



BUS854  
Managing Cultural Diversity  
in Business

Semester 2, 2010

*Department of Business*

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

**BUS854 MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN BUSINESS**

**Year and Semester:** Semester 2 2010; classes August 2 - November 12

**Unit convenor:** Dr Elizabeth Christopher  
Tel: 0417 236 531.  
Email: Elizabeth.Christopher@mq.edu.au

**Prerequisites/co-requisites:** It is assumed that students at Master's level will have a sound knowledge and understanding of management principles.

**Credit points:** 4

Students should read this outline carefully at the start of semester. It contains essential information. If anything is unclear, please contact Elizabeth.

**ABOUT THIS UNIT**

The thesis, or core argument, of the unit is based on two major assumptions:

1. Both cultural convergence and divergence are occurring on a massive scale across the world;
2. Leaders of organisations, private or public, undertake the double duty of managing convergence with equality and reconciling divergence with justice.

The content of the unit is a critical exploration of ways and means by which international leaders perform these duties; with the aim of guiding and inspiring leaders of the future.

For the purpose of this Unit, culture is defined in its widest sense as:

• **Cultivated behaviour:** the sum of individuals' social learning and experience through symbols deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions, accepted generally without question and passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next: a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. Thus culture is communication and communication is culture.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

It is to explore cultural dimensions of international management. Specific objectives are to learn more about:

- 1- Managing cultural differences in international business environments;
- 2- Culture-based risks, challenges and opportunities for international managers;
- 3- Convergence and divergence in cultural views of social responsibility and corporate governance;
- 4- The role of culture in management of diversity;
- 5- Communicating across cultures: perspectives on 'reality'
- 6- Cross cultural negotiation; cultural differences in tactics and manoeuvres;
- 7- Cultural bases for strategies in international alliances;
- 8- Convergence and divergence in international controls and labour relations;
- 9- Developing international managers;
- 10- Motivation and leadership in the management of diversity

## **TEACHING STAFF**

- Convenor: Dr Elizabeth Christopher
- Tel: 0417 236 531. Email: [Elizabeth.Christopher@mq.edu.au](mailto:Elizabeth.Christopher@mq.edu.au)
  
- Consultation hours: before and after each class.

## **CLASSES**

Tuesdays, 10am - 1 pm in Building E4B Room 316;

The class will be offered also on Wednesdays, 12 - 3pm in E4B Room 316

Face to face study hours: 3 hours per week.

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

## **REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS**

### **Set text**

Helen Deresky and Elizabeth Christopher, 2008, International Management: Managing across Borders and Cultures (Pearson Education Australia)

Obtainable from Macquarie University Coop Bookshop  
([macq\\_byr@coop-bookshop.com.au](mailto:macq_byr@coop-bookshop.com.au))

Students should have their own copy of this text if possible. There are some copies on the library shelves and in library reserve.

Lectures support and add to the textbook but cannot replace it. It is a standard work of reference on cross cultural management, specifically addressed to the Australasian market.

Also in library reserve is a very useful book of readings: Elizabeth Christopher (editor), 2008, Managing cultural diversity in international business.

Classroom sessions are backed up online with lecture notes, case studies, articles and discussion points on the ten major topics above that make up the content of the Unit.

### **UNIT WEB PAGE**

Online address for Blackboard: <http://learn.mq.edu.au>

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After completing this unit students should be able to do the following:

- \* Sketch the multicultural 'big picture' in which global trade and government forces operate; and summarise the major challenges faced by international managers (political, legal, economic, social and technological);
- \* Present a range of culture-based arguments concerning the need for social responsibility and ethical behaviour in multi-national enterprises;
- \* Identify major cultural characteristics, including communication styles, that characterise regions, nations, communities, organisations, groups and individuals;
- \* Discuss a range of tactics for international negotiation;
- \* Describe major cultural factors in strategies for international alliances, including controls, labour relations and management;
- \* Present arguments for adopting particular leadership styles in given situations; and for varying motivational techniques depending on circumstances;

### **GRADUATE CAPABILITIES**

This unit develops the following graduate capabilities:

- 1 Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills
- 2 Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking
- 3 Problem Solving and Research Capability
- 4 Creative and Innovative
- 5 Effective Communications

- 6 Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens
- 7 Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible
- 8 Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative
- 9 Commitment to Continuous Learning

\* Enhance generic skills (foundation skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology; self-awareness, interpersonal and communication skills; critical analysis; problem-solving; creative thinking; logical argument; leadership and teamwork).

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY**

This unit is presented through six learning media:

1. A 3-hour weekly classroom lecture combined with class and small group discussions, and experiential exercises.
2. Online support via Blackboard: <http://learn.mq.edu.au>  
Lecture notes, assignment details, assessment methods, case studies, reading and reference materials and a sample exam paper will be posted. Students are encouraged to use the discussion board to share their learning; and there is a private mail box.
3. Students' private journal entries posted weekly on Blackboard, to reinforce their learning and encourage them to think critically about the content of the Unit.

(Note: if Elizabeth does not acknowledge any personal communication from any student within 24 hours, they should assume she has not received it and re-send it!)

4. Coursework, consisting of:
  - An individual written assignment;
  - A group research project for practice in research methods and teamwork;
  - Two written exams for students' self-assessment as well as grading and feedback by academic staff: (a) mid-semester class test; (b) final written examination.
5. The set textbook: Helen Deresky and Elizabeth Christopher, 2008, *International Management: Managing across Borders and Cultures* (Pearson Education Australia); plus a list of recommended texts and websites; and weekly readings posted on Blackboard.
6. The students themselves. Nobody wants to listen to a lecture for 3 hrs every week. Much learning will be from peers. Students are expected to attend as many classes as they can and to offer themselves as a learning resource. All students

will be required to give a short talk in class (5-10 minutes maximum), Weeks 3 through 10, on a specific and personal aspect of their cross cultural experience.

**ASSESSMENT:**

In order to pass this Unit, students will be expected to:

1. Make a short presentation to the class (minimum 5 minutes) on an aspect of their cross cultural experience. Presentations will begin in Week 3 and go through Week 10 (5%, no written report).
2. Attend classes and post online a weekly self-reflective journal of their progress through the Unit (total of 5%)
3. Write an individual assignment in the form of their response to an imaginary cross cultural management task (examples and guidelines online; 10% max., approx. 1,000 words);
4. Sit a 90-minute written test in class, mid-semester (15%)
5. Participate in a group research project, including a class presentation, and submit a written report (examples and guidelines online, 15% max., approx. 1,500 - 2,000 words),
6. Sit a two and a half hour end-of-semester written exam (50%, sample exam online with suggestions for appropriate answers)

**TIMETABLE**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>BEGINNING MONDAY</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
1	Aug 2 2010	Overview
2	Aug 9	Going global
3	Aug 16  <b><i>PRIVATE ONLINE JOURNALS BEGIN</i></b>	Social responsibility and ethics  <b><i>CROSSCULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS BEGIN</i></b>
4	Aug 23	The role of culture
5	Aug 30	Communication
6	Sept 6	Negotiations and decisions

	<b>GROUPS TO BE FORMED FOR GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT</b>	
7	Sept 13	Forming, monitoring and controlling strategic alliances
	<b>INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE BY MONDAY SEPT. 20</b>	
	<b>Mid semester break: Monday Sept 20 - Friday Oct 1</b>	
8	Oct 4	90-minute written class test. No lecture & no cultural presentations
9	Oct 11	Workforce diversity and international management
10	Oct 18	Motivation and leadership
	<b>END OF CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS FINAL ENTRIES IN SELF-REFLECTIVE JOURNALS</b>	
11	Oct 25	Group projects: verbal reports begin.....
12	Nov 1	...continued.
	<b>WRITTEN RESEARCH REPORTS DUE FRIDAY NOV 5</b>	
13	Nov 8	Revision of entire unit: end-of-semester ceremony.
14	TBA EXAM (2½ hours plus 10 min. reading time)	University examination period

### RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

- This unit gives you practice in applying research findings in your assignments
- This unit gives you opportunities to conduct your own research

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Attendance. Students are required to attend at many lectures as they can. They are required also to post online each week, Weeks 3 through 10, a self-reflective private journal describing what they found new and interesting in the week's lecture, what they would have liked but didn't find, and what they feel they have learned.

These tasks are set so students can:

- Listen, question and contribute to explanations and expansions of the material in the set text and other relevant literature;
- Extend their knowledge of related literature;
- Share ideas and opinions with the lecturer and other students;
- Monitor the progress of their own learning;
- Reflect critically on the content of the lectures, week by week;
- Maintain momentum and enthusiasm for their studies.

2. Cross cultural contributions. Students will make a 5-10 minute presentation to the class, beginning Week 3, on some aspect of their international experience. A list of presenters will be circulated during Weeks 1 and 2. Objectives are:

- To share their experiences of working or studying across cultures;
- To give students practice in public speaking;

3. Individual written assignment of about 1,000 words, due end of Week 7, out of 10%: students' responses to an imaginary cross cultural management dilemma. Learning outcomes are to provide them with the opportunity to:

- Read more widely;
- Research different ways to manage cultural diversity in the workplace;
- Gain more insights to key concepts of cross cultural studies;
- Recognise how the major themes of Unit fit within the context of international management;
- Become more able to relate theory to practice in the management of cultural diversity;
- Apply theoretical knowledge to a 'real-life' problem;
- Construct reasonable and realistic arguments and increase their ability to make clear, logical statements;
- Increase their problem-solving skills
- Gain skills in correct procedures for writing and presenting academic work.

4. Mid-semester class test, 90 minutes, first week after the break, out of 15%: objectives are to:

- Motivate students to learn;
- Give students the opportunity to assess their own learning in time to benefit from lecturers' feedback;

- Provide practice in exam writing;
- Encourage self-leadership and self-management of learning.

5. Group research project due end of Week 12, including a class presentation in Weeks 11 and 12, and a written report of 1,500-2,000 words, out of a total of 15%: learning outcomes are to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the following:

- Theoretical and practical knowledge of the three major methods for academic research: interviews/case studies; surveys; and unobtrusive or non-intervention methods;
- Ability to work as a member of a task-oriented and multi-cultural team;
- Leadership qualities: the management of workforce diversity;
- Increased ability to write academic reports (based also on experience gained and feedback from the case study assignment).

6. End-of-semester 2½ hour written exam, out of 50%: learning outcomes are to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the following:

- They have learned something from study of BUS854 (i.e. that they know more now on the topic of managing cultural diversity in business than they did before they enrolled in the unit);
- They understand what they have learned, i.e. it was not all rote learning and memorisation;
- They can apply this knowledge through analysis, synthesis and evaluation, to aspects of the management of cultural diversity in real life.

## **ASSESSMENT TASKS IN MORE DETAIL**

### **1. Individual class presentation**

Each week, beginning Week 3, through Week 10, students are asked to become 'cultural ambassadors' by informing the class of personal aspects of their cross cultural experiences. In Weeks 1 and 2 a list of presenters and dates will be circulated and compiled; and some examples provided of presentations by former students.

Each presentation should be for a minimum of 5 minutes and no written report is required. All presentations of at least minimum length will receive the full grade of 5% for their contribution to the unit learning.

In exceptional circumstances, such as work commitments that prevent students from making a class presentation, students should discuss an alternative with Elizabeth.

### **2. Online weekly private self-reflecting journal**

This is for Elizabeth's eyes only. Students are asked from Week 3 to post entries in a reflective journal, commenting on their responses to the week's lecture. They

will identify what they feel they learned from it, what were its high and low points and what might have been done differently. For the journal entries the grade will be out of 5%

**3. Individual assignment (submitted via Blackboard end of Week 7).**

Students will be given an imaginary problem in cross cultural management and asked to write, in about 1,000 words, how they would handle it. Their ideas must be supported by reference to relevant literature. Examples will be provided. (mid-semester break); submission by Blackboard; assessment out of 10%.

**4: Mid-semester short-answer exam**

In class time, Week 8, after the break, students will write short answers to 15 questions on topics covered in Weeks 1 through 7. This will be a 90 minute exam (no lecture will be given and no cultural contributions made). Each answer is worth a maximum of 1% (total 15%). An example of a previous exam, with suggestions for answers, is online.

**5. Group research project.**

Groups of 3-4 people will be created by Elizabeth in Week 4. Each group will be provided with its own private 'discussion board' on Blackboard so Elizabeth can keep track of all groups. Guidelines and examples of former reports that earned high grades are provided online.

After reading some literature on research methods for the social sciences (see <http://www.managementhelp.org/research/research.htm> and further references online) groups will each seek answers to a specific research question, based on assumptions derived from their study of the Unit. Each group will decide what relevant question they would like to research.

One or more members of each group will summarise its research to the class, in a presentation of about 15 minutes', beginning Week 11 and continuing in Week 12.

Full written reports must be submitted online by the end of Week 12 for comments & grades to be returned before the exam. Reports should conform in style and content to academic standards for report writing (see guidelines online)

This assignment is worth a total of 15% including class presentation and written report: due date for report, end of Week 12; submission by Blackboard. Length of report: approximately 1,500-2,000 words.

NOTE: Students may be penalised if they do not submit each item of required coursework by the due date, including work required for class.

	<b>Assessment Task 1</b>	<b>Assessment Task 2</b>	<b>Assessment Task 3</b>	<b>Assessment Task 4</b>
Title/Name	<b>Individual class presentation</b>	<b>Online weekly private self-reflecting journal</b>	<b>Individual assignment (submitted via Blackboard end of Week 7).</b>	<b>Group research project</b>
Description ( <i>including length or similar if applicable</i> )	Students are asked to become 'cultural ambassadors' by informing the class of personal aspects of their cross cultural experiences.	Students are asked from Week 3 to post entries in a reflective journal, commenting on their responses to the week's lecture	Students will be given an imaginary problem in cross cultural management and asked to write, in about 1,000 words, how they would handle it. Their ideas must be supported by reference to relevant literature	Each group will be provided with its own private 'discussion board' on Blackboard so Elizabeth can keep track of all groups
Due date	Each week, beginning Week 3	From Week 3	End of Week 7	Week 4
% Weighting	5%	5%	10%	15%
Grading method - marking criteria/ standards - expectations in relation to presentation - referencing requirements or refer to attached marking rubric				
Submission method	In class	Online	Online	Online
Feedback ( <i>type, method, date</i> )				
Estimated student workload (hours)				
Learning outcomes assessed				
1	Sketch the multicultural 'big picture' in which global trade and government			

	<b>Assessment Task 1</b>	<b>Assessment Task 2</b>	<b>Assessment Task 3</b>	<b>Assessment Task 4</b>
	forces operate; and summarise the major challenges faced by international managers (political, legal, economic, social and technological)			
2	Present a range of culture-based arguments concerning the need for social responsibility and ethical behaviour in multi-national enterprises			
3	Identify major cultural characteristics, including communication styles, that characterise regions, nations, communities, organisations, groups and individuals			
4	Discuss a range of tactics for international negotiation			
5	Describe major cultural factors in strategies for international alliances, including controls, labour relations and management			
6	Present			

	<b>Assessment Task 1</b>	<b>Assessment Task 2</b>	<b>Assessment Task 3</b>	<b>Assessment Task 4</b>
	arguments for adopting particular leadership styles in given situations; and for varying motivational techniques depending on circumstances			
Graduate capabilities assessed				
1a	Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking			
1b	Problem Solving and Research Capability			
1c	Creative and Innovative			
1d	Effective Communications			
1e	Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens			
1f	Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible			
1g	Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative			
1h	Enhance generic skills (foundation skills of literacy, numeracy and information			

	<b>Assessment Task 1</b>	<b>Assessment Task 2</b>	<b>Assessment Task 3</b>	<b>Assessment Task 4</b>
	technology; self-awareness, interpersonal and communication skills; critical analysis; problem-solving; creative thinking; logical argument; leadership and teamwork).			
2	Commitment to Continuous Learning			
3	Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills			
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				

## **6. Examination**

Value 50%; date to be advised; two and a half hours (plus 10 minutes' reading time). Part A: Case study; 3 questions 10 marks each (30 marks total); Part B: 2 short discussions on any 2/5 topics (10 marks each); sample exam paper online. Dictionaries are not permitted in the exam.

Students must sit the exam during their allocated class period. The only exceptions to sitting the examination at the designated time will be because of documented illness or unavoidable disruption. In these circumstances students may consider applying for Special Consideration. Information about unavoidable disruption and the special consideration process is available at <http://www.reg.mq.edu.au/Forms/APSCon.pdf>

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. (Individual Divisions may wish to signal when the Division's Supplementary are normally scheduled.)

Students are advised that it is Macquarie University policy not to set early or delayed examinations for individuals or groups of students. All students are expected to be available to sit the exam at the designated time and place.

### **DETERMINATION OF OVERALL GRADE**

Grades will be awarded using the standard Macquarie University scheme:

HD High distinction 85-100%

D Distinction 75-84%

Cr Credit 65-74%

P Pass 50-64%

PC Conceded pass 45-49%

F Fail 0-44%

An Incomplete (I) grade will only be awarded under exceptional circumstances. W indicates the student has chosen to discontinue the unit after the HECS census date and up to the end of week 10. Students who receive an "I" grade should contact Elizabeth immediately to discuss the reasons, and to find out what to do to complete the requirements of the Unit.

High Distinction (HD: 85-100) denotes performance which meets all unit objectives in such an exceptional way, and with such marked excellence, that it deserves the highest recognition;

Distinction (D: 75-84) denotes performance which clearly deserves a very high level of recognition as an excellent achievement in the unit;

Credit (C: 65-74) denotes performance which is substantially better than would normally be expected of competent students in the unit;

Pass (P: 50-64) denotes performance which satisfies unit objectives;

Pass Conceded (PC: 45-49) denotes performance which meets unit objectives only marginally;

Fail (F: 0-44) denotes performance which does not meet the unit objectives.

### **SUMMARY:**

Students' work will be awarded a high grade to the extent to which it shows:

- Excellent understanding of the relevant principles and all key concepts;
- Discussion showed insight and was innovative; use of authorities and references was excellent; clear and logical statements were made and conclusions were sound and interesting.
- Reflection, obvious investment of time and effort.

The University Examination period starts 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Please look up exam timetables on the MQ website for the exact date closer to end of semester.

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.

<http://www.timetables.mq.edu.au/exam>

The only exception to not 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.

The University's policy on special consideration process is available at [http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special\\_consideration/policy.html](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html)

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. (Individual Faculties may wish to signal when the Faculties' Supplementary Exams are normally scheduled.)

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>

## **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)

## **GRADES**

Please refer to relevant Bachelor Degree rule in the 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).

On occasion your raw mark for a unit (i.e., the total of your marks for each assessment item) may not be the same as the SNG which you receive. Under the Senate guidelines, results may be scaled to ensure that there is a degree of comparability across the university, so that units with the same past performances of their students should achieve similar results.

It is important that you realise that the policy does not require that a minimum number of students are to be failed in any unit. In fact it does something like the opposite, in requiring examiners to explain their actions if more than 20% of students fail in a unit.

The process of scaling does not change the order of marks among students. A student who receives a higher raw mark than another will also receive a higher final scaled mark.

For an explanation of the policy see  
<http://senate.mq.edu.au/rules/Guidelines2003.doc> or  
<http://senate.mq.edu.au/rules/detailedguidelines.doc>.

## **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 is available at:

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

## **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>.

[Individual Unit Convenors may wish to add Unit/ Faculty specific support eg BESS, Room, PAL, E4B Consultation Room.]

## **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.