



BIOL3460

Terrestrial Ecosystems

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of Natural Sciences

Contents

<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>	7
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	7
<u>Changes from Previous Offering</u>	9

Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Co-convenor

Suz Everingham

suz.everingham@mq.edu.au

Co-convenor

Alexandra Ralph

alexandra.carthey@mq.edu.au

Lecturer

Max Mallen-Cooper

max.mallen-cooper@mq.edu.au

Lecturer

Renee Cawthorne

renee.cawthorne@mq.edu.au

Lecturer

Bridget Campbell

bridget.campbell@mq.edu.au

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

20cp from BIOL2410, BIOL2610, BIOL2430 or BIOL2350.

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit develops advanced knowledge of terrestrial ecosystems with a strong emphasis on Australian environments within a global ecological framework. You will examine how climate, soils, biodiversity, and disturbance regimes shape ecosystem structure and function across Australia's forests, rangelands, savannas, grasslands, and alpine systems. The unit integrates ecological theory with applied analysis of land management, conservation, restoration, and climate adaptation in Australian and other socio-ecological systems. The required field trip will incur an estimated cost of \$100 per student to participate.

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: Explain the ecological processes that govern the structure and functioning of terrestrial ecosystems

ULO2: Analyse how climate, soils, biota, and disturbance interact to shape terrestrial ecosystems in Australia and globally

ULO3: Evaluate ecological responses of terrestrial ecosystems to land use change and climate change using ecological evidence and theory

ULO4: Apply ecological principles and Indigenous knowledge perspectives to evaluate ecosystem management and restoration strategies

ULO5: Communicate ecological analyses and management recommendations using discipline-appropriate formats and evidence-based reasoning.

General Assessment Information

Assessment Submission Information

Both the field trip oral briefing report (AT1) and the workshop portfolio (AT2) will be submitted through Turnitin on the iLearn course page. Assessment task 3 - the final exam - will occur in-person in the semester 2 exam week.

Assessment Release Information

All information regarding Assessment Task 1 will be released at the start of week 5, 24/08/2026. All information regarding Assessment Task 2 will be released at the start of week 2, 3/8/2026.

Requirements to pass the unit

To pass this unit you must:

1. Achieve a total mark equal to or greater than 50%

Late assessment submission and penalties

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 the oral presentation or workshop portfolio assessment task 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 technical concerns. 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. For example, if the assignment is worth 8 marks (of the entire unit) and your submission is late by 19 hours (or 23 hours 59 minutes 59 seconds), 0.4 marks (5% of 8 marks) will be deducted. If your submission is late by 24 hours (or 47 hours 59 minutes 59 seconds), 0.8 marks (10% of 8 marks) will be deducted, and so on. Assessments where Late Submissions will be accepted:

- Assessment task 1: Yes, standard Late Penalty applies (as above) unless special consideration is granted
- Assessment task 2: Yes, standard Late Penalty applies (as above) unless special consideration is granted
- Assessment task 3: Not applicable, this is an in-person exam in exam week, please apply for special considerations if required

Special consideration for assessments

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 <http://connect.mq.edu.au/>.

Short Extensions

For the following listed assessments only, students are allowed to request an extra 3 calendar days to complete eligible assessments. No reason or evidence is required. After this three day period the standard late assessment penalties apply (as above). The assessments eligible are as follows:

- Assessment task 1 - Field trip oral briefing report
- Assessment task 2 - Workshop portfolio

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Field trip oral briefing report	20%	No	04/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Final Exam	40%	No	During final exam week	Individual	No	Observed
Workshop portfolio	40%	No	25/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Field trip oral briefing report

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **04/10/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

This oral briefing develops your ability to communicate scientific observations and field data to professional audiences, mirroring workplace practices in environmental consulting, research dissemination, and stakeholder reporting. You will deliver a structured oral presentation synthesising key findings, methodologies, and insights from the field trip. This task develops your oral communication skills, critical analysis of field observations, and ability to translate field experiences into professional briefings

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate ecological responses of terrestrial ecosystems to land use change and climate change using ecological evidence and theory
- Apply ecological principles and Indigenous knowledge perspectives to evaluate ecosystem management and restoration strategies
- Communicate ecological analyses and management recommendations using discipline-appropriate formats and evidence-based reasoning.

Final Exam

Assessment Type ¹: Examination

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **During final exam week**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

The purpose of the Final Exam is for you to formally demonstrate the expertise you have gained in this unit. The exam may include any topic covered in the unit. It will be held during the University Final Examination period.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the ecological processes that govern the structure and functioning of terrestrial ecosystems
- Analyse how climate, soils, biota, and disturbance interact to shape terrestrial ecosystems in Australia and globally
- Evaluate ecological responses of terrestrial ecosystems to land use change and climate change using ecological evidence and theory

- Apply ecological principles and Indigenous knowledge perspectives to evaluate ecosystem management and restoration strategies

Workshop portfolio

Assessment Type ¹: Portfolio

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **25/10/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Portfolios are widely used in professional practice to demonstrate skill development, document iterative learning, and showcase competency growth over time. You will compile a portfolio of workshop activities, exercises, and reflections that document your progressive mastery of key concepts and practical skills throughout the semester. This task develops your ability to curate evidence of learning, engage in reflective practice, and demonstrate continuous skill development.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the ecological processes that govern the structure and functioning of terrestrial ecosystems
- Analyse how climate, soils, biota, and disturbance interact to shape terrestrial ecosystems in Australia and globally
- Evaluate ecological responses of terrestrial ecosystems to land use change and climate change using ecological evidence and theory
- Apply ecological principles and Indigenous knowledge perspectives to evaluate ecosystem management and restoration strategies
- Communicate ecological analyses and management recommendations using discipline-appropriate formats and evidence-based reasoning.

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
- [Academic Success](#) 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.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service](#)

[Connect Portal.](#)

Delivery and Resources

General course delivery information

Online Learning content will be delivered in H5P format in a flipped-classroom model. All content will be available on iLearn from the Monday of each week in weeks 1-13. Please go through the content weekly before coming to the workshops.

Students are expected to participate in Workshops each week, from weeks 2-12, in person at **5W room 428** (Plant Growth Facility) on Wednesdays (9am-12pm) or Thursdays (9-12 am or 1-4 pm). Workshop activities and participation directly contribute to Assessment Task 2 - Workshop Portfolio.

All students are expected to participate in a 2 day Field trip on the Saturday and Sunday end of Week 7: 12th and 13th September. The field trip tasks will directly contribute to Assessment Task 1 - Field Trip Oral Briefing.

Week 1 classes

Online H5P content for week 1 will be available from Monday 27th July 2026. No workshops are scheduled this week - they will commence in week 2.

Methods of communication

- For answers to general questions about the unit, the first place to seek answers is this **unit guide**. This includes information about assignment due dates and workshop information.
- Staff will post important updates about the course on the Announcement page on iLearn as well as via your university email
- Questions about learning content or clarification on whether you understand a concept should be posted to the Student Discussion Forum on iLearn, as these may be of interest to other students. Before posting, please check whether another student has already posted the same query.
- Questions of a personal nature should be directed to the course convener Dr Suz Everingham (suz.everingham@mq.edu.au). Please ensure that you use your student email account. Emails from personal accounts may be automatically directed to spam/junk

Unit Schedule

[A detailed PDF for the unit timetable is available here.](#)

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from **Policy Central** (<https://policies.mq.edu.au/>)

[s.mq.edu.au](https://students.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/support/>

Academic Success

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

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [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 <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

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 2026.04 of the [Handbook](#)