



BIOL7920

Topics in Evolution

Session 1, Special circumstances 2021

Archive (Pre-2022) - Department of Biological Sciences

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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 other small group activities on campus, and most will keep an online version available to those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies online.

To check the availability of face-to-face activities for your unit, please go to [timetable viewer](#). To check detailed information on unit assessments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult your unit convenor.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Module presenter

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Students will formulate novel research questions within well-defined topic areas, conduct a comprehensive review of the primary literature, synthesise this material to address their research question, and present their findings in written form. This unit provides an opportunity for students to explore areas of biological research that they may be unfamiliar with at the outset. The intention is to give students an opportunity improve their skills in two fundamental forms of scientific writing: grant proposals and literature reviews.

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: Demonstrate advanced skills in scientific writing

ULO2: Synthesise primary scientific literature

ULO3: Construct and critique scientific arguments

ULO4: Critically reflect upon your own written work and constructively review the work of your peers

General Assessment Information

Submission of work: All assessment tasks (proposal, abstract & final review) must be submitted electronically via the **relevant TURNITIN link** located in iLearn.

Scheduling of assessment tasks: Assessment tasks have been scheduled so that feedback from earlier assessments can adequately inform the more heavily-weighted latter tasks (full grant proposal & review). Where possible they have been designed so as to not contribute to workload bottlenecks for students undertaking Year 1 of the MRes program.

Academic honesty - IMPORTANT: Presenting the work of another person as one's own is a serious breach of the University's rules and carries significant penalties. The University's Academic Honesty Policy can be accessed at:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

In this unit we will be checking written work for plagiarism using TURNITIN. Penalties for plagiarism may include a zero mark for the assignment or in more extreme cases, failure of the unit. Plagiarism WILL be noted on your academic record. Full details of penalties can be found at:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/schedule_penalties.html

Extensions, penalties and disruptions to study: Overdue assessment tasks will attract a penalty at the rate of **5 % of the total mark allocated for the task per day past the due date**. Weekend days are included in this calculation. The penalty will be capped at 75 %, which means that once your submission is more than 15 days overdue you can earn up to a maximum of 25 % of the assessment grade. The date and time of your submission will be taken as registered by TURNITIN.

Deadlines for assessments are **not negotiable** except under circumstances when you have experienced a serious and unavoidable disruption. In such instances, you should formally lodge a disruption to studies notification via ASK@MQ. University policy and procedure in regard to disruptions is given in the links below, but please note in particular:

1. To be eligible for special consideration, you must notify the University of a *serious and unavoidable* disruption **within five (5) working days** of the commencement of the disruption;
2. Such requests must be lodged for the **specific assessment task** for which you experienced disruption. Special consideration cannot be granted retrospectively (i.e., beyond the 5-day window of each assessment due-date);
3. Unit staff will NOT be held responsible for assessing special consideration **unless a disruption notification is formally lodged** viaASK@MQ.

Further information about the Disruptions to Studies policy and procedure is online at Policy Central:

http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/procedure.html.

And there is additional information on managing your Disruptions to Studies at:

http://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/manage_your_study_program/disruption_to_studies/

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Literature review plan	5%	No	Week 4
Peer review - literature review	10%	No	Week 6
Literature review	35%	No	Week 7
Grant proposal plan	5%	No	Week 10
Peer review of grant proposal	10%	No	Week 12
Grant proposal	30%	No	Week 15
Time on task reflection	5%	No	Week 13

Literature review plan

Assessment Type ¹: Professional writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 8 hours

Due: **Week 4**

Weighting: **5%**

An outline for the proposed literature review

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced skills in scientific writing
- Synthesise primary scientific literature
- Construct and critique scientific arguments

Peer review - literature review

Assessment Type ¹: Professional writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 8 hours

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **10%**

Students will peer review each others literature review drafts prior to final submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Construct and critique scientific arguments
- Critically reflect upon your own written work and constructively review the work of your peers

Literature review

Assessment Type ¹: Literature review

Indicative Time on Task ²: 45 hours

Due: **Week 7**

Weighting: **35%**

A short literature review on a topic in biological sciences.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced skills in scientific writing
- Synthesise primary scientific literature
- Construct and critique scientific arguments

Grant proposal plan

Assessment Type ¹: Professional writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 8 hours

Due: **Week 10**

Weighting: **5%**

A plan for the proposed grant application.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced skills in scientific writing
- Synthesise primary scientific literature
- Construct and critique scientific arguments

Peer review of grant proposal

Assessment Type **1**: Professional writing

Indicative Time on Task **2**: 8 hours

Due: **Week 12**

Weighting: **10%**

Students will peer review each others grant proposal drafts prior to final submission.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically reflect upon your own written work and constructively review the work of your peers

Grant proposal

Assessment Type **1**: Professional writing

Indicative Time on Task **2**: 45 hours

Due: **Week 15**

Weighting: **30%**

Students will write an grant application.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced skills in scientific writing
- Synthesise primary scientific literature
- Construct and critique scientific arguments

Time on task reflection

Assessment Type ¹: Reflective Writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 8 hours

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **5%**

Students will keep a time on task diary and at the end of the session reflect on their time management.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate advanced skills in scientific writing

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

Unit readings

There is no formally prescribed text for this unit. Recommended readings will be populated into iLearn. These include the following guides for effective science communication:

Cheng K (2019) *Expository Scientific Writing: A Short Guide*.

Haddaway et al. 2020 Eight problems with literature reviews and how to fix them. *Nature Ecology & Evolution*

iLearn

iLearn and email will be the principle method of communication in this subject. We expect you to regularly stay in touch with the unit's dedicated iLearn site, where you will find ongoing unit announcements and a group discussion forum. The site will also be populated with material such as relevant new literature and grade outcomes for specific assessment tasks.

As noted earlier, additional resources of relevance are provided on the MRes community iLearn site "**Biological Sciences PG**", accessible from your iLearn homepage under "Community Units" or directly via the link:

<https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/course/view.php?id=49045>

How do you log in? The URL for the iLearn is: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>. You will need to log in to iLearn each time you use it. Your user name is your student number and the password your oneID. For further details go to http://mq.edu.au/iLearn/student_info/index.htm. If you are having trouble accessing your online unit due to a disability or health condition, please contact Macquarie Student Services. If you cannot log in after ensuring you have entered your username and password correctly, contact Student IT Help: 9850 4357 (in Sydney) or 1 800 063 191 (outside Sydney).

Unit Schedule

The structure for this unit is based around two writing modules corresponding to each half of the teaching session. The first module deals with writing an opinion/commentary-style literature review and the second deals with writing a research grant proposal. Each module starts with several weeks of scheduled face-to-face tutorial hours in which you will receive guidance for the task. There is a common assessment structure for each module consisting of a plan/proposal, a student peer-assessment task, and the full document.

A full outline of unit activities and their precise dates/times throughout the teaching session will be updated in Unit Guide publication prior to the session start (and published on the unit's iLearn site).

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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](#)

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of

Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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.

Changes from Previous Offering

This unit has for several years been based around a single literature review task, and prior to that served as the “theme topic” literature review component of the Biological Sciences Honours program. The 2021 delivery of BIOL7920 has been modified to include a roughly equally-weighted grant-writing task, therefore scaling back the size and scope of the review writing task. This change has occurred along with changes to related units in a course restructure aimed at coherence and continuity of the Year 1 MRes curriculum. The overall emphasis in BIOL7920 remains on developing effective scientific writing practices.