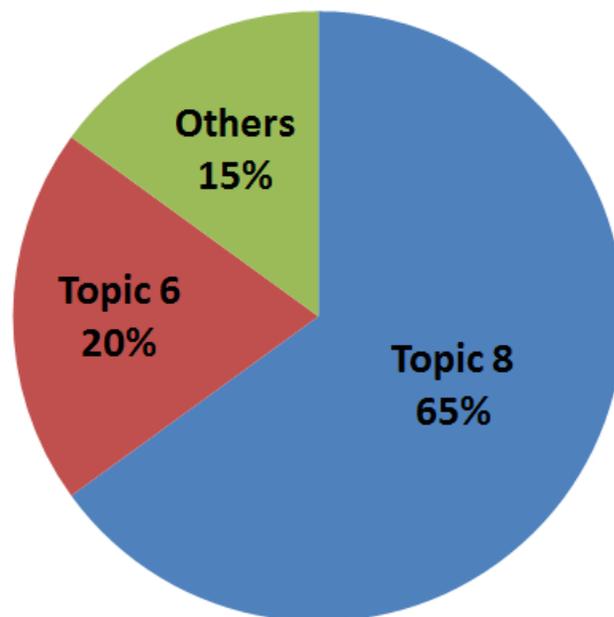

A PEEK INTO A MENTOR WORKSHOP (2015)

Our Principal Mentor, Irwin, attended a workshop for mentors when the OBU program director and chief moderator came down to Singapore. Here is a peek into what was shared!

Current Pass Rates: 57%

Student Topic Selection



No surprise here! Topic 8 (Financial and Business Analysis) is still the most popular topic. However, there is an observed trend that topics like Corporate Governance (17), Marketing (18) and CSR (20) are picking up and one of them may overtake Topic 6!

Changes in May 2016 Submission

- 1) **For Topic 8 and 15** - Organization selection will be confined within 3 specified industries. So if your desired company is outside of the specified industries, it can't be selected. The 3 specified industries will change on a yearly basis. However, a student who submitted a report and **failed**, would not need to change his industry to a new one for the re-submission. He can continue with the original industry and company for the resubmission.

The 3 new industries will be announced by OBU on 1st December of every year. So for the May 2016 submission, students can't start report writing before 1st December 2015.

Rationale for change – One of the main reasons is to clamp down further on plagiarism. In certain countries, there are a suspicious number of submissions on the same industries and companies, with many reports looking too similar for comfort. Also, as the industries selected will likely be those that were recently in the spotlight (e.g. banking), this helps students to keep themselves updated. The information available on such industries will also be abundant.

- 2) **SLS** – Instead of the usual 4 questions, there will be one question only for 2,000 words. *“What have you learned and which academic skills you have developed through researching and writing the RAP?”* This will require the writing of personal examples to support your points.

Rationale for change – OBU has found that the SLS is becoming too formulaic. Students are almost writing from a template and are saying the same things despite each student having a unique circumstance. As such, this attempt at free-form writing is to encourage students to really reflect on what they have learnt during the process.

Nuggets – It is possible to write the free form essay based around the 4 earlier questions. However, it would not need to be confined to the “500-words per question” constraints as before.

Also, when at the self-critique portion (i.e. how well do you think you have done on this report) it is encouraged to write of your limitations and how you did your very best to minimize the impact of such limitations. Do not be overly negative nor overly positive.

Example

I felt that I was not able to do a deep analysis on the 4Ps of Singapore Airlines as I did not have a marketing background. However, I did my utmost to make sure my analysis is logical by reading 2 books on Marketing Models and discussing my project with my uncle, who is a Marketing Manager.

Some Insights on Specific Topics

Topic 6

Students are to be careful about only analysing a DEPARTMENT within a company. As the title of Topic 6 shows, it is a critical review of the ORGANIZATION. **The study must be done on a group of people who are representative of the company.**

Topic 8

As usual, the main reason for failure is the lack of analysis. This has been mentioned numerous times.

A new point is that a student who claims he has done primary research for Topic 8 (and all other topics) must show solid evidence of the primary research.

Topic 17

For Corporate Governance, the focus will be on evaluating the company's corporate governance as a whole. If the company was involved in a corporate governance scandal, that has to obviously be mentioned and analysed. However, the report cannot be solely on the scandal. The other areas of corporate governance must be considered too.

Final Points

- There is an emphasis on students to ensure a few things before starting the project
 - 1) That they meet the English Language Requirements as F4 no longer qualifies. This has to be done and submitted **before they pass the F7, F8 or F9 paper.**
 - 2) That the mentor they select is an OBU qualified mentor. If not, their submission will not be allowed.
 - 3) That they are opted into the OBU program and have done the Ethics module.
- Plagiarism is a key focus of OBU now. **All reports are submitted to TurnItIn and the examining committee now has the power to impose punishments on students for plagiarism.** For example, for minor plagiarisms, the student can be failed and dis-allowed from writing on the same company. He would have to write a whole new report. For major plagiarisms, the students will be barred from OBU and also referred to ACCA. This could mean that their ACCA studies are also terminated.

PASS FIRST TIME. PASS WELL.