

BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting – Mentoring newsletter

August 2017

www.oxfordbrookesmentoring.co.uk

Welcome to P35 (November 2017)

New industry sectors for Topics 8 and 15

Definitions are taken from ICB documentation at goo.gl/Be71cd and apply to both P36 and P36.

2713 Aerospace – Manufacturers, assemblers and distributors of aircraft and aircraft parts primarily used in commercial or private air transport. Excludes manufacturers of communications satellites, which are classified under Telecommunications Equipment.

3577 Food Products – Food producers, including meatpacking, snacks, fruits, vegetables, dairy products and frozen seafood. Includes producers of pet food and manufacturers of dietary supplements vitamins and related items Excludes producers of fruit juices tea supplements, vitamins and related items. Excludes producers of fruit juices, tea, coffee, bottled water and other non-alcoholic beverages, which are classified under Soft Drinks.

5753 Hotels – Operators and managers of hotels, motels, lodges, resorts, spas and campgrounds

Remember: Projects based on any other industry sector will immediately fail!

New questions for Topics 17 and 20

Topic 17 – Select an organisation that has been identified as having weak corporate governance structures within the past 5 years. Critically evaluate their corporate governance practices including an assessment of the origins of the corporate governance issue(s) and the organisation's response.

Topic 20 – Select an organisation that has been identified as having weak social responsibility practices within the past 5 years. Critically evaluate their social responsibility practices, including an assessment of the origins of the problem(s) and the organisation's response and the impact of this on the organisation's key stakeholders.

Please bear with us over the coming weeks as the Business School prepares to move to Oxford Brookes University's central Gipsy Lane campus in Oxford. We have been based on the Wheatley campus for 30 years, and we will be in our new location on 11th September 2017. During the next few weeks it may take us longer than usual to reply to email queries and we are unlikely to have internet access at all on Friday 8th September. Our email addresses and telephone numbers will remain the same.

Supporting failing students – we need your help!

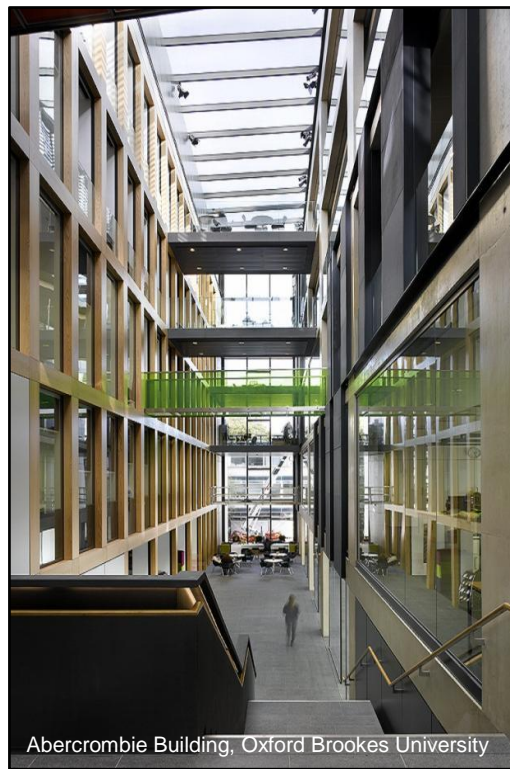
As part of a new initiative to gain a better understanding of why students fail their RAPs, the BSc Applied Accounting Team would like to invite all our mentors to tell us which elements of the RAP process they commonly see their students struggling with (for example, writing reports, making spreadsheets, or presenting their work) and what further guidance or support they would consider useful. Our Mentors are often the only people with direct experience of working with our students, so with your help, we hope this will allow the Programme to tailor its needs to future students, and to offer more support to our Mentors. If you would like to send us your observations, please email us at accamentoring@brookes.ac.uk; all comments will be treated anonymously, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Revised guidance on the SLS presentation slides

As noted in the new Information Pack, there should be **10-20 slides** for the SLS:

- They must be interesting, clear and easy to read.
- Graphs, pictures and charts may be included in addition to text.
- The presentation should start with a clear opening slide with the title of the presentation and the student's ACCA number.
- The slides should be designed to support the student's verbal presentation and should summarise the research report (including its conclusions and recommendations).

There should not be too much material either: our experienced markers and moderators have been the recipients of hundreds of presentations and can easily make an informed judgement as to the likelihood of the slides being well presented during a 15-minute presentation. It is not just the number of slides that matters, but also the amount of content on them. If the markers estimate that there is too much information to present in that time, the student may be at risk of failure.



New rules for resubmission

If a student resubmits within any of the next four periods following their original submission **and** they are resubmitting on the same topic and organisation, it is not necessary for them to use the latest financial statements (see section 7.d.iv at <http://bit.ly/2usVUH8>). But if they have changed topic and/or organisation, they must use the latest financial statements.

A mentor under scrutiny at University Conduct Committees for 'templating'

Last year one of our Academic Conduct Officers found some irregularities among a mentor's P33 students and began a wider investigation into his P32 students. Twenty-three of the mentor's students were eventually contacted, and very strong similarities were found throughout their spreadsheets, presentations and reports. Six students (who had already received their degrees) were referred to a University Conduct Committee, and after hearing all the evidence the panel found that:

- The Mentor had supplied his students with presentation and spreadsheet templates, and then had made improvements to the students' work to raise their grades.
- The students had submitted this work as their own, which was dishonest and constituted cheating under the University regulations.

The six students had their degrees rescinded and were expelled by the University, the most severe penalty available; this means they will be unable to resubmit a RAP at a later date. Their mentor (an ACCA member) has been

permanently struck off the mentoring list. The panel was also duty-bound to inform ACCA of their decisions.

The practice of 'templating' (where a Mentor offers a mentee a template to adapt to his or her own needs) is expressly forbidden because it poses a real risk to students if it tempts them to copy; this may lead to suspicions of plagiarism and then possible academic referral. Instead, we always recommend that mentors do not give examples but focus on the process of writing the Research Report and the Skills and Learning Statement: for example, making it the student's task to find and interpret information, and asking the student to reflect on difficulties and challenges that this presents.

We also regularly survey social media and websites that offer RAP mentoring and writing services, and wherever we find mentors bending these rules we will investigate and in the most serious cases inform our partners at ACCA. We are always grateful to our students and Mentors who inform us when they encounter dishonest practices themselves.

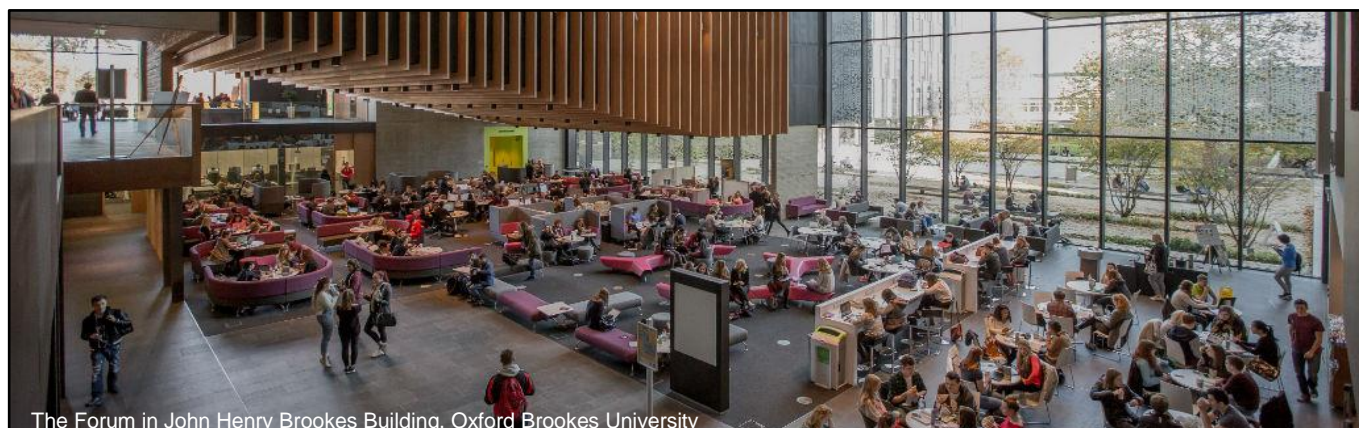
Do you advertise your Mentoring services online?

Advertising online is a great way to find mentees from all over the world, but whether you advertise mentoring online via your own website or through social media, please ensure that you **clearly identify by name all the registered mentors offering their services via your webpages, including your own**. We recently received several enquiries from students who asked whether a mentoring website was being run by a registered RAP Mentor or by someone else entirely.

Unless we can find a list of names on your webpage, we are unable to verify the legitimacy of your services from our own registers; our team has to contact you directly to ask for names, check these against our registers, and then inform the student. On more than one occasion by the time we managed to verify the Mentors operating on one site, the student had already found another Mentor elsewhere.

Therefore, identifying your mentoring team lets students (and our Programme team) know that your Mentoring service is reputable, which is surely good for business! It also helps to distinguish your services from other sites offering RAP-writing services, the use of which are banned under the University's plagiarism rules.

Finally, as a quick reminder, please remember to identify yourselves as 'RAP mentors', 'BSc Mentors' or 'Registered Mentors' (or a combination thereof) but **never** 'Approved Mentors' or 'Oxford Brookes/OBU Mentors'. This applies to your personal and company name, web address, and descriptions of services offered. Please contact us for further guidance if you are unsure whether you meet these rules.



The Forum in John Henry Brookes Building, Oxford Brookes University

P35 dates for your diary

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| 27 September 2017 | Latest date for students to complete the Professional Ethics module. |
| 30 September 2017 | Mentors must be registered on oxfordbrookesmentoring.co.uk by having paid the fee and completed the training course. Several P33 and P34 students were unable to submit their RAP with their tutors or line managers because this deadline was missed, and so they had to find another registered Mentor elsewhere. If you know any colleagues who would like to act as Mentor but have not yet registered themselves, please let them know about this deadline! |
| 1 November 2017 | Earliest submission of project to OBU. |
| 15 November 2017 | Latest submission of project to OBU. |
| 21 March 2018 | P35 degree results released. |

The first-time submission fee for P35 is £300.