



PBHS2202

Life Stories: Biography and Family History

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

School of Humanities

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Everyone has a story—and in this unit, you'll learn how to uncover, research, and tell those stories with care, creativity, and historical insight. This unit introduces you to the tools and techniques of genealogical and biographical research, helping you trace family histories and bring individual lives into historical focus. Whether you're interested in your own ancestry or the lives of others, this unit will help you become a thoughtful and skilled life historian.

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: Apply genealogical and biographical research methods to uncover personal and family histories.

ULO2: Analyse how personal narratives intersect with broader historical, cultural, and social contexts.

ULO3: Communicate family and biographical histories through visual, written, and reflective formats.

ULO4: Reflect critically on ethical and methodological issues in life history research.

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-timed 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>Skills Logbook</u>	40%	No	01/11/2026	Individual	No	Open
<u>Family Tree Infographic</u>	20%	No	23/08/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
<u>Short Biography</u>	40%	No	08/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Skills Logbook

Assessment Type ¹: Portfolio

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **01/11/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Open

Keep a detailed log of your developing research skills, from locating birth records to analysing oral histories and constructing timelines. Record evidence of your research process through written/oral and video form.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply genealogical and biographical research methods to uncover personal and family histories.
- Analyse how personal narratives intersect with broader historical, cultural, and social

contexts.

- Communicate family and biographical histories through visual, written, and reflective formats.

Family Tree Infographic

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **23/08/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Visualise your ancestry by creating an engaging infographic that maps out your family tree (kin or non-kin) and highlights key stories or connections.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply genealogical and biographical research methods to uncover personal and family histories.
- Communicate family and biographical histories through visual, written, and reflective formats.

Short Biography

Assessment Type ¹: Experiential task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 40 hours

Due: **08/11/2026**

Weighting: **40%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Write a compelling, evidence-based biography of a past or present family member, blending personal insight with historical context.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply genealogical and biographical research methods to uncover personal and family histories.
- Analyse how personal narratives intersect with broader historical, cultural, and social contexts.
- Communicate family and biographical histories through visual, written, and reflective

formats.

- Reflect critically on ethical and methodological issues in life history research.

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

All lectures are recorded and provided online via the iLearn site.

Workshops will build on skills and knowledge for assessment.

Unit Schedule

- Week 1 - Introduction to Life Stories
- Week 2 - Family history and genealogy
- Week 3 - Society of Australian Genealogists
- Week 4 - Life Stories and Skills
- Week 5 - Biography
- Week 6 - Osteobiographies
- Week 7 - Australian Dictionary of Biography
- Week 8 - Ethics and Life Stories
- Week 9 - DNA
- Week 10 - Object Biographies
- Week 11 - Oral history and family history
- Week 12 - Memoir and Autobiography
- Week 13 - Life stories and wellbeing

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](#)