GEOP8060

Environmental Impact Assessment

Session 2, Special circumstance 2020

Department of Geography and Planning

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Disclaimer

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Notice

As part of Phase 3 of our return to campus plan, most units will now run tutorials, seminars and ot her small group learning activities on campus for the second half-year, while keeping an online ver sion available for those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies onli ne.

To check the availability of face-to-face and onlin e activities for your unit, please go to timetable vi ewer. To check detailed information on unit asses sments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult yo ur unit convenor.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Greg Walkerden
greg.walkerden@mq.edu.au

Credit points
10

Prerequisites
Admission to MEnv or MEnvEd or MEnvMgt or MEnvStud or MEnvPlan or MPlan or GradCertEnvPlan or MWldMgt or MPPP or MMarScMgt or MEnvLaw or GradDipEnv or MSusDev or GradCertSusDev or GradDipSusDev or GradCertSIA or GradDipSIA or MConsBiol or GradDipConsBiol or MDevStud or MPASRMDevStud or MPPPMDevStud or MSc in (Biodiversity Conversation or Remote Sensing and GIS or Environmental Health)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is a central decision making process in many planning systems, and it sets the agenda for ongoing environmental management of major developments. This unit will enhance student's understanding of how EIA is carried out in Australia and internationally. The focus is on the preparation and evaluation of environmental impact assessment statements, and on the design and performance of EIA systems, in the context of strategic environmental assessments. Environmental impact statements prepared for the New South Wales context, as well as for other jurisdictions in Australia and some overseas countries, will be examined. Platform skills such as systems thinking and negotiation are emphasised.

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:

ULO1: Evaluate, and propose improvements to, the design of EIA systems for major projects

ULO2: Apply skills in stakeholder analysis, negotiation, and project presentation in EIA

ULO3: Scope environmental impacts using skills in socio-ecological systems analysis

ULO4: Apply skills in project management and management system design in EIA

ULO5: Critically evaluate Environmental Impact Statements from the perspective of sustainable development

ULO6: Analyse the sustainable development implications of EIA processes adopted in different nations

General Assessment Information

Assessment Standards

Many specific aspects of your work are important (as identified in the following standards), but it is the overall quality of the completed work that is important. Assignments will be assessed holistically. The following bands are 'ideal types': lists of the features of typical examples of assignments at each level. The standard of each assignment is obviously important - good grades demonstrate that your work is competent, proficient or excellent. But from a learning perspective, it is equally important to look at your own work developmentally: to look for gradual improvement, deepening insight, and broadening competency. Grades for assignments assess the standard of your work. Comments on assignments are intended to be helpful developmentally: indicating what you have achieved, and how you could improve your work.

For a grade of High Distinction (>= 85%)

- use and synthesis of a variety of high quality sources not mentioned in class or on reading lists;
- considered use of dictionary and technical terms, diagrams and/or other sources to define and set the topic in context;
- incisive and decisive specification of the key issues;
- prioritisation and exposition of the key issues in a clear and logical sequence;
- relevant contrary arguments are identified and effectively dealt with;
- discussion forms a sound basis for clear, justified and comprehensive recommendations and conclusions;
- independence of thought and obvious originality;
- demonstrated ability to weigh arguments and form clear, considered personal viewpoints;
- proficient use of the English language;
- references presented at 'publishable' standard.

Overall, your work demonstrates, in an interesting or challenging way, originality based on proficiency in all the learning objectives.

For a grade of Distinction (75-84%)

- use and synthesis of some high quality sources not mentioned in class or on reading lists, and reference to some others;
- adequate use of dictionary and technical terms, diagrams and/or other sources to define and set the topic in context;
- clear specification of the key issues;
- key issues generally presented in a logical sequence;
- relevant contrary arguments raised but might not be fully resolved;
- discussion leads to clear and justified recommendations and conclusions;
- independence of thought and significant originality;
- general ability to weigh arguments and form personal viewpoints;
- clear use of the English language;
- references largely error free.

Overall, your work demonstrates a comprehensive awareness and understanding of the topic of the assignment.

For a grade of Credit (65-74%)

- use and synthesis of some high quality sources, and reference to some additional good quality material;
- use of dictionary and technical terms to define and contextualise the topic;
- overall awareness of the key issues;
- the selected key issues generally presented in a logical sequence;
- some contrary arguments raised with inadequate appreciation of their significance;
- a clear statement of conclusions and recommendations;
- some independent thought but limited originality;
- difficulties in weighing arguments and presenting personal viewpoints;
- sometimes proficient and always passable use of the English language;
- some errors of omission or detail in presentation of references.

Overall, your work demonstrates the ability to use and apply fundamental concepts and skills.

For a grade of Pass (50-64%)

- limited use and synthesis of good quality sources;
- use of dictionary or vernacular definitions in an attempt to identify and set the topic in context;
- some awareness of the key issues;
- some attempt to order the argument, but flaws in logical discipline;
- few contrary arguments raised and little appreciation of their significance or resolution;

- a generally clear statement of conclusions and recommendations;
- little independent thought and minimal originality;
- little weighing of argument and lack of clarity in personal viewpoints;
- passable use of the English language;
- some errors of omission or detail in presentation of references.

Overall, your work satisfies the basic learning requirements of the assignment.

For a lower grade of Fail (26-49%)

- lack of awareness of sources or what the question is about;
- confused definitions;
- general inability to identify the key issues;
- inability to order the argument;
- few, if any, contrary arguments raised and no appreciation of their significance or resolution;
- inadequate statement of conclusions or recommendations;
- no independent thought or originality;
- no ability to weigh arguments or form personal viewpoints.

For a grade of Serious Fail (< 26%)

- no reference to suggested sources, generally inappropriate use of materials;
- no attempt at definitions;
- no awareness of key issues, such that the paper fails to address or answer the question;
- arguments unformulated, many errors, unsupported assertions, unjustified generalisations;
- contrary arguments impugned or ignored;
- inconclusive outcome to the paper;
- no independent thought, any originality likely to be illogical;
- inability to weigh arguments, personal viewpoints absent or inadequate.

Source: Neil DT, Wadley DA, and Phinn SR 1999, 'A generic framework for criterion-referenced assessment of undergraduate essays', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 23(3) pp. 303-325. See also: Neil DT, Wadley DA, and Phinn SR 1998, *Assessment Guidelines*, School of Geography, Planning and Environmental Management, The University of Queensland. Used with permission. This text is a very minor adaptation of an excerpt from Neil, Wadley and Phinn (1998). See the full text in either version for further very useful background on these standards, and the criteria they reflect.

Academic Honesty

It is a fundamental principle that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation,

development, application and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- all academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim
- all academic collaborations are acknowledged
- academic work is not falsified in any way
- when the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately.

All students should familiarise themselves with Macquarie University's Academic Honesty Policy. The Department recommends that students familiarise themselves with the explanation of plagiarism on the Georgetown University Honor Council website which discusses plagiarism in an easy to understand and comprehensive manner.

If you are struggling to complete an assignment, please contact the Unit Convenor, or make a Special Consideration request via ask.mq.edu.au.

Word Counts

References are not included in the word counts set for each assignment. A tolerance of plus or minus 10% is allowed for, on the set lengths. So for example, a 1,000 word essay could be anywhere from 900 to 1,100 words long. If you submit assignments that are shorter or longer than this, you may be penalised for length.

Submission of Assignments

Write assignments are to be submitted electronically via iLearn before midnight on the due date. *Written assignments will be reviewed by Turnitin, which helps us check whether sources are properly acknowledged, and whether assignments submitted are each student's own work.*

Extensions & Late submissions

To request an extension, make a request for Special Consideration through ask.mq.edu.au, providing a clear explanation and providing supporting documentation where needed (e.g. a Macquarie Professional Authority form). **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.** Please plan your work for your units at the start of the Session, and keep track of how much time you have available for each assignment. Please get help if you are having trouble completing work on time. Visit a doctor, a Campus Wellbeing service (https://students.mq.edu.au/support/wellbeing), talk to the Unit Convenor for academic help, or whatever else is appropriate.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
EIA System Review Outline	5%	No	11:59 pm, Monday 24th August

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
EIA System Review	35%	No	11:59 pm, Sunday 13th September
Review of an EIS	60%	No	11:59 pm, Monday 5th October

EIA System Review Outline

Assessment Type [1]: Plan
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 10 hours
Due: **11:59 pm, Monday 24th August**
Weighting: **5%**

Provide a brief outline, using section headings and dot points, that outlines your preliminary analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the EIA system you are assessing. 300 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate, and propose improvements to, the design of EIA systems for major projects
- Apply skills in project management and management system design in EIA
- Analyse the sustainable development implications of EIA processes adopted in different nations

EIA System Review

Assessment Type [1]: Report
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 30 hours
Due: **11:59 pm, Sunday 13th September**
Weighting: **35%**

Critical assessment of an EIA System for major projects, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, from the perspectives of socio-ecological dynamics and stakeholder interests, considering both (i) the EIA system design and (ii) how it operates in practice. 1,700 words.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate, and propose improvements to, the design of EIA systems for major projects
- Scope environmental impacts using skills in socio-ecological systems analysis
- Analyse the sustainable development implications of EIA processes adopted in different nations

Review of an EIS

Assessment Type [1]: Project
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 55 hours
Due: **11:59 pm, Monday 5th October**
Weighting: **60%**

Project teams will be assigned an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a major project, policy or program. Each team will divide the assessment of the EIS into a number of parts. Each team member will prepare a 2,000 word objective and independent assessment of the part of the EIS allocated to them. Project teams will then debate whether the major project, policy or program should be approved or rejected.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate, and propose improvements to, the design of EIA systems for major projects
- Apply skills in stakeholder analysis, negotiation, and project presentation in EIA
- Scope environmental impacts using skills in socio-ecological systems analysis
- Apply skills in project management and management system design in EIA
- Critically evaluate Environmental Impact Statements from the perspective of sustainable development

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[1] If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the Writing Centre for academic skills support.

[2] Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Learning and teaching processes

The main elements of teaching are:

- key information is laid out in lecture segments;
- guest lecturers introduce aspects of professional practice;
- workshop sessions provide opportunities for experiential learning;
- assignments that provide opportunities to develop and demonstrate that you have met the Unit Learning Outcomes.

Covid-19 is creating an unusual level of uncertainty over the details of how the unit will be delivered, and it may be that changes will be forced by future outbreaks in Sydney. As a result, it will be essential that you pay close attention to instructions about how to complete the unit on its iLearn site (https://ilearn.mq.edu.au).

Some teaching will be in the form of lecture material, readings, and exercises to be done online in your own time (asynchronous teaching), and some will be face to face, either via Zoom (links

will be provided on iLearn) or on campus (synchronous teaching). Currently we expecting small group work to happen on campus, and large group work to happen on online, but that may change. It will be important to complete the asynchronous work before the sessions where are all working together.

Technology used and required

Students need access to a computer and basic office software (eg. Microsoft Office or OpenOffice), and course web pages to complete assessment tasks.

Using the iLearn site

The Unit's iLearn site (available via https://ilearn.mq.edu.au) is fundamental to delivery of the Unit.

Using the research literature

Citing peer reviewed research is essential for all assignments. Access peer reviewed journal articles through the University Library's website; use MultiSearch. Google Scholar is an excellent starting point. If you are off-campus, accessing Google Scholar from the university library's home page (see link below the Search box) will make it easier to get to journal articles.

The following databases of journal articles accessible through the University Library are also particularly recommended:

- Academic Search Premier
- JSTOR
- Scopus
- Web of Knowledge
- Web of Science.

The library has also put together helpful research guides for many disciplines relevant to this unit. See the Unit's iLearn pages for further information.

Unit Schedule

See the unit's iLearn site (https://ilearn.mq.edu.au) for details of the Schedule.

When run on campus, Environmental Impact Assessment is run over five full days. In 2020 the timetabled days are:

Saturday 1st August: History & Context

Saturday 22nd August: Receiving ecosystems case study

Friday 11th September: Built environment case study

Saturday 3rd October: Reforming EIA

Saturday 24th October: Environmental Impact Statement Debates

In this mode, each session runs from **9:30 am to 5:00 pm**.

Please refer to the iLearn site to find out how this schedule is being adapted to manage the risks of Covid-19.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Progression Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Fitness to Practice Procedure
- Grade Appeal Policy
- Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public
- Special Consideration Policy *(**Note:** The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.)*

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the Student Policy Gateway (https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit Policy Central (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct

Results

Results published on platform other than eStudent, (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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 help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Getting help with your assignment
- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- Subject and Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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.