



# MMCC2100

## Public Relations and Social Media: Foundations and Cases

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2025

*School of Communication, Society and Culture*

### Contents

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<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	3
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	4
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	8

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#### **Disclaimer**

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor, Lecturer, Tutor

Lauren Gorfinkel

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Contact via Email

Tues 11am-12pm after the lecture (on Zoom)

Tutor

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is an introduction to the theory and practice of Public Relations (PR) and Social Media. Students will explore the dominant perceptions of PR and Social Media, while investigating its presence in our everyday life. We will examine the relationship between PR and Social Media with a focus on media relations, crisis communication, corporate social responsibility and not-for-profit campaigns. The unit will enable you to be informed about the role that PR and Social Media plays in our social, political and cultural environments. It will also help develop strong conceptual and analytical foundations as well as creative and presentation skills in preparation for a career in public communications and the media.

## 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:** analyse and demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR and Social Media in contemporary society.

**ULO2:** evaluate the principles and theories of PR and Social Media.

**ULO3:** communicate, present and debate your own ideas to a group.

**ULO4:** exhibit high level English writing skills in academic and professional forms.

**ULO5:** construct a campaign or project that demonstrates your ability to apply knowledge, analyse issues and solve a problem in a creative way that is understandable to others.

**ULO6:** communicate your understanding of PR and Social Media in written form.

## General Assessment Information

### Late Penalty

*Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to written reports and recordings only. **Late submission of time sensitive tasks** (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs) **will be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application.***

If you find you cannot submit your assignment on time, please apply for Special Consideration through AskMQ. Make sure you read Macquarie University's policy regarding Special Consideration requests before you apply: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration>

### Additional information

For unit assessment requirements and standards for this unit, please refer to the Assessment Policy (Schedule 1): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/assessment>

To achieve the full benefit of learning in this unit as well as to successfully complete assessment tasks, it is crucial to engage with the lectures, read the set readings, and actively participate in

the tutorials. The tutorials will be focused on discussing important knowledge from the lectures, workshopping ideas, working through scenarios, developing projects that will form the basis of your assessments, and practicing important related skills relevant to a career in public relations and social media.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#"><u>Awareness/Action Campaign Analysis</u></a>	30%	No	11/04/2025
<a href="#"><u>Campaign Creation/AI Analysis</u></a>	30%	No	09/05/2025
<a href="#"><u>Crisis Communications Presentation</u></a>	40%	No	06/06/2025

### Awareness/Action Campaign Analysis

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Project

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 25 hours

Due: **11/04/2025**

Weighting: **30%**

For this assignment, you will analyse an organisation's use of media relations, social media, websites, and other public relations strategies and channels for an awareness or advocacy campaign. In the process, you will demonstrate your knowledge and application of relevant public relations concepts and theory. See ilearn for further details.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- analyse and demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR and Social Media in contemporary society.
- evaluate the principles and theories of PR and Social Media.
- exhibit high level English writing skills in academic and professional forms.
- communicate your understanding of PR and Social Media in written form.

### Campaign Creation/AI Analysis

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Project

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 30 hours

Due: **09/05/2025**

Weighting: **30%**

For this assignment you will create a new awareness or advocacy campaign for the organisation

you analysed for assignment 1. Your campaign should build on the organisation's existing campaigns and include an email pitch to the journalist, a media release, and an engaging social media post. AI tools may be used in this task as specified in the lectures, tutorials and detailed assessment guide. You will provide a detailed justification for the new campaign idea, including a rationale explaining key elements of your campaign, as well as a reflection on the use of AI for this task. See ilearn for further details.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- analyse and demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR and Social Media in contemporary society.
- evaluate the principles and theories of PR and Social Media.
- exhibit high level English writing skills in academic and professional forms.
- construct a campaign or project that demonstrates your ability to apply knowledge, analyse issues and solve a problem in a creative way that is understandable to others.
- communicate your understanding of PR and Social Media in written form.

## Crisis Communications Presentation

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Presentation

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 30 hours

Due: **06/06/2025**

Weighting: **40%**

For this assignment, you will analyse and evaluate a recent communications/reputation crisis for an organisation. Applying crisis communications theory, you will present advice to the organisation's leaders explaining what happened, what they could have done differently and what they can do to rebuild their reputation. See ilearn for further details.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- analyse and demonstrate knowledge of the role and place of PR and Social Media in contemporary society.
- evaluate the principles and theories of PR and Social Media.
- communicate, present and debate your own ideas to a group.
- exhibit high level English writing skills in academic and professional forms.
- construct a campaign or project that demonstrates your ability to apply knowledge, analyse issues and solve a problem in a creative way that is understandable to others.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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

**Lectures and Tutorials** MMCC2100 consists of a 1-hour lecture (live online and recorded) and a 1-hour tutorial (on-campus or online). Lectures begin in Week 1. Tutorials begin in Week 2.

Students are expected to engage in the lecture (live or recorded), read the assigned readings, and engage with other materials provided on iLearn prior to their tutorial to ensure they are prepared for class discussions and activities. i.e. if you are not watching the lecture live please schedule a time in your calendar to watch it before your tutorial.

### Consultation

The consultation time will be via Zoom directly after the lecture. The recording of the lecture will stop and you'll be able to ask any questions about the unit. You are also welcome to email the convenor with your questions.

### Audio-Visual Materials

Audio-visual materials including recorded lectures, lecture slides, tutorial materials and online readings will be available via iLearn.

### Readings

All required readings will be available electronically and linked to the weekly topics in Leganto/iLearn. It is recommended that you start with the set textbook first where listed, following by extra materials in the 'consolidation' section for each week, and move on to other readings to assist with your assessment tasks if you have more time. A link to the readings will be available under each weekly heading. Alternatively you may access readings for all weeks via the Leganto/Unit Readings tab on iLearn. Note that new and extra readings may be added to the Leganto tab for those interested in going deeper.

### Textbook

The following book is the set textbook for this unit:

**Sutherland, K., Ali, S. and Khattab, U. (2019) *Public Relations and Strategic Communication*. Oxford University Press: Melbourne.**

The chapters in the book form the weekly readings for most weeks. Knowledge of content from both the lectures and this book will provide a solid basis for the assessment tasks and must be referenced in assessments along with any other readings relevant to your specific project or case study.

The textbook will be **available via ilearn/Leganto/the library** as an **e-book**. As a limited number of students will be able to access the book at any one time due to copyright restrictions, it is highly recommended that students download relevant chapters well in advance of assessment due dates or purchase their own copy in case they are unable to access the library copies when needed.

If you are relying on the library copies please log off ASAP after you have downloaded what you need to give everyone an opportunity.

If you'd like to purchase your own **paperback** or **e-book** you can get 20% off the e-book from the publisher by using the code SAVE20 at the checkout. When compiling this unit guide, the best value for the **paperback** version seemed to be via [Amazon](#) at **half price**. The text is also available to **rent** as an eBook at half the cost of the print book from the publisher. Click [here](#).

### **Technology required**

You are expected to access iLearn: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/> at least once a week before your tutorial and keep up-to-date with lectures, announcements and new materials. You are also advised to check your student emails regularly for ilearn and unit updates. You should be able to access relevant scholarly and professional information from the library online and from broader online, media and social media sources.

You will be required to create a video capturing face-to-camera as well as slides for one of the assignments. The suggested platforms for recording this assessment are Zoom or Echo360. If you have any issues with access to technology, please consult with the unit convenor or your tutor as soon as possible. You are advised to test out technology in the first week of the unit (don't wait until the week your assignment is due). If you have any technical difficulties please contact [onehelp@mq.edu.au](mailto:onehelp@mq.edu.au) for assistance.

## **Unit Schedule**

### PR FOUNDATIONS

**Week 1:** Introduction to PR and the Unit

**Week 2:** Publics, Channels, Messages: Focus on Earned Media and Social Media

**Week 3:** PR Theories, Research Methods, Analytical Skills

### PROACTIVE CHANGE CAMPAIGNS

**Week 4:** Not-for-Profit/Charity/Advocacy Campaigns

**Week 5:** Corporate Campaigns: Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social Governance (ESG), Corporate Activism

**Week 6:** Government Campaigns / Political Campaigns

### MEDIA RELATIONS / CONTENT CREATION

**Week 7:** How to write a media release and pitch to journalists (Assessment 1 – Awareness/ Advocacy Campaign Analysis Due 30%)

MID-SEMESTER BREAK

**Week 8:** AI in PR: Pros and Cons for PR Planning and Content Creation

CRISIS COMMUNICATION

**Week 9:** PR and Ethics: A Deeper Dive (Assessment 2 – Campaign Creation / AI Analysis Due 30%)

**Weeks 10-11:** Issue and Crisis Communications: Theories and Cases

**Week 12:** Professional Presentation Skills: Presenting to Clients

**Week 13:** No class (Assessment 3 – Crisis Communication Presentation Due 40%)

## 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 [connect.mq.edu.au](http://connect.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto: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/>

### Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) 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 the [Service Connect Portal](#), 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/](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.

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Unit information based on version 2025.03 of the [Handbook](#)