**2022/2023 Summer 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:** | **Do we know recognize when someone is in pain from their facial expression?** |
| **Project duration, hours of engagement & delivery mode** | *Duration of the project:* 10 weeks during Summer Vacation.  *Hours of engagement:* 25 hrs per week  *COVID-19 considerations:* Aspects of the project can be completed under a remote working arrangement, on-site attendance will be required for testing participants. |
| **Description:** | While trying to understand how we recognise facial expressions, studies have tended to focus on 6 “basic” expressions (happy, sad, surprise, fear, anger, and disgust). However, researchers are now questioning whether these 6 expressions successfully characterize the full spectrum of naturalistic facial expressions that we see and recognise in our everyday lives. In this project we will investigate the idea that “pain” is a basic facial expression that we can recognize. Findings will have implications for models of affective processing, mental state attribution and theory of mind but this is also a highly translational problem space; future studies could look at the relationship between pain recognition and biased outcomes in various applied settings, including hospitals.  *Specific aims and approach:* The first step will be to build a stimulus set comprised of naturalistic photographs depicting unfamiliar people in physical or emotional pain, as well as control photographs taken while the same people are in other emotional states (e.g., calm). The second step will be to use these photographs in behavioural experiments designed to test whether human participants can accurately detect and recognise people in physical pain as opposed to other emotional states. Data will be collected remotely and in the laboratory. Should time allow, the final phase of this project will examine the relationship between real world experience and the recognition of pain in others’. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | The successful applicant will acquire skills in curating and preprocessing a large set of visual stimuli. They will be expected to learn how to set up behavioural experiments and they will gain experience in collecting data from participants. 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 cognition, vision science or data science.  Coding experience with matlab or python is desirable but not necessary.  3rd – 4th year students only (except in rare circumstances). |
| **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 |