



POL 822

Evidence and Expertise in Policy

S2 Evening 2016

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Lecturer

Diana Perche

diana.perche@mq.edu.au

Contact via 98508805

W6A 432

Monday 5-6pm or by appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MPPP or PGDipPP or GradDipPP or PGCertPP or MSc in Environmental Health or PGDipSc in Environmental Health or PGCertSc in Environmental Health or GradCertPPP

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit examines the use of and reliance upon research and expert opinion in policy making, in the context of the pressure for 'evidence-based' policy and contestability of advice. It explores issues around reliability and validity of research and develops skills in assessing quality and relevance of evidence related to specific policy problems. The unit considers theoretical debates around participation, engagement and knowledge politics with respect to policy making, and it critically examines a range of contemporary case studies demonstrating the use of evidence in policy formulation and evaluation.

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:

Explain and critically analyse the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy

Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem

Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument

Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)

Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the application of evidence, expertise and public opinion in the policy process

General Assessment Information

Assignment Submission

All written assignments must be submitted using the “Turnitin Assignments” facility on the iLearn website. This facility includes software which scans the uploaded assignments for plagiarism. Follow the instructions on the screen carefully. Your assignment should be uploaded before midnight on the due date.

In all cases, you should ensure that you keep a copy of the assignment.

Return of marked work

Marked assignments will be returned via the same facility on iLearn. When marks are released, you will need to go back in to the assignment submission box, and open your uploaded assignment. When you click on the “GradeMark” button, you will be able to see the marker’s comments on your work. You can save or print the essay with the comments.

Extensions

Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and will require documentary evidence such as a medical certificate to support the request for an extension. You should contact the convenor as early as possible if you think you may need an extension. While we do understand that most students are engaged in paid employment, extensions cannot be granted on this basis alone.

Penalties for late submission

Assignments which are submitted after the due date, without having an extension granted by the convenor, will be penalised, at a rate of 3% of the mark for each week day after the due date. Any paper submitted more than 3 weeks after the due date will not be marked, and the student will be failed for the assignment.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Assessment 1</u>	20%	Sunday 21 August
<u>Assessment 2</u>	40%	12 or 17 September

Name	Weighting	Due
Assessment 3	40%	16 November

Assessment 1

Due: **Sunday 21 August**

Weighting: **20%**

Critical response to the reliance on research or evidence in a recent ministerial press release. Further details, including the parameters, points of criticism, and marking criteria for the task are posted on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain and critically analyse the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)

Assessment 2

Due: **12 or 17 September**

Weighting: **40%**

Present a policy discussion paper for a think tank on a recent academic research publication of your choice. This assessment task has two components: the written discussion paper of 2000 words, and the class presentation of 5 minutes length. The class presentation will take place at the first on-campus session for external students, and in the seminar in Week 7 for the internal students. Further details on the task and the marking criteria are posted on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)

Assessment 3

Due: **16 November**

Weighting: **40%**

A research essay considering the theory and debates within evidence-based policy, applied to a specific case study of your choice. Further details and the marking criteria are posted on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain and critically analyse the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the application of evidence, expertise and public opinion in the policy process

Delivery and Resources

Delivery:

For lecture times and classrooms please consult the MQ Timetable website:

<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au>. This website will display up-to-date information on your classes and classroom locations.

Internal students are expected to attend the following classes each week:

Lecture: Monday 6-7pm

Seminar: Monday 7-9pm

External students: The lecture is digitally recorded and can be downloaded from the ILearn website shortly after it is delivered. You will also find lecture slides on the website.

External students are also required to attend two **on-campus sessions** of four hours each over the semester. The dates for these sessions are:

Saturday 17 September: 9.30am - 1.30pm

Saturday 29 October: 9.30am - 1.30pm

External students are encouraged to attend weekly lectures and seminar classes whenever they can.

Resources:

This unit has a unit webpage which is accessible only to currently enrolled students. Online units

can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>

There is no text book for this unit. All required readings will be accessible electronically via the Macquarie University Library iShare system. Links will be posted on the iLearn site.

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

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

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

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy 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/

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

- Explain and critically analyse the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Assessment 3

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

- Explain and critically analyse the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the application of evidence, expertise and public opinion in the policy process

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Assessment 3

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

- Explain and critically analyse the role of research in policy making in the context of pressure for “evidence-based” policy
- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the application of evidence, expertise and public opinion in the policy process

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1

- Assessment 2
- Assessment 3

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

- Evaluate the quality, validity and reliability of research relating to a specific policy problem
- Locate, assess, and analyse different kinds of policy-relevant evidence, from a range of sources, and synthesise research findings into a simple, logical and coherent argument
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the application of evidence, expertise and public opinion in the policy process

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2
- Assessment 3

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

- Communicate research findings and views accurately and effectively using a variety of techniques (written, spoken, visual)
- Identify, critically analyse and discuss the major debates and controversies involved around the application of evidence, expertise and public opinion in the policy process

Assessment tasks

- Assessment 1
- Assessment 2

- Assessment 3