



NSCI7930

Research Topics in Natural Sciences 1

Session 2, Online-scheduled-weekday 2023

School of Natural Sciences

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff Tracy Rushmer tracy.rushmer@mq.edu.au
Credit points 10
Prerequisites Admission to MRes
Corequisites
Co-badged status
Unit description This unit comprises study of special topics in the natural sciences, and is designed to supplement a student's existing knowledge and coursework with targeted material and techniques that will be required for their MRes thesis project in year two. Activities may include attending a national or international summer school, cross-institutional study or highly tailored units of study that are exemplars of current analytical/theoretical concepts or problem-solving applications. Topics and activities will be selected with the aid of an academic supervisor.

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:** Critically synthesize and evaluate information from a variety of sources
- ULO2:** Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of research principles and methods
- ULO3:** Rigorously apply scientific methods to address a research question
- ULO4:** Articulate clearly a coherent argument in written, oral or technical communication as relevant to the specific activity chosen

General Assessment Information

Requirements to Pass this Unit

To pass this unit you must:

- Attempt all assessments, and
- Achieve a total mark equal to or greater than 50%

Engagement – please read, as this is very important

As a BPhil / MRes Yr 1 student you are becoming part of our community of researchers. You need to be an active participant in the unit activities. You will be expected to proactively interact with your mentor.

Academic Honesty

Presenting the work of another person as one's own is a serious breach of the University's rules and carries significant penalties. 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. (link: [Academic Integrity Policy](#))

Due dates and assessment topics

In the first week of the session you will have the opportunity to set the learning plan with due dates through agreement with your mentor and the convenor. Once due dates are agreed they are final.

Late Assessment Submission Penalty

Unless a [Special Consideration](#) request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark of the task) will be applied for each day a written report or presentation assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a grade of '0' will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. **The submission time for all uploaded assessments is 11:55 pm.** A 1-hour grace period will be provided to students who experience a technical concern. For any late submission of time-sensitive tasks, such as scheduled tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, and/or scheduled practical assessments/labs, please apply for [Special Consideration](#).

Assessments where Late Submissions will be accepted

In this unit, late submissions will be accepted as follows:

- As agreed in your Learning Plan

Special Consideration

The Special Consideration Policy aims to support students who have been impacted by short-term circumstances or events that are serious, unavoidable and significantly disruptive, and which may affect their performance in assessment. If you experience circumstances or events that affect your ability to complete the assessments in this unit on time, please contact your mentor and the convenor prior to submitting a Special Consideration request through [ask.mq.edu.au](#).

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Assessment tasks (3+)	95%	No	As agreed in Learning Plan
Learning plan	5%	Yes	End of Week 1

Assessment tasks (3+)

Assessment Type ¹: Project

Indicative Time on Task ²: 132 hours

Due: **As agreed in Learning Plan**

Weighting: **95%**

You will have a minimum of 3 assessment tasks, with a maximum of 60% weighting for any one task. Tasks can vary and may include a scientific report, report, essay or exam, as appropriate for a 10cp unit. Assessment tasks and weightings will follow the learning plan agreed upon with the supervisor for a project-based unit, or will be as listed in the unit guides when components of other units are being undertaken with the approval of the unit convenor.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically synthesize and evaluate information from a variety of sources
- Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of research principles and methods
- Rigorously apply scientific methods to address a research question
- Articulate clearly a coherent argument in written, oral or technical communication as relevant to the specific activity chosen

Learning plan

Assessment Type ¹: Learning plan

Indicative Time on Task ²: 5 hours

Due: **End of Week 1**

Weighting: **5%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

You will work with the supervisor or unit convenor to develop a learning plan for the unit that includes all assessment tasks and the total time to be spent on these tasks (not to exceed 132 hrs).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically synthesize and evaluate information from a variety of sources
- Articulate clearly a coherent argument in written, oral or technical communication as relevant to the specific activity chosen

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

Off-shore students

Off-shore students must email the convenor as soon as possible to discuss study options.

Attendance at scheduled activities

Should any activity be missed due to illness or misadventure please notify the convenor as soon as possible (ideally prior to the scheduled activity).

On-campus / in person is the preferred way to attend unit activities, but please do not attend class in person if you are unwell. See [iLearn](#) for details on attending unit activities online.

COVID

Students are requested to minimise the risk of spreading COVID to themselves and others in accordance with the university and NSW Health guidelines: <https://www.mq.edu.au/about/coronavirus-faqs> and <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe>. Students who feel unwell are requested to participate in the class using the online option (see [iLearn](#)). Any further requirements or changes to units in relation to COVID will be communicated to students via [iLearn](#).

Unit Schedule

1. On Friday the 28th July, the Convenor will meet with students and mentors at 12 noon in Room 14ER 280 (Tea Room).
2. Mandatory 1 hour face to face meeting in Week 1 with your mentor to discuss and complete your Learning Plan for the semester.
3. Meet with your mentor 1 hour face to face meetings/updates as agreed by you and your

mentor.

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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution 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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the 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

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

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.