



MRES700

Research Communications

S1 External 2017

University

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Florence Chiew

florence.chiew@mq.edu.au

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes and 4cp at 700 level

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores the ways in which our disciplinary mindsets, habits and practices shape how we relate and communicate with other researchers. We will consider why and how we conform to certain academic conventions of style in our disciplines and the impact this has on our perception of ourselves as scholars. In doing so, we confront a central issue in research communication practices: If our disciplinary training shapes how we think, read, write and speak to each other, how can a person from one discipline understand someone from a different background? What do we need to translate complex findings and discipline-specific concepts into a language, format and context that non-experts can understand? Why and to whom does this matter? The course will debate these questions and discuss strategies for engaging with wider and non-specialist audiences. As effective communication relies on responsible communication, we will also pay close attention to the ethical dilemmas that can emerge from the research encounter, and through this deepen our appreciation of research integrity and responsibility.

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:

- adapt your research interests for a non-expert or non-specialist audience,
- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- provide constructive feedback on others' writing,

recognise the ideas, debates and dilemmas around research ethics and integrity.

General Assessment Information

Applying for an extension

Requests for an extension can be made by emailing the Unit Convenor at least one week prior to the due date. The email should outline the reason for the extension, and suggest a new submission date. The extension is granted once the convenor has responded to the request by email and a new submission date has been agreed on. Requests for an extension made within one week of the due date will only be granted if warranted by the circumstances and supported by appropriate documentation (e.g. medical certificate).

Late submissions

Work that is submitted after the due date (without an extension) will attract a penalty of 10% of the total marks for each week it is overdue (i.e. -10% for 1-6 days late; -20% for 7-13 days late; -30% for 14-20 days late). Work submitted more than 20 days late will not be accepted.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Blog portfolio	40%	No	31/3 and 12/5
Class participation	20%	No	ongoing
Research Pitch	40%	No	9 June 2017

Blog portfolio

Due: **31/3 and 12/5**

Weighting: **40%**

Twice in the course, you will submit a portfolio of 3 blog posts of at least 400 words each. All 6 of these posts should document the **preparation** you have done for that seminar. As they are preparation exercises, they must be uploaded **before** the seminar for which they are preparing. There are no extensions granted for this task as it was designed to be completed seminar by seminar.

The blog posts are meant to be informal, thoughtful and exploratory. They should demonstrate a close and critical engagement with assigned texts and seminar topics. You should use them to ask questions about the texts, draw out the logic and implications of the arguments you read and reflect on your own responses: why do you feel the way you do about the ideas proposed in the readings? Can you see another way of approaching the same question or topic?

They are a reflective form of writing so you may use the first person 'I'. As you proceed, you may also add links to interesting and relevant material, and connect points across different weeks. We want you to read with an open mind, and to explore ideas in your posts and others' posts, even if

you initially think the ideas are odd or unconventional or wrong.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- adapt your research interests for a non-expert or non-specialist audience,
- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- provide constructive feedback on others' writing,
- recognise the ideas, debates and dilemmas around research ethics and integrity.

Class participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

An important part of this course is dialogue and engaging honestly and critically with the views of others. It is an expectation that you will come to class prepared, having engaged with the set readings and formulated questions about them, and willing to share your thoughts with others. Your mark for this aspect of the assessment will be based on willingness to engage in class discussion, ask questions of your class mates and formulate views about the topics under discussion. You will not be assessed on whether you are 'right' or 'wrong', only on your willingness to participate.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- recognise the ideas, debates and dilemmas around research ethics and integrity.

Research Pitch

Due: **9 June 2017**

Weighting: **40%**

This assignment is due via *Turnitin*, on Friday 9 June.

Step 1

Imagine you need to explain your research project/idea to a panel of non-experts, and to convince them of your project's significance. This panel will consist of:

1. a) an academic from another faculty (e.g. if you are in biology imagine an ancient historian on your panel),
2. b) an interested member of the public,
3. c) a representative from a potential funding body (who is not an academic)
4. d) a journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*

Give a summary of your project/idea in language that is accessible to this diverse audience.

Explain the research problem or question you are interested in, and say why it matters to you. Aim for 1000 words.

Step 2

Organise yourself into a pair (or a group of 3) with another student/s.

Once you have partnered or teamed up, you need to swap a current version of your draft (activity in Step 1) with each other. Between seminar 9 and 10 you will give feedback to your partner or group member on their piece of writing. You will also receive feedback from your partner or group member on your piece of writing. Use this feedback to make revisions of your original draft. On Friday 9 June you should hand in both your original draft and your revised draft through *Turnitin*.

Step 3

Based on the feedback you've received, and on your own critical distance from your initial draft, identify a potential problem, issue or dilemma that you expect to face in communicating your research. This may be an actual problem that you are facing right now, or it may be an issue to ponder over a longer time frame. Your issue/problem could be:

- ? Topic related – working with complex subject matter.
- ? Approach related – a question of framing and how much detail to include.
- ? Writing, style, tone – detecting the difference between jargon and everyday language.
- ? Level of engagement – balancing being engaging and being faithful to the evidence.
- ? Audience – checking assumptions of what an average layperson may know.
- ? Real-world application – a question of social impact.
- ? Ethical – e.g. identifying the different ways in which people can participate in the study.

Write a short critical reflection on your problem or dilemma. Explain how and why it might make it difficult to convey the significance of your project/idea. This should be reasonably elaborate. Don't just state what the dilemma is. You need to flesh out why it is a dilemma, what some of your options are, why you feel stuck on it, the implications of different ways of resolving it, and so on. Use specific examples to help explain this problem.

It doesn't matter (in terms of your mark) how successfully the problem is resolved. What matters is the quality of your analysis: why, for example, do you find it difficult to write in your own voice, or to imagine writing as having a good conversation? What assumptions about academic writing or the scholarly persona underpin this obstacle? Why is it hard to

put yourself in the shoes of your reader/audience? What does perspective-taking tell you about how to frame ideas? It may be helpful to make use of the readings discussed in the course to develop your reflections. Aim for 500 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- adapt your research interests for a non-expert or non-specialist audience,
- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- provide constructive feedback on others' writing,
- recognise the ideas, debates and dilemmas around research ethics and integrity.

Delivery and Resources

Readings will be available on the iLearn unit and via [MultiSearch, the MQ Library catalogue site](#). In MultiSearch, click on Unit Readings, and enter MRES700.

MRES700 Unit Readings List

Ann Game and Andrew Metcalfe (2003). 'Writing', in *The first year experience: start, stay, succeed at uni*(Annandale: NSW Federation Press), pp. 36-47.

Ann Game and Andrew Metcalfe (2003). 'Reading', in *The first year experience: start, stay, succeed at uni*(Annandale: NSW Federation Press), pp. 48-54.

Helen Sword (2012). Chapter 1 'Rules of Engagement', and Chapter 2 'On Being Disciplined' in *Stylish Academic Writing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) [online access]

Howard Becker (2007). Chapter 2 'Persona and Authority', in *Writing for Social Scientists* (Chicago: Chicago University Press), pp. 26-42.

Ruth Barcan (2013). Chapter 5 'Feeling like a Fraud: Or, the Upside of Knowing You Can Never Be Good Enough', in *Academic Life and Labour in the New University* (England: Ashgate), 191-216.

David Bohm (2004) *On Dialogue* (London and New York: Routledge)

William Zinsser (1988). Chapter 9 'Writing Mathematics', in *Writing to Learn* (New York: Harper Collins), pp. 149-167.

Robert Boice (2000). Section II 'Write in Mindful Ways', in *Advice for New Faculty Members* (Allyn & Bacon Publishers), pp. 103-113.

Virginia Valian (1977). 'Learning to Work', in *Working it Out: 23 Women Writers, Artists, Scientists, and Scholars Talk About Their Lives and Work* (New York: Pantheon Books)

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

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

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

- adapt your research interests for a non-expert or non-specialist audience,
- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- recognise the ideas, debates and dilemmas around research ethics and integrity.

Assessment tasks

- Blog portfolio
- Class participation
- Research Pitch

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

- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- provide constructive feedback on others' writing,

Assessment task

- Research Pitch

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

- adapt your research interests for a non-expert or non-specialist audience,
- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- provide constructive feedback on others' writing,
- recognise the ideas, debates and dilemmas around research ethics and integrity.

Assessment tasks

- Blog portfolio
- Research Pitch

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

- display more advanced critical thinking and writing skills,
- provide constructive feedback on others' writing,

Assessment tasks

- Blog portfolio
- Class participation
- Research Pitch

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

- adapt your research interests for a non-expert or non-specialist audience,
- provide constructive feedback on others' writing,

Assessment tasks

- Blog portfolio
- Class participation
- Research Pitch

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

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

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- recognise the ideas, debates and dilemmas around research ethics and integrity.

Assessment task

- Class participation