

MACQUARIE
UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF
BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

ACCG847
Forensic Accounting

Semester 2, 2011

*Department of Accounting and
Corporate Governance*

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

Year and Semester: Semester 2, 2011

Unit convenor: Renee Radich

[Prerequisites / Corequisites:] There are no formal prerequisites or co-requisites for this unit however students are assumed to have a thorough knowledge of accounting procedures and systems and of corporate structures; It will be beneficial if you also have some understanding of Auditing.

Credit points: 4 Credit points

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 examines various techniques of financial fraud prevention, investigation and detection. Topics will include: motivations for financial fraud, symptoms of financial fraud, financial statement fraud, evidence collection and evaluation, legal report writing, interviewing witnesses and perpetrators, fraud prevention. Case studies will be used

Forensic accounting differs from financial accounting, management accounting and auditing in terms of its purpose and context. Financial accounting involves data collection, recording and classification and summarising economic events in a logical manner in order to report those matters in financial language to decision makers, many of whom are external to the firm. Financial accounting is constrained as to reporting formats used by the need to conform to Accounting Standards. Management accounting provides relevant information to insiders in the company so that activities of divisions within a company and profitability of operations can be monitored and enhanced. There are no standard formats for such management reports and they may contain considerable amounts of data not addressed in financial reports.

The purpose of Auditing is to provide assurance as to the reliability or otherwise of reports generated by the systems at a macro level. The reason is simple: if decisions are based on sound information the chance of wrong decisions being made is reduced. Hence, the underlying objective of financial statement audit is to assist decision makers by providing a degree of quality control over the information through ensuring that the financial statements issued are free from material error. It confirms final positions shown but may not reveal the side tracks leading to those results.

Forensic Accounting is concerned with specific problems, frequently dispute resolution and entails detailed investigation of evidence rather than with compiling

reports from the basic. Data it is interpretive and thus has more in common with auditing than with other branches of accounting.

The word *forensic* is an adjective meaning pertaining to or used in public forums i.e. courts of law. Thus forensic accounting is concerned with investigation and consulting services. Investigative accounting involves detailed examination of evidence to determine whether significant error or wrongful (illegal?) actions may have occurred. Forensic accounting builds on this by concentrating on exceptional or unusual events and consequently uncovers almost as many fraudulent events as are disclosed by whistle blowers.

Forensic accounting services are a growing and integral part of the accounting profession. The unit is designed to equip students to appreciate the issues involved from both local and international perspectives the unit and considers the following topics..

- The social and legal context
- The foundations of Australian legal structures
- Fraud perpetrators and their motivation(s)
- Conceptual backdrop and white collar crime
- Fraud symptoms
- Evidence collection and evaluation
- Legal elements of fraud
- Financial statement fraud
- Money laundering
- Fraud prevention and fraud policies

TEACHING STAFF

Convenor: Renee Radich

Room: E4A 330

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Email: rradich@efs.mq.edu.au

CONSULTATION TIMES

Consultation hours will be Tuesday 2-4pm. **Please note that staff will only respond to emails that are sent by students from their Macquarie University email address.**

You are encouraged to seek help at a time that is convenient to you from a staff member teaching on this unit during their regular consultation hours. In special circumstances, an appointment may be made outside regular consultation hours. Staff will not conduct any consultations by email. You may, however, phone staff during their consultation hours.

In order to gain access to staff located at levels 1, 2 and 3 of building E4A during their consultation hours please ring the staff member from the phones available in the lobby (phone numbers of relevant staff members will be provided on Blackboard and are available next to the phones). Students experiencing significant difficulties with any topic in the unit must seek assistance immediately.

CLASSES

Students are required to attend one 3 hours face-to-face seminar per week. This will be held in F9C011 on Tuesdays between 9am and 12pm.

The timetable for classes can be found on the University web site at:

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

PRIZES

- A prize is awarded for this unit
- <http://www.businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/postgraduate>

REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS

The following text is available from the Co-op Bookshop:

Albrecht, S. W., Albrecht C.C., Albrecht C.O. and Zimbelman M.F., 2011, *Fraud Examination*, South Western, 4th Edition, ISBN-10: 0538470844 or ISBN-13: 9780538470841.

This text will be supplemented with readings available on the unit web site.

The following Journals and texts are useful as additional references:

Recommended journals:

*Journal of Forensic Accounting
Auditing, Fraud and Risk (JFA)
Computer Fraud and Security
Forensic Science
Forensic Science International
Environmental Forensics*

Recommended Texts:

TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

Students are expected to have:

- Proficiency in Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Knowledge of Macquarie University eLearning –for downloading lecture materials, etc
- Knowledge of the library research databases – for accessing additional research material.

UNIT WEB PAGE

Course material is available on the learning management system

The web page for this unit can be found at:

<http://learn.mq.edu.au>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes of this unit are:

1. Respond to issues associated with an allegation of fraud
2. Identify risk and management weakness from a fraud perspective
3. Appreciate the social /legal context of fraud
4. Conduct preliminary examination of documents, assemble evidence and write reports
5. Understand and use sources of information
6. Develop and implement an organisational policy to minimise fraud

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 as indicated above in the section of learning outcomes;
- 2 Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking: for example, the ability to analyse and implement a fraud prevention and detection mechanisms;
- 3 Problem Solving and Research Capability: for example, the group assignment will require students to learn how to solve specific problems with respect to a forensic accounting scenario and requires research skills;
- 4 Creative and Innovative: for example, in order to make a clear and interesting presentation of the seminar questions, creative and innovative thinking will be required;
- 5 Effective Communication: is crucial for both written and oral assessment tasks;
- 6 Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens: the unit is based on fraud prevention and detection and intrinsically linked to ethical issues;
- 7 Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative: this skill will be developed through seminar discussions and group assignment and assessed in the exams.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

The normal format for each 3 hour seminar class will be as follows:

- a) brief lecture / interactive discussion
- b) review of pre-assigned practice questions
- c) group discussions

(a) Brief lecture / interactive discussion – each week, the lecturer will lead discussion covering the key points of the relevant material. The format and approach for this session will vary but may include a question and answer session where students will be asked to participate. This will require students to have pre-read the material.

(b) Preparation and review of practice questions –students will be expected to complete, and contribute to discussion concerning, various practice questions. The amount of time spent on these questions and the seminar in which they are completed will be at the discretion of the lecturer and will depend upon the time available. Accordingly, students should bring a copy of these questions to every seminar.

A week-by-week list of the topics to be covered is at the end of the unit outline.

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This unit uses research from external sources (references) and gives you practice in applying research findings in your assignments

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

	Assessment Task 1	Assessment Task 2	Assessment Task 3	Assessment Task 4
Title/Name	Pre-assigned practice questions	In-Class Examination	Group assignment	Final Examination
Description	Summary note assignment and feedbacks from peers	One diagnostic test in week 5	Case study for a group of 4/5	see notes below
Due date	Random selection of 4	30 August	18 October	The University Examination period in Second Half Year 2011 is from 15 November to 2 December.
% Weighting	10%	10%	20%	60%
Grading method	See below	Suggested solutions provided will represent marking standards	A marking guide provided will represent marking standards	Marking guide will be provided to qualified examiners as standard marking criteria
Submission method	In person, in seminar	written quiz papers submitted during the designated seminar	A hard copy to class on Monday 16 May soft copy to the assignment drop box on Blackboard by 5pm of that day.	written hard copy submitted during the exam time
Feedback (<i>type, method, date</i>)	Immediately via lecturer and peer feedback	Suggested solutions would be discussed following the examination	Feedback will be provided on the return of group assignments	Not applicable
Estimated student workload (hours)	On average, students will need to spend 2-3 hours per week	1.5hrs/week	1.5hrs/week	3.0hrs/week

Learning outcomes assessed	Assessment Task 1	Assessment Task 2	Assessment Task 3	Assessment Task 4
1. Respond to an allegation of fraud	x	x		
2. Identify risk and management weakness	x	x	x	
3. Appreciate the social /legal context of fraud	x	x	x	
4. Conduct preliminary examination of documents, assemble evidence and write reports	x	x	x	x
5. Understand and use sources of information	x		x	x
6. Develop and implement policy to minimise fraud.	x			x
Graduate capabilities assessed				
1 Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills	x	x		x
2 Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking	x	x	x	
3 Problem Solving and Research Capability	x	x	x	x
4 Creative and Innovative	x			
5 Effective Communication	x		x	x
6 Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens		x	x	x
7 Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative		x	x	x

PRE ASSIGNED PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Students are expected to attend a **minimum of 10 out of 12 seminars**. Activities start in week 2 and are based on the previous week's lecture topic.

Each week students will be given a task(s), which will be available through the subject's web site. The activities are focused on case study analysis. Students are expected to READ the case studies prior to their seminars in order to enhance quality of class discussion. In addition, collaborative learning is also an important element of the learning process in this subject. Student's interactive learning techniques such as group discussion, role-playing, self-assessment and peer-assessment are also applied in the seminars throughout the semester.

The objective of this activity is to encourage students in revising their teaching material on a regular basis and class participation. In addition, it is set to be a diagnostic tool through a peer-assessment task. Students can benefit from improving their learning experience with feedback from peers.

- Students can accumulate to 10 percent of the total mark from this activity, 2.5 marks for each of 4 weeks activities collected.
- Students are required to provide key points from each activity and submit to your lecturer at the beginning of the seminar.
- Students are required to submit 4 randomly selected week's activities. **Students must submit their work at the beginning of the seminar and participate in the seminar activities in order to obtain the mark.** No extension will be granted for students who are enrolled late in this subject.
- The correct answers will not be published and will be ONLY discussed in tutorials.

The aim is for you to develop higher order skills that you are able to apply in a range of contexts. As such, the memorization of answers and definitions from the text will not be adequate for you to pass this subject. Accordingly, solutions will not be released on the subject website. A suggested strategy for dealing with the subject material is as follows:

- Attend seminars each week and make notes,
- Prepare for seminars by completing the assigned reading
- Attempt all activity questions
- Make a note of any questions you have about the material
- Refer back to readings and lecture notes for potential answers to your questions
- Come along to seminars prepared and ready to ask questions and contribute to discussions
- If questions are still unresolved then make use of the staff consultation times

DIAGNOSTIC TEST:

A diagnostic examination will be held in class in week 5. The exam will be thirty minutes in duration and will cover materials drawn from weeks 1-4.

ASSIGNMENT:

An assignment is to be completed individually and is due in class in week 10. This is to be a concise word processed document and English expression is very important in this task. Details will be distributed in week 4. The written component will be graded out of 15. Late assignments will incur a 10% penalty per day. **Note that non-submission of the assignment will result in an automatic fail grade for the unit.**

In addition, your team will present your major findings during the seminar in that week. This presentation is expected to be no longer than 10 minutes per group and will be graded out of 5.

In order to grade the assignment, an Individual Contribution sheet must be filled out by each student and submitted at the same time as the assignment. The individual sheets can remain confidential and do not have to be shown to the other students in your team.

A copy of the individual contribution sheet is included in this outline. As can be seen, you should note down the percentage contribution of each member of the group (including yourself) to the finally completed assignment. For example, if you believe all 4 students in your group contributed equally to the assignment, you should allocate 25% next to each of the 4 students. The sheet of every member of the group will be used in determining the grade for the assignment.

FINAL EXAMINATION:

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

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

A 3 hour (plus 10 minute reading time) final examination for this unit will be held during the University Examination period.

The University Examination period in Second Half Year 2011 is from 15 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.

<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

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

GRADES

Macquarie University uses the following grades in coursework units of study:

HD –High Distinction
D – Distinction
CR – Credit
P – Pass
F – Fail

Grade descriptors and other information concerning grading are contained in the Macquarie University Grading Policy which is available at:
<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

All final grades in the Department of Accounting and Corporate Governance are determined by a grading committee and are not the sole responsibility of the Unit Coordinator.

Students will be awarded one of these grades plus a Standardised Numerical Grade (SNG). The SNG is not necessarily a summation of the individual assessment components.

The final grade and SNG that are awarded reflect the corresponding grade descriptor in the Grading Policy.

In addition, there is a requirement *to pass the final examination* to be awarded a final grade of a Pass or a higher grade.

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

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>.

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.

DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:

Week	Tuesday	Topic	Textbook Chapter(s)
1	2 August	Course overview An introduction to Forensic Accounting The roles of Forensic Accountants The social and legal context. White collar and corporate crime An overview of fraud: what it is and who gets involved The Fraud Triangle	1&2
2	9 August	Fraud reduction principles	3&4
3	16 August	Fraud detection & concealment	5&6
4	23 August	Fraud investigation Theft and concealment	7&8
5	30 August	Financial statement fraud – overview, (Diagnostic test)	11
6	6 September	Financial statement fraud –, revenue & inventory related	12
7	13 September	Financial statement fraud – liability & asset related	13
		Mid-Semester break	
8	4 October	Fraud against organisations	14
9	11 October	Consumer Fraud Fraud in e-Commerce	15 17
10	18 October	Group Presentations	
11	25 October	Expert witness	Guest presenter 18
12	1 November	Interview skills	10
13	8 November	Revision	

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GROUP ASSIGNMENT INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION SHEET

	Student ID	Student Name	Percentage Contribution of group member to the overall assignment
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
Total			100%

SIGNED

DATE

Student ID
