



ACCG8048

Business Ethics and Sustainability

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

Department of Accounting and Corporate Governance

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General Information

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

(10cp from ACCG or ACST or AFIN or BUSA or ECON or MGMT or MKTG units at 6000 level or above) or (20cp at 8000 level)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit aims to provide students with an understanding of the main ethical issues raised by business and corporate activities, including understanding businesses' role in ensuring sustainable environments and societies. Core ethical issues include businesses' obligations to external stakeholders and individuals employed within corporations. Sustainability incorporates how businesses impact shared natural systems and respond to societal issues like inequality, poverty, and access to education. The unit has a strong research focus and students will apply the theoretical knowledge gained in the course to real-world situations. After completing the unit, students will recognise and confidently engage with the complex issues in ethics and sustainability that will inevitably arise during their careers.

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: Investigate major issues in contemporary business ethics and sustainability and articulate a clear and informed position on these issues.

ULO2: Critically interpret major theories that have informed the development of business ethics and sustainability literature and articulate their own perspective.

ULO3: Analyse and critically evaluate ethics and sustainability theories and arguments.

ULO4: Relate relevant theories in business ethics and sustainability to decision-making in real-world cases.

General Assessment Information

Late Submission Penalties

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.

Requirements to satisfactorily complete the unit. Satisfactory completion of ACCG8048 is an overall passing grade. There is no requirement to achieve a passing grade in each individual assessment component. However, since each assessment component contributes to the overall learning outcomes of the unit, students are expected to complete each assessment task in order to maximise their educational experience.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Skills development: Business ethics and sustainability in practice	30%	No	31/08/2026	Individual	Yes	Open AI
Skills development: Applying frameworks and theories	30%	No	02/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open AI
Professional practice: Case analysis	40%	No	06/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open AI

Skills development: Business ethics and sustainability in practice

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **31/08/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open AI

The purpose of this assessment is for you to gain awareness of, and expertise in, analysing the impact of business ethics and sustainability issues and events.

You will apply core ethics and sustainability concepts to business scenarios.

Skills in focus:

- Global, ethical and environmental citizenship
- Discipline knowledge
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication skills

Deliverable(s): Written submission [max 1200 words]

Individual assessment

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Investigate major issues in contemporary business ethics and sustainability and articulate a clear and informed position on these issues.
- Critically interpret major theories that have informed the development of business ethics and sustainability literature and articulate their own perspective.
- Analyse and critically evaluate ethics and sustainability theories and arguments.

Skills development: Applying frameworks and theories

Assessment Type ¹: Problem-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **02/10/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open AI

The purpose of this assessment is for you to develop a deeper understanding of the core ethics and sustainability theories and frameworks covered in the course, and extend your capacity to use these perspectives to interpret and assess businesses', ethics principles and/or strategies.

You will submit a written essay based on your research and application of these core theories to a specific case study.

Skills in focus:

- Global, ethical and environmental citizenship
- Discipline knowledge
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication skills

Deliverable(s): Written submission [max 1500 words]

Individual assessment

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Critically interpret major theories that have informed the development of business ethics and sustainability literature and articulate their own perspective.
- Analyse and critically evaluate ethics and sustainability theories and arguments.
- Relate relevant theories in business ethics and sustainability to decision-making in real-

world cases.

Professional practice: Case analysis

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **06/11/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open AI

The purpose of this assessment is for you to undertake an in-depth analysis of ethical and/or sustainability issues in a complex, real-life case.

You will draw upon the major theories covered in the unit in order to provide a structured and detailed analysis of the case.

Skills in focus:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Discipline knowledge
- Global, ethical and environmental citizenship
- Work readiness

Deliverable(s): Written submission [max 2000 words]

Individual assessment

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Investigate major issues in contemporary business ethics and sustainability and articulate a clear and informed position on these issues.
- Critically interpret major theories that have informed the development of business ethics and sustainability literature and articulate their own perspective.
- Analyse and critically evaluate ethics and sustainability theories and arguments.
- Relate relevant theories in business ethics and sustainability to decision-making in real-world cases.

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

Classes. Lectures start from Week 1 and **seminars start from Week 2**. Seminars are based on the lecture, set reading and discussion questions for the previous week e.g. Seminar 2 is based on the Week 1 lecture, readings and discussion question, Seminar 3 is based on the Week 2 lecture, reading and discussion questions, and so on. Students are expected to have listened to the lecture and read the set reading prior to attending their allocated seminar.

For lecture and tutorial times, refer to the Class Finder tool via <https://publish.mq.edu.au/>.

Required Text and materials: The prescribed text for this unit is: Joseph DesJardin's *An Introduction to Business Ethics*, 7th Edition (McGraw-Hill, New York, 2023). The material in this text is fundamental to the concepts covered in the unit and should be read carefully. A reading list will be provided on Leganto (accessed via iLearn) with additional readings for each week.

Technology used and required: The unit web page can be accessed from ilearn.mq.edu.au. Please note that student activity on the unit web page is logged and may be utilized by the unit convenor and other university staff in resolving student disputes regarding such issues as assignment submission. Instructions for obtaining help with accessing the unit web page can also be found at the above URL.

Unit Schedule

Topic	Topic
TOPIC 1: BUSINESS ETHICS	
1	Business ethics: Science or art?
2	Ethics across cultures
3	Safety at work
4	Ethics in digital environments
5	Marketing ethics
6	Shareholders or stakeholders?
INTERLUDE: ANALYSING ETHICS ISSUES	
7	Ethics essay skills - Think & write well

TOPIC 2: SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS ETHICS	
8	Environmental sustainability: Paradigms & principles
	** Mid semester break **
9	<i>Guest Lecture: Sustainability in practice</i>
10	Social sustainability: Economic inequality
11	Social sustainability: Diversity & discrimination
12	Changing complex systems: Business and a better world
13	Acting ethically and sustainably in organisations

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](#)