

Participant Information Sheet

People who drive under the influence of illicit drugs

NOTE: This Participant Information Sheet will remain with the University of Queensland research team for their records.

Project Title: Drugged-Driving Effects on Driving Performance

Chief Investigators:

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UQ Ethics Approval Number: 2025/HE000945

You are invited to take part in a study exploring how the use of drugs or combinations of drugs, medications or alcohol (poly-drug use) affects a person's ability to drive safely. Please read the following information about the project to decide whether you want to participate in this research. Please feel free to ask any questions about our involvement in the project.

If you decide to participate in this research, please remember that participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to stop at any time, and you would not need to give any explanation for your decision to stop participating. If you stop participating and indicate it in the Consent Form, your data will not be used in the research.

You will be given a Consent Form to sign, and you will be given a copy to keep. Your decision whether you take part, or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the University of Queensland.

Please note that your identity and the data collected from this study will be confidential. This Participant Information Sheet describes what is involved in the study, and you should read it in full before deciding whether to participate. Please keep this information sheet as a record.

What is this research about?

A research team, led by Dr Shamsi Shekari, at the School of Psychology, the University of Queensland, are conducting this study. We are interested in understanding how habitual behaviours, such as sleep, medication use, alcohol or drug use, might affect people's ability to focus, react quickly, or complete driving-related tasks. We are not testing your driving ability, judging your driving ability, or making any medical diagnoses. The findings will help improve safety-related knowledge and support future public health and road safety initiatives.

The University of Queensland Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the study (Approval number [2025/HE000945](#)).

Am I eligible?

To participate in the experimental study, you must meet the following criteria:

- Must live in Brisbane
- Between the ages of 18 and 65 years
- Must not have any type of sleep disorder
- Sleep more than 6 hours regularly
- Hold a valid driver's license (provisional or open)
- Willing to provide oral fluid (saliva) and breath sample to screen for drugs and measure alcohol in your body
- Regularly use illicit drugs either alone or combined with prescription medications and or alcohol
- Have normal vision (either with or without prescription glasses or contact lenses).

If you experience any unanticipated changes in life circumstances that may affect your ability to engage in the experimental study, please notify the research team as soon as possible to discuss your ability to continue the study.

What will I need to do?

To participate in this research, you will agree to participate in these activities:

- **Expression of interest** – Scan a QR code, read the eligibility criteria, and if you believe you are eligible, click " **Participate in the Drugs group** ".

- **Eligibility check** – Consent to the screening survey, complete the survey and submit it. You may be eligible for one session if you use the illicit drugs on daily basis. You will receive a phone call explaining if you are eligible (for one session or two sessions) or ineligible. Regardless of your eligibility status, the screening survey will NOT ask for your permission for future contacts to keep your identity confidential. If you are eligible a research team member will call you to organise a one-hour induction session via Zoom.
- **Induction session** – Receive study details before deciding to take part and complete some demographics questionnaires.
- **Two-stage consent process** – Provide verbal consent in the induction session and written consent at the test session, ensuring you are fully informed and ready.
- **Sleep diary** – Complete a daily sleep diary for at least three days before your lab session so researchers can monitor your recent sleep–wake patterns.
- **Lab visits preparation** – Abstain from caffeine for 8 hours before the test session(s) to avoid interference with test results.
- **Lab visit**
 - Attend one or two 1.5-hour simulated driving sessions (depending on your eligibility), scheduled to align with your usual drug-use cycle.
 - Undergo breath alcohol and saliva drug tests, complete questionnaires, cognitive tasks, hazard perception, driving simulation, and balance assessments.
- **Safety and support** – Accept up to \$50 in Uber credit, if needed, to travel to the Long Pocket Campus (test session venue) and home and receive **\$250 Gift Pay voucher per session** as recognition of your contribution.

Here are details of your activities:

Induction

During the online one-hour induction session, your voice or video will NOT be recorded. The researcher will explain the study in full and will give you time to ask your questions. The researcher will send you a link to review the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form. The researcher will also ask you to give your consent to participate verbally. Your written consent will be obtained in the test session. Upon your verbal consent, the researcher will ask you to complete some questionnaires about your general health and sleep quality. You can choose not to respond to the questions if you feel uncomfortable.

Please note that you will not be asked to take any drugs for this study, nor will you be provided with any of these substances by the research team. The study does not require or encourage drug use, and you will not be rewarded for high-dose use. The researcher will ask you to describe your typical drug use routine (e.g., weekly, fortnightly), to identify natural patterns of use. The researcher will schedule the timing of your lab session(s) after your usual drug use patterns. The lab visit will be scheduled for a day shortly after your typical drug use, when drug levels in the body are expected to be highest. If you are eligible, the second visit will occur shortly before your subsequent expected use, when drug levels are expected to be lowest. This approach ensures that the study measures

performance naturally across your cycles of drug use. At the end of the induction session, the researcher will give you full details about the lab site and will ask you address for arranging a transport to the lab site before your first appointments.

Consent

You will provide your consent at two stages: At the induction session, you will be asked to provide a verbal consent to ensure that fully understood the study before your test session is scheduled. Then, at your first test session, you will be asked to give a written consent again. This second consent confirms that you are in a clear state of mind to take part on the day of testing. This delayed second consent ensures you have sufficient time to reflect on the study requirements, discuss participation with others if desired, and make an informed, voluntary decision without pressure.

By signing the consent form, you confirm that you have read and understood the study information, that your participation is voluntary, and that you may withdraw at any time before your data is de-identified. You agree to complete questionnaires, computerised tasks, driving and balance tests, and to record your sleep for three nights before testing. You acknowledge that no drugs will be provided, your data will be kept confidential, and you will receive reimbursement for your time.

Monitoring recent sleep–wake

Depending on your eligibility, you will attend up to two lab sessions that are scheduled for shortly after your usual drug use and before your next occasion of drug use. You will be emailed a short sleep diary every morning for at least three nights before each laboratory session to monitor your recent sleep pattern in preparation for your lab visit.

Test sessions

You will be required to attend up to two 1.5-hour simulated driving laboratory visits at the Foxtail Building, Long Pocket Campus of the University of Queensland. You will be asked to abstain from caffeine-containing products for 8 hours before each session.

During each lab session, you will begin by completing short questionnaires about your recent drug use, alcohol consumption, and a brief breath alcohol test to record any potential alcohol levels in your system. You will then provide saliva samples to screen for the presence of drugs using validated testing devices. You will be asked to rate your fatigue and sleepiness.

The core part of your session will involve a series of computerised tasks designed to assess your attention, reaction time, and cognitive functioning. These tasks are commonly used in research to understand how substances affect the brain's ability to process information. You will also complete a traffic safety conflict test that simulates driving conditions, and afterwards, rate how well you believe you performed. Following these tests, you will undertake a driving simulation using a desktop-based system that mimics real-life driving scenarios to evaluate your driving performance and afterwards,

rate how well you believe you performed. You will undergo postural and balance tests at the end of the session. Please note that we are not judging your performance on any of tasks and tests.

As a thank you for your time and contribution, you will receive a \$250 Gift Pay after each session. To ensure your safety, if you are attending the session after recent drug use, you will be provided with up to \$50 in Uber credit to travel between home and the testing facility. The second session will follow the same protocol as the first and will be held at least one week later.

Source of funding

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts funds this project.

What type of consent should I give?

If you are eligible for this study, you must sign an extended consent form to participate in the research. When you agree to extended consent, your data can be reused in future projects that are an extension of this project, closely related to this project, or in the same general area of this research. Your consent form will include permission to collect biospecimens (saliva and breath samples) and fill out a brief sleep diary before each test session.

As part of the consent, we will remove your personal information after the completion of the study to protect you from future contacts. Also, if you tick the relevant box in the Consent Form, we will remove your data from the dataset if you withdraw from the study. However, you can remove your data before the conclusion of the research project, as all personal identifiers will be deleted upon completion.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there may be no direct personal benefit from participating in this research, your involvement is highly valuable and may offer some indirect advantages. By participating in this study, you are contributing to necessary research to understand how drug use affects driving ability, attention, and reaction time. This knowledge can help shape future road safety policies, support more effective drug-driving enforcement strategies, and ultimately contribute to reducing crashes and saving lives on Australian roads.

For the broader community and research field, this study will provide critical evidence about the impairing effects of drugs and poly-drug use on driving performance. The findings may help establish more scientifically valid approaches to detecting drug-impaired driving and support the development of safer, evidence-informed road safety laws and technologies.

What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?

Taking part in this study is voluntary, and while most people participate without any issues, there are a few possible risks you should know about. We have explained each one below and what we'll do to minimise them.

- *Risk of disclosure of illicit drug use:* You will be asked about your recent or intended use of illicit drugs. We understand this is sensitive and may carry social, legal, or reputational concerns. Please be assured that your answers and data will be fully de-identified, no names or personal details will be linked to your responses or test results. The researchers do not have a duty to disclose any drug use by participants and will not report your drug use to the police or any authorities. Also, all communication will happen through secure systems; only research staff can access your contact details. We will explain this again during the consent process so you can feel confident that your privacy is protected.

- *Risk of psychological discomfort:* Some questions will ask you to think about your drug use and your views on driving under the influence of drugs. You may also be asked to complete tasks under the influence of a drug. This might make you uncomfortable, embarrassed, or anxious, especially if you don't perform well.

To reduce this risk, we will remind you that we are not judging you and there are no right or wrong answers. You can stop or skip any part of the study if you feel uncomfortable, with no penalty. We will also give you a list of support services if you want to talk to someone afterwards, such as Lifeline (13 11 14) and the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (1800 250 015) and local services available at The University of Queensland, such as Student Counselling Services, Crisis Line, and Self-Help Resources.

- *Risk of intoxicated or unpredictable behaviour:* If you attend the session under the influence, you might feel disoriented or act differently than usual. Two trained researchers will always be present to manage this risk. They are experienced in handling these situations calmly and safely. The session will be terminated if required, and you will respectfully be discharged from the study.

- *Risk of drug overdose:* You will be using the drug before coming to the session, not during the session. However, there is a small risk that you may arrive more intoxicated than intended or experience overdose symptoms. To keep you safe, our staff are trained to spot signs of overdose. We have emergency protocols in place, including first aid and Naloxone spray for opioid overdoses. If you show signs of distress or high impairment, we will stop the session and call for medical help if needed.

- *Risk of road safety incidents:* We strongly advise you **not to drive** to or from the testing site after taking drugs. To make this easier, we will give you a \$50 Uber voucher for travel to and from the session. We will explain this during the induction and remind you before each visit.

- *Risk of motion sickness:* The study includes a 25–30-minute driving simulation. The simulator is designed to minimise visual strain and discomfort. If you are prone to motion sickness, you might feel dizzy, nauseous, or disoriented. We will ask if you have had motion sickness before to reduce this risk. You can take breaks or stop the task anytime if you feel unwell. Also, water, fresh air, and short rests will be available throughout.

- *Risk of minor discomfort or inconvenience:* Each session lasts 1.5 hours. There may be minor fatigue from completing computer-based tasks and concentration-heavy tasks. You can take breaks between tasks and skip anything you do not want to do.

All participation is voluntary. You can take breaks, skip any part of the session, or withdraw from the study anytime. Your safety is a priority, and the research team is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment throughout your participation.

What will happen to the information about me?

The study follows strict privacy, confidentiality, and ethical standards to ensure your information is handled responsibly and kept safe at every stage. All information collected about you will remain confidential.

When you participate, we will collect information such as your questionnaire responses, results from driving and cognitive tasks, and biological samples (like breath or saliva). This information will be stored securely and handled according to national ethical guidelines and university policies. Any biological samples collected (saliva and breath) will be labelled only with your study code and destroyed after they are analysed, following biosafety procedures.

Your research data will be stored securely at the University of Queensland while conducting and following the study's conclusion.

During the study, we will assign you a unique study code to protect your identity; This code will be used on all your data and samples instead of your name. Your name and contact details will be stored separately from your study data in an encrypted file. These details are used only during the study to contact you about session times. All electronic data will be saved on password-protected university servers, and paper records will be stored in locked cabinets or archived securely. Only researchers who are listed on the approved ethics protocol will be able to access the data.

At the end of the project, all identifying information, such as your name, contact details, and the document that links your name to your study code, will be deleted to ensure your identity's confidentiality and protect you from unwanted contacts in the future. Additionally, at the end of the study, data from paper records will be scanned and saved digitally; then the paper records will be shredded. We also allow you to update your responses before your data is analysed.

Your data will be reused in future projects that are an extension of this project, closely related to this project, or in the same general area of this research. At the University of Queensland, your Consent Form will be stored securely for 15 years, and other raw data collected from you (deidentified data) will be stored for five years after the study is published. After these periods, all records will be permanently destroyed using secure methods. The metadata (research findings and outputs) will be retained indefinitely.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in various forms. Information will be provided in any publication and/or presentation so you cannot be identified.

What will happen if I decide to withdraw?

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study anytime without needing to provide any explanation. You would not receive any penalty or bias due to your withdrawal. Should you decide to withdraw and tick the relevant box in your Consent Form, all the information collected from/about you will be destroyed and not used in the research. Please note that you will be able to withdraw your data before the completion of all parts of the project. After this point, you cannot withdraw your data as any links with identifying information will have been destroyed. If you choose to withdraw, contact the research team by email at **drugdrivingenforcement@uq.edu.au**. Upon indicating your intention to withdraw, the researcher will send you a withdrawal form. Please complete and return that withdrawal form. You will receive partial reimbursement for the time you have already contributed.

Can I hear about the results of this research?

Yes, you are very welcome to learn about this study's results. Once the research is complete, we will summarise the main findings through The University of Queensland's research pages. This website will include project updates, key results, links to published journal articles or reports, and presentations at national and international conferences. You will be able to visit these sites to read about what we discovered:

Please note that we will only report results at the group level. This means the data will be averaged across all participants and presented in a way that does not identify you personally. Because this study does not produce individual-level health or clinical feedback, we will not provide personal results to participants. If you would like to receive a direct update or have any questions about the results once they are available, please contact the lead researcher, Dr Shamsi Shekari, at the University of Queensland.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. You are free to discuss your participation in this study with the researcher, who is contactable at drugdrivingenforcement@uq.edu.au or call 0438546409.

If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Coordinator on +617 3365 3924 / +617 3443 1656 or email humanethics@research.uq.edu.au

This research Ethics ID number: 2025/HE000945

Thank you for your interest in this study and for taking the time to read this information sheet. This information sheet is for you to keep. If you wish to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a written consent form.