



EDST8804

Engaging with the Outdoors as a Learning Environment

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

Macquarie School of Education

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Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Co-convenor (First Contact) and Tutor

Dr Catherine Jones

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Contact via Contact via iLearn Dialogue

By appointment

Co-convenor (Second Contact)

Dr Nicole Jamison

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Contact via Contact via iLearn Dialogue

By appointment

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

(Admission to MTeach(0-5) and EDST8800) OR Admission to MEChild

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit examines the role of outdoor environments in promoting young children's learning, development and wellbeing. The unit builds on students' foundational understanding of play-based pedagogies to enhance their capacity to critically evaluate and design research-informed inclusive environments and play-based experiences that promote learning for children from birth to five years. The unit explores interrelationships between affordances in the outdoor environment, children's play behaviours and their learning. The unit requires students to engage critically with a range of relevant contemporary issues which have the potential to impact on children's opportunities for learning and development.

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: Draw on contemporary theoretical and curriculum approaches to design rich, integrated and inclusive outdoor play experiences for children aged birth to five years.

ULO2: Evaluate effective intentional teaching strategies to support children's holistic learning in the outdoor environment using relevant current government frameworks.

ULO3: Research and apply an understanding of social, cultural and educational diversity when planning for and evaluating outdoor learning environments for children aged birth to five years.

ULO4: Demonstrate strategies for embedding sustainability and Indigenous Knowledges in the outdoor learning environment.

ULO5: Apply knowledge of the regulatory context in relation to outdoor play environments.

General Assessment Information

General Submission Information

All written assessments must be submitted electronically. Please format assessments using 12-point font and 1.5 spacing. Submissions must meet the required file type and formatting specifications outlined in the assessment guidelines. If you are unsure about the file format or have technical difficulties, it is your responsibility to seek assistance before the submission deadline. Students should be careful to check that they submit the correct file for an assessment as no re-submissions will be accepted after the due date and time, including instances where students upload an incorrect file. It is not the responsibility of unit staff to contact students who have failed to submit assessments. If you have any missing items of assessment, it is your responsibility to contact the unit convenor.

Turnitin plagiarism detection software is used to check all written assessments. It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that their submitted work is in a format compatible with Turnitin software for plagiarism checking. Students can use Turnitin's Originality Report as a learning tool to improve their academic writing if this option is made available in the unit.

Word limits are strictly applied, with + or – 10% applicable. Work above the word limit will not be marked.

Academic Integrity

Students should be aware of and apply the University policy on academic integrity (see: <https://policies.mq.edu.au/document/view.php?id=3>).

Artificial Intelligence

<https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/assessments/ai-and-assessment>

<https://policies.mq.edu.au/document/view.php?id=394>

Special Consideration /Late Penalties

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day to late submissions, up until the 7th calendar 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.

Important to note:

Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs) will be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application.

Students should not request an informal arrangement from their tutor, lecturer or Unit Convenor (or equivalent).

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. A Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Applications must be made via [Service Connect](#).

University Policy on Grading

Assignments will be awarded grades ranging from HD to F according to guidelines set out in the [University's Grading System](#) and [University Assessment Policy](#).

To attain a pass or higher grade in Professional Experience a student must obtain a satisfactory in both the Professional Experience component and a pass or higher grade in the academic component. For Professional Experience units the Professional Experience Evaluation Report is marked as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. The Macquarie Teaching Performance Assessment (MQTPA - in final WIL/PEx units) is marked as Not met, Met or Exceeds.

Results

Results shown in iLearn, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed because 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 [Service Connect](#).

Withdrawing from this unit

If you are considering withdrawing from this unit, please seek academic advice via [Service Connect](#) before doing so as this unit may be a co-requisite or prerequisite for units in the following sessions and may impact your course progression.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Planning for outdoor learning	50%	No	02/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Professional portfolio	50%	No	10/10/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Planning for outdoor learning

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 45 hours

Due: **02/09/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Design outdoor learning environment; critical analysis and evaluation of learning potential and intentional teaching strategies.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Draw on contemporary theoretical and curriculum approaches to design rich, integrated and inclusive outdoor play experiences for children aged birth to five years.
- Research and apply an understanding of social, cultural and educational diversity when planning for and evaluating outdoor learning environments for children aged birth to five years.
- Apply knowledge of the regulatory context in relation to outdoor play environments.

Professional portfolio

Assessment Type ¹: Portfolio

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **10/10/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students submit collection of teaching resources aligned with topics covered in Module 3.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Draw on contemporary theoretical and curriculum approaches to design rich, integrated

and inclusive outdoor play experiences for children aged birth to five years.

- Evaluate effective intentional teaching strategies to support children's holistic learning in the outdoor environment using relevant current government frameworks.
- Research and apply an understanding of social, cultural and educational diversity when planning for and evaluating outdoor learning environments for children aged birth to five years.
- Demonstrate strategies for embedding sustainability and Indigenous Knowledges in the outdoor learning environment.

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

Required and recommended texts

Prochner, L., & Nawrotzki, K. (2026). *Nature and early education: Global perspectives on outdoor learning for young children*. Routledge.

Little, H., Elliott, S., & Wyver, S. (2017). *Outdoor learning environments: Spaces for exploration, discovery and risk-taking in the early years*. Routledge.

In addition, some weeks will include supplementary readings - details of these are provided on iLearn through Leganto.

Tutorial structure and lectures

Content delivery commences in week 1 of the session. Tutorials will run from weeks 1-9 and week 13 (10 weeks total). Content is delivered as follows:

- **Weekly lectures** delivered online through ECHO360. Each week there are a short series (2-4) of lecture videos on the weekly topic. Students are required to watch these **prior** to the relevant weekly tutorial or study time.
- **Weekly textbook and related readings** through Leganto. Weekly readings are

specified on iLearn and students are required to complete these **prior** to their relevant weekly tutorial or study time.

In tutorial students will discuss issues and questions arising from the lectures and prescribed readings. They are expected to base their arguments/discussions on evidence from published research and other relevant material. Tutorial tasks also involve practical, hands-on activities. As this is an outdoor learning unit, many of these activities will be conducted in outdoor spaces around the university.

There will be a supporting iLearn site for the unit providing links and materials. The weekly program for the course with the accompanying readings/ preparation is available on the following pages or on the unit iLearn site.

Information about the unit iLearn site

This unit has a full web presence through iLearn. Information for students about access to the online component of this unit is available at <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/index.php>. You will need to enter your student username and password.

Please do NOT contact the Unit Convenor regarding iLearn technical help. Assistance is available from IT Helpdesk: via email onehelp@mq.edu.au or Ph: 9850 4357 or 1800 67 4357. On Campus: Ground floor at 18 Wally's Walk.

Unit Schedule

A detailed and dated schedule with weekly readings is provided on iLearn.

Topics covered in this unit include:

1. Historical and theoretical approaches to outdoor learning environments and contemporary issues in outdoor play
2. The regulatory context of outdoor learning environments and designing effective outdoor environments
3. Outdoor learning environments and pedagogies for infants, toddlers and preschoolers
4. Environments beyond the gate
5. Physically active play in the outdoors
6. Adventurous and risky play, managing risk in outdoor play
7. Promoting language, literacy, mathematics, numeracy and science in the outdoors
8. EYLF Principles: Equity and inclusion in outdoor environments
9. EYLF Principles: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
10. EYLF Principles: Sustainability

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](#).

School of Education Procedures

In addition, the following policies and procedures for the Macquarie School of Education apply to this unit.

Academic Progression Policy

This unit is a part of a professional course listed on Schedules 2 and 3 of the [Academic Progression Policy](#). This course has additional requirements that are applicable for the full duration of the course, including course-specific Inherent Requirements, Fitness to Practice requirements and

other compulsory course requirements. It also has rigorous academic progression standards. Inability to meet these requirements may result in a withdrawal of offer of admission and/or permanent exclusion from the course in accordance with the General Coursework Rules.

Communication

It is the student's responsibility to check all electronic communication on a weekly basis. Communication may occur via:

Official MQ Student Email Address

The Dialogue function on iLearn

Other iLearn communication functions

Attendance and Participation

See the University timetable for information about when classes begin in this unit. [Creating your timetable - Enrolling | Macquarie University, Sydney \(mq.edu.au\)](#). Students are required to attend the tutorial in which they are enrolled. Any changes to tutorial enrolments must be completed officially through e-Student. Please do not contact the unit convenor to request a change.

There is an attendance requirement in this unit. Initial Teacher Education (ITE) degrees must ensure that teacher education students meet unit learning outcomes, course learning outcomes and the Graduate level of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Since units are within an accredited ITE degree, Macquarie School of Education is required to demonstrate these outcomes and standards have been taught, practised and assessed. To meet 'taught, practiced and assessed' accreditation requirements, ITE units have mandatory attendance, with an expectation of at least 80% attendance at tutorials. Please see your unit iLearn site for details of how to meet attendance requirements in this unit.

Infrequent Attendance Students

Information about the dates of the on-campus sessions can be found in the university timetable. [Creating your timetable - Enrolling | Macquarie University, Sydney \(mq.edu.au\)](#)

The on-campus sessions are essential to student engagement and learning and attendance is expected.

Prior to the on-campus sessions, students should have read the prescribed readings and listened to the lectures, summarise the main points, and make notes of the key terms and definitions. Prepare any discussion questions of your own that you wish to share.

Please make effective use of the online component of the unit and access iLearn regularly. Keep up to date with listening to the lectures on a weekly basis.

Further details and any updates about times and locations will be posted on iLearn as an Announcement during first half of the semester.

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
26/07/ 2026	Assignment date for A1 has been changed to be submitted after the first Infrequent tutorial.

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