



2027 Summer Research Project Template

Help us present your project in a way that connects with the right students. Thoughtful, engaging descriptions tend to attract stronger and more suitable applications. Thank you for putting a project forward - these programs rely on your contribution, and we couldn't do it without you.

Section	Description
Project title	How much self-control does it take to delay gratification?
Hours & delivery	Hours: 30 hours per week. Dates: 11 January to 19 February 2027 Weekend availability is preferred for testing with children. Delivery mode: On campus, possibly some online Location: Social Sciences Building, UQ, St Lucia
About the project (150–250 words)	The amount of self-control and agency a person is thought to have can determine how much freedom they are afforded by society, how heavily they are punished, and how public service initiatives approach behaviour-change interventions. Sound measures of self-control are therefore necessary to make appropriate judgements about how to interpret and respond to behavioural outcomes. This project explores the role that self-control plays in why some people sacrifice immediate gratification for larger delayed rewards, while other people settle for smaller, more immediate rewards. Using delay maintenance tasks, where people must abstain from smaller immediate rewards to obtain larger delayed rewards, we seek to understand what defines “self-control”, how can it be measured, and how it can be properly separated from other determinants of these choices. We are interested in whether self-control can be teased apart from things like motivation, temptation strength, foresight, risk-sensitivity, and trust, in existing and novel measures of delay maintenance. This project explores the role of self-control in delay maintenance choices across development and in a broad range of contexts. Some of our studies explore children’s behaviour in the marshmallow test. Others explore adult behaviour, in the context of decisions about alcohol and drug use, or decisions about distributing recreation time across boring tasks.
What you'll do (100-150 words)	The activities you will undertake will depend on which of our studies are best aligned with your skills and interests. Tasks may include: - Administering novel versions of the marshmallow test to 4-6yo children - Recruiting participants for studies - Reviewing literature related to self-control - Organising databases of research - Aiding in setting up new studies (for example, preparing materials & helping with ethics applications)



What you'll learn
(100–150 words)

The skills and experience you will gain from participating in this project will depend on which of our studies you are working on. You may gain experience in:

- Conducting developmental research and working with children
- Performing literature reviews and managing research databases
- Designing studies and attaining ethical approval
- Recruiting participants and managing participant data
- Approaches to cognitive psychology

Project outcomes
(75–125 words)

The expected outputs or achievements will vary depending on the study/studies you contribute towards. Goals may relate to the number of participants tested, the number of papers reviewed, the successful preparation of new studies, or the completion of database updates. Beyond these specifics, students should gain valuable experience working in a research environment.

Who should apply?
(75–125 words)

Attributes that would make a student a good fit for the project:

- in at least the 2nd year of an undergraduate degree
- have taken some subjects that cover relevant cognitive and developmental topics (e.g. PSYC2050, PYC2311, PSY2030, PSYC3262, PSYC3282)
- a current Blue Card and experience working with children
- flexible availability (weekend availability is especially valuable)
- interest in cognitive and/or developmental psychology
- interest in topics such as self-control, metacognition, motivation, executive functioning, foresight, logical reasoning, agency, self-determination, or free will.
- genuine interest in the theory behind research or its real world applications

Team & supervision
(75–125 words)

These studies primarily conducted by PhD candidate Natasha Anderson with supervision from Dr. Jonathan Redshaw, Professor Thomas Suddendorf, and Professor Julie Henry. Developmental research related to this project is conducted through the Early Cognitive Development Centre (ECDC) at UQ. You will be inducted into the ECDC and will have the opportunity to participate in lab meetings with other developmental researchers.

Additional opportunities
(optional)

Depending on your level of interest, engagement and success in this project, you may be provided with the opportunity to present your research to the ECDC at the end of your project and to maintain involvement with our research in the future.

Notably, you only need to be inducted into the ECDC once, so the completion of this project may make you a desirable candidate for any future developmental research opportunities at UQ.

Additional requirements
(if applicable)

To conduct developmental research, applicants will require a current Blue Card.

Contact

Yes, students may contact the supervisor before applying.

Please direct enquiries to:

Jonathan Redshaw at j.redshaw@uq.edu.au AND

Natasha Anderson at natasha.anderson@uq.edu.au
