



GEOP8090

Gateway to the Planning Profession

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

School of Communication, Society and Culture

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff Sonia Jacenko sonia.jacenko@mq.edu.au
Credit points 10
Prerequisites Admission to MPlan and 80cp at 8000 level
Corequisites
Co-badged status
Unit description Planning is a professional practice and this unit is designed to assist students develop skills for a career in the planning profession. The unit requires students to prepare a substantial and well researched report in response to a Brief issued by a hypothetical planning agency. The student will prepare a work plan, apply knowledge of planning systems to a particular issue, and respond to the expressed requirements of the hypothetical client. In undertaking this work the student will apply research skills, identify and confront ethical issues, and practice writing for a non-specialist audience.

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:** Prepare a detailed project outline in response to a planning Brief and document the key steps in its execution
- ULO2:** Apply research skills to contemporary planning issues
- ULO3:** Exercise problem-solving, critical, analytical and integrative thinking skills in the field of planning
- ULO4:** Communicate findings in written forms for diverse audiences
- ULO5:** Apply skills in self-management, personal judgement and initiative

General Assessment Information

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 11.55pm. 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>Response to Brief</u>	10%	No	17/08/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
<u>Literature/policy review</u>	30%	No	11/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
<u>Data collection and analysis</u>	30%	No	16/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
<u>Final report</u>	30%	No	06/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Response to Brief

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **17/08/2026**

Weighting: **10%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

800 word response setting out the steps and stages to be undertaken to acquit the Brief

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Prepare a detailed project outline in response to a planning Brief and document the key steps in its execution

Literature/policy review

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **11/09/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

2500 word literature/policy review (Part 1 of report as required in the project Brief)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply research skills to contemporary planning issues
- Exercise problem-solving, critical, analytical and integrative thinking skills in the field of planning
- Communicate findings in written forms for diverse audiences

Data collection and analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 34 hours

Due: **16/10/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

2000 word data analysis (Part 2 of report as required in the project Brief)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply research skills to contemporary planning issues
- Exercise problem-solving, critical, analytical and integrative thinking skills in the field of planning
- Communicate findings in written forms for diverse audiences

Final report

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **06/11/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

5000 word final report combining literature/policy review, data collection/analysis plus overall findings and recommendations

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Communicate findings in written forms for diverse audiences
- Apply skills in self-management, personal judgement and initiative

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

GEOP 8090 Gateway to the Planning Profession is designed to mirror professional research practice, and provides an opportunity to refresh planning knowledge and skills. The scope and delivery of this unit is highly responsive to student needs and the requirements of the Brief to which students are asked to respond.

Class topics address both the requirements of consultancy reports in general and the specific issue the consultancy report is asked to address.

It is expected that students attend scheduled classes to understand the course content; the requirements of the assessments; and to participate in class discussion. The small class size lends itself to robust discussion and some of the classes are run in a workshop style to assist in understanding key concepts relating to the assessments.

Students are expected to participate in the development of both method and content for assessments, and to cooperate with each other in progressing a discussion of the issues involved.

There is no reading list as one assessment is to develop a short reference list and apply the content to the report being prepared. In addition, students will be required to read and understand the application of planning policies and strategies relevant to the planning issue captured in the Brief. Students will be guided on locating these in class.

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](#)