ENVS8525

Sustainability and Transitions

Winter vacation, In person-scheduled-intensive, North Ryde 2025

School of Natural Sciences

Contents

Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Convenor
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Credit points
10

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit examines the origins, issues, policies, principles and processes of sustainable development (SD) and transition theories. Students are engaged in a process of identifying how sustainable development principles are interpreted in practice in different sectors including in national frameworks, local government and business and how these relate to social, environmental, economic and governance transitions. The unit involves the students in analysis of the theoretical, ideological and value bases of SD and a critical appraisal of the policy and practical approaches that exist, are emerging and required to support a transition towards sustainability.

Learning in this unit enhances student understanding of global challenges identified by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action

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 a knowledge of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and how

they inform individual to institutional policy and practice.

ULO2: Articulate a position on 'sustainable development' and explain this through discourse or transition theories

ULO3: Apply critical and analytical skills to policies, strategies and practices to bring about change for sustainable development

ULO4: Research sustainable development practices and identify how they impact on different stakeholders and reflect on this impact within transition theory

ULO5: Communicate and present findings in different forms including multimedia, and cogent, structured reports, addressing defined issues

General Assessment Information

Assessment guide

Assignments are the means used to assess if you have reached the learning outcomes for the unit. The criteria by which the assignment will be marked are made clear in each case. *As a rough guide 10 marks is equivalent to about 10 hours quality work.*

Evidence of wide and comprehensive reading is required, drawing on journals, international examples, thought pieces and reports. All ideas much be cited to the source / author. See notes on academic honesty in the Unit Guide.

AI assessments and learning

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are increasing emerging in education and professional domains. The University acknowledges both the potential and the risks when using Chat GPT and similar Generative AI tools to enhance learning and teaching. Our first obligation is to develop students' ethical and practical awareness to use these tools honestly and responsibly. Generative AI tools are no substitute for learning and mastering the content in your unit. If a student uses Chat GPT or other Generative AI tools in their assessment and there is evidence to support this they may be in breach of the University's Academic Integrity Policy and can be subject to a misconduct investigation (refer to https://students.mq.edu.au/support/care-reporting/academic-misconduct).

Submitting assignments:

All assignments must be submitted electronically on the iLearn site.

Each assignment has a separate upload site. The assignment site will usually be a 'Turnitin', where your work is reviewed for similarity to websites, articles or other students' work. If you have not given credit for ideas used to the author or source you will be penalised (failure of the assignment and reporting to a disciplinary committee to determine whether you have breached the University's Academic Integrity Policy: https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/academic-integrity). See information on academic honesty on the iLearn site and techniques on how to avoid common plagiarism errors

(https://www.students.mq.edu.au/public/download.jsp?id=201272).

You do not need an assignment cover sheet for electronic submission to ENVS8525, it is understood that you are signing a declaration of honesty. Be sure to add your name, title of work and unit to your work.

Requirements to Pass this Unit

To pass this unit you must achieve a total mark equal to or greater than 50%.

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.

- Late Submissions will be accepted for assessments 1 and 2, and standard late penalties apply, as above.

- Late submissions will not be accepted unless Special Consideration is granted for Assessment 3.

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 inform the convenor and submit a Special Consideration request through https://connect.mq.edu.au.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Personal reflection	35%	No	07/07/ 2025
Preparation of a report and in class presentation on a contemporary sustainable development topic	40%	No	15/07/ 2025

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Research report of practice for sustainable development	25%	No	25/07/2025

Personal reflection

Assessment Type [1]: Reflective Writing
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 27 hours
Due: **07/07/2025**
Weighting: **35%**

This assessment task requires students to explore their values, actions, understanding, and ways of discussing sustainable development against individual sustainability discourses.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Articulate a position on 'sustainable development' and explain this through discourse or transition theories
- Apply critical and analytical skills to policies, strategies and practices to bring about change for sustainable development
- Research sustainable development practices and identify how they impact on different stakeholders and reflect on this impact within transition theory
- Communicate and present findings in different forms including multimedia, and cogent, structured reports, addressing defined issues

Preparation of a report and in class presentation on a contemporary sustainable development topic

Assessment Type [1]: Professional writing
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 37 hours
Due: **15/07/2025**
Weighting: **40%**

critical analysis to recommend how to progress a sustainable development issue

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a knowledge of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and how they

inform individual to institutional policy and practice.

- Apply critical and analytical skills to policies, strategies and practices to bring about change for sustainable development
- Communicate and present findings in different forms including multimedia, and cogent, structured reports, addressing defined issues

Research report of practice for sustainable development

Assessment Type [1]: Practice-based task
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 32 hours
Due: **25/07/2025**
Weighting: **25%**

A group-based task to prepare a report related to a sustainability topic

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply critical and analytical skills to policies, strategies and practices to bring about change for sustainable development
- Research sustainable development practices and identify how they impact on different stakeholders and reflect on this impact within transition theory
- Communicate and present findings in different forms including multimedia, and cogent, structured reports, addressing defined issues

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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

Delivery of the unit

The unit is delivered via face to face and in a block mode format. Combined lecture and workshop activities will be carried out across 6 full-day sessions in the Winter Vacation period.

Workshops commence at 11:00 AM and conclude at 6:00PM.

Learning and teaching involves:

- Background reading by the students to provide you with the foundational knowledge of the forthcoming workshop
- Lectures to introduce theories and concepts
- Practical workshop sessions to provide opportunities for experiential learning on tasks and through discussion with other class members (preparation is essential)
- Student presentations of tasks prepared in advance
- Talks from guest lecturers that convey the practice of sustainability and the ways change is facilitated
- Assignments that require students to practice key skills, including critical and integrative thinking, taking a systems perspective, listening to stakeholders, and communicating through diverse forms, including digital stories, writing, and presenting in a logical and clearly argued manner
- Assignments provide opportunities for presenting in different formats and working with people of different skills and cultural perspectives.

Students are expected to:

- Read set readings in advance for classes (there are optional readings for those who want to explore the literature more deeply)
- Participate in workshop activities in small groups
- Follow current developments concerning sustainable development in the media/ internationally (*students should use the News forum on the ilearn page to post articles or media of interest*).

Unit Schedule

Workshop	Date	Topics
1	30 June	• Introduction to the unit • History of sustainable development • Key sustainability theories and UNSDGs
2	1 July	• Sustainability discourses • Influence of worldviews and the UNSDGs on sustainability discourses • Impact of sustainability discourses on corporate and individual actions
3	7 July	• Transition theories and models

4	8 July	• Science to policy transfer • Resilience planning and practice
5	14 July	• Corporate Social Responsibility • Environmental, Social & Governance
6	15 July	• Future transitions and horizon scanning

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (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). 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) 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 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/

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/.

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.

Unit information based on version 2025.04 of the Handbook