



LAWS8500

Business and Human Rights

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

Macquarie Law School

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>	6
<u>Unit Schedule</u>	6
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	7

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Co-Convenor / Lecturer

Surya Deva

Contact via Via iLearn

315, MKB, 17 Wally's Walk

Co-Convenor / Lecturer

David Birchall

Contact via Via iLearn

343, MKB, 17 Wally's Walk

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to LLM or MLCHRS or (Admission to JD and LAWS600 or LAWS8001) or admission to GCFIL

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Should respecting human rights be the business of business, especially if doing so might reduce their profit? This unit grapples with various aspects of this perennial question. It introduces students to the evolution of business and human rights (BHR) as a specialised field and its relationship with corporate social responsibility, the Sustainable Development Goals and the environmental, social and governance disclosure. By critically analysing key BHR standards, judicial decisions and the relevant literature, students will gain an understanding of various issues concerning the three sets of questions: why corporations should have human rights responsibilities; what the nature and extent of these responsibilities is; and how to hold corporations accountable and provide affected people effective remedies for corporate human rights abuses. Using case studies and hypothetical scenarios, students will learn how to conduct human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate and remediate adverse impacts of business activities on human rights. The unit will enable students to integrate BHR standards in corporate policies, practices and mechanisms and navigate through complex human rights dilemmas that arise in global business operations.

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 concept of business and human rights in the context of the changing role and place of corporations in society.

ULO2: Examine various justifications for the human rights responsibilities of business.

ULO3: Apply relevant regulations and standards to solve human rights dilemmas that corporations face in practice when operating in different countries through subsidiaries and suppliers.

ULO4: Evaluate the relative efficacy of various business and human rights regulatory initiatives, including mandatory human rights due diligence laws and modern slavery legislation.

ULO5: Explore various access to remedy pathways available to hold corporations accountable for human rights abuses.

General Assessment Information

All written assessments submitted electronically must be submitted through the link provided in iLearn. This unit will utilise Turnitin plagiarism detection software. Students should carefully check that they submit the correct file for an assessment, as re-submissions will not be accepted after the due date and time, including instances where students upload an incorrect file in error.

The design, moderation and feedback of all assessments is in accordance with the Macquarie University Assessment Procedure (link provided under 'Policies and Procedures' below).

Late Submission Policy

A maximum penalty of five (5) percentage points of the total possible marks will be applied per day to late submissions, for up to a maximum of seven calendar days. Tasks that have not been submitted within the maximum number of additional late days will receive a mark of zero. This provision does not apply to exams or other assessment with a time limit of less than 24 hours.

Penalties for late submission will be applied consistently and equitably to all students enrolled in the unit. Where short-term, serious and unavoidable circumstances have affected their ability to submit an assessment task, a student must submit a formal application for Special Consideration as per the Special Consideration Policy. Students should not request an informal arrangement from their tutor, lecturer or Unit Convenor.

Where an application for Special Consideration is approved, and the outcome is an extension to the due date of a task, submissions that are received after the new due date will be subject to late penalties that are calculated from the new due date. This only applies where the outcome is an extension to the due date – see the Special Consideration Policy for a schedule of all possible outcomes.

Special Consideration Students should submit applications for Special Consideration electronically via the Service Connect portal, along with the supporting documentation. Before submitting their applications, students should refer to the Special Consideration Policy (link provided under 'Policies and Procedures' below).

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Tutorial Exercises	30%	No	Ongoing: During tutorials	Individual	No	Observed
Blog writing	30%	No	During Weeks 3-9	Individual	No	Open
Legal/ policy brief	40%	No	03/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Tutorial Exercises

Assessment Type [1](#): Professional task

Indicative Time on Task [2](#): 10 hours

Due: **Ongoing: During tutorials**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension [3](#): No

AI Approach: Observed

Students will participate in hypothetical exercises and role plays in tutorials throughout the session.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of business and human rights in the context of the changing role and place of corporations in society.
- Examine various justifications for the human rights responsibilities of business.
- Apply relevant regulations and standards to solve human rights dilemmas that corporations face in practice when operating in different countries through subsidiaries and suppliers.
- Explore various access to remedy pathways available to hold corporations accountable for human rights abuses.

Blog writing

Assessment Type [1](#): Reflection task

Indicative Time on Task [2](#): 8 hours

Due: **During Weeks 3-9**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

Students will write two blogs of about 800 words each on topical business and human rights issues.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Explain the concept of business and human rights in the context of the changing role and place of corporations in society.
- Examine various justifications for the human rights responsibilities of business.
- Apply relevant regulations and standards to solve human rights dilemmas that corporations face in practice when operating in different countries through subsidiaries and suppliers.

Legal/policy brief

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **03/11/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students will write a legal or policy brief of about 2,500 words advising the government, a corporation or civil society organisation on a hypothetical scenario.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply relevant regulations and standards to solve human rights dilemmas that corporations face in practice when operating in different countries through subsidiaries and suppliers.
- Evaluate the relative efficacy of various business and human rights regulatory initiatives, including mandatory human rights due diligence laws and modern slavery legislation.
- Explore various access to remedy pathways available to hold corporations accountable for human rights abuses.

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

This Unit will have two hours of pre-recorded lecture every week, a weekly one-hour F2F tutorial (or a two-hour biweekly online tutorial) and other online learning content posted on iLearn.

Tutorials will begin in Week 2.

There is NO textbook for this Unit. Rather, the Unit will rely on materials from diverse sources in different weeks. All readings will be accessible through iLearn.

Students should have access to a computer and internet with decent speed. The iLearn page contains all Unit requirements and a weekly schedule for teaching, readings and tutorials. Information about all assessment tasks is also available on iLearn.

Unit Schedule

The iLearn website contains a detailed schedule of topics covered, required readings, supplementary learning materials and tutorial questions. Below is a brief outline of the topics covered in this Unit:

Weekly Lecture topics

Week 1: Understanding business and human rights (BHR) and its evolution

Week 2: Expanding horizons and interlinkages of BHR

Week 3: Justification for corporate human rights responsibilities and obligations

Week 4: Key international soft standards

Week 5: Mandatory human rights due diligence and modern slavery laws

Week 6: Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and the proposed BHR treaty

Week 7: Navigating through global supply chain challenges

Week 8: Corporate operations in weak governance or conflict zones

Week 9: Business, human rights and the environment

Week 10: Socio-economic rights, markets and sustainable development

Week 11: Corporate accountability and access to effective remedies

Week 12: The future of BHR and beyond BHR

Week 13: Revision

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 2026.03 of the [Handbook](#)