



GEOP3020

Disasters and Resilient Communities

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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B264, Level 2, 25BWW

By appointment

Lecturer

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

130cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Disasters and extreme events, such as storms, floods, disease or bushfires, cause significant social, economic and environmental upheaval that directly affects people and places around the world. Resilience refers to the capacity of communities to anticipate, prepare and adapt to the risk of disaster and respond and recover when events occur. In the context of rapid climate change and ecological degradation, it is becoming increasingly urgent that communities plan for disaster and develop resilience strategies. This unit examines the social and biophysical origins of contemporary disasters, how disasters unfold at a range of sites and scales, how they are shaped by diverse geographies and vulnerabilities, the limits of community resilience, and how resilience can be improved. Contemporary cases from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region will be used to highlight key issues and policy debates. Overall, the unit will provide an understanding in both theory and practice about the ways in which communities respond to disaster and allow students to develop the skills and knowledge needed to pursue more resilient futures.

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: Identify and discuss the causes and consequences of contemporary disasters

ULO2: Engage with and critique the concepts of vulnerability and resilience in theory and practice

ULO3: Evaluate projects and policies that seek to create more resilient futures

ULO4: Synthesise data from the social and environmental sciences to assess disaster risks and develop strategies to improve local community resilience

ULO5: Communicate to diverse audiences using appropriately selected written, oral and visual means

General Assessment Information

To successfully pass GEOP3020 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

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 non-timed written assessments (incl essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc) is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams/quizzes, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcomes may result in a new question or topic.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Essay	30%	No	13/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Logbook	20%	No	11/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Report and presentation	50%	No	Presentations in tutorials wks 12-13; Report due 3/11/2026	Individual	No	Open

Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **13/09/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

1500 word essay drawing connections between disasters and resilient communities

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and discuss the causes and consequences of contemporary disasters
- Engage with and critique the concepts of vulnerability and resilience in theory and practice
- Evaluate projects and policies that seek to create more resilient futures

Logbook

Assessment Type ¹: Portfolio

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **11/10/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

A logbook with written reflections about the connections between disasters and resilience, drawing on media reports of Australian and Asia-Pacific case studies

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and discuss the causes and consequences of contemporary disasters
- Engage with and critique the concepts of vulnerability and resilience in theory and practice
- Communicate to diverse audiences using appropriately selected written, oral and visual means

Report and presentation

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 50 hours

Due: **Presentations in tutorials wks 12-13; Report due 3/11/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

2000 word report and short presentation developing a resilience strategy for a case study area

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Identify and discuss the causes and consequences of contemporary disasters
- Engage with and critique the concepts of vulnerability and resilience in theory and practice
- Evaluate projects and policies that seek to create more resilient futures
- Synthesise data from the social and environmental sciences to assess disaster risks and develop strategies to improve local community resilience
- Communicate to diverse audiences using appropriately selected written, oral and visual means

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

Lectures

Lectures will be delivered face to face and be recorded and available via Echo360 on iLearn. It is strongly encouraged that students attend the lectures as their content directly informs and supports the learning activities in the tutorials (that follow immediately after the lecture).

Tutorials

GEOP3020 has a full schedule of online and on-campus tutorials that enhance your general and discipline-specific skills and knowledge. It is important that you attend all tutorials for GEOP3020. Please register for your tutorial via eStudent, and attend the same tutorial each week.

Recommended Texts and/or Materials

Weekly readings will be assigned during the session and may be accessed via iLearn.

Additionally, the following texts will be useful throughout the semester:

Bankoff, G., Frerks, F. & Hilhorst, D. (Eds.) (2004) *Mapping Vulnerability: Disasters, Development and People*. Earthscan: London.

Krüger, F., Bankoff, G., Cannon, T., Orlowski, B. & Schipper, E. L. F. (2015) *Cultures and Disasters: Understanding Cultural Framings in Disaster Risk Reduction*. Routledge: London and New York.

Lukasiewicz, A. & Baldwin, C. (2020) *Natural Hazards and Disaster Justice*. Springer Nature Singapore: Singapore.

Miller, F., Shrestha, K.K. and Wright, S. (eds.) (2025) *Edward Elgar Handbook on Climate Change Vulnerability, Environments and Communities*. Edward Elgar Publishing, London.

Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T. & Davis, I. (2004) *At Risk: Natural Hazards, People's Vulnerability and Disasters* (2nd Edition). Routledge: London.

Wisner, B., Gaillard, J. C. & Kelman, I. (2012) *Handbook of Hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction*. Routledge: London.

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 GEOP3020.

Unit Schedule

GEOP3020 consists of the following modules:

1. Introduction
2. Guiding concepts
3. Assessing vulnerability
4. Disaster mitigation
5. Disaster recovery
6. Resilience strategies
7. Review and conclusion

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.

Unit information based on version 2026.02 of the [Handbook](#)