



ENVS8544

Environmental and Sustainability Consulting

Session 1, Online-scheduled-weekday 2025

School of Natural Sciences

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Course Convenor

Neil Saintilan

neil.saintilan@mq.edu.au

Room 125, 12 Wallys Walk

By appointment

Tutor

Anjali Gopakumar

anjali.gopakumar@mq.edu.au

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

80cp at 8000 level and Admission to MEnv or MEngProfEnvEng or MSusDev

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides students the opportunity to bring together what they have learned in other units through working in small teams to undertake environmental and sustainability consultancy projects for real clients. The real-life problems requested by clients are chosen to represent typical situations likely to confront graduates from our programs. The final report of each group will be expected to be of a high quality and equivalent to a consultant's report to a client. Students will learn to define and scope a project, understand the context, prepare a project proposal for a client, work with colleagues to complete the project, prepare a written report for the client, practice Indigenous ethics in consulting, and present the group's findings in person to the client. The unit is of value to students in environmental management, environmental planning, sustainable and sustainable development.

Learning in this unit enhances student understanding of global challenges identified by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([UNSDGs](#)) Sustainable Cities and Communities; Climate Action; Life on Land

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:** Apply broad environmental/sustainability knowledge to respond effectively to a client's project brief with a clearly defined and manageable project proposal.
- ULO2:** Demonstrate an ability to work cooperatively and professionally in a team to plan and manage an environmental/sustainability reporting project.
- ULO3:** Produce a professional quality environmental/sustainability consultancy written report relevant to the client's situation and specifications.
- ULO4:** Prepare and present a professional quality oral and visual presentation and respond effectively to questions.

General Assessment Information

Project Report

Assessment Type ¹: Professional writing Indicative Time on Task ²: 70 hours Due: **30/05/2025** Weighting: **60%**

Produce a professional quality written environmental/sustainability consultancy report relevant to the client's situation and specifications

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an ability to work cooperatively and professionally in a team to plan and manage an environmental/sustainability reporting project.
- Produce a professional quality environmental/sustainability consultancy written report relevant to the client's situation and specifications.

Project Proposal and Context

Assessment Type ¹: Work-integrated task Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours Due: **14/03/2025** Weighting: **25%**

Respond to client brief with a scoped project proposal, work plan and notional budget with context outlined

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply broad environmental/sustainability knowledge to respond effectively to a client's project brief with a clearly defined and manageable project proposal.

Presentation of Report

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours Due: **Week 13, at a time negotiated with the industry partner** Weighting: **15%**

A summary of the report is presented orally with visual means; questions are answered

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Prepare and present a professional quality oral and visual presentation and respond effectively to questions.

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

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

We strongly encourage all students to actively participate in all learning activities. Regular engagement is crucial for your success in this unit, as these activities provide opportunities to deepen your understanding of the material, collaborate with peers, and receive valuable feedback from instructors, to assist in completing the unit assessments. Your active participation not only enhances your own learning experience but also contributes to a vibrant and dynamic learning environment for everyone.

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

- o Assessment 1 Project Proposal and Context: – YES, Standard Late Penalty applies
- o Assessment 2 Project Report: - YES, Standard Late Penalty applies
- o Assessment 3 Client presentation: - NO, unless Special Consideration is Granted

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
Project Proposal and Context	25%	No	14/03/2025
Project Report	60%	No	30/05/2025
Presentation of Report	15%	No	Week 13

Project Proposal and Context

Assessment Type ¹: Work-integrated task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **14/03/2025**

Weighting: **25%**

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Assessment Type ¹: Professional writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 70 hours

Due: **30/05/2025**

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Delivery and Resources

Week 1 Classes

The first workshop will be held face-to-face with online streaming. See iLearn page for more details.

Methods of Communication

We will communicate with you via your university email and through announcements on iLearn. Queries to convenors can either be placed on the iLearn discussion board or sent to the unit convenor via the contact email on iLearn.

Teaching and Learning Strategy

Each student group is responsible for the delivery of a Consultancy Report on an environmental/ planning or sustainability project for a client. The client may be either inside or outside the University.

The projects prepared by each client are an example of work practice - they are real projects that the client wants done to advance their environmental or sustainability practice in one way or another.

Each student group will act like a real consultant in all of their relations with the client and in all activities undertaken on their behalf. The teaching and learning strategy includes:

- three skills workshops (1.Information session on the unit expectations and key considerations in undertaking a consultancy; 2.Successfully managing a consultancy project; 3. Report writing for clients and ethical behaviour in the commercial world) ;
- self learning resources on handling group work and consultancies;
- regular group mentoring meetings on managing team processes, project management, and substantive components of the task with the convenor/ mentor;
- group interaction, dialogue and problem solving in a participative way;
- through class interaction, practice of presentations;
- learning to give and receive professional feedback from peers and mentors;
- reflection on your own professional practice;
- feedback from clients.

As students are involved in a real life situation it is valuable to keep an individual log of hours and task completed. Also there is an expectation of self reflection to assess own performance in client and team interaction and to assist in writing the final professional reflection on experience. Some guidelines are set out below to help student groups in their relations with, and activities for their client organisation.

Relations with the client

Whenever the group meets with the client, each member should be appropriately dressed (smart casual) as becomes professional consultants; the client management team who meet with you will be similarly attired.

In order to manage the client-consultant relation it is advised to schedule at least four formal contacts between the group and the client representative or representatives. These should be planned and agreed upon with the client at the first meeting.

1. Client Briefing: An initial meeting to define and scope the project. The unit staff will have already met with all clients to do preliminary work towards this and will accompany each group at the first meeting to give advice as necessary.
2. A progress meeting (or report without meeting) in about the sixth week of semester. At this point the group should indicate clearly to the client whether all planned outputs will be achieved and any necessary modifications to the contract put forward for agreement by both parties.

3. A findings meeting (draft report) to the client before the presentation and formal submission of the final report to foreshadow the key findings.

4. A final reporting meeting at the end of semester for the group to present their final report to the client.

Some clients will only be prepared to commit to these four meetings, but others will welcome additional contact.

One of the first tasks for each group after the first meeting with the client will be to determine exactly what information they, as the consultants, will require from the client. A consolidated list should be prepared and communicated to the client representative by the nominated group leader. This sort of contact with the client should be limited to ONE group member whose responsibility it is to keep the rest of the group informed.

The group should not treat the client organisation, or their representative(s), like teaching staff or another member of the university teaching staff. The client has 'contracted' the group to do the work and research necessary to complete the project. Your feedback sessions with the client are to see that you are on track to deliver what the client wants.

In between the agreed formal meetings the group representative should provide a monthly or fortnightly email update on progress - this too should be agreed at the first meeting. In the course of their work the group may be made privy to commercially, or otherwise sensitive material, and there may be a requirement to sign a confidentiality clause. In any case all members of every group are to respect the confidentiality of information or knowledge they acquire from the client in the course of completing their contract with them.

SOME PROJECTS MAY REQUIRE ETHICS APPROVAL. The time involved in achieving these approvals may restrict what activities can be undertaken.

Activities on behalf of the client

Group members must remember that when doing anything on behalf of the client, the reputation of the client will be affected by their behaviour and actions. So any survey or similar actions must also be cleared by the client.

Technology

There is an ilearn site associated with this unit. This will be the main form of communication for detailed information and updates. Students must be able to access the internet to research background for these projects.

COVID Information

For the latest information on the University's response to COVID-19, please refer to the Coronavirus infection page on the Macquarie website: <https://www.mq.edu.au/about/coronavirus-faqs>. Remember to check this page regularly in case the information and requirements change during semester. If there are any changes to this unit in relation to COVID, these will be communicated via iLearn.

Changes to this unit

The projects proposed for each semester are original projects negotiated each semester.

We value student feedback to be able to continually improve the way we offer our units. As such we encourage students to provide constructive feedback via student surveys, to the teaching staff directly, or via the FSE Student Experience & Feedback link in the iLearn page.

This is the first offering of the unit in Semester 1

Unit Schedule

Week	Class (Friday Weeks 1, 3 and 8: 1-2pm: 14SCO 163 and online)	Task
1 (Feb 28)	Workshop 1 - Introduction and overview of the unit	<i>Review and select project</i>
2	Group meetings with clients - opportunity to clarify client requirements and ask questions	
3 (March 14)	Workshop 2 - Successful project management	
4	Group presentations on project proposals (5-10 mins per group: by appointment with mentor) (feedback on the proposals; not marked)	<i>End Wk 4: Project proposals due (25%)</i>
5	Work in groups (address proposal feedback from client and mentor)	
6	Work in groups (group mentoring)	
7	Group presentations on progress (5-10 mins per group: by appointment with mentor) (for feedback; not marked)	
(15 April)	Recess (UA Common Week)	
(22 April)	Recess	
8 (May 2)	Workshop 3 – Writing client reports and ethics in the workplace	
9:	Work in groups (group mentoring)	
10:	Work in groups (address report feedback)	<i>Submit draft reports for feedback: 16th May</i>
11:	Work in groups (finalise report)	
12: 30 th May	Rehearse group presentations (appointment with mentor)	<i>Final reports due (60%) 30th May Log-books due; complete final SparkPlus peer reviews</i>

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 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>

dents.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.

Changes from Previous Offering

We value student feedback to be able to continually improve the way we offer our units. As such we encourage students to provide constructive feedback via student surveys, to the teaching

staff directly, or via the FSE Student Experience & Feedback link in the iLearn page

Unit information based on version 2025.02 of the **Handbook**