



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	Measuring real world social attention in younger and older adults using mobile eye-tracking
Hours & delivery	This project will be offered either hybrid or on campus at St Lucia and will involve approx. 24 hours per week. Students can complete the hours when suits them best.
About the project (150–250 words)	Social connection plays a crucial role in health and well-being across the lifespan. Social cognition refers to the capacity to attend to, detect, and understand socially relevant information, and are fundamental to effective social interaction. It is therefore concerning that a large body of research suggests that many social cognitive abilities decline with advancing age. However, much of this research has relied on highly artificial laboratory tasks that may not reflect how social cognition actually operates during real-world interactions. Our lab aims to address this limitation by examining social cognitive processes, including social attention, in more naturalistic settings that better approximate everyday social interaction. We have recently used mobile eye-tracking glasses to measure younger and older adults' social attention while they completed a real life visual perspective-taking task with a human partner. These data provide the first test of how attention and theory of mind operate during a real social interaction. Although this innovative methodology allows us to address questions that have not previously been examined, eye-tracking data require substantial pre-processing before they can be analysed. We are therefore seeking a student to assist with eye-tracking data pre-processing, which will help us prepare the dataset for analysis and subsequent publication.
What you'll do (100-150 words)	A key focus of this project will be learning to use the Tobii Pro eye-tracking software, and completing pre-processing of our eye-tracking data. This will include adding "event markers" to our eye-tracking videos and creating "areas of interest", so that we can quantify fixation patterns during our task. You will primarily be working on a laptop (that we will provide) to complete this work.
What you'll learn (100–150 words)	You will learn how mobile eye-tracking works, and how it can be used to measure social attention in more naturalistic settings. This project would provide an excellent foundational skill set for an Honours project in this topic area.
Project outcomes (75–125 words)	These data will be included in a publication on "Real world social attention in younger and older age" and will be presented at national and international conferences next year.
Who should apply? (75–125 words)	The project requires a very high level of attention to detail, patience, and ability to complete repetitive tasks. We would be particularly interested in someone who is interested in normal adult ageing and/or social cognition or social connectedness, or someone who is interested in designing a new project that uses mobile eye-tracking in Honours next year. This project would be best suited to someone in their 3 rd year but we would be open to 2 nd or 4 th year students.



Team & supervision (75–125 words) Dr Sarah Grainger will be the primary supervisor for this project. The student will work closely with her team, including Alana Topsfield (PhD candidate).

Additional opportunities (optional) Describe **any additional opportunities associated** with the project, such as presentations, networking, or publications, pathways into ongoing research or further study. These experiences can **help students understand the broader value** of participation.

Additional requirements (if applicable) There are no other requirements for this project.

Contact Yes, students may contact the supervisor before applying.
Direct enquiries to: Sarah Grainger (s.grainger@uq.edu.au)