



# ICOM303

## Writing for International Business and Finance

MQC3 Day 2014

*Dept of Media, Music & Cultural Studies*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Moderator

Nicole Anderson

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Unit Convenor

Howard Gelman

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit introduces the practical and theoretical dimensions of professional writing on international business and finance issues. The unit proposes to explain the variety of communication tools necessary for businesses to operate efficiently. The unit explores these approaches from different cultural perspectives that rely on English language communication in an international setting. Students will analyse, interpret and assess data and information in various forms.

## 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:

Understand and evaluate international business issues

Analyse business media cultures

Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective

Demonstrate a knowledge of business tools—statistics and financial terms

Demonstrate writing skills for international business audiences

Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## Assessment Tasks

| Name                           | Weighting | Due     |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| <u>Tutorial participation</u>  | 10%       | Ongoing |
| <u>Presentation and Report</u> | 25%       | Ongoing |
| <u>Business Briefing</u>       | 35%       | Week 6  |
| <u>Product Analysis</u>        | 30%       | Week 11 |

### Tutorial participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **10%**

Marks will be awarded for participation in tutorial discussions and general contributions (marks are awarded for 'participation' as well as attendance). Failure to attend and participate in all tutorials could result in exclusion and consequent failure in the unit. In addition, two class quizzes will cover the readings.

Two quizzes during lecture on tutorial readings: week 6 (covers readings from week 2–6); week 13 (covers readings from week 7–12); 2 writing assignments during lecture.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
- Analyse business media cultures
- Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective
- Demonstrate a knowledge of business tools—statistics and financial terms
- Demonstrate writing skills for international business audiences
- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

### Presentation and Report

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **25%**

Students will lead a 35-minute discussion based on the weekly readings and the tutorial activity as listed in the reader. You will have handouts covering your topic and a brief task for the class. Two or three students will be responsible for approximately 35 minutes of seminar time. You are also required to provide a 500-word analysis of the readings using your own examples

to explain key ideas. Don't summarize the readings and don't rely on explaining your presentation. You should try to show through outside examples how the readings reflect everyday business practices. This is an analysis of the reading not a duplicate of your class presentation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## Business Briefing

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **35%**

Students will pick an international industry that affects Australia and analyse the key actors, elements and implications for the relevant business sector. Identify some major companies in the industry and discuss the issues facing their prosperity. Your job is to decide for your investment reader what are the positive aspects and how to assess the negatives. You need to take a decision of what companies are overcoming problems and capitalizing on opportunities.

The report will be based on independent research drawn from a variety of primary and secondary sources including interviews (no more than six months old). The report is a business analysis. The report should contain a source list. Only four Internet sources are allowed and must be accompanied by a printout of the relevant research.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## Product Analysis

Due: **Week 11**

Weighting: **30%**

You will choose a nationally known Australian product. This could be any product that has not been sold overseas but could find a potential international market. Your task will be to show how the product can be marketed to other countries.

The brief will include:

1. An introductory letter addressed to the CEO or Board of Directors.
2. An executive summary detailing strategies to achieve success.
3. A campaign plan showing how you will market your product internationally.

Assessment will be based on research, creativity of description, use of language, attention to word limit and the accuracy of explanations.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Demonstrate writing skills for international business audiences
- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## **Delivery and Resources**

ICOM303 Unit Reader is available for purchase from the Coop bookshop on Phillip Street - Sydney CBD.

The timetable for this unit can be found at;

[https://student.mqc.edu.au/noticeboard/frameset\\_Timetable.htm](https://student.mqc.edu.au/noticeboard/frameset_Timetable.htm)

## **Unit Schedule**

### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**

#### **Week 1      Introduction to writing for business and finance**

An important goal in writing for business is the ability to convey essential information in a way that gives a co-operative, motivated person a good chance of understanding the document at first reading, and in the same sense that the writer meant it to be understood. The first six weeks of tutorials will focus on writing about business from the inside.

Seminar activity: Tutor and student introductions, understanding the unit guide, getting the most from the unit, assessment and orientation. What are the different types of business documents? Examples of business plans, quarterly and annual reports, executive summaries, retail documents.

## **Week 2      The role of the professional writer working for a business**

The ability to communicate ideas in writing is one of the most important skills for people working in business and other organizations. Business writing is specialised and requires understanding of the organisational context, communication styles and information handling practices.

Reader: Gelman, Howard, Chapter 1, 'Technique', Everyone Can Write, (2014), Exisle, pp. 17—30.

Petelin, Roslyn and Durham, Marsha, (2001) Chapter 1, The professional writing guide, Sydney: Business and Professional Publishing, pp. 1–13.

Marsen, Skye, (2003), Professional Writing: The Complete guide for business, industry and IT, Hampshire: Palgrave, pp134–164.

Seminar activity: How writing works. Explanation of report writing techniques. An examination of the ten rules for business communications, concentrating on writing clear, concise and effective documents.

## **Week 3      Business cultures: aims, objectives and structures**

Every business and organisation has a particular culture that is shaped by its activities and the people it employs. These factors will shape the way that communication flows within the organisation and to its clients and the public.

Reader: Hartley, Peter and Brickman, Clive G., (2000) Business Communication, London, Routledge, pp.69-89.

Institute for Management Excellence, Understanding Corporate Culture, Copyright © 2001 All rights reserved, updated: June 07, 2008.

Eunson, Baden, Communication in the Workplace, J. Wiley, 2007, pp 97–101.

Seminar activity: What is organisational culture? How does it differ from the wider culture? What factors shape culture in an organisation? Can organizations have multiple cultures? What might generate multiple cultures?

## **Week 4      Writing reports and proposals**

in business you will be expected to turn out readable pieces of written communication. Report writing relies on getting facts from one place to another. Proposals are used to apply for funds, seek support and introduce new ideas.

Reader: Gelman, Howard, Chapter 3, 'Report Writing', Everyone Can Write, Exisle, pp. 53–64.

Forsyth, Patrick, (2006), Write Reports and Proposals, London: Times, pp. 79-96.

Seminar activity: Discuss and give examples of the basic elements of report writing. What difficulties could be expected in preparing a proposal to supply a service like public relations or

advertising?

### **Week 5      Practical research**

Statistics, reports and company information underpin business journalism. Locating sources of information is crucial for the development of business and finance stories.

Reader: Hazlett, Curt, *Make Sense of Numbers in Writing About Business*, [www.BusinessJournalism.org](http://www.BusinessJournalism.org).

Angwin, Julia, 'How to Use Numbers and Statistics', in Thompson, Terri (ed.), *Writing About Business*, New York, Columbia University Press, pp.191-197.

Barass, Robert (2002), *Writing at Work:—Say it Without Words*, London: Routledge, pp. 81-98

Seminar Activity: Bring a set of statistics to the tutorial sourced from a government or corporation. How might they be used to write a business news story? What are the challenges in presenting statistics? How can they be used to distort information?

### **Week 6      Copywriting, promotion and brochures**

Copywriting is the art of promoting a product or service in a short or long form. Short form writing is designed to communicate a message in an advertisement that might appear in a display ad. Long form copywriting includes articles, brochures and pamphlets.

Reader: Applegate, Ed. (2005), *Strategic Copywriting. How to Create Effective Advertising*, Rowman & Littlefield, Inc. pp. 55-66

Marra James L. (1993), *Advertising Copywriting*, NJ: Prentice Hall, pp. 231-261

Seminar activity: Bring a business and a general magazine to class. Compare and characterise the differences in advertisements in terms of length of text, type of product and presentation. What do the advertisements say about the respective readers?

### **Week 7      International news agencies**

The world economy and business relies on non-stop flows of financial, market and company information. The challenge is to provide timely, accurate and independent news reports to ensure the smooth and ordered operation of business.

Reader: Bartram, John (2003) 'News Agency Wars: the battle between Reuters and Bloomberg', *Journalism Studies*, 4 (3) August, pp. 387-399.

Palmer Michael, Boyd-Barrett, Oliver and Tehri Rantanen, 'Global Financial News', in Boyd-Barrett, Oliver and Tehri Rantanen (eds.) (1998). *The Globalisation of News*, Sage Pub, London, pp. 61-78.

Seminar Activity: Locate a specialist media report directed to a particular industry or finance sector. What information does it provide? What are the sources? How does it differ from general business news?

### **Week 8      Covering businesses**

Finding and researching the Big End of Town provides insight to the businesses and people who control and influence trade, commerce and industry in a city, nation or international industry. Understanding economic terminology is the first step to business journalism. This week is the start of writing about business from the outside — as a business journalist or business analyst.

Reader: Murdoch, Rupert, The Future of Newspapers, 2008 Boyer Lecture, ABC. Varian, Hal, The economics of the newspaper business, Google, 2013, pp. –3. Whannell, Gary, Information and Authenticity: Financial information and the media in the age of replication, University of Bedfordshire, UK, 2009.

Seminar Activity: Group presentation of business publications: Australian Financial Review, The Economist, Nikkei Weekly Wall Street Journal, Financial Review. Discuss the readership, geography and main focus of each business newspaper. Try to convince the class that their publication should be the choice for business news.

## **Week 9                    Elements of economic systems**

Inflation is down, growth is up, monetary policy is tight, unemployment is down and productivity is improving. Business writing requires the ability to gather information from a variety of sources, determine its relevance and present it in effective and meaningful ways to readers who are often short of time, interest and specialist knowledge

Reader: Levin, Doron, (2003) 'Everything we write is rooted in money; learn to follow the buck,' Detroit Free Press.

Gordon L. Clark, Nigel Thrift, Adam Tickell (2004) 'Performing finance: the industry, the media and its image', Review of International Political Economy 11 (2) May pp.165-178

Seminar Activity: Bring a media report on a business or important financial issue to the tutorial and discuss what is covered in the report, who might read it and why it is significant.

## **Week 10                The international business environment**

Since the late 1980s, the world has become almost a single trading system. This has encouraged businesses to expand their markets and operations across national jurisdictions and to develop truly international structures and operations.

Reader: Jones, Geoffrey, Summit Report 2008, Harvard University, 2009.

Radic, Hugo, 'Globalisation and the convergence of National Business Systems,' in Burton, Fred, Chapman, Malcolm and Cross, Alan, (1999) International business organisation: Hampshire: Macmillan Press, pp. 220–238.

Bennett, Roger (1999), International Business 2nd ed, London: Financial Times Management, pp.1-25.

Seminar activity: How might the interest of an international business differ from the national interests of the host country? What factors does a business writer need to be aware of when writing for an organisation that features people from many cultures?

## **Week 11                New and challenging workplaces**

The nature of work has undergone radical change in the last 20 years. Secure, full-time and



long-term employment has given way to assignments, labour hire, out-sourcing and portfolio based occupations. Employees or consultants are constantly evaluated and their positions reviewed by organizations seeking to compete in the global economy. What strategies can be applied to securing interesting, lucrative and engaging employment?

Reader: The Way We'll Work in Time Magazine, 25 May 2009.

Erickson, Tammy, Five upcoming changes in the way we work, Harvard Business Review, January 8, 2010.

Seminar activity: Search the want ads on the Internet and in newspapers for new job categories or descriptions of innovative employment. How will current employment trends affect your own pursuit of a career?

There will be a short quiz covering the first six weeks of readings.

## **Week 12 Business ethics**

Professional writers always face the challenge of preparing credible and accurate descriptions in documents, promotional material and reports. Writers have an obligation to recognise that readers might make important decisions based on the information they provide.

Reader: Grace, Damian and Cohen, Stephen (2005) Business Ethics — Problems and Cases, 3rd edition, Oxford University Press, pp 70-86.

Wilson, Ian (2000), The new rules of corporate conduct, Quorum, pp. 137-152.

Hills, Ben, (2005), 'The James Hardie Story', International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health, pp. 212–214.

Seminar activity: Businesses must often present difficult or unpalatable information. What are the dilemmas for writers producing promotion and information documents? Are there any recent cases in Australia that illustrate ethical problems?

## **Week 13 Review: How to get a job**

An explanation of the 3-step method to gain employment.

Seminar activity: Writing a cover letter for employment. How to set out realistic goals. What to say and what not to say.

Students may request consultation with the unit convener on issues, skills and concepts relevant to writing for international business and finance. There will be a short quiz on unit readings week 7–12.

## 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/)

### Grades

Macquarie University uses the following grades in coursework units of study:

- HD - High Distinction
- D - Distinction
- CR - Credit
- P - Pass
- F – Fail

Grade descriptors and other information concerning grading are contained in the Macquarie University Grading Policy which is available at:

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

For further information, please refer to the following link:

<http://universitycouncil.mq.edu.au/legislation.html>

## **Grade Appeals and Final Examination Script Viewing**

If, at the conclusion of the unit, you have performed below expectations, and are considering lodging an appeal of grade and/or viewing your final exam script please refer to the following website which provides information about these processes and the cut off dates in the first instance. Please read the instructions provided concerning what constitutes a valid grounds for appeal before appealing your grade.

<http://www.city.mq.edu.au/reviews-appeals.html>

## **Attendance at Macquarie City Campus**

All Students are required to attend at least 80% of the scheduled course contact hours each Session. Additionally Macquarie City Campus monitors the course progress of international students to ensure that the student complies with the conditions of their visa relating to attendance.

This minimum level of attendance includes all lectures and tutorials. Tutorial attendance will be recorded weekly. If any scheduled class falls on a public holiday this will be rescheduled as advised by your Lecturer. Attendance at any mid-Session or in-class test is compulsory unless otherwise stated.

Unavoidable non-attendance due to illness or circumstances beyond your control must be supported by appropriate documentation to be considered for a supplementary test. Other non-attendance will obtain zero for the test. You should refer to the section below on Special Consideration for more details about this.

## **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)

### Student Support at Macquarie City Campus

Students who require assistance are encouraged to contact the Student Services Manager at Macquarie City Campus. Please see reception to book an appointment.

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

At any time students (or groups of students) can book our Student Advising rooms on Level 6 by emailing [info@city.mq.edu.au](mailto:info@city.mq.edu.au) with a day and time and nominated contact person. There are additional student study spaces available on Level 1.

Macquarie University Campus Wellbeing also has a presence on the City Campus each week. If you would like to make an appointment, please email [info@city.mq.edu.au](mailto:info@city.mq.edu.au) or visit their website at: <http://www.campuslife.mq.edu.au/campuswellbeing>

StudyWISE provides:

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops [http://www.mq.edu.au/learning\\_skills](http://www.mq.edu.au/learning_skills)
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions

## 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.

### IT Help at Macquarie City Campus

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/> or call 02 9850-4357.

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 and it outlines what can be done.

Students must use their Macquarie University email addresses to communicate with staff as it is University policy that the University issued email account is used for official University communication.

Students are expected to act responsibly when utilising Macquarie City Campus IT facilities. The following regulations apply to the use of computing facilities and online services:

- Accessing inappropriate web sites or downloading inappropriate material is not permitted.
- Material that is not related to coursework for approved unit is deemed inappropriate.
- Downloading copyright material without permission from the copyright owner is illegal, and strictly prohibited. Students detected undertaking such activities will face disciplinary action, which may result in criminal proceedings.

Non-compliance with these conditions may result in disciplinary action without further notice.

If you would like to borrow headphones for use in the Macquarie City Campus computer labs (210, 307, 311, 608) at any point, please ask at Level 2 Reception. You will be required to provide your MQC Student ID card. This will be held as a deposit while using the equipment.

For assistance in the computer labs, please see a Lab Demonstrator (usually they can be found in Lab 311, otherwise ask at Level 2 Reception).

## **Graduate Capabilities**

### **Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative**

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
- Analyse business media cultures
- Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective
- Demonstrate a knowledge of business tools—statistics and financial terms
- Demonstrate writing skills for international business audiences
- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## Assessment tasks

- Tutorial participation
- Presentation and Report
- Business Briefing
- Product Analysis

## Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
- Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective
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## Assessment tasks

- Tutorial participation
- Presentation and Report
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- Product Analysis

## Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
- Analyse business media cultures
- Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective
- Demonstrate a knowledge of business tools—statistics and financial terms
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### Assessment tasks

- Tutorial participation
- Presentation and Report
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- Product Analysis

## Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
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- Demonstrate writing skills for international business audiences

- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## **Assessment tasks**

- Presentation and Report
- Business Briefing
- Product Analysis

## **Problem Solving and Research Capability**

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
- Analyse business media cultures
- Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective
- Demonstrate a knowledge of business tools—statistics and financial terms
- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## **Assessment tasks**

- Tutorial participation
- Presentation and Report
- Business Briefing
- Product Analysis

## **Creative and Innovative**

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Analyse business media cultures
- Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective



## Assessment tasks

- Business Briefing
- Product Analysis

## Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
- Analyse business media cultures
- Demonstrate business writing skills, and write about business from an insider's perspective
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## Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Analyse business media cultures
- Demonstrate a knowledge of business tools—statistics and financial terms

- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## **Assessment tasks**

- Tutorial participation
- Presentation and Report
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## **Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible**

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Understand and evaluate international business issues
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- Demonstrate a knowledge of business tools—statistics and financial terms
- Apply disciplinary business knowledge to trade, finance and industry

## **Assessment tasks**

- Presentation and Report
- Business Briefing
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