

## BSC APPLIED ACCOUNTING GETTING STARTED WITH THE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PROJECT

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## WELCOME

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Purpose of the session...(next hour)

- What is required for the Research Report
- Discuss how you might choose a topic
- What information sources are available
- How do we acknowledge these sources

Lots of opportunities for  
questions



## WHO ARE WE

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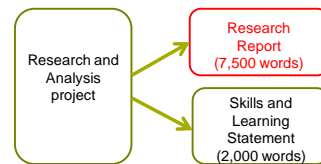


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## RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS PROJECT WHAT IS IT?

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Cover reflective writing for the Skills and Learning Statement on a later webinar.

## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH REPORT (RR) REQUIREMENTS

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Write a business related Research Report (up to 7,500 words) on a single organisation

- Demonstrate **understanding and application of accounting and business knowledge and techniques**
- Demonstrate ability to **analyse and evaluate financial and non-financial information**
- Demonstrate graduate **academic skills** including referencing of information sources.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RESEARCH?

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- Conducting an investigation or study in to a particular issue (*one of the 20 topics*)
- Can use **primary or secondary data**
- Using a range of appropriate sources (academic and other) to support your work and conclusions
- Making sure that you give appropriate credit to the sources you use (this is known as referencing)



## RESEARCH REPORT TOPIC SELECTION

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Research report must be based upon one of the 20 specified topics

Why 20? – cover the whole ACCA syllabus

20

Lots of interesting areas

Budgets, legislation, new technology, costing techniques, motivation of employees, corporate governance, risk management, mergers and acquisitions



Full list – Information pack

## HOW DO I CHOOSE?

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**Your choice** (not your friend's, mentor, tutor)



Type of research you can (or want to) do

Primary research or secondary research

## RESEARCH AIM / QUESTION

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Identify the overarching aim of your research – what do you want to achieve?

It must link with one of the 20 topics in the Information Pack.

For example,

Topic 1 – An evaluation of managers' use of ABC & Cos budgetary process in performance management and decision making.

Topic 10 – An evaluation of the use of margin based costing at XYZ & Co

The objectives are more specific goals support the aim.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

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Objectives explain how you will achieve the aim (how you will conduct the research)

AIM – An evaluation of managers' use of ABC & Cos budgetary process in performance management and decision making.

OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate the nature of the budgetary process (top down, incremental, zero based)
- Analyse the advantages and disadvantages of this approach at ABC & Co
- Investigate managers' views of advantages and disadvantages of budgetary process
- Make recommendations

## RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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Top tips for aims and objectives

- Keep focused – think about what is possible & realistic
- Be specific
- Think about what is achievable in the time frame

Not personal aims or goals. So the aims and objectives are NOT to complete the degree and graduate, to improve my IT skills, to enhance my job opportunities, to develop analysis skills etc.

## PRIMARY RESEARCH

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You collect information (data) to answer your research question usually using questionnaires or interviews

Particularly relevant for topics such as

- Topic 1 – budgetary control systems
- Topic 4 – an organisation's environmental costs
- Topic 6 – motivation of employees
- Topic 9 – planning and implementation of an IT system


Guide to the information needed for different topics is available

**PRIMARY RESEARCH**

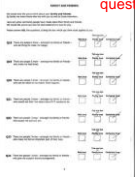
You collect information (data) to answer your research question.

Usually questionnaires or interviews

On-line questionnaires



COVID 19  
All data collected is remotely



**RESEARCH ETHICS – PERMISSION LETTER**

Collect primary data – you must consider ethics

Must have permission from the organisation (approval letter included in your submission)

Must have permission from participants

If organisation wishes to be anonymous – contact me on [acca@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:acca@brookes.ac.uk)



**SECONDARY RESEARCH**

Collect **publicly available information** to inform your analysis and evaluation


Topic 8 - Evaluation of business & financial performance of an organisation over a 3 year period

Topic 12 – Effects of a proposed accounting standard

Topic 17 – weak corporate governance

Topic 20 – weak CSR

Check Google – how much information is out there???



**NOVEMBER 2020 – INDUSTRY SECTORS (TOPIC 8 & 15)**

Same as last year

- Automobiles and parts
- Media
- Industrial Transportation

Look in the Information Pack for more detail



**HOW DO I KNOW IF MY ORGANISATION IS IN THAT SECTOR?**

Use the Industrial Classification Benchmark (ICB)

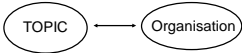
<https://research.ftserussell.com/products/downloads/ICBStructure-Eng.pdf>

There was a new structure in 2019/2020.....

The Information Pack has information about the old and the new codes. It includes the definitions.


**THINGS TO THINK ABOUT**

What interests me? What do I want to learn about?



Does it work?  
Can I get enough information?

Must be able to answer the research question asked....  
Think before you start



### CHOOSING A RESEARCH PROJECT SHORT VIDEO -

<http://www.accaglobal.com/uk/en/student/exam-entry-and-administration/oxford-brookes-bsc-hons-in-applied-accounting/oxford-brookes-bsc-assesment.html>

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### SOURCES – HOW ARE THEY USED?

FIND the theory / concepts / models

↓

To demonstrate understanding of theory / concepts / accountancy / business models

↓

To apply theory / concepts / accountancy / business models

Study texts, reputable websites, journals (open access)

Depends on TOPIC chosen

### CHOOSING MODELS / THEORIES

Think about your topic – what area of the syllabus are you working in

Management Accounting – budgeting (topic 1), costing (topic 10), management info systems (topic 9)

Risk, governance, CSR – internal audit (topic 11), risk management (topic 16), corporate governance (topic 17), CSR (topic 10)

Business Strategy – marketing (topic 18), Investment decisions (topic 14)

Identify a model, framework or theory from your ACCA studies

### RESOURCES – MODELS THEORIES

Free, open access, materials used in Kaplan study texts

<https://kfknowledgebank.kaplan.co.uk/home>

- Audit and Assurance
- Business Management
- Business Strategy
- View all
- Stakeholder analysis
- Strategic analysis
- Strategic choice
- Strategy into action
- Risk, Ethics and Governance
- Financial Management
- Law
- Management Accounting
- View all
- Budgeting
- Costing
- Decision making
- Management information systems
- Performance management
- Financial Reporting

### ACCOUNTANCY / BUSINESS MODELS

Assessment criteria (Appendix 1 Information Pack)

Research Project	Pass - Grade A	Pass - Grade B	Pass - Grade C	Fail - Grade F
<b>Technical and Professional Skills</b>	<p>Excellent of wider reading by use of appropriate business theory / concepts / business models.</p> <p>Demonstrates thorough understanding of the theory / concepts / business models by fully exploring, reviewing, evaluating the theory / concepts / business models chosen.</p> <p>Links theory / concepts / business models operationally to application studied.</p> <p>Identification and full discussion of the limitations of the application of theories in the chosen context.</p>	<p>Appropriate choice of theory / concepts / business models for chosen topic.</p> <p>Demonstrates significant evidence of understanding by linking appropriate theory / concepts / business models.</p> <p>Analyses of theory/concepts/business models are discussed in generic terms.</p>	<p>Some, but limited choice of use of theory / concepts / business models.</p> <p>Some evidence of understanding of theory / concepts / business models. However in relation to an abstract way with little discussion of evaluation.</p> <p>Some limitations of the application of the theories / concepts / business models identified.</p>	<p>Little coverage or poor choice of relevant theory / concepts / business models.</p> <p>Very limited understanding of the theory / concepts / business models. Discussion of theory / concepts / business models is not and/or based from other sources.</p> <p>Very limited or no explanation of the advantages of using theory / concepts / business models.</p> <p>Very limited or no discussion of the limitations of the approach/subject.</p>

**TOPIC 8 - MOST POPULAR**

An analysis and evaluation of the business and financial performance of an organisation over a three year period.

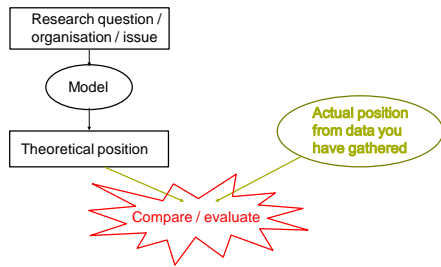
Business & financial – looking to use the business models (SWOT, PESTEL, Porter's 5 forces, Value Chain) to inform the analysis of the financial performance.

Evaluation requires a comparison.....needs a comparison organisation. Comparator - justify why it is appropriate (same sector, same.....)

**APPLICATION OF MODELS**

Application of (secondary) business models	Thoughtful and critical application of theory / concepts/business models to the project topic.  Theory/concepts/business models applied appropriately to the research approach i.e. for primary research questionnaires / interview questions or for secondary research justified use of effective and relevant comparator (benchmarks)  Very few errors in the calculations or other aspects of application of the theory/concepts/business models	Soundly correct application of theory to the project topic. Theory/concepts/business models reasonably applied to the research approach e.g. for primary research questionnaires / interview questions or for secondary research use of effective and relevant comparator (benchmarks).  Few errors in the calculations or other aspects of the application of the theory/concepts/business models	Some application of theory, but lacking a coherent approach.  Link between theory / concepts/business models and research approach not entirely clear.  For primary research theory chosen not always appropriate for questionnaires / interview questions used.  For secondary research the choice of comparator benchmark is not clearly justified.  Some errors in the calculations or other aspects of the theory / concepts/business models.	Poor use of theory / models and confused understanding of application.  Link between theory / concepts/business models and research approach not clear.  For primary research theory chosen not appropriate for the research undertaken.  For secondary research the choice of comparator benchmark is not justified, is inappropriate or is not used.  Numerous errors in the calculations or other aspects of the application of the theory / concepts/business models.
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**HOW DO MODELS / THEORY HELP WITH RESEARCH**



**QUALITY OF SOURCES FOR MODELS**

Appropriate needs to be appropriate so consider your topic

Good quality sources are academic source such as a text book (includes your study texts provided by your learning provider).

Open source academic articles – some academics will make academic papers available for free (known as open source). Try looking in <https://scholar.google.co.uk/>

Less good quality sources Wikipedia, UKEssays

**SOURCES - HOW ARE THEY USED ?**

Evaluation of information, analysis and conclusions

Primary research

Data from people

Secondary research

Public information  
- Internet sources  
- Commentaries  
- Newspapers



**QUALITY OF PUBLIC SOURCES**

Using public information (from internet) how do we know it is good?

Is the source reputable?  
government information (eg economic growth)  
trusted commentator (eg Financial Times or similar)

who is it written for – investor community?

when was it written?

is there bias?



### PUBLIC SOURCES – IS IT USEFUL?

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In evaluation and analysis, sources are used to support your explanation of what is happening.

For example, if you think demand for a product has fallen as the result of increased competition (new entrant, existing product at lower price).

Use a source to provide evidence of increased competition

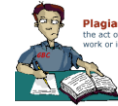


### USING SOURCES = REFERENCING

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Why reference?

It is accepted practice in the academic world to acknowledge the words, ideas or work of others and not simply to use them as if they were your own. Failure to do this could be regarded as **plagiarism**



**Plagiarism:**  
the act of presenting another's  
work or ideas as your own.

### USING SOURCES = REFERENCING

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Why reference?

- to acknowledge the words, ideas or work of others and not simply to use them as if they were your own.
- to enable other people to identify and trace your sources quickly and easily
- to support facts and claims you have made in your text
- to show that you have read widely and use a variety of sources

### REFERENCING

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**What about commonly known facts?**

- It is not necessary to reference information (dates, facts etc) which is commonly known in a particular subject area (e.g. listed shares are traded on a Stock Market). This is called common knowledge.
- Models, theories, frameworks (eg SWOT & PESTLE) are not common knowledge you **MUST** reference them
- Annual report (used in topic 8, 15) must be referenced

### FIRST STEP IN REFERENCING

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**First step in referencing**

- As you find and use information from books, journals, web sites etc for your report, **make sure you note down details about each source.**

Look for an author (might be an organisation), title, date, edition, place of publication and publisher; for journal articles, book chapters and quotations you will also need page numbers; for online resources you will additionally need the url or doi and the date on which you accessed the information

### STYLE OF REFERENCING

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Oxford Brookes Business School uses HARVARD referencing (see Appendix 3 in the Information pack)

Other recognised methodologies (eg APA) are acceptable if applied methodically

For internet sources – the reference list has the URL and date of access (so the markers can follow the link!)

**MUST** be YOUR list of references – the things you have read and included in the text of your report.

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### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

<p><b>Information gathering and referencing</b></p>	<p>Clear evidence of a range of relevant information sources.</p> <p>At least 2 types of source e.g. text books / journal articles / company sources / newspapers/business journals. Some on-line sources must be used.</p> <p>Clear evidence of the use of systematic referencing. Harvard referencing is the Oxford Brookes standard, other recognised methodologies are acceptable if applied methodically.</p> <p>The list of references includes the references cited in the body of the text and no others. All citations used in the body of the text are included in the reference list and can be traced to source.</p> <p>For primary research, appropriate choice of sources, justifiable sample strategy with relevant permissions.</p>	<p>Very few and / or irrelevant information sources used. (Obvious sources omitted – for example Annual Report for a Financial Analysis of a Company or substantially dependent on a single source)</p> <p>No little evidence of appropriate referencing, no systematic approach followed. No references in body of text.</p>
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### PLAGIARISM – WHAT IS IT?

A form of cheating because you have not acknowledged the person who had the idea in the first place



**Plagiarism:** the act of presenting another's work or ideas as your own.

Unethical, taken very seriously


Use text matching software to see if you have used the same words as someone else  
 Avoid cut and pasting words from other sources  
 Rewrite in your own words (paraphrase)

Cut & Paste

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### SUPPORT AVAILABLE


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Register for future webinars here

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Useful video here

Information Pack – page 30  
 Explains more about academic integrity and referencing

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# THANK YOU

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

[acca@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:acca@brookes.ac.uk)