



MGSM953

Management Consulting and Research

MGSM Term 4 City 2018

MGSM Degree Programs

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Warren Riddell

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

((Admission to MBA or MMgmt and 32cp including MGSM835 and (MGSM820 or MGSM850)) or (Admission to MSocEntre and 32cp including MGSM869) or admission to PGCertMBAExt or GradCertMgtPostMBA) and permission by special approval

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is designed to introduce students to the management consulting sector and to enable them to confidently use the practice and processes of management consulting in the context of working on a specific, identified business issue for a client. The unit is designed to enable participants to assume the role of consultants to management and presents an intense experiential learning opportunity in a 'real world' situation. As such the unit is structured so that participants develop creative results-oriented solutions to the issue(s) faced by the client and to obtain the client's engagement and 'buy-in' to the recommended solutions.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Comprehensively research and synthesise complex business data in reference to the identified business problem, to develop commercially sound and ethically responsible recommendations to the client.

Apply relevant frameworks and models to analyse key data and produce multiple perspectives that address the client's engagement brief.

Assess, reflect and respond appropriately to a wide range of personalities, attitudes and perceptions with a view to influencing people with views that may be different to their

own

Integrate and address ethical, social and environmental responsibilities into recommendations submitted to the client.

Develop recommendations for the client that create sustainable value for clients by ensuring the client's organisational resilience and adaptability

General Assessment Information

For group work, it is assumed that all members have made a fair contribution and so will be awarded the same mark. You are required to contribute and participate fully in your group. At the end of the course each student must submit a confidential peer review for each member of their group.

I reserve the right to adjust marks upwards or downwards for any student if I have reason to believe that the group grade does not accurately reflect a student's contribution.

Marking Criteria

Grading of the group presentations and consulting reports (by the lecturer and the Client) will take into account the following criteria (note – the report will be marked as a whole and therefore these criteria are not equally weighted):

- Clear diagnosis and framing of the issue
- Clear identification of the deliverable(s)/output(s)
- Effective use of primary / secondary data sources
- Systematic use of qualitative and quantitative data and accurate data analysis (with an ability to generate new insights and / or to support / substantiate arguments)
- Logically developed arguments and critical evaluation
- Strength of recommendations (incl. understanding of what it will take to make it happen and potential resource and organisational impacts), applicability and originality
- Clarity of presentation: structure, linkages in logic maintained; flow, clear messages
- Client feedback on the process and deliverable, e.g. the consulting team's intellectual approach, relationship management, quality of final deliverable, extent to which the client is persuaded as to your recommendations
- Participation and contribution in Group Progress Update Meetings with the lecturer in working towards the final deliverable

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Client Presentations	35%	No	Session 10

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Consulting Report</u>	40%	No	Session 10
<u>Individual Reflections Report</u>	15%	No	Session 9
<u>Class Contribution</u>	10%	No	Session 10

Client Presentations

Due: **Session 10**

Weighting: **35%**

Each group will be required to make a presentation of the key report findings to the client and class (recognising client confidentiality issues). This presentation will be assessed and graded with major input from the client.

These presentations will be of a maximum 20 minutes duration after which the group will take questions from the client, your classmates and the lecturer. The lecturer will provide more details during the course, including the basis on which the presentations will be assessed.

In addition, the group may decide (or be requested) to make separate presentation/s to the client organisation. These are strongly encouraged but will not be marked/assessed as part of the course.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Comprehensively research and synthesise complex business data in reference to the identified business problem, to develop commercially sound and ethically responsible recommendations to the client.
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- Assess, reflect and respond appropriately to a wide range of personalities, attitudes and perceptions with a view to influencing people with views that may be different to their own
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Consulting Report

Due: **Session 10**

Weighting: **40%**

The consulting report will be developed in three parts.

Part 1: Establishing the “Engagement Contract” (or signed Project Proposal / Charter) and Framing/Diagnosing the Issue.

This part involves:

- Explicating the client’s issue that is to be the topic of the report
- Developing a clear understanding of the obligations of both parties
- Establishing a clear understanding as to the scope of work and form of the report
- Agreeing respective roles and responsibilities, any key risks and dependencies (on people, information, etc.) that may need to be managed
- Establishing a project plan (responsibilities, accountabilities, timeline, key milestones, outputs and delivery date)
- Establishing clearly who will be the recipient of the report.

Note:

- Do not underestimate the problems that can result from ambiguity about any of the points listed above. A copy of an agreement concerning the project must be signed and handed to the lecturer by the end of week 3 of the term.
- Ascertain the parameters of the issue. For example, it may have “internal” elements, (i.e. something very specific and operational within the organisation). Additionally or alternatively, it may have “external” aspects, i.e., a broad matter of concern upon which the client would like a report (e.g. inter-firm alliances in the industry).
- The project issue has been deliberately chosen to require some up-front effort to define these clearly. Thus skill in problem definition is a key management consulting skill and differentiates the project for this course from most other MGSM courses.
- The report must be original, that is, it must not replicate one (or part of one) which has been prepared previously for some other purpose, whether in-house or as part of an educational qualification.

Part 2: Identifying the Analysis Methodology/ Collecting the Data

This part involves intensive investigation of the client’s issue. This should include:

- Group members discussing and agreeing the analytical approach (models, frameworks, etc) to be used.
- Incorporation of information on the issue as available in various secondary sources (e.g. journals, the Internet).
- Collection of data from inside the client’s organisation.

The critical activity on which you will be assessed will be your ability to add insights and value – not to reproduce or restate what is already known unless this is structured /framed in such a way

that it brings new clarity to bear for the client.

Part 3: Developing the Client Report / Presentation

This part involves compiling a report and presentation that:

- Identifies and explains the Client's issue
- Summarises the analysis and reasoning
- Presents a practical and detailed set of recommendations
- Provides an implementation approach and/or timetable

The activity on which you will be assessed will be your ability to structure a logical flow of reasoning and to argue in a tight, compelling way **(a)** what is being addressed, **(b)** why it is an issue, **(c)** what the key dimensions and implications / impacts of the problem are, **(d)** what the proposed solution encompasses; and of course, **(e)** how you have arrived at the proposed solution / recommendation.

Assessment of your contribution to the group report

Assessment of group work (report) will be based on group member's rating of the contribution of other members of the group (in a peer evaluation form submission, submitted in iLearn) and this will determine the actual group mark awarded to each member of the group for the presentation and group report.

Details of the within group assessment will be discussed in class on the first night.

Some **instructions** on the final client report:

- Executive Summary - 2 pages maximum.
- Typed in 11-point, Arial, 1.5 lines spaced, A4 paper.
- The main body of the report is to be produced in MS Word.
- Please provide 2 bound print copies and 1 electronic copy to be submitted in iLearn.
- Confidentiality of the report's contents is assured.

Report length - Fifteen pages maximum (including Executive Summary). Assignments longer than the prescribed limit will be penalised. If you need to include extra material, you can do so in a **small** number of appendices that are clearly numbered and referred to in the body of the report. Please assume that the appendices will only be read if they are relevant and useful. The client will have major input to the assessment and grading of the group presentation and the report.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Comprehensively research and synthesise complex business data in reference to the identified business problem, to develop commercially sound and ethically responsible recommendations to the client.
- Apply relevant frameworks and models to analyse key data and produce multiple

perspectives that address the client's engagement brief.

- Assess, reflect and respond appropriately to a wide range of personalities, attitudes and perceptions with a view to influencing people with views that may be different to their own
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Individual Reflections Report

Due: **Session 9**

Weighting: **15%**

This is due in Week 9 and represents 15% of the total unit mark. It must be 2000 words in length and details your personal and professional learnings obtained from the unit. Submission will be done in class in print form and in iLearn (due date and time will be posted)

Extensions and penalties:

No extensions will be granted. There will be a deduction of 10% of the total available marks made from the total awarded mark for each 24 hour period or part thereof that the submission is late (for example, 25 hours late in submission – 20% penalty). This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for special consideration is made and approved. No submission will be accepted after solutions have been posted.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Assess, reflect and respond appropriately to a wide range of personalities, attitudes and perceptions with a view to influencing people with views that may be different to their own

Class Contribution

Due: **Session 10**

Weighting: **10%**

To be assessed by the lecturer

On successful completion you will be able to:

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Delivery and Resources

Required Text

There is no set text. Recommended readings on selected topics on management consulting are listed at the end of this Unit Guide.

MGSM iLearn

The web page for this unit can be found at: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MGSM>

Unit Schedule

Students are highly recommended to attend all classes starting 20 September, and every Thursday evening 6pm-10pm (except for 11 October and November), and all day Friday 12 October (9am – 5pm) at the CBD campus . The course will be presented over 10 weeks, it is a highly intensive and demanding course that will provide a unique experience for the appropriately qualified and experienced students.

The unit will be driven by the steps in conducting the living case study, as follows:

Session	Topic
1	Course Introduction, overview of the client issue, meeting with client
2	Defining/framing the business issue
3	Background on the client, understanding the issue
4 & 5	The consulting process
6	Hypothesis building, creative team dynamics, developing insights and options
7	Drawing conclusions and making recommendations
8	Communicating and presenting
9	Dress rehearsals
10	Final presentation to the client and delivery of the consulting report

Each group will need to prepare a short (1 to 2 pages) Project Status Report (PSR) to be submitted at each scheduled lecture. The PSR will be written with the client as the target audience. It should discuss the group's progress with the consulting project, including elements such as a list of key milestone dates, an outline of the group's approach to the consulting problem, and preliminary findings. Issues regarding scope, key risks being managed, critical inputs / information required and any resource constraints, should also be flagged. Each group may also bring along work papers and analyses for discussion with the lecturer. Should there be more immediate concerns group members are expected to escalate these matters immediately to the lecturer.

By Week 2 each group needs to have developed a comprehensive project plan showing roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, milestones, deliverables and key dates.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your

student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Comprehensively research and synthesise complex business data in reference to the identified business problem, to develop commercially sound and ethically responsible recommendations to the client.

- Apply relevant frameworks and models to analyse key data and produce multiple perspectives that address the client's engagement brief.
- Assess, reflect and respond appropriately to a wide range of personalities, attitudes and perceptions with a view to influencing people with views that may be different to their own
- Integrate and address ethical, social and environmental responsibilities into recommendations submitted to the client.
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Assessment tasks

- Client Presentations
- Consulting Report
- Individual Reflections Report
- Class Contribution

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Comprehensively research and synthesise complex business data in reference to the identified business problem, to develop commercially sound and ethically responsible recommendations to the client.
- Apply relevant frameworks and models to analyse key data and produce multiple perspectives that address the client's engagement brief.
- Develop recommendations for the client that create sustainable value for clients by ensuring the client's organisational resilience and adaptability

Assessment tasks

- Consulting Report
- Individual Reflections Report
- Class Contribution

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience,

of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Comprehensively research and synthesise complex business data in reference to the identified business problem, to develop commercially sound and ethically responsible recommendations to the client.
- Apply relevant frameworks and models to analyse key data and produce multiple perspectives that address the client's engagement brief.
- Develop recommendations for the client that create sustainable value for clients by ensuring the client's organisational resilience and adaptability

Assessment tasks

- Client Presentations
- Consulting Report
- Individual Reflections Report
- Class Contribution

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Comprehensively research and synthesise complex business data in reference to the identified business problem, to develop commercially sound and ethically responsible recommendations to the client.
- Apply relevant frameworks and models to analyse key data and produce multiple perspectives that address the client's engagement brief.
- Develop recommendations for the client that create sustainable value for clients by ensuring the client's organisational resilience and adaptability

Assessment tasks

- Consulting Report

- Individual Reflections Report
- Class Contribution

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Assess, reflect and respond appropriately to a wide range of personalities, attitudes and perceptions with a view to influencing people with views that may be different to their own
- Integrate and address ethical, social and environmental responsibilities into recommendations submitted to the client.

Assessment tasks

- Client Presentations
- Consulting Report
- Individual Reflections Report
- Class Contribution

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Assess, reflect and respond appropriately to a wide range of personalities, attitudes and perceptions with a view to influencing people with views that may be different to their own
- Integrate and address ethical, social and environmental responsibilities into recommendations submitted to the client.

Assessment tasks

- Client Presentations
- Individual Reflections Report
- Class Contribution

Alignment with MGSM's mission-driven attributes

Leadership: Develop the skills required of leading consultants with respect to the synthesis of comprehensive business data in order to make well-informed and strategically sound decisions.

Global mindset: Assessment of the implications of strategic decisions from a whole of entity perspective, across of a wide spectrum of stakeholders

Citizenship: Submit recommendations (to clients) that are consistent with the principles of corporate social responsibility and community ethics

Creating sustainable value: Development of recommendations that create value for clients over the short and longer-terms by ensuring organisational resilience and adaptability

Attendance Policy (MGSM)

The interactive environment of the classroom is central to the MGSM experience. Students are required to attend the full duration of all classes for the units in which they are enrolled. We recognise that exceptional circumstances may occur, such as unavoidable travel on behalf of your organization or the serious illness or injury of you or a close family member.

Special consideration may be given for a maximum of 20% non-attendance for such circumstances as long as lecturers are contacted in advance, and supporting documentation provided, to request exemption from attendance. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in automatic withdrawal, with academic and/or financial penalty. The full Student Attendance Policy is published in the MGSM Student Handbook at <https://students.mgsm.edu.au/handbook>.

Content Disclaimer

These unit materials and the content of this unit are provided for educational purposes only and no decision should be made based on the material without obtaining independent professional advice relating to the particular circumstances involved.