetings as set out on this page and confirm that the report has been carried out in accordance with the University's regulations¹.

It is your responsibility to find someone to act as your mentor and to arrange three meetings with him/her. It is not possible for Oxford Brookes to provide a mentor for you.

Ideally your mentor will be a line manager or partner in the firm or practice where you are or have been working, or your college/university tutor.

The person you choose **should** be one of the following:

- A qualified Chartered Certified Accountant
- Your employer/line manager (current or previous)
- Your tutor at College or University
- If the person you wish to choose as your mentor is not one of the above then you must contact the ACCA Office at Oxford Brookes University for approval.

2.3. Meetings with your Mentor

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

NB: A set of notes for your mentor can be found in Appendix 4, please pass these on to your chosen mentor as early as possible.

Meeting 1 - at the outset

To prepare for this you should have some idea on the choice of topic, (see page 9), and have embarked on preliminary investigation into the research areas and methods you may want to use. Following this meeting you should be able to set out 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 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.

¹ The Student Guide is accessible via the ACCA website: www.accaglobal.com

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

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.

2.4. 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 Appendix 4 for further information on regulations regarding plagiarism, syndication and other forms of cheating.

2.5. Key Skills Statement

In the Key Skills Statement you should demonstrate personal learning arising from interaction with your mentor (and peer presentation group if applicable, see 2.4).

The Statement should concentrate on skills of communication and working with others and focus on your meetings with your mentor as the vehicle for your evidence. It should also clearly indicate where you have used IT skills in particular Word Processing, Spreadsheet and online database usage within your projects

PREPARING FOR MEETINGS

Describe how you prepared for the three meetings. Assess the importance of planning and organising in relation to the effectiveness of your meetings and of meetings in general.

QUESTIONING

Consider and explain the role of questioning in ensuring productive discussions with your mentor, in particular the use of appropriate questioning techniques.

LISTENING

Explain the importance of listening in ensuring that communication with your mentor was effective. Consider active listening techniques, sources of error and distortion in communication.

THE PRESENTATION

Assess the presentation identifying what went well and what could have been improved. You should attach 2 sides of A4 to your key skills statement showing an outline of your presentation, including copies of PowerPoint/overhead slides or other visual aids that you used during your presentation.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF INTERACTION

Using an appropriate model of communication analyse and evaluate interaction with your mentor and if applicable with your peer discussion group, in relation to the key elements of successful communication.

Reflect on IT skills used.

referring to appropriate literature on communication, (see Appendix 2). Where appropriate consider what you would do differently in the future in similar circumstances.

As a guide each section of your Statement should be approx. 300 words. However, the overall total of 1500 words, excluding your presentation outline, should not be exceeded for the Key Skills Statement.

NB: Your Key Skills word count should be indicated on the title page of your Statement and on the Submission Form.

2.6. Assessment

The following documents will be assessed:

- **Research and Analysis Report**
- **Key Skills Statement**

2.7. Criteria for Assessment of the Report

You must achieve a pass in each of the following areas:

Communication Skills

A pass in this area will be achieved by:

- A coherent and structured Report focused on the stated objectives and written in a lucid style
- Clear and accurate referencing (see Appendix 1). *Note that where you have quoted someone else's work and not referenced it, then this is plagiarism, which is a serious offence, which will in disciplinary action by (section deleted) Oxford Brookes University and possibly, also, the ACCA. (See Appendix 4).*

Information gathering

A pass in this area will be achieved by:

- Evidence of an appropriate selection of methods of gathering information - these should relate to the topic/objectives of the Report
- Use of a range of information sources which must show evidence of wider reading and use of IT based sources
- Referencing of appropriate sources of information

Analysis and conclusions

A pass in this area will be achieved by:

- A relevant analysis of the information using an appropriate framework or tool
- A clear presentation of findings from the information gathered
- Appropriate conclusions from the analysis related to the objectives of the Report

IT skills

A pass in this area will be achieved by:

- Application of IT software to achieve a document with a clear layout and logical structure
- Use of a spreadsheet to analyse and present data in tabular and graphical form within the Report. A printout of relevant spreadsheets **must** be included, showing where ever possible the formulas used to make calculations.

2.8. Criteria for Assessment of the Key Skills Statement

A pass will be demonstrated by an analysis of your ability to communicate and work with others by providing:

- Reflection on the nature and structure of the meetings with your mentor through the identification of relevant and influencing factors
- Reflection on the meetings with your mentor examining the nature of the interactions which took place and showing an understanding of the key elements of successful face to face communication, in particular questioning and listening techniques
- A clear outline for the presentation made at Meeting 3 including identification of what went well and what could have been improved. This outline should include copies of PowerPoint/overhead slides or other visual aides that you used during your presentation.
- A self-assessment, drawing on evidence from meetings with your mentor, of your abilities to actively listen, ask appropriate questions, respond to others and achieve satisfactory outcomes.

SECTION 3 THE REPORT PROCESS

3.1. Choosing a topic

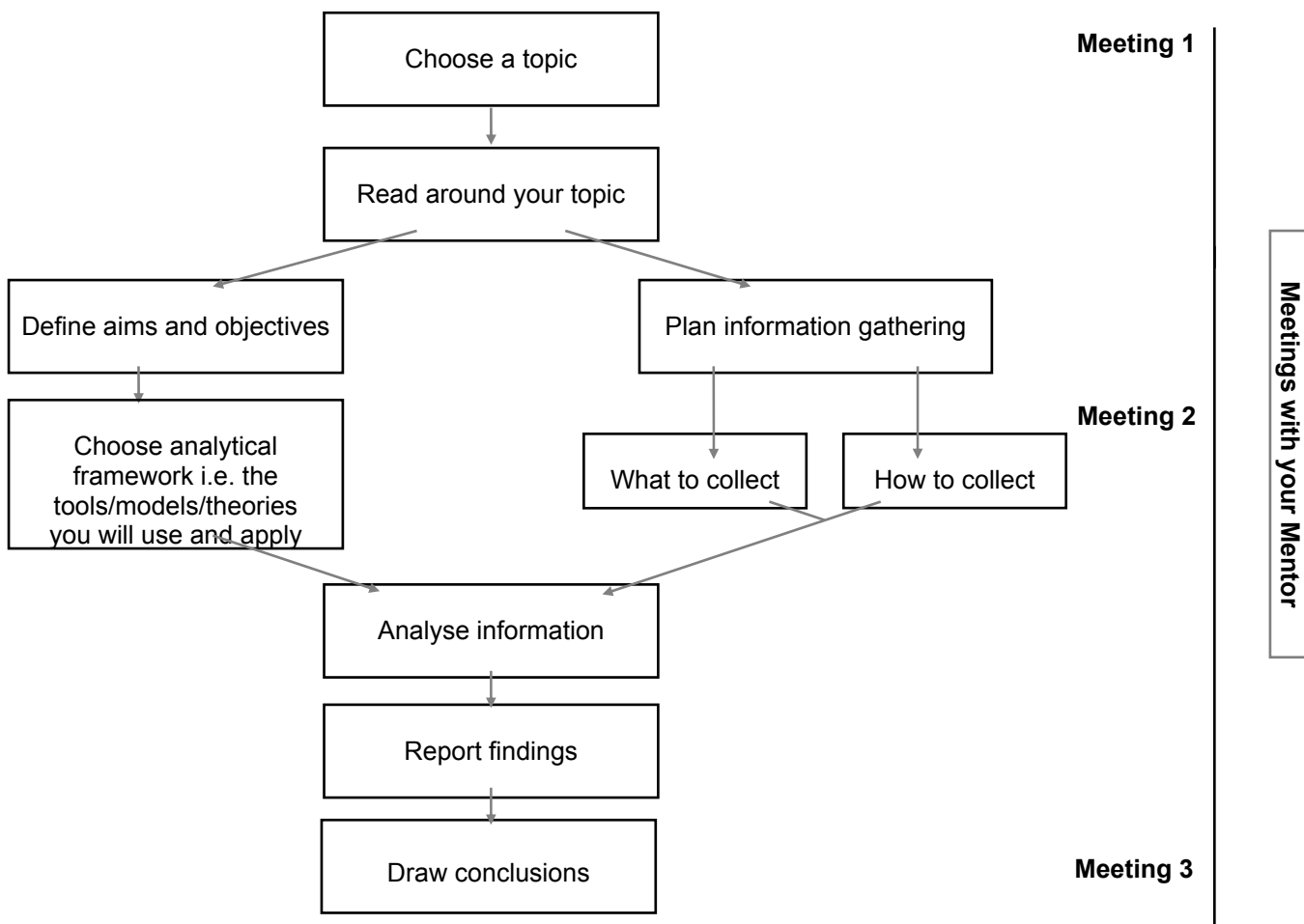
The topic chosen for your Report should be linked to your organisation or to an organisation of your choice. This should be a real rather than fictitious organisation and consequently any data used should be actual data and fully referenced. If the identity of the company needs to be concealed for reasons of confidentiality, then this should be stated clearly in the project.

We strongly recommend that you choose a topic from the list on the following page. However, should you have an alternative topic, which is of particular interest to you, please provide a title and one page outline in writing to the address on page 2 of these guidelines to confirm acceptability for this Project. You are advised to put your request in writing before starting work on the Report and to allow one month for consideration and response. Unapproved project titles will normally be failed automatically.

NB: In carrying out the research for your Report, if you intend to source any information not already in the public domain (i.e. from your employer or a client of your employer), then you are urged to bear in mind issues of confidentiality/data protection and to obtain clearance in writing from the relevant party.

3.2. Process Model

The following diagram shows how you might carry out the various processes involved in completing your report.



3.3. Recommended Topics for your Report

Except where stated otherwise, the Research and Analysis project should address relevant issues in a specific organisation.

- 1 An analysis of the efficiency and/or effectiveness of a management accounting technique in an organisational setting.
- 2 An analysis of how the application of technology can contribute to an organisation's efficiency and/or effectiveness.
- 3 An examination of the impact of an aspect of existing or impending legislation on an organisation.
- 4 An analysis of the impact of e-business on an industry or organisation of your choice.
- 5 The identification of the effects of globalisation on an industry of your choice.
- 6 The identification of key factors or indicators in the motivation of employees in an organisation of your choice.
- 7 An analysis of the tax and profit implications of different company entities, changes in status or acquisitions or disposals of company assets.
- 8 An analysis of the financial situation of your choice of organisation.
- 9 An examination of how to plan, develop and implement an appropriate information system in an organisation.
- 10 An analysis of how management accounting techniques are used to support decision-making in organisations.
- 11 An analysis of the costs and benefits of the internal audit/internal review activities within an organisation of your choice.
- 12 An analysis of the effect of any International Accounting standard on the accounts of any organisation in terms of profitability or financial stability or balance sheet value.
- 13 An analysis of future personnel requirements under conditions of change (including employee development).
- 14 An investigation of recent investment decisions by an organisation of your choice and how the use of different methods of risk and uncertainty analysis might affect such decisions.
- 15 An analysis of the role of working capital on the profitability and /or efficiency of an organisation of your choice.
- 16 An analysis of the effect of different sources of capital on investment decisions within an organisation of your choice.
- 17 An analysis of the effect of corporate governance on an organisation of your choice.
- 18 An examination of how to plan, develop and implement an appropriate PRP system in an organisation.
- 19 An analysis of the business and financial reasons and effects of creating a multinational merger company.

- 20** An analysis of the effects of IT failure and contingency plans within an organisation of your choice.
- 21** An analysis of the impact of the Euro on an organisation or industry of your choice.
- 22** Analyse the marketing strategy of an organisation of your choice, identifying the key success factors or indicators in the marketing mix and the activities of the organisation.

NB: Oxford Brookes University reserves the right to change the above titles from time to time. You must use the current titles unless you request special permission from Oxford Brookes University. (See page 8) You will be given a project code to use when submitting your Research and Analysis Project.

3.4 Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get help in preparing for the project?

Several ACCA providers also offer tuition for this project. Premier Plus Centres will soon be offered the opportunity to become an Oxford Brookes recommended centre. Also there is an Oxford Brookes University approved Text published by BPP.

When do I submit the Project?

There are two opportunities each year to submit the project, each window of opportunity being six or seven weeks long immediately following the release of the professional examination results. The ACCA website gives the timetable for submission.

What is included in the Word Count?

Appendices, Contents pages and the Bibliography 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 Bibliography. One reason for this is to avoid plagiarism.

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.

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

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 6 weeks of the results letter and you will be invited to a graduation ceremony at Oxford Brookes University in Oxford.

If I fail do I get told why?

You will get a limited amount of feedback, which will indicate which areas you passed and which areas you failed. If you wish to get a commentary, which gives you much more detail, then you may get one from the ACCA office at Oxford Brookes University on payment of £60 sterling.

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 normally 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.

How many times can I submit the project?

You may submit the project as many times as you wish, provided each submission is within 10 years of your initial registration for the ACCA professional examinations. The standard fee (currently £50) 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.

3.5 Checklist prior to submission

Before you submit your project please use the following checklist to ensure that you have included all the relevant documents

- Are your section titles in line with the specified headings?
- Is there evidence of a spreadsheet and other IT and have you included a reflection *on your spreadsheet* in your Key Skills Statement?
- Have you included a Bibliography and correctly referenced it within the text?
- Are there word counts on the documents?
- Have you included a two page summary of your presentation, including powerpoint/overhead slides etc.
- Has your mentor signed the Mark sheet?
- Have you attached both submission sheets?
- Is your payment attached giving details of your name and ACCA student number on the back of the cheque/bank draft? For visa payments we cannot accept American Express.
- Have you included an e-mail address so that we can give you your result by e-mail?
- Where appropriate, have you included key information from published financial statements in an Appendix?
- Have you included your questionnaire results and a sample of the questionnaire in an Appendix?
- Have you bound your project as one document using spiral bind, slide bind or comb bind?
- Have you signed the new submission forms (versions after September 2004), which have the new Oxford Brookes University regulations, without which we cannot mark your project?

Results by email:

Please note when we are sending out your results your business email address will be more likely to have the capacity to receive the email and is less likely to be rejected or bounce back undelivered to us. We are only able to send out student's results once by email. Please make your email address very clear on the submission form.

Contact details:

If you move address before results are sent out please contact Oxford Brookes University, ACCA Office. The ACCA are unable to update us once you have submitted your project, which means you will need to contact both the ACCA

HOW TO REFERENCE YOUR WORK

How to Reference Your Work and Construct a Bibliography

Referencing

Whenever you are directly quoting or referring to one of your sources of information, you should acknowledge this in the text as you go along. References should be clearly set out using the Harvard System. It is important to double check that all references in your text appear in the bibliography.

Bibliography

Your bibliography comes at the end of your Report. It is a list of all the sources you have used in compiling your Report e.g. books, articles, company publications, newspaper articles etc. The bibliography should be set out alphabetically using the Harvard System. It is not sufficient to merely include your sources of information in the Bibliography without including the proper reference in the text. Failure to do this will result in failure of the Project.

How to reference your work and construct a bibliography

Correctly referencing your work is simple, and compulsory. You must reference all your sources of information. We do advise you to reference as you go along, rather than leaving it until the end of your assignment. There is nothing more time consuming than constructing a bibliography retrospectively.

References within your text

In the Harvard system references within the text are set out as follows:

Example

In any organisation made up of different interest groups some conflict over goals is inevitable (Needle, 1994).

In the bibliography the reference shown above would appear in this way:

Example of a book reference

Needle, D. (1994) Business in Context. 2nd Edition, London, Chapman & Hall

NB: You only cite the edition if it is not the first. Please note that the title of the book is either underlined or emboldened.

Example of a journal or newspaper reference

Buxton, J. (1998) Management: The Growing Business: Co-operative's Wheels of Fortune. The Financial Times, February 24

NB: It's the title of the journal or newspaper that is either underlined or emboldened

Example of journal article where no author is given

The Economist (1997) 'New technology is no snap', October 11, p125

Citing Electronic Sources

No standard agreed method has yet evolved for citing electronic sources. Electronic sources may include include ftp sites, Telnet addresses, WWW and gopher pages, newsgroups and e-mail messages. The following book should help:

Li, Xia and Crane, Nancy B. (1996) **Electronic styles, a handbook for citing electronic information** 2nd Edition, Medford, N.J., Information Today

There are also several guides you can view on the Internet.

A recommended example of a guide to citing Internet sources is accessible via:

http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/library/using/citing_references.html

NB: This has a useful one-page summary as an appendix.

A simplified solution might be:

Author's last name, First name. Title of work. *Title of complete work if applicable in italics.* [protocol and address] [path] (date of message or visit).

Example

Walker, Janice R. MLA-Style Citations of Electronic Sources.

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html

Appendix 2 **APPROVED/RECOMMENDED READING****Oxford Brookes University/ACCA Approved Text****BPP (2003) Success in your Research & Analysis Project. London, BPP**Additional Recommended Reading

Cameron, S. (2002) Business Students' Handbook: learning skills for study and employment 2nd edition. Harlow, Financial Times/Prentice Hall

Guirdham, M. (2002) Interpersonal Skills at Work, 2nd Edition, London, Prentice Hall

Hayes, J. (2002) Interpersonal Skills at work, 2nd edition. Hove :Routledge

Honey, P. (1988) Face to Face: A Practical Guide to Interactive Skills 2nd Edition, Aldershot, Gower

Honey, P (2001) Improve your people skills. 2nd ed. - London : CIPD.

Hussey, J. Hussey, R. (1997) Business Research. Basingstoke, Macmillan

Northedge, A. (1990) The Good Study Guide. Milton Keynes, Open University

Pedler, M. Burgoyne, J. Boydell, T. (1994) A Manager's Guide to Self Development. Maidenhead, McGraw Hill

Saunders, M. Lewis, P. Thornhill, A. (2003) Research Methods for Business Students. 3rd Edition, Harlow, Financial Times/Prentice Hall

Appendix 3

MENTOR/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP**Mentor Guidelines**

The mentor is primarily interested in the progress of your Project but is not your tutor. They will need to hear about your plans and will ask questions to help you reflect on the clarity of your thinking and the focus of your Report.

It is important to realise that your mentor is not your assessor but, as already stated, will be asked to provide confirmation that you participated in three meetings with him/her, provided a satisfactory progress update, and gave a presentation.

A mentor need not have expert knowledge of the field of your research or in research methods. You should not expect them to give you direction regarding the content, relevant references or design of your research for the Research and Analysis Report or Key Skills Statement.

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?

CHEATING

Students undertaking this project should be fully aware of the University regulations relating to cheating. Cheating may be defined as a deliberate and intended action, using trickery, practising deceit, or violating rules dishonestly. Students may be shocked by the use of the word 'cheating', but it is an indication of the seriousness with which the University takes these matters. Such cheating takes many forms in academic circumstances. The form most familiar to students is that of cheating in examinations. What may be less familiar are the ways in which students have attempted to cheat in the Research and Analysis Project - and have been found out and penalised.

These other ways of cheating are as follows:

- **Impersonation** - this means to undertake a piece of assessed work on behalf of, or to pretend to be, another student, or allowing another person to undertake an assessment on your behalf, or to pretend to be you.
- **Substitution** - this means submitting other people's work as though it were your own - either with, or without, their knowledge, and includes copying in examinations or in the submission of assessed work.
- **Duplication** - this means 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** – this includes the invention of data, their alteration, copying data from any other source, or otherwise obtaining them by unfair means, or inventing quotations and/or references.
- **Collusion** - this is a secret agreement or co-operation with others especially for a deceitful purpose, and includes copying or sharing another student's work, with his/her secret agreement that you can do so, or lending your work to another student in the reasonable knowledge that some or all of it will be copied, or secretly working with others jointly to produce a piece of work that is supposed to be your own work. Thus collusion is not collaboration, which is open co-operation with others, and which is used where it is considered to work in teams, and many university courses include assessments based on group work.

But, as far as the Research and Analysis Project is concerned, collusion and collaboration are unacceptable. The only person you will be working with is your Mentor, whose roles are clearly defined. Your mentor will encourage you to reflect upon your work, and will give friendly and expert guidance on the broad direction you should take. Your mentor is not in the same position as, for example, a project tutor at a university, and is not even expected to direct you to sources of information. The mentor may give constructive comments but would not be expected to write any part of the project.

There may be a group presentation and, no doubt, some feedback may be received jointly from a mentor to a group of students, but it is important that each individual student presents his or her own work and co-operative projects are not allowed.

- **Plagiarism** – this means taking or using another person's thoughts, writings or inventions and presenting them as though they were your own.

Plagiarism is probably the most common of these offences and perhaps a few additional words should be said about it. To acknowledge the work of others is more than a matter of good academic practice; it is the foundation stone of all academic practice. This is why so much attention is placed on correct referencing, and why students may find themselves unwittingly guilty of plagiarising because they have failed to follow the correct referencing procedures. As far as ACCA and Brookes are concerned, however, ignorance is no excuse, and plagiarism will be heavily penalised as it is viewed as a serious matter of cheating.

Plagiarism is not a complicated issue - if you quote/use the actual words of another author, or if you express the thoughts of an author in your own words, and you do not indicate (a) that you have done so and (b) where those words or thoughts can be found in published form, then you have plagiarised.

You will find more information and advice about plagiarism at the website given below, which gives a list of other useful websites on plagiarism.

www.mantex.co.uk/samples/plgrsm.htm

In particular, the website

<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/SJA/plagiarism.html>

Gives a very readable set of examples of what is plagiarism and what is not - with a few tips on how to deal correctly with attributing of the work of others.

You may feel that there is too much emphasis on plagiarism but it has to be pointed out that if plagiarism is detected within a project, it is likely that you will not only fail the project but, as this is also a form of cheating, additional penalties may be applied.

The University takes all forms of cheating extremely seriously and has adopted a number of actions to detect cheating and in particular plagiarism. These include regular checks of certain websites that are known to assist students when attempting to cheat. The University also uses software to detect a change in writing style, which is a good indication that the work may be the result of several different writers.

Appendix 5 **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**

Information provided to students regarding their meetings with you

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, (see page 9), 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 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 Appendix 4 of the Research and Analysis Project Guidelines 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?

Submission Forms for Research and Analysis Project

MARK SHEET

SECTION C (Student to complete in Block Capitals)

Student Surname	
Student First name	

ACCA Student Registration Number Date of submission

Total Report word count:
Please note: this should not exceed 5000 words, otherwise you risk failure

Total Key Skills Statement word count:
Please note: this should not exceed 1500 words, otherwise you risk failure

SECTION D (Mentor to complete and sign)

Mentor's Certification:

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the project is the student's own work and that it has been carried out in accordance with the University's regulations, (see Student Guide available on-line at www.accaglobal.com), and that three meetings have been held with the student in accordance with the guidelines contained in Section 2.3 of the Research and Analysis Project Guidelines.

Mentor's Name	Address (Block capitals)

Capacity for acting as mentor: (tick choice) (See 2.2 of the Research and Analysis Project Guidelines.)	Employer Tutor/lecturer Qualified Chartered Certified Accountant	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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Signature..... Date.....

SECTION E (For Office Use Only)

Markers sheet

PROJECT

PASS

FAIL

Please refer to the attached sheet for full feedback comments.

Communication Skills	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Information gathering	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Analysis and Conclusions	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
IT Skills	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

KEY SKILLS STATEMENT

You are required to undertake the mentoring again. (Moderator to delete as appropriate).

Yes
No

Preparing for meetings	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Questioning	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Listening	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
The presentation	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Self-Assessment of Interaction	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
OVERALL RESULT	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

Marker code	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Date.....	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Date	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
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