



ECON3000

Public Economics

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

Department of Economics

Contents

<u>General Information</u>	2
<u>Learning Outcomes</u>	3
<u>General Assessment Information</u>	3
<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	3
<u>Delivery and Resources</u>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	7
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	7
<u>Changes since First Published</u>	9

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General Information

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

ECON2003 or ECON203

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit outlines the key roles that the government sector plays in a market-based economy. The unit discusses traditional public financial issues as well as emerging issues relating to public economics within a globalised economy. Students learn how public sector responsibilities interact with activities undertaken by the private sector and how they can reflect preferences of the society in which they operate. Topics may include equity-efficiency trade-offs, taxation, public expenditure, public sector pricing and cost-benefit analysis and fiscal federalism. The unit also covers areas of research into a national's cultural assets, indigenous policy and political economy considerations and various contemporary national and international public policies.

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: Examine critical issues in the economics of the public sector.

ULO2: Review changing national and global government intervention issues, structures and policies.

ULO3: Explain the working of public policy issues in the wider democratic process.

ULO4: Analyse the roles of the public sector in a decentralised market economy.

ULO5: Evaluate the necessity and effects of government fiscal decisions and the consequent trade-offs in how they affect different groups in society.

General Assessment Information

Late Assessment Submission Penalty (written assessments)

If you submit your assessment late, 5% of the total possible marks will be deducted for each day (including weekends), up to 7 days. Submissions more than 7 days late will receive a mark of 0.

Example 1 (out of 100): If you score 85/100 but submit 20 hours late, you will lose 5 marks and receive 80/100.

Example 2 (out of 30): If you score 27/30 but submit 20 hours late, you will lose 1.5 marks and receive 25.5/30.

Extensions:

Automatic short extension: Some assessments are eligible for automatic short extension. You can only apply for an automatic short extension before the due date.

Special Consideration: If you need more time due to serious issues and for any assessments that are not eligible for Short Extension, you must apply for Special Consideration. Need help? Review the [Special Consideration page](#) for further details.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Skills development: Policy analysis	30%	No	Week 9 (in class and in person)	Individual	No	Observed
Professional practice: Policy case analysis	20%	No	11:55 PM 23/10/2026	Individual and Group	No	Open AI

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Formal examination	50%	No	University examination period	Individual	No	Observed

Skills development: Policy analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **Week 9 (in class and in person)**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

The purpose of this assessment is for you to practice how to think critically and analytically on public policy issues. You will be given an analytical task in the form of a short answer problem set.

Skills in focus:

- Communication skills
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Discipline knowledge

Deliverable(s): Short answers to problem sets

Individual assessment

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the working of public policy issues in the wider democratic process.
- Analyse the roles of the public sector in a decentralised market economy.
- Evaluate the necessity and effects of government fiscal decisions and the consequent trade-offs in how they affect different groups in society.

Professional practice: Policy case analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **11:55 PM 23/10/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual and Group

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open AI

The purpose of this group assessment is to develop your appreciation of the importance of

government policies to the economy. You will write a group case study essay showcasing the different ways in which government policies affect the economy and their effectiveness.

Skills in focus:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication skills
- Work readiness
- Global, ethical and environmental citizenship

Deliverable(s): Case study essay [max 2500 words]

Individual and group assessment

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Examine critical issues in the economics of the public sector.
- Review changing national and global government intervention issues, structures and policies.
- Explain the working of public policy issues in the wider democratic process.
- Analyse the roles of the public sector in a decentralised market economy.
- Evaluate the necessity and effects of government fiscal decisions and the consequent trade-offs in how they affect different groups in society.

Formal examination

Assessment Type ¹: Examination

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **University examination period**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

The purpose of this assessment is for you to demonstrate the expertise you have gained in this unit.

You will participate in a 2-hour, on campus, closed-book exam held during the University Examination period.

Important information about the exam will be made available on the unit iLearn page. You should also review the [MQ Exams website](#) for general tips.

Deliverable(s): Formal exam

Individual assessment

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Examine critical issues in the economics of the public sector.
 - Review changing national and global government intervention issues, structures and policies.
 - Explain the working of public policy issues in the wider democratic process.
 - Analyse the roles of the public sector in a decentralised market economy.
 - Evaluate the necessity and effects of government fiscal decisions and the consequent trade-offs in how they affect different groups in society.
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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
- [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

Textbooks:

Students are recommended to purchase the following textbook: Gruber, J, (2023) Public Finance and Public Policy (7th edition IE), Macmillan Higher Education. Abelson, P. (2018) Public Economics: Principles and Practice (4th edition), Open access: <https://appliedeconomics.com.au/> . Additional weekly readings and resources will be made available on the unit iLearn site during the session.

Technology used and required:

The unit uses the learning management system (iLearn) that can be accessed via iLearn.mq.edu.au. The iLearn site is also used to post important notices. You should check this regularly. The iLearn web page has the facility to allow peer to peer discussion and also allows students to put questions to the teaching staff. Zoom will be used for all remote consultation sessions.

Learning and teaching activities:

All internal students are expected to attend the weekly two-hour f2f sessions. The recordings of these sessions will be available on the iLearn unit page. Every week, an additional pre-recorded lecture will be made available. The Final Exam will be conducted in person (Special consideration may apply for external students). The classes will consist of a mix of lecture material, tutorial questions and discussions (details to be provided on iLearn at the start of the

Session). All recorded lectures and discussions will be available on iLearn-ECHO360. It is suggested that weekly lecture material be reviewed in advance of the lecture sessions.

Unit Schedule

We intend to cover the following topics in the following order. Further details and updates are available on the iLearn unit page.

Week 1: Preliminary Concepts and Their Applications to Government Policies

Week 2: Optimal Social Welfare

Week 3: Externalities and Remedies

Week 4: Public Goods

Week 5: Effective Government Policy

Weeks 6-8: Cost Benefit Analysis

Week 9: Policy Analysis Problem Set. Australian Federal Accounts/Debts

Week 10: Taxation

Week 11: Redistribution, Inequality and Poverty

Week 12: Political Economy

Week 13: Review

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/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 since First Published

Date	Description
04/08/2026	Date correction for assessment task for 2026.

Unit information based on version 2026.03 of the [Handbook](#)