**UQ Summer or Winter Research Project Description**

Please use this template to create a description of each research project, eligibility requirements and expected deliverables. Project details can then be uploaded to each faculty, school, institute, and centre webpage prior to the launch of the program.

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| **Project title:** | Assessing and supporting the sexual health and wellbeing of children and adolescents living with disability |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | Duration: 4 weeks  Hours of engagement: 30 hours per week  Delivery mode: Hybrid arrangement \*Students will be able to complete some of the work in person and some remotely. It is expected that students attend the initial training and regular meetings in-person. This project will take place on UQ St Lucia campus. |
| **Description:** | A person’s sexuality, referring to their sexual health and wellbeing, sexual orientation, intimacy, sexual activity, thoughts, and values, among other aspects, develops throughout childhood and adolescence, and is a key part of their identity (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2022). Sexuality is a vital but often neglected aspect of healthcare, particularly for children and adolescents with disability. To understand and enjoy sexual expression appropriately and safely, and to be better protected from sexual harm, a child needs adequate information, education, and support from a young age.  Research with adults informs us that people with disability often express desires for intimate relationships however report limited opportunities as well as numerous other barriers when forming relationships. Data also indicates that both adults and children with disability are at much higher risk of imprisonment due to sexually related crimes and are significantly more likely to experience sexual violence.  In Australia, 90% of women and 68% of girls with an intellectual disability have experienced sexual abuse (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2010). Reporting abuse may be difficult for a person with limited verbal skills, and prevention and support services are limited; factors which increase vulnerability. An important way to prevent the over-representation of children and adolescents with disability as victims and offenders of sexually related crimes is through comprehensive sexuality education and support.  To be able to provide comprehensive support, health care professionals often require valid, reliable and clinically useful assessment tools to gather information and to guide their intervention planning. However there appears to be a major gap in research and practice as it is not well understood what assessment tools exist and are utilised in practice to support the sexual health and wellbeing of children and adolescents living with disability. This research therefore aims to identify existing assessment tools, and to understand how clinically useful, valid and reliable those tools are.  This research is one of four within a wider research project. The wider research project aims to co-design a clinically useful, valid and reliable tool for healthcare professionals to use with people with disability. The wider project is led by Dr Chloe Bryant and includes both national and international academics and industry professionals. |
| **Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:** | You will gain skills in at least one or more of the following: reviewing literature, data collection, data management, qualitative data analysis, and academic writing skills. There will also be the potential to be involved in a publication from this research project. |
| **Suitable for:** | We are seeking a highly motivated applicant with excellent organisational skills, a proactive approach, an interest in the supporting the sexual health and wellbeing of people with disability, attention to detail, and excellent written communication. Additionally, students will need to be enrolled in a health focused degree, and will have completed at least two (2) or more years of study including one (1) or more research focused courses (e.g., research methodology). |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Chloe Bryant |
| **Further info:** | Email: [chloe.bryant@uq.edu.au](mailto:chloe.bryant@uq.edu.au)  Students may apply for this project without prior contact.  Please email if you have any questions. |