

MACQUARIE  
UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF  
BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

ACST 355 / 860  
Contingent Payments 2

Semester 2, 2011

*Department of Applied Finance and  
Actuarial Studies*

**MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
UNIT OUTLINE**

<b>Year and Semester:</b>	<b>Semester 2, 2011</b>
<b>Unit convenor:</b>	<b>Shauna Ferris</b>
<b>Prerequisites for ACST355:</b>	<b>ACST344 (P) or ACST354 (P)</b>
<b>Prerequisites for ACST860:</b>	<b>ACST859</b>

Students in this unit should read this unit outline carefully at the start of semester. It contains important information about the unit. If anything in it is unclear, please consult one of the teaching staff in the unit.

#### **ABOUT THIS UNIT**

This unit develops models for the analysis of cash flows depending on uncertain events (ie. payments contingent on uncertain events, hence “contingent payments”). In particular, we will look at payments under policies involving two lives, models of competing risks, multiple decrement models and the valuation of benefits and contributions under superannuation plans. We will develop expected cash flow models and profit test models for various life insurance products, and will consider the effect of the pricing and policy value basis on the emergence of profit. We will begin by considering factors affecting mortality, types of selection, and issues around risk classification.

A good knowledge of the material covered in ACST 255 / 859 and ACST354 / 854 is essential. You should revise these units as soon as possible if necessary.

#### **EXEMPTION**

The units ACST255 / 859 and ACST355 / 860 together correspond to the professional subject CT5. The exemption will be recommended if and only if a SNG of at least 60 is achieved in both units and the average SNG is at least 65.

#### **PRIZE**

The Peter Hains Memorial Prize for Actuarial Studies is awarded for proficiency in this unit.

#### **TEACHING STAFF**

Shauna Ferris is the unit convenor. She can be contacted by email at [Shauna.Ferris@mq.edu.au](mailto:Shauna.Ferris@mq.edu.au).

Shauna Ferris and Associate Professor Leonie Tickle will both give lectures in this unit.

The tutors in this unit are Jacqueline Xu, Tony Zhang, Kirsten Flynn, and Shauna Ferris.

Tony Zhang is the teaching administrator for this unit. Administrative questions that are not covered in this unit outline should be directed to him via the Private Mail facility of the website. If the questions are of interest to everyone, the question and the reply will be posted to the website, so you should specifically request if you want your message to remain private.

## CONSULTATION TIMES

Questions about unit content can be sent to the Discussion Board of the website. Posting and responding to questions using the Discussion Board can be a very effective way to learn, and you are encouraged to make active use of the Discussion Board.

Alternatively you can ask questions during lecture breaks, tutorials or consultation hours.

Jacqueline Xu runs a consultation hour for all ACST355 / 860 students, on Friday 11–12 in E4B104. Shauna Ferris has consultation in her office E4A617 on Friday 2–4. Consultation sessions run during teaching weeks only. In special circumstances, an appointment may be made outside regular consultation hours – send an email to [shauna.ferris@mq.edu.au](mailto:shauna.ferris@mq.edu.au) to request a meeting.

Students experiencing significant difficulties with any topic in the unit must seek assistance immediately.

## CLASSES

The timetable for classes can be found on the University web site at: <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au/>

**Lectures** are held Tuesday 11–1 in C5CT1 and Friday 9–10 in W5AT1. The unit material is covered in the three hours of lectures each week.

**Tutorials** are held Friday 10–11, commencing in week 1.

**Computer lab sessions** will replace some lecture and tutorial classes in weeks 10, 11 and 12. See Teaching and Learning Strategy later in this unit outline.

Any alterations to classes will be advised in lectures and / or via the website.

## REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS

### Optional text

The ActEd CT5 notes are an optional text. Those who completed ACST 255 / 859 in 2009 or first semester 2010 should already have these notes. It is recommended that you read the optional reading from the ActEd notes in advance of the lecture. During the lecture you can then work through the lecture handout, which will cover similar ground as the ActEd notes but expressed in a different way.

Those who want to view a copy of the ActEd CT5 notes should send a query to **Tony Zhang** using private Mail on the ACST 355 / 860 website. Arrangements will be made for you to view them in the Actuarial Studies Department. The notes are not available in the library. **This reference copy of the notes cannot under any circumstances be photocopied.**

### Lecture notes

Lecture Handouts (ie. notes with gaps) are available for downloading from the unit website under Unit Notes. **Print these in advance and bring them to the relevant lecture to complete. It is expected that you will have the notes in lectures.**

Complete notes including solutions to lecture exercises will be made available for downloading from the ACST355 / 860 website at 12 noon on the Friday on which the relevant section of work is completed (eg. if we complete Section 1 in week 1, the complete notes will become available at noon on Friday of week 1). Solutions to section exercises will be made available at 6 pm on that same day. **This schedule is fixed and will not be varied for individual students unless the formal grounds for Special Consideration or Equity Support are met.**

### Tables

The *Formulae and Tables for Actuarial Examinations* book is not required for this unit, and will not be provided in the examination. Instead, you will be asked to generate your own set of tables, based on up-to-date UK mortality tables. There will be Tables Tasks exercises set in various weeks that will give you details of how to construct the tables and provide results to spot check your answers. In addition to generating results for your future use, the aim of these tasks is to help you to revise relevant results from ACST255 / 859. **It is important that you keep up-to-date with the Tables Tasks so that you can use your tables to answer questions throughout this unit.**

## TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

You will be required to use the teaching website, Excel, Word and Pdf / Pdfcreator.

## UNIT WEB PAGE

Course material is available on the learning management system (BlackBoard). To access the teaching website, go to <http://learn.mq.edu.au> and login using your usual login and password. You will then have access to the websites for all the units in which you are enrolled. If you have any trouble logging in (e.g. you have forgotten your password), please contact the Student IT Helpdesk in C5C244.

Before logging in, you should follow the link labelled “Technical Information” and read all the information there, including the Information Technology Security Policy and Rules and the Information Technology Usage Rules. This technical information also mentions a number of “plugins” that may be required. Of those listed, in this unit you will only need Acrobat Reader. Remember to close your browser when you have finished using the site. If you don't, another person can use the still running browser to access the website with your account.

The web site will be used as an integral part of this unit. The main components of the website (listed on the left hand side toolbar) are:

### Course Content

- Unit Outline and Administrative Information: You can download this unit outline from here. Other administrative information will be posted here during the semester.
- Unit Notes: Notes including Lecture Handouts – Complete Set, complete unit notes for each section, solutions to exercises for each section, and spreadsheet templates, are posted here for downloading.
- Assessments: Data and templates for the quizzes and assignments will be made available here, along with best student attempts at the assessments.
- Tables Tasks: The data and shell spreadsheets you need to complete the Tables Tasks will be made available here.
- Revision exercises: Additional revision exercises will be made available here.
- Tests and exams: Previous examinations and tests for ACST345 and ACST355 / 860 are available here. (ACST355 was offered for the first time in 2006. ACST345 was offered until 2005 and covered some of the same content as ACST355.)
- Links: Any web links you need to use will be made available here.

**Announcements.** Administrative announcements will be posted here.

**Assessments.** Submit your weekly quizzes and four online assignments here.

**Assignments.** Enter this section to submit your answers to the long answer questions of Assignments 1, 2 and 3.

**Calendar.** The calendar will list the dates that some items of assessment become available; however it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with all assessment requirements including those not listed on the calendar.

**Discussions.** You should use the Discussion facility, along with the tutorial time, as your resource for asking questions about the content of the unit. Please address your questions to your fellow students – if there is no response or an incorrect response from the class the teaching staff will post a response. You are encouraged to post answers to other students' questions – this is one of the most effective ways to clarify

your own understanding of the material. You should consult the Discussions frequently, to contribute to questions and see answers to queries.

**Mail.** You should use private Mail to send administrative queries to the unit convenor or teaching administrator. Staff will also use private Mail to contact you individually, if necessary. You may also use this facility to contact your fellow students. It is your responsibility to check the website regularly to make sure that you are up-to-date with messages sent to your private Mail address.

**Search.** Use this tool to search the website.

**Web links.** Links to relevant websites are available here.

**iLectures.** Audio of each lecture will be made available for all lectures on this tab.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

The broad learning objectives of this unit are as follows. The learning outcomes as well as the specific learning objectives are given in the lecture notes at the start of each section of work. You should review these in advance of each lecture and after completing each section of work.

1. Define, calculate and analyse the use of various single figure indices, explain the rationale behind the indices, and explain the advantages and disadvantages of the indices for summarising and comparing actual experience in different scenarios.
2. Define, describe and illustrate the principal forms of heterogeneity within a population and the ways in which selection can occur.
3. Extend the techniques learned in ACST255 / 859 to permit the calculation and analysis of cashflows dependent upon the death or survival of either or both of two lives, and cashflows dependent upon a fixed term as well as age.
4. Describe, develop, apply and analyse methods used to model cashflows contingent upon competing risks.
5. Construct and use multiple decrement service tables, and demonstrate understanding of the relationship with associated single decrement tables.
6. Describe, apply and analyse the technique of discounted emerging costs for use in pricing, reserving and assessing profitability, for superannuation funds and related multiple decrement tables, traditional life insurance contracts and unit linked policies.

## GRADUATE CAPABILITIES

In addition to the discipline-based learning objectives, all academic programs at Macquarie seek to develop the capabilities the University's graduates will need to develop to address the challenges, and to be effective, engaged participants in their world. This unit contributes to this by developing the following graduate capabilities:

1. Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills:
  - (a) Have an appreciation of the time value of money.
  - (b) Be an expert in compound interest theory, in both discrete and continuous scenarios.
  - (c) Have a deep intuitive understanding of the meaning of probability and the methods of manipulating probabilities.
  - (d) Understand the use of Expected Present Value as a key concept in many actuarial applications.
  - (e) Have skills in fitting and assessing the reliability of statistical models, particularly in the context of financial applications.
  - (f) Have the ability to develop methods for measuring and manipulating the range of decrement rates relevant to actuarial practice.
2. Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking
3. Problem Solving and Research Capability

## RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

- This unit uses research by Macquarie University researchers (references are given in the unit notes)
- This unit uses research from external sources (references are given in the unit notes)
- This unit gives you practice in applying research findings in your assignments
- This unit gives you opportunities to conduct your own research

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

**Lectures.** The unit material is covered in the three hours of lectures each week.

**Tutorials.** The tutorial is an opportunity for you to attempt the section exercises given in the lecture notes at the end of each section, and to discuss problems with the tutor.

Tutors will also go through one or two short additional questions in the tutorial. The additional tutorial questions will not be made available on the website or in hardcopy, or to students not attending the tutorial, so please do not request this.

You must attend the tutorial in which you are enrolled.

**Computer lab sessions** will replace some lecture and tutorial classes in weeks 10, 11 and 12. The Friday lab classes will be held across two rooms, E4B206 and E4B214. The Tuesday 2 November lab class will be held in room E4B214 only.

### **Material to bring to classes**

You are expected to bring to all classes:

- the relevant pages of the Lecture Handouts – Complete Set, to complete during classes; and (for tutorials) a copy of the section exercises from Lecture Handouts – Complete Set;
- completed Lecture Handouts for previous sections of work;
- blank paper, to complete exercises;
- a calculator;
- your completed Tables Tasks, so that you can refer to tables when completing exercises.

### **Schedule of Classes and Assessments**

A schedule of classes and assessments is given on the following page. This may be adapted as the semester proceeds. Any alterations to classes or assessment due dates will be advised in lectures and / or via the website.



Week	Week Beginning	Due Monday 5 pm	Tuesday 11-1 class	Friday 9-10 class	Friday 10-11 class
1	1 Aug	-	Lecture: Section 1 <i>Mortality indices</i>	Lecture: Section 1 (cont) and <i>Gapminder</i>	Tutorial: Section 1
2	8 Aug	Quiz 1	Lecture: Section 2 <i>Mortality risk factors and selection</i>	Lecture: Section 2 (cont) and <i>Historical mortality</i>	Tutorial: Section 2
3	15 Aug	Quiz 2	Lecture: Section 3 <i>Simple annuities and assurances involving two lives</i>	Lecture: Section 3 (cont)	Tutorial: Section 3
4	22 Aug	Quiz 3	Lecture: Section 4 <i>Contingent and reversionary benefits</i>	Lecture: Section 4 (cont)	Tutorial: Section 4
5	29 Aug	Quiz 4; Assignment 1	Lecture: Section 5 <i>Competing risks</i>	Lecture: Section 5 (cont)	Tutorial: Section 5
6	5 Sept	Quiz 5	Lecture: Section 6 <i>Multiple decrement tables</i>	Lecture: Section 6 (cont)	Tutorial: Section 6 (Q1-5)
7	12 Sept	Assignment 2	Lecture: Section 6 (cont)	Lecture: Section 7 <i>Superannuation Funds</i>	Tutorial: Section 6 (Q6-9) and additional question for Section 7
<b>STUDY BREAK</b>	19 Sept 26 Sept	Quiz 6 -			
8	3 Oct	Assignment 3	Lecture: Section 7 (cont)	Mock test	Mock test feedback; opportunity for questions about the test
9	10 Oct	-	Test	Lecture: Section 7 (cont)	Tutorial: Section 7
10	17 Oct	Quiz 7	Lecture: Section 8 <i>Profit testing</i>	Lab: Section 8 (E4B206 and E4B214)	Lab: Section 8 (cont) (E4B206 and E4B214)
11	24 Oct	Quiz 8	Lecture: Section 9 <i>Determining provisions using profit testing</i>	Lab: Section 9 (E4B206 and E4B214)	Lab: Section 9 (cont) (E4B206 and E4B214)
12	31 Oct	Quiz 9	Lab: Section 10 <i>Profit Testing – Additional Exercises</i> (E4B206 and E4B208)	Lab: Section 10 (cont) (E4B206 and E4B214)	Lab: Section 10 (cont) (E4B206 and E4B214)
13	7 Nov	Assignment 4	Unit surveys, Exam information, Revision	Revision	Revision

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This unit is assessed using a class test, regular short quizzes, a series of assignments and a final examination. (You will also be provided with non-assessable short questions to attempt during the tutorial, as well as section exercises to attempt during the tutorial and in your own time.) The assessment structure is suitable given the problem-solving and technical nature of the unit, and is also aimed at encouraging you to regularly review the material. An assessment schedule is given on the previous page and any changes to the assessment or assessment due dates will be advised in classes.

The quiz questions and short tutorial questions (and to some extent, the assignment questions) are aimed at helping you to understand the fundamental concepts, before moving on to more difficult material. **They are not necessarily indicative of the difficulty of questions you could expect in the class tests and on the final exam** (ie. they are mostly easier, to assist your initial learning).

### Quizzes and Assignments

The nine quizzes are worth a total 5% of the final assessment for the unit. Each quiz is based on the material in one section of the unit (Quiz 1 is based on material in Section 1, Quiz 2 is based on material in Section 2, ... Quiz 9 is based on material in Section 9) but may also use some earlier work.

The four assignments are worth a total of 12% of the final assessment for the unit.

Quizzes and assignments are to be submitted online by the due dates shown on the preliminary schedule. You should not leave the submission of quizzes or assignments to the last minute in case there are system problems that cause delays. (In the rare case of prolonged University-wide technology problems, allowances will be made for all students). You should ensure that you fully Submit each item of assessment and receive the acknowledgement "Thank you for submitting Quiz 1" etc. Feedback on each quiz and assignment will be available online once the assessment has been submitted and the deadline for the assessment has passed.

You must submit a quiz / assignment, in order to be able to access the questions and solutions throughout the semester. **Quizzes and assignments cannot subsequently be made available to students who do not submit an attempt** so please do not request this.

Quizzes 1 and 2 are used as early diagnostic tools to assess how well you are understanding the unit material and whether you need to revise pre-requisite material or to reconsider your enrolment in the unit. If you score less than 60% in these assessment tasks you should contact the unit convenor to discuss your options.

## Class test

The test is worth 13% of the final assessment for the unit. It is scheduled for Tuesday 11 October at 11 am. and will cover Sections 1 to 6 inclusive. It will be a 75 minute written paper. The class test date, time, format and coverage may be subject to change – any changes will be advised in lectures and / or on the unit website.

Marked test papers including individual feedback will be returned to BESS. Class level results, marking guide and feedback on common errors will be provided on the website. Since this is a large class, we expect that it might take up to three weeks to provide feedback.

## Exam

A final examination is included as an assessment task for this unit to provide assurance that:

- the product belongs to the student and
- the student has attained the knowledge and skills tested in the exam.

The final examination is worth 70% of the final assessment for the unit. It will be a three-hour written paper with ten minutes reading time held during the University Examination period.

**In order to receive a passing grade in this unit, students must have satisfactory performance on the class test plus the final exam (combined).**

The University Examination period in Second Half Year 2011 is from 14 November to 2 December. You are expected to present yourself for examination at the time and place designated in the University Examination Timetable. The timetable will be available in Draft form approximately eight weeks before the commencement of the examinations and in Final form approximately four weeks before the commencement of the examinations from <http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au/exam>.

The only exception to sitting an examination at the designated time is because of documented illness or unavoidable disruption. In these circumstances you may wish to consider applying for Special Consideration. Information about Special Consideration is given later in this unit outline.

If a Supplementary Examination is granted as a result of the Special Consideration process the examination will be scheduled after the conclusion of the official examination period. Students applying for Special Consideration must make themselves available to sit a supplementary exam during this period.

You are advised that it is Macquarie University policy not to set early examinations for individuals or groups of students. All students are expected to ensure that they are available until the end of the teaching semester, that is, the final day of the official examination period.

The Macquarie university examination policy details the principles and conduct of examinations at the University. The policy is available at: <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/examination/policy.htm>

	<b>Class test</b>	<b>Assignments (four)</b>	<b>Online quizzes (nine)</b>	<b>Final exam</b>
Description	In-class test	Combination of online and written questions	Online questions	Formal exam
Due date	11 October	See schedule	See schedule	Exam period
<b>% Weighting</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12% in total</b>	<b>5% in total</b>	<b>70%</b>
Grading method	Mark out of 40 provided. Marking system is given on test paper.	Mark provided. Marking system is given in assignments.	Mark provided. Marking system is given in quizzes.	Mark provided. Marking system is given on exam paper.
Submission method	In-class	Online	Online	Formal exam
Feedback	Class-level and individual, within 12 working days of assessment	Online, within 1 day of the deadline for submission	Online, within 1 day of the deadline for submission	None
Estimated student workload (hours)	8-12	15-25	12-20	15-27
Learning outcomes assessed				
1	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓	✓
6		✓	✓	✓
Graduate capabilities assessed				
1(a)	✓	✓	✓	✓
1(b)	✓	✓	✓	✓
1(c)	✓	✓	✓	✓
1(d)	✓	✓	✓	✓
1(e)	✓	✓	✓	✓
1(f)	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓	✓
3		✓		✓

## **RULES REGARDING TESTS AND EXAMINATIONS**

You should ensure that your handwriting in the class tests and in the final examination is legible. Sections of work that are not legible will not be marked. For true/false questions, answers that are not clearly legible as either T or F will be assumed to be wrong and marked accordingly.

You are permitted to bring to the class test and the final examination, **ONE** A4 sheet of paper containing reference material printed on both sides. The sheet may be handwritten, typed or photo-reduced. Any mortality or statistical tables that you require will be provided for you in the class tests and the final examination.

Calculators will be allowed in the class tests and the final examination but a clear indication of the steps involved in every calculation must be shown. Any machines that have a text-retrieval capacity, whether or not they have a full alphabet on the keyboard, are not allowed. Calculators may be checked at the commencement of the class tests and final exam, and the make/model may be recorded.

Dictionaries will not be permitted in the class tests or the final examination.

Academic Senate has resolved that mobile phones should not be used in classrooms or be brought into examination rooms. Communication devices, including but not restricted to mobile phones, text message receivers, pagers and wireless-equipped calculators, may not be brought into the class tests or exam. If a student is found to have brought such a device into the examination room, the argument that the device was turned off will NOT be regarded as an acceptable excuse.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICY ON GRADING**

Macquarie University uses the grades HD, D, Cr, P, PC and F for grading the achievements of students in units of study. The meaning of each symbol is explained in Section 9 of the Bachelor Degree Rules in the current Macquarie University Handbook of Undergraduate Studies.

Academic Senate has a set of guidelines on the distribution of grades across the range from fail to high distinction. Your final result will include one of these grades plus a standardised numerical grade (SNG). The numerical marks resulting from assessment of your work in this unit will be used as an initial indicator of the quality of your learning and understanding. The use of these numerical marks is, however, only a starting point in determining the appropriate grade. In particular, note that the SNG ranges mentioned in the Handbook of Undergraduate Studies are not the raw marks. To obtain a grade you must satisfy the qualitative definition of that grade. Once your grade has been determined, you are allocated an SNG indicating your approximate position amongst students assigned that grade.

## GRADING APPEALS AND FINAL EXAMINATION SCRIPT VIEWING

If, at the conclusion of the unit, you have performed below expectations, and are considering lodging an appeal of grade and/or viewing your final exam script please refer to the following website which provides information about these processes and the cut off dates in the first instance. Please read the instructions provided concerning what constitutes a valid grounds for appeal before appealing your grade.

[http://www.businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/for/new\\_and\\_current\\_students/undergraduate/admin\\_central/grade\\_appeals](http://www.businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/for/new_and_current_students/undergraduate/admin_central/grade_appeals).

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The University is committed to equity and fairness in all aspects of its learning and teaching. In stating this commitment, the University recognises that there may be circumstances where a student is prevented by unavoidable disruption from performing in accordance with their ability. A special consideration policy exists to support students who experience serious and unavoidable disruption such that they do not reach their usual demonstrated performance level. The policy and procedure are available at:

[http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special\\_consideration/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html)

[http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special\\_consideration/procedure.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/procedure.html)

It is the student's responsibility to familiarise themselves with these policies and to comply with the required processes and deadlines. Applications based on medical grounds should include the Professional Authority Form (PAF).

Late submission of quizzes and assignments and rescheduling of class tests is not permitted. If illness or unavoidable disruption affects your ability to submit an assessment task or sit the test, you should contact the unit convenor immediately. Allowances will be made where a formal application for Special Consideration is approved.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

The nature of scholarly endeavour, dependent as it is on the work of others, binds all members of the University community to abide by the principles of academic honesty. Its fundamental principle is that all staff and students act with integrity in the creation, development, application and use of ideas and information. This means that:

- all academic work claimed as original is the work of the author making the claim
- all academic collaborations are acknowledged
- academic work is not falsified in any way
- when the ideas of others are used, these ideas are acknowledged appropriately.

Further information on the academic honesty can be found in the Macquarie University Academic Honesty Policy at:

[http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic\\_honesty/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html)

Penalties for plagiarism may include deduction of marks, failure in the unit and / or referral to the University Discipline Committee.

## IT CONDITIONS OF USE

Access to all student computing facilities within the Faculty of Business and Economics is restricted to authorised coursework for approved units. Student ID cards must be displayed in the locations provided at all times.

Students are expected to act responsibly when utilising University IT facilities. The following regulations apply to the use of computing facilities and online services:

- Accessing inappropriate web sites or downloading inappropriate material is not permitted. Material that is not related to coursework for approved unit is deemed inappropriate.
- Downloading copyright material without permission from the copyright owner is illegal, and strictly prohibited. Students detected undertaking such activities will face disciplinary action, which may result in criminal proceedings.

Non-compliance with these conditions may result in disciplinary action without further notice.

**Students must use their Macquarie University email addresses to communicate with staff as it is University policy that the University issued email account is used for official University communication.**

## INSTITUTE OF ACTUARIES OF AUSTRALIA

The Institute of Actuaries of Australia (IAAust) has recently launched a new free offer for students to become IAAust University Subscribers. Full time undergraduates studying at an Institute accredited university who are members of a university student actuarial society are eligible. To sign up, go to

<http://www.actuaries.asn.au/Membership/MembershipoftheInstitute/Subscriber.aspx>.

The University Subscriber offer is not a membership of the IAAust but a subscription to receive information on career opportunities, invitations to selected IAAust events and online publications. You might also consider joining the IAAust – there are advantages in doing so while a full-time student. For membership information, go to

<http://www.actuaries.asn.au/Membership/MembershipoftheInstitute.aspx>

## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at <http://www.student.mq.edu.au>.

**BESS.** The Business and Economics Student Centre (BESS) is located in room E4B106 and offers photocopying facilities, reading areas and reference material. Class tests will be returned to BESS. Information about facilities and services is at [http://businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/for/new\\_and\\_current\\_students/undergraduate/bess](http://businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/for/new_and_current_students/undergraduate/bess).

**ACSTINFO.** This ACSTINFO site is used to distribute information to all students majoring in actuarial studies. The information supplied may include administrative information and job advertisements. You will retain access to this site during the vacation following the end of this semester. It is to your advantage to ensure you read information on this web site regularly. You should not assume that information posted there will also be repeated in lectures. To access the site, login at: <http://learn.mq.edu.au/> and the site should appear among your list of units. When you first login, please read the section labelled "How to use this site." This contains useful information which will help you determine when there is new information on the site which you should read.

**E4B104 Consultation Room.** This room will be used for Jacqueline Xu's regular Friday 11-12 consultation.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND YOUR STUDENT FILE

Every business keeps a record of its correspondence with its customers. The University is no exception and it maintains a file for every student. Staff are required to ensure that copies of all correspondence with you are added to your file. Historically, "correspondence" meant letters, but nowadays it also includes electronic communication such as email. Staff have some discretion here and might not file copies of trivial emails, but it is difficult to define precise boundaries here, so it is safer to assume that any email you send to a staff member will be added to your file.

Some people regard email as more ephemeral than a letter and thus tend to take less care with issues such as clarity of expression, grammar and spelling. Before sending an email to a staff member, a good question to ask yourself is: "If a member of staff is reviewing my student file prior to writing a reference for me, and they see a copy of this email, would that staff member gain a favourable impression of my level of communication skills?"

In this context, email includes communications you send to staff with the mail tool in the unit's web site. It does not normally include postings you make to the discussion area. However, in those very rare cases where a student makes an inappropriate posting to the discussion area, a copy of the posting would be added to that student's file.



## **CLASS ETIQUETTE**

Mobile phones should be switched off during all lectures and tutorials. If there is a reason for you to keep your phone on you should request to be allowed to do so before the start of the class.

Lectures commence at 5 minutes past the hour and you are expected to be punctual.

You are expected to keep talking to a minimum during classes so as not to disrupt your fellow students (and the lecturer!).

## **FEEDBACK**

I would welcome your feedback on any aspect of the unit. If you see that something could be improved, don't sit back and complain to your friends! Come and see me and let me know your ideas and if I agree that your ideas are good I will make changes. You can give me feedback in lectures or by posting to the website (anonymously if need be).

I hope not to see any feedback in the end-of-semester unit evaluations that I haven't heard about already and therefore had the opportunity to incorporate to improve the unit. Please get involved in making this unit as useful and rewarding as possible.

Shauna Ferris  
1 August 2010