



# BIOL700

## Research Frontiers in Biology

S1 Day 2014

*Dept of Biological Sciences*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Other Staff

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is designed to expose MRes students to the broad range of topics that are currently dominating biological sciences. This unit is a seminar and conference unit that will allow students to engage deeply with current research topics and encourages them to reflect on current research trends.

## 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:

Learn how science is communicated

Gain skills in efficiently understanding a new topic

Understand process behind enquiry

Discuss constructively the interpretations of scientific mediums

Attain an understanding on how to network effectively

Develop a process to generate new ideas

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<a href="#">Seminar Attendance</a>	10%	Weekly
<a href="#">Tutorial Discussion</a>	25%	Weekly
<a href="#">Blog</a>	25%	Weekly/Fortnightly
<a href="#">Peer Assessment</a>	10%	Week 11
<a href="#">Working group</a>	30%	Week 13

### Seminar Attendance

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

**Presentations in the Biology Seminar Series occur each week from 1-2 pm, generally on Wednesdays. This is a forum for visiting scientists to convey topics of interest to the department and an excellent opportunity for Department members learn about cutting edge research. You are required to attend these seminars during the semester. They will form the basis for the discussion groups and blog postings. In addition to the Departmental seminar program you will also be required to attend 3 seminars elsewhere. These seminars can be in other departments at Macquarie University and/or outside Macquarie at institutions such as, but not limited to, other universities, museums, botanical gardens or other research oriented institutions. The aim is to broaden your horizons.**

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Attain an understanding on how to network effectively
- Develop a process to generate new ideas

### Tutorial Discussion

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **25%**

**Discussions following a seminar or conference allow researchers to explore more deeply the topics covered, benefit from the knowledge and thoughts of others and at times question the speaker more closely. Proactive participation in a discussion group subsequent to the departmental seminar is required. Early in the program we will examine effective ways to provide constructive contributions to discussion groups. You will then be required to apply these skills each week in a discussion group. The challenge will be to**

**synthesise the information provided by the seminar speaker and place their work in a broader framework. Ultimately as a group we want to attain an understanding of the significance of the research and future research directions. Preparation for these seminars and discussion will involve researching the speaker and their previous research. Each week pairs of students will drive the discussions. These discussion leaders are expected to have put in significant preparation and be well versed on the speaker and their research. This discussion group will not assess the quality of the talk but focus on the contribution of the work to the field. On occasion the speaker will join the discussion to afford you an opportunity to ask further questions and learn more.**

On successful completion you will be able to:

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## Blog

Due: **Weekly/Fortnightly**

Weighting: **25%**

**There are many ways to communicate science. One approach with increasing popularity is the use of online forums to convey not only the researchers work but also summarise the work of others. Online forums include blogging, social media tools and podcasting. These tools provide an opportunity to convey science a much larger and demographically broader audience – a constant and important challenge for a modern day scientist. The most successful blogs are regularly posted, accurate, engaging, and articulate and convey new and complex topics in a simple, exciting and memorable way. Doing this efficiently is facilitated by a diverse knowledge base to recognise where novel and significant contributions in research are made. By comparing and contrasting research, you should also be able to identify potential opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations.**

**In this exercise you will post a blog weekly/fortnightly related to the Departmental Seminar. In addition you will be asked to post blogs on the three seminars attended outside of the Departmental Seminar Series. The blogs must summarise the seminar topic, place the seminar in context of the speaker's other work, and provide an in depth analyses of how the seminar topic contributes to the field of interest. The blogs should not criticise the style of seminar delivery. We expect evidence that you have read some primary literature on the topic, you have grasped the concepts and findings explained in the seminar and understand their significance. The blogs also need to be accessible (i.e. the challenge will be to provide a blog that a first year student would be able to understand), hence students should aim to be accurate, engaging, articulate and memorable**

On successful completion you will be able to:

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## Peer Assessment

Due: **Week 11**

Weighting: **10%**

**You will be required to critically assess two blogs of the conveners choosing for each student. The first blog will be selected early on and this activity is designed to help students identify effective blogging styles. The second will be the same blog you select for assessment conducted on a seminar outside the department. Using the workshop tool in ilearn and the rubric designed for assessing blogs you will be asked to critically assess the blogs of all other participants within the course**

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## Working group

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **30%**

New and innovative research can arise from novel combinations of theory, ideas, data and techniques. Working groups are small collections of scientists, who generally have not previously collaborated, who work intensively to integrate these novel mixes to answer outstanding or new questions and significantly advance science. Working groups tackle research questions that need data synthesis or new concepts or theory – they rarely include collecting new data. Working groups usually involve bringing people from across the globe to a single location and providing a workspace for several days at a time over a couple of months/years, allowing for intensive work.

Key to a successful working group is the mix of participants – they need to have the appropriate skills, data and drive – and a clever concept. There are several funding bodies that provide resources for working groups as they are a very effective and exciting way of producing high impact research. In this exercise you will need to prepare a working group proposal for a hypothetical funding body (we will provide their guidelines). This will involve identifying a novel topic of interest, which individuals will be invited to attend the working group and it will be

important to have a strong argument justifying the importance of research. We strongly recommend that you make use of the seminars you have seen as a basis for your proposal (combining an interesting question from one speaker with the methods from another, for example). Significant thought will need to be given to this project and students are strongly advised to allocate adequate time to thinking about their proposal.

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## Delivery and Resources

### Timetable

#### Tutorials

Monday, week 1, 3 March	10-12pm	E8A 12
Wednesday, week 1, 5 March	10-12pm	E8A 120
Wednesday, week 2, 12 March	10-12pm	E8C 212
Tuesday, week 4, 25 March	10-12pm	E8C 212

#### Departmental Seminars

Wednesdays            1-2pm                            Biology Tearoom E8A 260

#### Discussion group

Wednesdays            2-3pm                            Biology Tearoom E8A 260

### Website

Notification of the seminar, speaker and topic will be provided via iLearn. iLearn and email will be the principle method of communication in this subject. We will also provide materials such as a key paper for each seminar (it will be up to you to do more research), and supporting documents associated with facilitating and participating in discussion groups. Tutorial slides will also be posted here.

We expect you to use iLearn for:

- Regularly checking subject announcements;
- Looking up details of speakers

- Submitting assignments

*How do you log in?* The URL for the iLearn is: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>. You will need to log in to iLearn each time you use it. Your user name is your student number and the password your oneID. For further details go to [http://mq.edu.au/iLearn/student\\_info/index.htm](http://mq.edu.au/iLearn/student_info/index.htm). If you are having trouble accessing your online unit due to a disability or health condition, please go to the Student Services Website at <http://sss.mq.edu.au/equity/about> for information on how to get assistance. If you cannot log in after ensuring you have entered your username and password correctly, you should contact Student IT Help, Phone: (02) 9850 4357 (in Sydney) or 1 800 063 191 (outside Sydney).

### Technology required

You will need access to iLearn, Wordpress (online blogging), word, pdf reader and journal articles through the library and the professional websites of speakers.

### Changes

The workload has been reduced following a policy change at the Faculty level. This means students do not have to attend a conference and prepare fewer blogs. We have brought forward the tutorial on working group proposals in response to student feedback.

## Unit Schedule

### Unit completion requirements

To complete this unit and gain a 'P' grade or better requires an overall pass of 50% and a high level of attendance at both seminars and discussion groups. All assessments must be completed to pass this course.

## 4. UNIT SCHEDULE AND RESOURCES

### Timetable

DAY	WEEK	TIME	PLACE
Tutorial 1	Monday, Week 1	10-12pm	E8A 120
Tutorial 2	Wednesday, Week 1	10-12pm	E8A 120
Tutorial 3 and 4	Wednesday, Week 2	10-12pm	E8C 212
Tutorial 5	Tuesday, Week 4	10-12	E8C 212

Department Seminars	All Weeks, Wednesday	1-2pm	Biology Tearoom
Discussion Groups	All Weeks, Wednesdays	2-3pm	Biology Tearoom

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We expect you to use iLearn for:

- Regularly checking subject announcements;

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## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy [http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance\\_management/policy.html](http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html)

Disruption to Studies Policy [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption\\_studies/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html) *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of



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/support/student\\_conduct/](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/)

## 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](http://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](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

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