



POIX207

Australian Governments and Public Policy

S1 OUA 2017

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

OUA Co-ordinatory MHPIR

Matthew Bailey

matthew.bailey@mq.edu.au

Lorna Barrow

lorna.barrow@mq.edu.au

Tutor

Francesco Stolfi

francesco.stolfi@mq.edu.au

Contact via Email

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Explore policy studies and analysis by examining the process of policy making within governmental and other organisations. Questions are raised about the state in contemporary society and the distribution of power in the stages of policy development, implementation and evaluation. The unit draws on analytical literature from a variety of sources, but its empirical content is supported mainly by Australian examples. Knowledge of the institutions of Australian government is important for the unit. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see www.open.edu.au

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/>

Learning Outcomes

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

Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain

Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy

Demonstrate written communication skills

Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the

linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

General Assessment Information

This unit is concerned with public policy in Australia. It examines the use of power and influence by individual and institutional actors in the development and implementation of public policy. It draws on analytical literature, case studies and comparative material relevant to the Australian context. It stimulates critical thinking about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy; develops an understanding of linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes within contemporary Australian government; and encourages reflection on the connections between academic study and employment. It develops skills relevant to academic study, including independent thought, critical judgement, and information retrieval and communication.

Prerequisites: 12cp or (3cp in HIST or MHIS or POL units)

Please note that this unit was previously coded PLT370 and PLTX270. If you have successfully completed PLT370 or PLTX270, you should not enrol in POIX207.

Knowledge of the institutions of Australian government is important for the unit.

Successful Completion of the Course

All assessment tasks must be attempted and an overall minimum pass mark of 50% must be achieved in order to successfully complete this course.

Assignment submission

This unit uses a combination of submission methods. Please check the individual assignment guidelines in the Assessments and Guides section of the course to find out which method that particular assignment uses.

Turnitin Submission Procedure

iLearn Assignment Upload Procedure

Required and Recommended Weekly Readings

These are listed in the unit. All required and most recommended readings can be found under the unit code in Unit Readings in the Macquarie Library or are available via weblinks in the unit.

There is one **required textbook** for this unit:

Althaus, Catherine, Bridgman, Peter and Davis, Glyn 2007, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 4th edition, Crows Nest, Allen and Unwin.

OR

Althaus, Catherine, Bridgman, Peter and Davis, Glyn 2012, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 5th edition, Crows Nest, Allen and Unwin.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Reflective Participation</u>	30%	No	weekly (forums)/variable
<u>Analytical Report</u>	10%	No	Friday Week 4
<u>Research Essay</u>	30%	No	Wednesday Week 12
<u>Examination</u>	30%	No	5pm Friday Week 13

Reflective Participation

Due: **weekly (forums)/variable**

Weighting: **30%**

NOTE: All three components must be attempted.

1. Participation in Weekly Discussion Forums (10%):

Each week you will be prompted to contribute to a general class discussion relating to the week's topic and readings using a number of questions. This assessment task is designed to test your understanding of the issues involved and to encourage you to think about their implications for policy-making.

- You must contribute to at least **THREE** of the weekly discussions to pass the course.
- You need to contribute to **EIGHT** weekly discussions to pass this component of this Assessment. Contributing once to each of 8 weeks will achieve 2.5%; a further 2.5% can be earned for quality of engagement.

Informed discussion is possible only if preliminary reading is done, so please read the required texts and at least one of the select texts.

NOTE: if there is some *very good reason* why you cannot do this assessment task in the way that is set up, please contact the tutor as soon as the course starts, or as soon as you realize there is a difficulty so that something can be arranged to assist you. Very good reasons include: disability; unreliable, unstable or non-autonomous access to the internet. These reasons must be documented.

2. Discussion Report (5%)

Choose **one** of the questions **that has been discussed by the class** from one of the weekly discussion forums between Weeks 2 and 12. Report on the *discussion* that took place on the question and the conclusions that can be drawn from it to answer the question. Your report should be in essay format (1000 words) and be fully referenced using the Referencing Style set for this unit. It can be submitted at a time of your choice, **but no later than Friday of Week 12**. Submission is via Turnitin.

3. Speaking Notes (15%)

There are two components to this task.

1. At a time or times of your choice during the semester, but no later than **Sunday of Week 8**, select **two** of the 'role plays' listed under the topics for weeks 3 and 4, and set out, as 'speaker's notes', the main points you would address if you, as your selected public policy actor, were to give a brief (no more than 3 minute) oral presentation on the topic. (Value: 10%)
2. Between Week 8 and the end of Week 10, you will evaluate **two** of the submissions from **other** students in the format provided and submit these to Turnitin. The points of evaluation will be summed up and used to assess the grade to be awarded to the particular speaker's notes. You will not be identified to the speaker in this process, but a general comment will be posted to the blog. Evaluation must be completed by **Sunday of Week 10**. (Value: 5%).

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Analytical Report

Due: **Friday Week 4**

Weighting: **10%**

Select one public event in Australia reported in one or more news media in 2016 that dealt with a person or a group, not a state actor, concerned with an issue of public policy and, in a formal essay of **250** words:

1. Summarise the gist of the reportage in 50 words or less.
2. Cite the source (but do not attach it to your report).
3. Delineate the apparent viewpoint of the creator of the report.
4. State your own estimation of the likely or known impact of the event on the *policy* at issue, noting any evidence you may have in support of your view.
5. State (one sentence) the state actor most likely, in your view, to have an interest in the report, and why.

The essay must be fully referenced using Harvard (Author Year) in-text style (no footnote referencing). A Bibliography is required. See Assessments and Guides for further information.

Submission is through Turnitin.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Research Essay

Due: **Wednesday Week 12**

Weighting: **30%**

A fully referenced formal academic research essay of **2100** words in response to a question relating to a central theme of the unit. You are expected to demonstrate that you understand and can explain and use the relevant theoretical tools and concepts provided by the course.

Questions will be posted to the course in Week **6**.

Essays must be fully referenced using the Harvard (Author Year) in-text style. A Bibliography is required. See Assessments and Guides for further information.

Submission is through Turnitin.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
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Examination

Due: **5pm Friday Week 13**

Weighting: **30%**

A non-invigilated take-home exam requiring reflection on the course and the tools and concepts it has provided.

The examination questions will be released at 9am Monday of Week 13. You must submit your exam by **5pm** Friday of Week 13.

Submission is through Turnitin.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills

Delivery and Resources

Unit webpage and technology used and required

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

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

Please contact teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements.

Readings

Other than the text book, required readings are accessible through Unit Readings in the Macquarie Library, or by the internet as indicated.

Lectures: audio recordings of the lectures can be accessed through Echo via the link provided in the course. Notes are also provided for most lectures.

Unit Schedule

Weekly schedule

Week 1	Introduction This is an introductory week that aims to orient you to the approach the Unit takes to the study of public policy. The emphasis is on the processes of public policy-making in contemporary Australia rather than a description or analysis of particular policy areas in a technical way. Politics is at the heart of our subject, but understanding political processes can show what is common to all policy areas and what a policy actor must know in pursuing 'technical' objectives.
Week 2	The Role of Government and Theories of the State Are there services that should only be delivered by government? Is there a satisfactory demarcation line between the public and private delivery of services? Can accountability be adequately retained with outsourced delivery of services? What considerations might apply in choosing between public and private service delivery? Why has privatisation happened almost everywhere? Are there services that should only be delivered by government? Is there a satisfactory demarcation line between the public and private delivery of services? Can accountability be adequately retained with outsourced delivery of services? What considerations might apply in choosing between public and private service delivery? Why has privatisation happened almost everywhere? The advance of privatisation throughout the world is often presented as a result of the quest for "efficiency" in government, and that is no doubt part of the story (whether or not specific cases of privatisation lead to efficient outcomes). But privatisation can also be seen as just the most recent and leading case of ongoing political struggles around the constitution and activities of "the state". In the lecture and exercises this week we consider the nature of "the state", and see it from a variety of theoretical perspectives. The aim is to give a broad context to our study of public policy, casting doubt on the idea that there is "one best way" to do things in policy-making. This does not mean that everything is equal or the same: policy can be done "better", but our theoretical framework is what will give meaning to such a term.
Week 3	The Turnbull Government – a progress report using the “Policy Cycle” We look at the policy-making activities of the Turnbull Government in the light of the policy cycle model presented by Althaus, Bridgman and Davis. Is it a descriptive or a normative model - or a satisfactory blending of both? How useful is it to the study of public policy? We look at some of the criticisms of the model and consider whether there might be more useful ways of analysing and explaining or modelling public policy processes.

Week 4	Agendas and Decisions - Policy Development, Issue Identification, Interest Groups/Lobbying/Think Tanks What are pressure groups? interest groups? think tanks? lobbyists? Are think tanks different to lobbyists? Might some interest groups be considered to be altruistic?
Week 5	The Political Executive and Parliament Who administers policy for the government? In recent times there have been marked changes to the management of the public service that have abolished the old machinery (such as the Public Service Boards) that guaranteed certain terms and conditions of public sector employment. Contract employment, performance indicators and powers of termination in political hands now mark the public service. Has the capacity of the public service to serve elected ministers of all persuasions been affected? How is accountability to be understood now? Have the Australian public service(s) become "politicized"?
Week 6	Bureaucracy - The Public Service Has 'reform' of the Australian public service led to the politicisation of the senior ranks of the bureaucracy? If so, is this a necessarily undesirable development? How are the bureaucracy held accountable? Are the mechanisms of accountability effective? What changes might improve accountability without impeding the development of good policy?
Week 7	Implementation This week we are looking at the stage of the policy cycle concerned with implementation. This has often been neglected in favour of other more glamorous stages of the policy cycle, but practitioners and scholars are increasingly aware of the importance of planning and managing effective implementation. This week we will consider the necessary features of successful implementation, and will explore the ways in which politics can interfere. We will focus on the example of the ceiling insulation program which was poorly implemented by the Rudd government, and is now the subject of a Royal Commission inquiry instigated by the Abbott government.
Week 8	Evaluation; Policy Instruments What types of evaluation are there and what tools are available to implement policy? Policy Evaluation: we look at a short history of evaluation - its technical and political approaches. Is policymaking an art or a science? Of course the practice of policymaking has elements of each, as a study of evaluation shows. On the one hand, evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of specific policies can draw on scientific methods of research, including quantitative methods, and much of the work of individual analysts and the private companies considered in an earlier week proceeds in this way. On the other, many sceptics claim that political values determine the evaluation of policy and even that scientific approaches are merely a cloak for hidden biases and personal preferences. In this week we attempt to see beyond these simple dichotomies, suggesting that policy evaluation is a meaningful activity if the shifting weight of "science" and "value" is specified in specific contexts.
Week 9	Environmental Policy-making What is so special about environmental policy-making? In what ways does environmental policy-making conform to the usual patterns and exhibit the usual problems inherent in public policy? The history of environmental policy making extends over many years, but the language of environmentalism, in particular, is relatively recent and new issues have emerged to challenge the assumptions of established actors in the policy system.
Week 10	Optional Lecture: Indigenous Policy This week should largely be devoted to working on your Research Essay, due in Week 12. However, an optional lecture on Indigenous Policy is provided if this is an area in which you have a particular interest
Week 11	The 'Policy Entrepreneur' How can determined individuals make a difference in policy formulation? Are there limits to the activities of policy entrepreneurs? Can useful rules be formulated as a guide to future policy entrepreneurs?
Week 12	Accountability To whom are governments accountable? Are these mechanisms effective. Is community consultation taken seriously by Australian governments and the bureaucracy? How might citizen participation be thwarted? How might it be enabled?

Week
13

Review and Exam

We review the content of the unit in this final week and pose a set of questions that underpin the final assessment exercise. A preview is provided of the exam - listening to the lecture is recommended before attempting the exam.

Learning and Teaching Activities

Reflective Participation

Engagement in discussion, an extended response to one discussion question and preparatory notes for a speaker on public policy

Analytical Report

An analysis of a topical issue reported in the media

Research Essay

An extended essay discussing the findings of a research effort in response to a set question

Examination

The opportunity to reflect on and test understanding of course concepts, theory and analytical tools in relation to public policy

Policies and Procedures

Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Extension Request

Special Consideration Policy and Procedure
(<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>)

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit [Ask MQ](#) and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to [the census date](#) (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to [apply for Special Circumstances](#). If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can [apply online](#).

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to [apply directly to Macquarie University](#).

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

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.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 (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

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

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay
- Examination

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills

- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay
- Examination

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay
- Examination

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay
- Examination

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay
- Examination

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay
- Examination

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report

- Research Essay
- Examination

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay

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

- Delineate assumptions underlying the content of policies in the public domain
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills about key problems and political considerations in the development of policy
- Demonstrate written communication skills
- Demonstrate an ability to undertake research and reveal an understanding of the linkages between theoretical perspectives and policy processes.

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Participation
- Analytical Report
- Research Essay

Changes from Previous Offering

Assessment tasks have been changed to emphasise the practical nature of public policy-making

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
16/02/2017	change of tutor