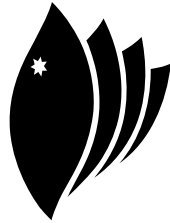


MACQUARIE  
UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF  
BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

ACCG260  
**Accounting and Reporting  
for the Environment**

Semester 1, 2010

*Department of Accounting and Finance*

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

**Year and Semester: 2010, Semester 1**

**Unit convenor: James Hazelton**

**Prerequisites: 24 Credit Points**

**Corequisites: None**

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.

#### **UNIT AIM**

The principal aim of ACCG 260 is to provide students with an introduction to how environmental issues are accounted for and reported on from an organisational, governmental and personal perspective. ACCG 260 is a designated 'planet' unit.

#### **OVERVIEW OF CONTENT**

The unit considers key contemporary environmental issues such as carbon and water and investigates practical and theoretical issues in terms of locating reporting obligations, report boundaries, content, measurement and assurance. Case studies draw on current developments in the field, including the new carbon reporting obligations under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act (2007), the ongoing development of national water accounting in response to the National Water Initiative (2004) and Macquarie University's own efforts to undertake sustainability reporting. At the completion of the unit students will have developed skills in relation to locating and interpreting environmental reports that will assist them in evaluating and improving environmental performance.

The content of the unit is informed by contemporary research in the area of environmental reporting, including recent publications by Macquarie staff.

#### **PREVIOUS STUDIES**

There are no requirements for previous studies.

## TEACHING STAFF

The teaching staff member responsible for the delivery and administration of this unit is:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
James Hazelton Unit Convenor	E4A 239	james.hazelton@mq.edu.au	9850-8486

Consultation is available by appointment.

## CLASSES

Contact hours for ACCG 260 comprise:

- One 2 hour lecture per week; and
- One 1 hour tutorial per week.

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

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

## REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND/OR MATERIALS

There is no prescribed text for the unit.

Weekly readings are drawn from the following sources:

- The internet (students are expected to follow web links and download materials);
- Journals (students are expected to download journals via the University library website via Journal Finder); and
- eReserve (students are expected to download readings via the University library website via eReserve).

## UNIT WEB PAGE

The web page for this unit is located at: <http://learn.mq.edu.au/webct> Please note that student activity on the unit web page is logged, and may be utilised by the Unit Convenor and other University staff in resolving student disputes regarding such issues as assignment submission. Instructions for obtaining help with accessing the unit web page can also be found at the above URL.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

The learning objectives of this unit are to:

- Deepen understanding of contemporary environmental issues (such as carbon pollution and water scarcity);
- Understand how accounting and reporting contributes to improving environmental outcomes;
- Appreciate the challenges in applying accounting and reporting principles to environmental events;
- Understand the existing Australian framework for accounting and reporting environmental events in relation to governments and organisations; and
- Imagine future possibilities for accounting and reporting for the environment.

The learning outcomes of this unit include the ability to:

- Locate key environmental reporting obligations and reports for both governments and organisations;
- Interpret and critically evaluate existing environmental reports; and
- Suggest improvements for the process of accounting and reporting for the environment in order to improve environmental outcomes.

In addition to the discipline-based learning objectives, all academic programs at Macquarie seek to develop students' generic skills in a range of areas. One of the aims of this unit is that students develop their skills in the following:

- Communication skills
- Critical analysis skills

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY**

Students are expected to attend a two-hour lecture and a one-hour tutorial each week. Students are expected to have prepared for tutorials through reading the prescribed texts and preparing written tutorial assignments. Students are further expected to participate in tutorials via open discussion and group work.

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

In ACCG 260 you must demonstrate that you have satisfied the learning objectives of the unit.

Attendance requirement: As much of the learning takes place through class discussion, missing more than two tutorials is grounds for a fail grade. Students who miss classes should discuss this matter promptly with the Unit Convenor.

The final assessment in ACCG 260 is based on raw scores calculated as follows:

	%
Weekly assignments	25
Group assignment	25
Final exam	<u>50</u>
	<u>100</u>

The weekly assignments and mid semester assignment provide the means of continuous assessment and continuous learning throughout the semester.

The primary objective of the continuous assessment tasks in ACCG 260 is to make you ready, willing and able to demonstrate your understanding of the learning objectives on the day of the final exam.

### **CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (50%)**

#### **a) Weekly assignments (25%)**

Independent work on assignment exercises and problems is fundamental to satisfying the learning objectives of this unit. You are not expected to always have the right answers from your independent work but you are expected to make a significant attempt to assignment questions before each tutorial. It is expected that, in addition to attendance at the weekly tutorials, you will need to spend at least six hours per week working on assignments and preparing for the next tutorial. Assignment length will depend on the particular week's questions, but as a guide they will average 2-3 typed pages.

Each week students will be required to submit written answers to the assignment questions for the topic area. The tutorial assignments therefore provide an opportunity for students to develop the core learning outcomes on a week-by-week basis as well as written communication skills. The material covered in tutorials will also form the basis for the final examination.

It is expected that the written work you submit for the weekly assignments will be completed before the tutorial rather than during the tutorial. If it is noticed that an assignment is being prepared during the tutorial then it will not be considered satisfactory. Late assignments will not be accepted without a medical certificate.

On the front page of each weekly assignment that you submit please include the following:

- your student name
- your student number
- the following statement: "This assignment is my own work"

Students submitting the same or similar tutorial assignments to others in the unit risk disciplinary action. Students must also ensure that they do not inadvertently plagiarise material from textbooks or other readings. Copying material from the textbook or readings is also a form of plagiarism and will be awarded nil marks. Plagiarism is discussed in more detail below.

Over the course of the semester, weekly assignments will contribute to all the learning objectives listed above.

In order to provide early feedback on student progress, the weighting for the first three assignments will account for 15% of the unit assessment. These assignments will be marked in greater detail than subsequent assignments. The total marks for tutorial assignments is comprised as follows:

	%
Weekly assignments 1-3	15
Weekly assignments 4-11	<u>10</u>
Total marks for weekly assignments	<u>25</u>

The assessment criteria for tutorial assignments is as follows:

0/5 – Assignment is incomplete. One or more questions have not been attempted.

1/5 – Assignment is incomplete. All questions have been attempted, but some sub-parts of questions have not been addressed.

2/5 – All questions have been attempted but some answers are incorrect and / or superficial.

3/5 – All questions have been attempted and are substantially correct.

4/5 – All questions have been attempted and the student has answered questions in detail and has included their own opinions and/or analysis where appropriate.

5/5 - All questions have been attempted and in addition to providing their own analysis the student has related appropriate questions to other materials either in the unit or in the wider context. For example the student has related the question to a previous reading referred to a current event / media article.

#### **b) Group assignment (25%)**

You are required to submit one group assignment. Groups will be randomly determined by the Unit Convener. The group assignment is enhances the realization of the unit learning objectives in the following way:

- The assignment topic reinforces and extends core technical unit content;
- Working in a group environment facilitates the exchange of views and insights which may not be realized by working alone;
- Working in a group facilitates team working and collaboration skills critical in virtually all employment contexts.

## Assignment topic:

*Discuss the adequacy of current reporting requirements for organisations in relation to greenhouse gas emissions, water or non-greenhouse gas pollution. Refer to current reporting requirements and at least one organisation in your answer. You may choose any country or region to analyze.*

## Assignment notes

1. The word limit for the assignment is 2,000 words.
2. The organisational example(s) should not include those discussed in class.
3. The assignment should be properly referenced. You may select the referencing style you adopt but it must be applied consistently throughout the assignment.
4. Your assignment must be submitted electronically to the ACCG 260 website via Turn-It-In. Details will be provided in class.
5. It is assumed that all group members will have contributed equally in the preparation of the assignment. Where this is not the case please provide a letter signed by each group member detailing the different contribution. This weighting will then be applied to the overall assignment mark.

## Assignment assessment criteria

Assignments will be evaluated against the following criteria:

### 10% Quality of analysis

- 0-4: Analysis does not demonstrate a good understanding of the issue. Key arguments are not discussed or addressed. For example, only one side of a particular issue is given and objections to this position are not considered.
- 5-7: Analysis demonstrates a good understanding of the issue. Key arguments are discussed and addressed. For example, where a position is argued objections to this position are considered. A logical overall conclusion is provided.
- 8-10: Analysis demonstrates a deep understanding of the issue. In addition to detailing current knowledge and opinion, the assignment provides an original perspective in the form of a new idea, objection or insight.

### 10% Depth of research

- 0-4: References limited to materials cited in class. References not well understood.
- 5-7: References substantially beyond materials cited in class. References well understood and used appropriately to further the analysis.
- 8-10: References substantially beyond materials cited in class and included contemporary academic journal articles. References well understood and used appropriately to further the analysis.

#### 5% Presentation and Referencing

- 0-2: Extensive referencing and/or grammatical errors.
- 3-4: Few referencing and/or grammatical errors.
- 5: No referencing and/or grammatical errors.

### **FINAL EXAM (50%)**

The final written exam will be held during the University examination period. The final exam provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of both the individual topics covered in the unit as well as conclusions and synthesis of the material as a whole.

The final exam will be of two hours duration with ten minutes reading time. It will cover all material in the unit. You will be given further instruction on the format of the final exam during the final lecture of the semester. In the meantime you should be aware that the best preparation for the final exam is as follows:

- ❖ Attend tutorials and work through the assignment material;
- ❖ Complete the required readings each week; and
- ❖ Use the consulting times of staff involved in the teaching of the unit when you need extra help.

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, and can attend the exam at the designated time and place.

### **SPECIAL CONSIDERATION AND SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMS**

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. 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.

Any student who attends the original examination and subsequently applies for special consideration may be required to sit a supplementary examination except where their performance in the original exam was equivalent to the HD grade. If a supplementary examination is needed, then only the student's performance in the special examination will be used for the purpose of the examination weight in the unit assessment.



## **PLAGIARISM**

The University defines plagiarism in its rules: "Plagiarism involves using the work of another person and presenting it as one's own." Plagiarism is a serious breach of the University's rules and carries significant penalties. You must read the University's practices and procedures on plagiarism. These can be found in the Handbook of Undergraduate Studies or on the web at: <http://www.student.mq.edu.au/plagiarism/>

The policies and procedures explain what plagiarism is, how to avoid it, the procedures that will be taken in cases of suspected plagiarism, and the penalties if you are found guilty. Penalties may include a deduction of marks, failure in the unit, and/or referral to the University Discipline Committee.

## **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>.

## LECTURE SUMMARY

<b><u>Week</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Lecture Topic</u></b>
1	22 Feb	Perspectives on sustainability and reporting
2	1 Mar	Accounting and reporting on the environment by organisations
3	8 Mar	Carbon reporting by organisations
4	15 Mar	Pollutant reporting by organisations
5	22 Mar	Assurance
6	29 Mar	Water reporting by organisations
	5 Apr	Mid-semester break
	12 Apr	Mid-semester break
7	19 Apr	Ecological footprint Group Assignment Due
	26 Apr	ANZAC day – no classes
8	3 May	National greenhouse accounting
9	10 May	National water accounting
10	17 May	State of the environment reporting
11	24 May	Product labelling and life-cycle analysis
12	31 May	Revision