**UQ 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:** | **The effect of top-down knowledge on** |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | The project is offered on-site at St Lucia campus (McElwain Building), with weekly meetings on-site or online if the student prefers that. The project is going to be held Jan 12th to 20st of February 2026, with an expected workload of 20 hours/week. Time frames and workloads are negotiable and the project offers places for two students. |
| **Description:** | This project aims to address an important question in research on attention and eye movements – viz., whether knowledge can help us find a visually salient object, or whether knowledge can only speed search when the object is not (very) salient. This question has been debated in attention research, with one faction maintaining that visually salient objects are automatically attended, via a very fast stimulus-driven mechanism, while others maintain that no such mechanism exists, and instead all attention shifts are driven by our intentions and goals (while saliency is just a bottom-up limitation). The experiment used to test this question will be a visual search task, and we will measure the eye movements of participants during the task to see how quickly they could attend the target object. We anticipate testing ~50 participants in this experiment and hope to publish the results in a journal. |
| **Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:** | The summer student will be involved in all stages of the project – from designing the experiment to collecting the data on it with the eye tracker to writing the paper. The successful applicant can expect to gain valuable insights into how research is conducted in experimental psychology and specifically, cognitive psychology. The summer student will moreover learn how to collect data with the eye tracker and gain some insights into how we analyse the data and write up the results.  If the data are of sufficient high quality for a publication and the summer student contributed a lot to the data collection, s/he can expect to be included on the paper as a co-author.  Summer students are expected to attend weekly lab meetings during the time of their internship and will be offered an opportunity to present the project and results in the lab meeting if they would like to do that. |
| **Suitable for:** | Applicants for this summer internship should be in their 3rd or 4th year, and have a keen interest in experimental psychology and research, so that they can use this internship as an opportunity to see if they would like to pursue a research-intensive Honours degree and higher degrees. A background in programming and statistical analysis is optional, and students can use this as an opportunity to hone these skills or let one of our team members do it and just watch the process. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Stefanie Becker will be the primary supervisor, involved in the design of the project. The programming of the experiment and introduction to the eye tracker may be conducted by a PhD student of the Becker lab, under supervision of Dr Stefanie Becker. |
| **Further info:** | Applicants who intend to apply for this project as their first choice should contact Dr Stefanie Becker prior to submitting their application via email (s.becker@psy.uq.edu.au). |