**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:** | The neural code underlying the perception of emotion |
| **Project duration, hours of engagement & delivery mode** | 10 weeks for 20hrs per week.  Although the applicant will be required on-site for the majority of the project, some of the initial work could be completed under a remote working arrangement. |
| **Description:** | To effectively communicate with the people around us, we need to recognize different emotional cues. Where and how facial expressions are recognized in the brain is only partially understood.  Previous studies that have aimed to identify the neural correlates of expression recognition have used outdated photographs of actors asked to hold certain expressions (i.e., happy, sad, or angry). However, its likely that the brain responds differently to these exaggerated emotional displays than it does to genuine emotional reactions. Thus, to increase ecological validity and to understand how the brain recognizes expressions during our everyday lives – the goal of this project is to first build a large representative stimulus set comprised of more than 5000 wild-type images. These images will be sourced from the internet and need to depict a large number of different facial expressions.  Once these images are collected and curated, they need to be validated with behaviour. To do this we will conduct multiple behavioural experiments asking participants to rate the images for emotional content and to identify other stable facial attributes such as biological sex. Eye tracking data will also be collected while subjects are rating the images for different facial attributes. This will allow us to determine whether participants rely on different visual features and viewing strategies depending on whether they are judging expression or not.  Ultimately, this wild-type stimulus set will be made publicity available and the behavioural and eye-tracking data will be published to provide a new resource for future neuroscientific studies. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | The successful applicant will acquire skills in stimulus selection and preparation. They will be expected to learn how to set up behavioural and eye-tracking experiments. They will gain experience in collecting and curating data. Ideally, the applicant will also have the opportunity to help prepare their data for publication. They may also be asked to produce a report or oral presentation at the end of their project. |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to applications from students with a keen interest in social neuroscience.  Coding experience with matlab or python is desirable but not necessary. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Jess Taubert |
| **Further info:** | Students considering applying for this project are encouraged to contact Jess Taubert via email prior to submitting their application.  Email: j.taubert@uq.edu.au |