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EXAM DOCUMENTS
Access the examinable documents relevant to you at www.accaglobal.com/students/acca/exams/

EARLY PREPARATION
Get prepared for the next exam session by downloading the *Syllabus* and *Study Guides* for the papers you're planning on taking in December. Access ACCA Qualification resources at www.accaglobal.com/students/acca/exams and CAT resources at www.accaglobal.com/students/cat/exams



CHANGES TO THE QUALIFICATION

RELEVANT TO ALL ACCA QUALIFICATION PAPERS

Gareth Owen, ACCA qualifications development manager, explains the planned updates to the ACCA Qualification syllabus taking place in 2011 as part of a process of continuous syllabus improvement. This article summarises the rationale for the latest qualification developments, indicating which syllabuses are affected and when, outlining specifically which areas are being amended and why.

The last major development of the ACCA Qualification was introduced in December 2007. The qualification was brought up to date and restructured to meet employer, student and learning provider needs at the time and to comply with IFAC International Education Standards and other regulatory requirements. These changes were introduced to increase the relevance of the qualification in the market and take into account the results of an extensive programme of consultation with ACCA's key stakeholders.

With effect from June 2011, the ACCA Qualification will undergo further development and updating, rather than any major structural change, ensuring that the qualification continues to evolve and adapt to the latest business and accounting sector needs.

These latest changes are being introduced to update the syllabus content, to ensure that the ACCA Qualification continues to comply with the appropriate regulatory standards, to improve the articulation between related syllabuses and to reflect the views of our key stakeholders.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

As mentioned above, there will be no major structural changes to the ACCA Qualification assessment or in respect of rules relating to registration, progression or exemption. Neither will there be any significant changes to the structure of the exams, apart from the Knowledge module papers, which will be structured differently from **December 2011**.

Please also note that a new exam timetable will apply from December 2011. Further details of this will be published later on this year.

Most of the ACCA Qualification syllabuses will be affected to a greater or lesser extent. These changes are explained below.

FUNDAMENTAL KNOWLEDGE MODULE (DECEMBER 2011)

From December 2011, amended syllabuses and a different exam style will be introduced for Papers F1, F2 and F3. A greater variety of longer and short-form questions will be introduced into the assessment, which is currently based entirely on a mix of short objective questions of one and two marks.

The new format applies to both paper-based and computer-based exams (CBE). The format will better underpin later exams, particularly Papers F5 and F7. From December 2011, Paper F3 will only have one version offered, based on International Financial Reporting Standards, so students will no longer have to designate whether they wish to take INT, UK, SGP etc.

The syllabuses have also been re-aligned and brought up to date to take into account the latest occupational standards for the accountancy and finance sector.

These new syllabuses will have the exam structures shown in **Table 1** on **page 31** with effect from December 2011, which coincides with the launch of ACCA's new Foundations in Accountancy suite of qualifications which will be communicated to you very shortly.

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS MODULE (JUNE 2011)

Note: For all financial reporting and auditing papers, Irish papers will continue to follow the UK *Syllabus* and *Study Guide*, and Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore papers will continue to follow the International *Syllabus* and *Study Guide*. All papers will continue to have separate examinable documents.

ACCA FOR 2011

The first paper in the Skills module F4, *Corporate Business Law* is unaffected in all countries.

Changes are being made to Paper F5, *Performance Management* and Paper F7, *Financial Reporting* to re-align these syllabuses with the revised Paper F2 and F3 exams. For example, more decision making is being brought into Paper F5 and regulatory requirements into Paper F7.

A key change is happening to Paper F7 (UK). The Paper F7 (UK) exams will be based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) using international terminology with the key differences between UK GAAP and IFRS becoming examinable. The examinable differences will be indicated within the Paper F7 (UK) syllabus guide.

Elsewhere in the Skills module, Paper F6 (UK), *Taxation* has been updated to more effectively underpin the syllabus of Paper P6 (UK), *Advanced Taxation*. The most significant changes to Paper F6 (UK) are to introduce the basic aspects of inheritance tax (IHT), which will be predominantly computational, and the inclusion of overseas transactions for VAT.

Paper F6 (IRL), *Taxation* has also been updated to effectively underpin the syllabus of Paper P6 (IRL), Advanced Taxation. The main changes are the inclusion of domicile, termination payments, and overseas aspects of VAT, and the exclusion of retirement relief and favourable holding company relief.

Paper F6 (MYS) will reintroduce Real Property Gains Tax (RPGT) in the December 2010/June 2011 syllabus. Other variant tax papers may have minor changes, as is normal from year to year.

The Paper F8 (INT) and (UK) syllabuses have been updated to more explicitly include certain examinable content within the *Study Guide*, including the audit framework, internal audit, planning and risk and audit evidence. These changes will have minimal effect on the style or content of future exams, but does align the *Study Guide* more explicitly with the content of the published examinable documents. However, in line with Paper F7 (UK), *International Accounting Standards* will be used to underpin Paper F8 (UK) exam papers.

Finally the Paper F9, *Financial Management* syllabus has been amended to include aspects of Islamic finance which are gaining greater prominence in the financial markets and in mainstream finance. The main addition to the syllabus is a section on Islamic sources of finance, including the Islamic concept of interest and coverage of Islamic financial instruments.

PROFESSIONAL LEVEL SYLLABUS CHANGES (JUNE 2011)

The Paper P1, *Professional Accountant* syllabus has been amended to explicitly include more areas on business risk as a response to an employer stakeholder survey results done in 2008/2009. These areas include risk assessment and management responses in changes to risk profile, both strategic and operational, including some strategic aspects of financial risk.

The changes to Paper F7 (UK) in particular have also had a further impact on Paper P2 (UK), which now also includes more content on the legal requirements relating to the submission and reporting of accounts. As with Paper F7 (UK), Paper P2 (UK) will now be based on IFRS with the key differences between UK GAAP and IFRS being examinable. The syllabuses for both Paper P2 (INT) and (UK) have also been re-aligned to contain more on requirements relating to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and about when accounts must be consolidated and when exemptions from consolidation apply. Entity reconstructions have been added to the syllabuses of both papers. However, IFRICs will not be examinable in Paper P2 from June 2011.

Certain new regulatory requirements have brought changes to Paper P3, *Business Analysis*. As a result more management accounting has been introduced to this syllabus to provide a more rounded financial context to the business analysis scenarios examinable.

Business analysis is a subject where a working knowledge of management accounting and cost issues plays an increasingly important role. The changes will give the examiner wider scope to set more 'real world' questions, including the assessment of such business financial and quantitative techniques as forecasting, budgeting, cost accounting and decision making within a business analytics context. As these changes will impact the entire paper, the original 2007 *Pilot Paper* has been updated for the new syllabus.

Some of the content of Paper P4, *Advanced Financial Management* has been amended and developed to make the syllabus more coherent and to align it more closely with Paper F9, which underpins it. There have been no significant new areas added, but rather there has been a re-arrangement of the syllabus and a grouping/splitting of items to make the *Study Guide* clearer.

As a consequence of planned changes to Papers F2 and F5 outlined above, Paper P5, *Advanced Performance Management* requires some re-alignment, to eliminate overlap with Paper F5 and to differentiate the content of Paper P5 more distinctly from Paper F5. However, the more significant changes to Paper P5 are as a response to feedback received that there was potentially too much overlap between Papers P3 and P5, particularly in the areas of strategic, quality and people management. As a consequence some strategic management areas have been removed from Paper P5.

Quality management is now exclusively assessed in Paper P5 rather than in Paper P3 and some areas concerned with performance management and reward measurement in the 'People' section of Paper P3 have been re-allocated to Paper P5.

Paper P6 (UK) will have no changes initially. To allow students who have not covered IHT in Paper F6 (UK) time to finish their exam training, Paper P6 (UK) will remain unchanged until June 2013. After this time the more basic elements of IHT which are covered in Paper F6 (UK) will come out of Paper P6 (UK), leaving only the more complex aspects of IHT in Paper P6 (UK).

Paper P6 (IRL) will now have retirement relief and favourable holding company relief as new topics at this level, since they are no longer included in Paper F6 (IRL). In addition, termination payments will no longer be a new topic at this level, since they are now introduced in F6 (IRL). Paper P6 (MYS) will reintroduce Real Property Gains Tax (RPGT) in the December 2010 syllabus. Other Paper P6 variant papers have no significant changes, although they may have minor changes, as is normal from year to year.

Paper P7 (UK) has been amended to include the auditing aspects of insolvency (and similar procedures). Certain areas of internal audit have been added and re-arranged. Some content relating to practice management, assignments and reporting have been removed. Although Paper P7 (INT) does not contain any material on insolvency because this area is country specific and legal in nature, all other changes to the Paper P7 (UK) syllabus have been made to the P7 (INT) syllabus, to bring them into line with each other.

Table 2 on **pages 32 and 33** shows which syllabuses and papers will be affected.

HOW AND WHEN WILL THESE CHANGES BE COMMUNICATED?

The updated ACCA 2011 syllabuses will be made available on the ACCA website at the beginning of July 2010. These amended syllabuses will include appendices which summarise the changes in each syllabus.

The new Knowledge module (Papers F1, F2 and F3) *Syllabus* and *Study Guides* will be published from August 2010 and the new pilot questions for the ACCA syllabuses with the most changes, such as Paper P3, will also be available.

Pilot questions for the new style longer questions for Section B of the Knowledge module papers will be available from January 2011 in both paper and CBE format.

All ACCA publishers have been given details of all the planned changes to syllabuses so that study texts can be updated accordingly.

It is, therefore, important to ensure you choose texts that are dated June 2011 or later for the Skills module and Professional level exams, and December 2011 or later for Knowledge module exams.

Finally, a number of articles are planned in *Student Accountant* over the coming months to update you fully on the changes.

Examiner approach articles and interviews on the ACCA website will also be updated accordingly.

TABLE 1: NEW ACCA QUALIIFICATION FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL SYLLABUSES AND EXAM STRUCTURES FROM DECEMBER 2011

Exam	Section A	Section B
Paper F1, *Accounting in Business*	16 x one-mark short objective test questions and 30 x two-mark short objective test questions	6 x four-mark longer version objective test questions, one taken from each of the six sections of the syllabus
Paper F2, *Management Accounting*	35 x two-mark short objective test questions	3 x 10-mark longer version objective test questions – one taken from each of the budgeting, standard costing and performance measurement sections of the syllabus
Paper F3, *Financial Accounting*	35 x two-mark short objective test questions	2 x 15 mark longer version objective test questions with one question based on group accounts and the other on preparation of financial statements (which may include an element of interpretation of accounts)

THE UPDATED ACCA 2011 SYLLABUSES WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE ON THE ACCA WEBSITE AT THE BEGINNING OF JULY 2010. THESE AMENDED SYLLABUSES WILL INCLUDE APPENDICES WHICH SUMMARISE THE CHANGES IN EACH SYLLABUS.

TABLE 2: NEW ACCA QUALIIFICATION SYLLABUSES AND EXAM STRUCTURES FOR 2011

ACCA exam	Impact	When?
Paper F1	New style CBE and paper-based exam and syllabus changes	December 2011
Paper F2	New style CBE and paper-based exam and syllabus changes	December 2011
Paper F3	New style CBE and paper-based exam and syllabus changes	December 2011
Paper F4 (all versions)	None	
Paper F5	Syllabus changes to align better with Papers F2 and P5	June 2011
Paper F6 (UK)	Minor syllabus changes to re-align and make more coherent the underpinning of Paper P6 by Paper F6	June 2011
Paper F6 (other variants)	See text detail in Fundamentals level syllabus changes	June 2011
Paper F7 (INT)	To introduce more legal/regulatory information on financial reporting of groups	June 2011
Paper F7 (UK)	Now based on IFRS and including more legal aspects of preparation, submission and reporting of financial accounts and to include key differences between UK GAAP and IFRS	June 2011
Paper F8 (INT) and (UK)	To make more explicit areas included in examinable documents within the syllabus and remove some aspects of risk planning	June 2011
Paper F9	Introduction to Islamic finance added in relation to sources of finance, to keep syllabus relevant and up to date	June 2011
Paper P1	More emphasis on coverage of business risk in rresponse to employer stakeholder survey findings	June 2011
Paper P2 (INT)	More coverage of accounting treatment of SMEs, the circumstances in which consolidated accounts are required or exemptions and capital reconstructions	June 2011

TABLE 2: NEW ACCA QUALIIFICATION SYLLABUSES AND EXAM STRUCTURES FOR 2011 (CONTINUED)

ACCA exam	Impact	When?
Paper P2 (UK)	Now based on IFRS and including coverage of legal aspects of preparation, submission and reporting of financial accounts in the UK for single and combined entities, including the circumstances when such accounts are required and accounting treatment of SMEs and consolidated accounts to align with Paper P2 (INT) and to include key differences between UK GAAP and IFRS.	June 2011
Paper P3	Aspects of forecasting, budgeting, cost accounting and decision making, relevant to business analysis introduced, to provide more scope for a financial context within exam scenarios. Quality Section and performance aspects of HR management removed to Paper P5 to address overlaps	June 2011
Paper P4	Re-arrangement of syllabus and better re-alignment with Paper F9. No significant areas added but some removed to provide more coherence	June 2011
Paper P5	Syllabus developed to align better with Paper F5 and to reduce potential overlap with Paper P3, particularly in the Quality and performance management and measurement areas of HR	June 2011
Paper P6 (UK)	Basic elements of IHT which are included in Paper F6 (UK) will be taken out of the Paper P6 (UK) syllabus, and the Paper P6 (UK) syllabus will concentrate exclusively on the more complex areas of IHT	June 2013
Paper P6 (other variants)	See detail in Professional level syllabus changes above	June 2011
Paper P7 (INT)	The internal audit area has been amended. Aspects of practice management, assignments and reporting have been removed	June 2011
Paper P7 (UK)	Auditing aspects of insolvency have been introduced to the syllabus and the internal audit area has been amended. Aspects of practice management, assignments and reporting have been removed	June 2011

THE BSc (Hons) ACCOUNTING

RELEVANT TO ALL ACCA STUDENTS

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AND ACCREDITATION

The BSc (Hons) in Applied Accounting is a degree awarded by Oxford Brookes University, a UK university. The degree is exclusive to ACCA students through collaboration between ACCA and Oxford Brookes University.

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

For full requirements and details of the degree see www.accaglobal.com/students/bsc

The Privy Council in the UK is responsible in the UK for approving an institution as competent to grant degrees and has approved Oxford Brookes University as such.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is the body responsible to the UK Governments Department of Education and Skills for assuring the quality of UK Higher Education. Universities within the UK are subject to regular inspection by the QAA. The QAA has produced a set of National Framework Qualification Descriptors for all levels of award in higher education and the BSc in Applied Accounting conforms to these descriptors for the honours level degree (which is a higher academic standard than an ordinary level degree).

The QAA has also provided a set of 'Benchmark Statements' for degrees including accounting. The BSc programme outcomes are primarily referenced to the UK QAA Accounting Benchmark Statement but are also referenced to the recognised capabilities as a professional accountant as identified by such regulatory and advisory bodes as the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).

The ACCA Fundamentals papers (F1–F9) are also Oxford Brookes University papers. The university takes a full part in the quality assurance of these papers, employs examiners who set the papers, employs other personnel to specifically quality control papers and takes part in the marking and assessment process and reviews processes in relation to the exam papers. The degree is, therefore, a full honours degree and is equivalent to all other Oxford Brookes University bachelors honours degrees.

As a degree from Oxford Brookes, a recognised UK university, the BSc in Applied Accounting enjoys wide recognition across the globe. It is recognised within the UK, US, Europe, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, much of Africa, Pakistan and the Caribbean. The university provides formal transcripts if required for individual students so that they may submit them as evidence of their degree classification. Each module on the transcript is referenced by an Oxford Brookes University course code.

If you are uncertain whether the degree is recognised in your country you can contact acca@brookes.ac.uk

We at Oxford Brookes University believe that the degree supports the mission of ACCA to provide opportunity and access to people of ability around the world and to support our members throughout their careers in accounting, business and finance to achieve and promote the highest professional, ethical and governance standards.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on UK universities and their legal status can be found at www.privy-council.org.uk

QAA reports on Oxford Brookes University can be found on at www.qaa.ac.uk

Jane Towers-Clark, programme director, BSc in Applied Accounting, Oxford Brooks University

IN APPLIED DEGREE

EXPLANATION OF PLAGIARISM AND HOW TURNITIN DETECTS IT

Plagiarism is an issue of great concern which has been around for centuries and has been intensified by the increasing use of information made available on the internet.

Plagiarism is taking someone else's work and using it as if it was your own. There are a number of ways to avoid plagiarising such as providing proper acknowledgment or documentation when you use the work or words of others. Improper use of referencing is considered to be a form of cheating and may be subject to disciplinary action.

ACCA and Oxford Brookes University take misconduct for the *Research and Analysis Project* very seriously and plagiarism is thought to be the most common example if misconduct. Students must follow the correct referencing procedures or they could find themselves being heavily penalised.

Forms of plagiarism are noted below:

- **Plagiarism**: taking another person's thoughts/concepts and presenting them as your own without properly referencing the source.
- **Impersonation**: presenting work where you are pretending to be another student or presenting it on behalf of someone else.
- **Substitution**: presenting another person's work as if it was your own.
- **Duplication**: submitting work for assessment that is the same as work submitted at a previous period, without acknowledgement.
- **Collusion**: a secret agreement with others for a deceitful purpose, such as copying or sharing another student's work. Both collusion and collaboration are unacceptable.
- **Falsification**: invention of data, their alteration or inventing quotations and references.

DETECTING PLAGIARISM

OBU markers take a number of actions to detect plagiarism. One method is the detection software tool called Turnitin. Turnitin is a web-based text-matching tool that supports students in the development of good academic practice when preparing written work for assessment.

Turnitin allows OBU staff to check students' work for improper use of sources or potential plagiarism by comparing it against continuously updated databases (including web pages, publications and student work).

Turnitin produces a report for each submitted piece of work that indicates all the matches in the student's assignment to the web-based sources on its database. If the report demonstrates a significant proportion of matches within the database, OBU staff will assess the extent of plagiarism.

The university can fail a student on plagiarism grounds through the Disciplinary Committee after the case has been proved. OBU may then decide to forward the case to ACCA with all the relevant evidence for possible disciplinary action.

OBU has a vigilant project marking team who use their expertise to detect cases that they feel demonstrate elements of plagiarism or poorly referenced work. The team follow a marking criteria which clearly states that referencing should be used within a students project in order to meet the 'graduate skills' section required to pass the *Research and Analysis Project.*

Students are reminded that they have a code of conduct to adhere to and by cheating in their *Research and Analysis Project* they are breaking this code.

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY HAS A VIGILANT PROJECT MARKING TEAM WHO USE THEIR EXPERTISE TO DETECT CASES THAT THEY FEEL DEMONSTRATE ELEMENTS OF PLAGIARISM OR POORLY REFERENCED WORK.

OBU BSc (Hons): AND PREPARING

RELEVANT TO ALL ACCA STUDENTS

Your mentor is potentially a very useful source of support and guidance in the preparation of a successful *Research and Analysis Project* (RAP). Some of you will be allocated a mentor by your college. Others will have to find a mentor, who may be either an ACCA member, your employer or line manager. The points outlined below should help you to get the most from your mentor and give you a better chance of attaining a good pass.

UNDERSTANDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A mentor is an experienced adviser who provides guidance and support to you while you are engaged in the process of planning, preparing and submitting your RAP. In addition, the mentor confirms to Oxford Brookes University Business School that:

- s/he has acted as your mentor
- the submitted project is your own work
- you participated in the required three meetings (normally lasting some 30 minutes each), provided a progress report on your research report, and delivered a presentation on your research report.

A MENTOR IS AN EXPERIENCED ADVISER WHO PROVIDES GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT TO YOU WHILE YOU ARE ENGAGED IN THE PROCESS OF PLANNING, PREPARING AND SUBMITTING YOUR RAP.

Your mentor is not required to have specialist knowledge of your chosen project topic. Your mentor should understand the guidance which is available to students and it is in your own interests to ensure that your mentor has access to the guidance provided in the information pack. You should also note that your mentor is not involved in the assessment of your RAP. Your mentor is not your tutor, and it is not part of the mentor role to coach you in 'how to pass your RAP'. You should not expect to receive detailed advice on the structure and content of your research report, the *Skills and Learning Statement* or the assessment criteria. All of this is available to you in the information pack, and it is your role to be fully aware of all this information which is designed to help you in compiling your RAP.

Your mentor will encourage you to think about what you are planning to do, and ask probing and challenging questions which will both test your understanding of what is required and how you propose to meet your project objectives.

Your mentor will also give you constructive feedback on what you have done or are proposing to do. In addition your mentor will encourage you to consider your own strengths and weaknesses and to reflect on the process of undertaking the RAP, and what you have learned as a result.

You should look carefully at the attributes of an effective project mentor contained in the information pack, and take them into account when finding a project mentor.

UNDERSTANDING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE RAP

The information pack contains all the relevant details regarding the RAP. You should read it carefully and make sure that your mentor has had an opportunity to read it before you meet.

A graduate in applied accounting is required to demonstrate that s/he possesses both technical capabilities and has appropriate personal/transferable skills. The ACCA Fundamentals stage exams fulfil the required technical aspects.

PLANNING YOUR RAP

However, the exams do not fulfil all the requirements of the personal/transferable skills which a graduate would be expected to have on completion of a degree programme.

These transferable skills are those of:

- problem solving/analysis and evaluation
- communicating effectively, both written and oral
- self-managed learning
- completing an independent research project
- information gathering and referencing of information sources
- using information technology
- reflecting on learning and its impact on future professional development and employment roles.

The OBU RAP, consisting of a research report and a *Skills and Learning Statement* (SLS) has been developed to bridge this gap between the outcomes of a professional programme of study and an undergraduate programme of study.

Successful completion of the RAP will mean that you have demonstrated that you possess the requisite personal/transferable skills. On successful completion of the ACCA Fundamentals papers, the Professional Ethics module and the OBU RAP you will be awarded the BSc Honours degree in Applied Accounting.

You should be able to explain this to your mentor. The OBU RAP is a form of guided enquiry; the learner (you) chooses a topic from an approved list, and benefits from guidance contained in the information pack, and that received from the mentor.

The RAP requires you to reflect on what you have done and how you did it, and, therefore, derive the benefit of learning from your experiences. In this process, the mentor both encourages and supports your initiative while ensuring that the overall responsibility for learning is yours! On successful completion of the RAP you should be a more reflective and thoughtful practitioner, better equipped to meet your future professional development needs.

RECOGNISE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

As a student, you can derive a number of important benefits from the mentoring process. It can help you to improve your skills in critical thinking, as you have to explain, and justify if questioned, what you are doing or proposing to do and why. It can also assist you in developing reflective skills, as you will need to think about the meetings with your mentor, and reflect on what went well/less well, and why. The support and guidance provided by your mentor can help you to sustain both the interest and motivation required to do well in your RAP – plus you have the opportunity to develop independent learning skills in a supportive environment.

THE RAP REQUIRES YOU TO REFLECT ON WHAT YOU HAVE DONE AND HOW YOU DID IT, AND, THEREFORE, DERIVE THE BENEFIT OF LEARNING FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES. IN THIS PROCESS, THE MENTOR BOTH ENCOURAGES AND SUPPORTS YOUR INITIATIVE WHILE ENSURING THAT THE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING IS YOURS.

It may help you to think about the potential benefits of mentoring for the mentor. The mentoring process is increasingly one which is used by managers as a form of staff development, and thus experience in a mentoring role may be useful to the mentor in terms of personal, and perhaps subsequently, career development.

The mentoring process develops communication and interpersonal skills, and assists in the development of skills in monitoring and giving feedback on the work of others – which is very useful to those who have responsibilities for managing staff. Mentors usually find that there is a great deal which they can, and do learn from the process – and knowing that this is the case may help you to learn effectively from the mentoring process.

PREPARE AND PLAN

The old sayings 'If you fail to prepare, then prepare to fail' and 'poor planning and preparation produces poor performance' are true. Your starting point should be to read, and make sure you understand, the information provided in the information pack on the ACCA website. You should also check to see whether your mentor has a copy of this information, and either advise where it can be obtained or provide a copy.

The OBU process model is a very useful planning tool which you might want to use – you can fit dates/times to activities and establish a timeline for your project work, including dates of meetings with your mentor, which you will need to agree with your mentor. You should think carefully about your choice of project topic, and of the reasons for your choices; your mentor is likely to ask you about this at your first meeting.

It will also help if you set an agenda for mentor meetings, and set objectives for these meetings so you know what it is you intend to achieve at that meeting. You should also be prepared to take notes at your mentor meetings, and try and reflect on and identify what went well/badly afterwards.

If you do use this 'learning diary' approach when working on your RAP, it will be of great assistance to you when you are writing up your *Skills and Learning Statement*.

The mentoring process can be, and usually is, rewarding for both mentor and student. Given the pressures of busy workloads, and the demands of other commitments, it is important that you take all steps to ensure that the interactions with your mentor are both productive and satisfying – both for you and your mentor.

Taking due note of the points outlined will help you to gain the most out of the benefits from the mentoring process.

Alastair Neilson is marker/moderator OBU Business School

THE MENTORING PROCESS CAN BE, AND USUALLY IS, REWARDING FOR BOTH MENTOR AND STUDENT. GIVEN THE PRESSURES OF BUSY WORKLOADS, AND THE DEMANDS OF OTHER COMMITMENTS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU TAKE ALL STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERACTIONS WITH YOUR MENTOR ARE BOTH PRODUCTIVE AND SATISFYING.