



# GEOP8010

## Social Impact Assessment

Session 2, Online-flexible 2026

*School of Communication, Society and Culture*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor, lecturer

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By appointment

Lecturer

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MEnvPlan or MPlan or GCertEnvPlan or MEnvEd or MEnvMgt or MEnvStud or MDevCult or MEnv or MPH or MPPP or MSusDev or MAppAnth or MPASR or GradDipPASR or MWldMgt or MSocEntre or GradDipEnv or GradDipSIA or GradCertSIA or GradCertSusDev or GradDipSusDev or GradCertSocEntre or MGlobalHlthDevStud or GradCertGlobalHlthDevStud or GradDipPP or MDevStud or MDevStudGlobalHlth or MSc in (Environmental Health or Remote Sensing and GIS) or MPPPMDevStud or MIntPubDip or MPSP

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Social impact assessment (SIA) is an important assessment tool which applies social science methodologies to the evaluation of a wide range of public policy proposals, including those relating to land use planning, social policies and public health. This unit addresses the theory and methods of SIA, discusses the public policy processes which use this assessment, and applies a critical perspective to the ethical dilemmas facing the SIA practitioner. There is a practical focus to the unit through the use of current case studies, and this provides students with an insight into pressures and political difficulties frequently encountered. Students will learn how to recognise and respond to these problems, and present issues to non-specialist audiences.

## 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 theory underpinning SIA and its role and use in practice

**ULO2:** Recognise key social impact issues that occur in land use development and public policy assessment

**ULO3:** Apply knowledge and key concepts from social impact assessment to critical evaluation of planning and policy decisions

**ULO4:** Identify and discuss ways of integrating social issues into public sector discourse and practice

**ULO5:** Research and discuss complex ideas about social change, social process and assessment of social impacts

**ULO6:** Recognise ethical issues and risks in evaluation and impact assessment

## General Assessment Information

To successfully pass GEOP8010 students must complete all assessment tasks. Failure to complete any single assessment task may result in failure of the unit. The final grade is based on the total mark accumulated from all assessment tasks.

All students must keep a clean electronic copy of all assignments (preferably as a PDF) submitted for assessment.

### Late Submission Penalty

Circumstances that affect your ability to complete assignments by the deadline must be discussed with the unit convenor prior to the due date. Extensions will be granted only in unforeseen or exceptional circumstances according to the University Special Consideration policy. Students must apply online via AskMQ and provide appropriate supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificate).

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 11.55 pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-time sensitive assessment (incl. essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission

of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special Consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

## Assessment Tasks

| Name                                           | Weighting | Hurdle | Due                | Groupwork/Individual | Short Extension | AI Approach |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <u>Research essay</u>                          | 30%       | No     | 23/<br>08/<br>2026 | Individual           | Yes             | Open        |
| <u>Critique of a case study</u>                | 40%       | No     | 11/<br>10/<br>2026 | Individual           | Yes             | Open        |
| <u>Visual representation of key SIA issues</u> | 30%       | No     | 02/<br>11/<br>2026 | Individual           | Yes             | Open        |

### Research essay

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Written Submission

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

Due: **23/08/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension <sup>3</sup>: Yes

AI Approach: Open

1500 word research essay drawing on academic and grey literature to explain social impact issues raised by a proposed project or policy

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the theory underpinning SIA and its role and use in practice
- Recognise key social impact issues that occur in land use development and public policy assessment

### Critique of a case study

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 40 hours

Due: **11/10/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension <sup>3</sup>: Yes

AI Approach: Open

2000 word critical review of a social impact assessment or similar document

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply knowledge and key concepts from social impact assessment to critical evaluation of planning and policy decisions
- Identify and discuss ways of integrating social issues into public sector discourse and practice
- Research and discuss complex ideas about social change, social process and assessment of social impacts
- Recognise ethical issues and risks in evaluation and impact assessment

## Visual representation of key SIA issues

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Practice-based task

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 20 hours

Due: **02/11/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension <sup>3</sup>: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Visual representation of social impact issues in a form suited to an identified audience with 600 words accompanying written commentary

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and discuss ways of integrating social issues into public sector discourse and practice
- Research and discuss complex ideas about social change, social process and assessment of social impacts
- Recognise ethical issues and risks in evaluation and impact assessment

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<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
- [Academic Success](#) 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.

<sup>3</sup> An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

## Delivery and Resources

### Seminars and workshops

The unit is structured around weekly themes. Each week students are expected to complete the assigned readings for that theme prior to class, and engage in discussions, activities and reflections to deepen their learning. The classes each week are approximately 3 hours long and involve a mix of activities including seminars, workshops and discussion-based activities (debates, Q&A, role plays).

Seminars and workshops will be offered via a 3 hour block of teaching on **Mondays 5:00-8:00pm in 01CC 216** Groupwork Learning space.

Seminars (1.5 hours) will be delivered face-to-face and be recorded and available via Echo360 on iLearn.

GEOP8010 has a full schedule of online and on-campus (1.5 hours) workshops that enhance your general and discipline-specific skills and knowledge. It is important that you attend all workshops for GEOP8010. External students are expected to contribute brief postings online and to constructively engage with others' postings.

### Workload Expectation

GEOP8010 uses a combination of seminars and workshop classes with a number of role-play and web-based learning opportunities. It is expected that all students in the unit will both participate and contribute to classes, including completing the required readings and participating in class discussions. Students are expected to frequently access material online and participate in online discussions.

### Unit webpage

The webpage for this unit can be found at iLearn, the Macquarie University online learning system at <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au>. iLearn has both a discussion board and an internal email system. The webpage will provide you with access to lectures through the University's echo360 lecture recording facility, as well as to follow-up discussion, links, readings and forum discussions. Access to the website is essential to complete GEOP8010.

### Readings

Unit readings include a mix of academic, peer-reviewed readings and some policy documents. All readings will be available via Leganto from the iLearn site.

## Unit Schedule

The unit is designed around four key modules:

Module I - Introduction to and guiding concepts in SIA (weeks 1-2)

Module II - Methods and process in SIA (weeks 3-4)

Module III - SIA in practice (weeks 5-12)

Module IV - Conclusion and review (week 13)

## 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](https://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.

- [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.

Unit information based on version 2026.02 of the **Handbook**