

School of Education

Updated



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From the Executive Dean

Another year is underway and as expected it has delivered new challenges and experiences for us all. As restrictions continue to be lifted, and the vaccinations roll-out across the state and nation, the School of Education looks forward to another year of our Initial Teacher Education courses and upskilling teachers with postgraduate courses and short courses.



The Quality Indicators of Teaching and Learning (QILT) survey results were recently released. The School of Education is immensely proud of ranking as Australia's top university for undergraduate teaching quality, overall educational experience, and learning resources. The QILT results are a testament to the quality of our academic and professional staff, the positive and professional engagement with schools and educational leaders who partner with us.

In late March, the School of Education will launch 'Showcase' a publication highlighting the exceptional skills, talent and creativity from our emerging Design and Technology and Visual Arts Pre-Service Teachers. We are very fortunate to have exceptional academics who lead these

disciplines with assistance from outstanding academic support staff and technical officers. ECU is the only university in Western Australia that offers Design and Technology as a specialisation in Secondary Education. The photos included in this edition of UpdatED, including the front cover, are of staff and students in the workshops at the ECU Mount Lawley Campus.

A particular focus this year for the School of Education is to continue to produce impactful research. Outstanding world class research is undertaken in the School by many of our academics as highlighted in this edition which should be of interest. I am pleased to report the quality and quantum of published research increases every year. Recognition of that quality has been our Australian

Research Council grant success in 2020.

We continue to deliver outstanding courses where graduates are classroom ready. Our connection with graduates does not end at graduation. We have established the Education Alumni Chapter and I am pleased to advise that it continues to grow. The Education Alumni Chapter will deliver events and professional development which may be of interest to Alumni.

The School of Education looks forward to a great year. I wish you all the best for next term and best wishes that the rest of 2021 continues to be positive.

Professor Stephen Winn
Executive Dean
School of Education
Edith Cowan University

Alumni Education Chapter: Future of Teaching & Learning



The ECU Alumni Education Chapter's vision is to be an ambassador in the education field, provide a voice for teaching and education and empower ECU School of Education graduates to pursue career advancement and build social and professional networks.

To receive further information from the Education Chapter and ECU Alumni you can update your contact details so you can receive information about upcoming news and events from the Chapter.

The Education Alumni Chapter's first inaugural event will be held in late May. Further details including keynote speakers will be released in the coming weeks.

Update your Education Alumni Chapter details [here](#) or by scanning this QR code



Former principals go back to university

A group of recently retired principals have headed back to university to help assess the readiness of pre-service teachers for their professional lives in the classroom.

Around 20 former principals have participated in ECU Quality Teaching Performance Assessment (QTPA) panels, a rigorous first-of-its-kind quality assessment aiming to meet new national teacher accreditation requirements.

ECU School of Education Executive Dean, Professor Stephen Winn, said the principals were a fantastic asset for the program.

"Principals have spent years hiring teachers and so their perspective on what makes a young teacher employable is invaluable," Professor Winn said.

Since 2020, all teacher training institutions across Australia are required to undertake accreditation assessments before Pre-Service Teachers can graduate.

The QTPA is one of three quality assessment models approved for use by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership and is aimed at ensuring all Pre-Service Teachers entering the profession are required to meet the highest standards.

Nearly 700 ECU students have already been assessed and interviewed by panels of three academic staff members, with more than 80 academic staff and now retired principals taking part in the process.

Professor Winn said the QTPA – which is in addition to existing academic assessments and professional experience requirements – was a massive undertaking for staff and students alike.

"The QTPA process is an extraordinary feat, in no small part due to the efforts of our Academic and Professional Staff," he said.

"The QTPA will continue to demonstrate how ECU Pre-Service Teacher graduates will maintain public confidence that teachers are classroom ready upon graduation."

ECU students from both undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education courses are now required to undertake the QTPA as part of a capstone assessment linked to their final unit of professional experience.

The QTPA comprises four components, including a personal teaching statement, planning for teaching and learning, demonstration of impact and an oral presentation.



Pictured left to right: Image of Principals, Clinton Glendenning, Cheryl Wellburn, Sheryl Pilkington, Gillian Murcia and Fran Italian.

Future Research & Career Pathways

Are you interested in pursuing a **Master of Education** by Research or a **Doctorate (PhD) in education**?

Find out more about **research project opportunities** in ECU's School of Education.

Centre for People, Place & Planet

Professor Mindy Blaise is the co-director of the recently launched ECU Strategic Research Centre entitled 'Centre for People, Place and Planet'.

Their research responds to global environmental change by understanding the interactions of ecosystems, human ecology and social justice. This includes Indigenous knowledge and practice, land and water management, community-based solutions and environmental decision-making.

Professor Blaise is particularly interested in how ecological literacies can be embedded within educational contexts.



Centre for People,
Place & Planet
STRATEGIC RESEARCH CENTRE



Research in the School of Education

Featured research articles

Please find below recently published open access articles written by researchers in the School of Education. Open access means freely accessible to you! These selected publications may be of interest to you as teachers and/or school leaders.

An investigation of early childhood staff and their transition to the new Western Australian Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(7). Loxton, J., Cunningham, C., & Knaus, M. J. (2020). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2020v45n7.3>

Reappraising the AITSL professional engagement domain: Clarifying social capacity building for school leaders to enhance overall teacher job satisfaction and career longevity. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(9). Lowe, G. M., Prout, P. F., Gray, C. C., & Jefferson, S. (2020). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2020v45n9.4>

School leaders and a culture of support: Fostering student social emotional development. *Issues in Educational Research*, 30(2), 435–451. Beatty, L. & Campbell-Evans, G. (2020). <http://www.iier.org.au/iier30/beatty.pdf>

Professional learning in reading instruction: The influence of context on engagement and enactment. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(6). Main, S., Konza, D., Hackling, M., & Lock, G. (2020). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2020v45n6.5>

The 'obvious' stuff: Exploring the mundane realities of students' digital technology use in school. *Digital Education Review - Number 37, June 2020*. N.Selwyn, S.Nemorin, S.Bufin & N.Johnson. G. <https://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/der/article/view/30670/pdf>

What research do we do in the School of Education?

We have four key research programs, with experts from Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary working in partnership with a range of agencies to strengthen and advance knowledge, policies and practices in education.

1. Education within social settings
2. Innovation in policy and practice
3. Teacher education
4. Equity and inclusion within education

Find out more at <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/research-activity>



Associate Professor Nicola Johnson,
Associate Dean (Research), School of Education

Most government information on COVID-19 is too hard for the average Australian to understand

Almost half of Australian adults struggle with reading. Similar levels of struggling readers are reported in the United Kingdom and United States.

This does not mean all struggling readers are illiterate. It means they often struggle to understand writing in a way required for broad participation in work, education and training, and society.

Our recent analysis of government information on COVID-19 found many documents were written in a way that is inaccessible to struggling readers.

If adults do not understand key health messages, they are unlikely to comply with health directives that can protect themselves and the rest of the population.

Difficulty with reading

There are many reasons adults can struggle with reading. They include English being their second language, having had long or many absences from school, home factors, student attitudes and engagement, school and systems factors, and learning difficulties and disabilities.

People who have difficulty reading information may miss out on key health messages about COVID-19.

This could lead to poor health outcomes for themselves and others. This is because many of the health messages, such as the importance of wearing a face mask and social distancing, require individual action for community benefit.

We analysed the content of online government documents (federal and Western Australian) related to COVID-19 to determine how hard this information was to read. We chose government pages because we expect them to provide reliable information.

The website pages we selected clearly indicated they were for the general public – such as a page with the heading “information and advice on the COVID-19 coronavirus for the community and businesses in Western Australia”.

To be accessible to the general population documents should have a reading ability requirement of year 8. This means the health messages governments share should be understandable for someone in year 8 or lower in Australia.

What we found

We used an online readability checker to analyse the documents we accessed. Readability scores are based on the number of words in a sentence, the number of syllables in the words and the number of sentences in the document.

The documents we analysed had an average readability of grade 13, which is very difficult to read for many adults. The range of readability scores was from grade 8 to grade 26.

Only two of the 52 documents could be read with relative ease, as these were assessed at grade 8. But no document in the set we analysed was easy to read. An easy-to-read document would have had a score of grade 6.

For example, here is a difficult sentence explaining what the public needs to know about moving from one phase of restrictions to another. It is from one of the government websites. The document from which it was taken scored at grade 24 (very difficult to read).

Phase 3 will be subject to health advice, but will focus on continuing to build stronger links within the community and include further resumption of commercial and recreational activities.

There are 29 words in the above sentence.

As you can see, it is quite a long sentence with a number of big words. Without losing its original meaning, the sentence can be simplified into 18 words.

Based on health advice, Phase 3 will include connecting with community, opening businesses and allowing some personal activities.

The words we used are more common and therefore more easy to understand. Words such as “resumption” may be too hard for many readers.

What does this mean?

Based on the sample of documents we assessed, it appears a lot of government-produced COVID-19 information is not easy to read. This means it is unlikely to be of much practical use.

Our findings suggest governments are failing to take into account that many adults struggle to read when they develop important online communications about the pandemic – and perhaps other health advice.

If those who create health messages don't take into account that many adults struggle with reading, a large portion of the population misses out on information important for individual and public health.

We recommend readability checkers, now freely available on the internet, be used to check the grade level at which government documents are written.

Governments have a responsibility to share information so everyone can access it. They should not assume failure to comply with public health measures is always a choice. It's possible the message simply hasn't been received.

Authors: Dr Cath Ferguson, Dr Margaret Merga and Professor Stephen Winn

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Back to school: how to help your teen get enough sleep



When the holidays end, barring a fresh outbreak of COVID-19, teenagers across Australia will head back to school. Some will bounce out of bed well before the alarm goes off, excited to start a new school year, but many others will drag themselves to the shower or reach for caffeine to shake themselves awake.

Many will not have had enough sleep to tackle the trials and tribulations of their new school day.

I remember back to my days as a high school science teacher, when some of my students started falling asleep in class. My immediate thoughts were: have I lost my touch? Am I that boring?

Over-tiredness can also lead to misbehaviour. One of my usually good kids filled a disposable glove with water and hurled it around her head spraying water and ruining the work of other students.

An investigation determined a string of very late nights perusing social media and texting friends. It was possible her over-tiredness led to an inability to regulate her behaviour.

How phones close to bed affect sleep

With widespread school closures of 2020, and a reduction of face-to-face contact in 2020, teenagers used mobile phones more frequently to engage with their peers and online learning.

Teenagers need friendship networks to help them cope with stress and foster resilience.

Teens use devices to keep up to date with their friends' activities on social media, or they may connect with a mate for an online gaming session, or phone a friend. Just like their parents, when teens aren't connecting with their friends they are likely to use their smartphone like a mini-computer to stream videos and TV, listen to music, shop or catch up on news.

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Of concern is that many of these activities occur into the night and in the confines of the teenager's bedroom. This may not be a worry in the holidays when teens can sleep in but getting enough good quality sleep can be challenging when they have to be somewhere first thing in the morning.

Unfortunately, the constant use of technology can be at the expense of sleep with many teens missing out regularly on the required 8-10 hours a night.

Using a mobile phone into the night not only displaces sleep. Viewing screen-light also suppresses melatonin (the natural hormone that regulates our sleep-wake cycle), and provides content that may overstimulate the brain.

For teenagers, the pathway from increased late-night screen use leading to disrupted sleep and then contributing to increased depressed mood, behaviour problems, low self-esteem and difficulty coping can become well established.

Purchasing an alarm clock is a good step towards helping regulate your teenager's sleeping habits.

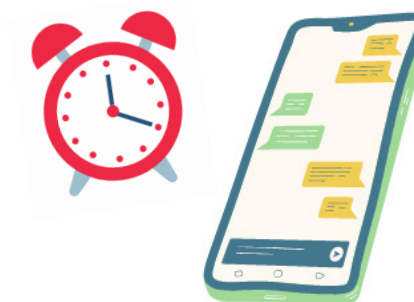
Having enough sleep means teenagers brain cells will be alert during the school day. Sleep helps with the ability to think critically, and process and store new information, so teenagers become satisfied with their achievements at school.

Enough sleep also helps ward off daytime sleepiness and provides more energy to participate in vigorous physical exercise – an activity that helps ensure a good night's sleep in itself.

Helping your teen get a good sleep

The first thing you could do is locate or purchase an alarm clock (with no internet connection). You could then remove devices from the bedroom the night before school starts and set the alarm.

But still, teenagers' routine of falling asleep late into the night during the holidays isn't magically going to revert to an early bedtime.



On the first school night teens will probably lie awake (perhaps with heightened anxiety about their first day) and get frustrated.

They will finally fall asleep, but be rudely awoken by the alarm. A grumpy start to the new year is to be avoided at all costs.

The message to teenagers and their parents is: understand the need for social connections but set curfews. Beyond setting such curfews on the phone itself, it's important to remove it from the bedroom 30 minutes to an hour before sleep as wind-down time. Teenagers must learn to manage their own schedules by going to bed at a time that ensures when the alarm goes off they will have achieved between 8 to 10 hours sleep.

Author: Dr Lynette Vernon,
Senior Research Fellow, School of Education

Here are some things that could make this easier:

- at least a week before school starts, set the alarm 5-10 minutes earlier each day until the school day alarm time is reached
- set earlier, regular bedtimes so as not to confuse the body clock
- take all electronic devices out of all bedrooms (yes, set an example) and charge them in a place children can't sneak out and access during the night
- avoid caffeine, alcohol, energy drinks and large meals well before bedtime
- exercise earlier in the day as this will increase tiredness. Make sure exercise isn't too close to bedtime as this raises body temperature and increases cortisol (the stress hormone) making it harder for some people to fall asleep
- try to get ahead of the problem by having conversations with your child before they reach their teens to make sure they understand the effects of not getting enough sleep
- during the holidays, use sleep tracking apps to monitor sleep and set up the bedroom to be conducive to a good night's sleep (no illuminated power cords, good airflow and a comfortable pillow and bedding).

Informal participation: challenging sport policy, planning and education

Informal participation in sport is the focus of a Monash University led Australian Research Council project that involves ECU School of Education researchers Professor Dawn Penney and Dr Eibhlish O'Hara.



Author: Professor Dawn Penney, Professorial Research Fellow

The project reflects changes in Australian society and patterns of engagement in sport, with many people choosing to participate outside of traditional club structures.

Focusing on two local authorities in Victoria and two in WA, the research is revealing that informal sport takes many forms – ranging from two or three young people meeting to have a casual kick around down the park, to regular playing and competition opportunities that are coordinated via social media.

Importantly, the participation reflects the group interests – in social connectedness, fun and friendships – with games adapted to suit the participants and the flexibility for involvement to vary to match individual circumstances, interests and abilities. Professor Penney explains a key appeal for many people.

"You won't get a hard time for being late to practice, or for deciding that this week you want to either take it easy or 'go hard', or for your prime interest in turning up being that this is simply your key chance to put yourself first and put home or work pressures to one side."

Amidst COVID-19 restrictions, informal sport has often been the only form of participation available to people. The researchers predict that the popularity and importance of informal sport for social, mental and physical health and well-being will only increase.

The research is involving industry partners and participants as stakeholders in future planning and provision to support growth of a sector that currently remains overshadowed by formal club-based and representative sport.

It is also highlighting challenges and opportunities for Health and Physical Education and school sport to support young people to shape a variety of participation futures.

And have produced the following open access publications:

- An investigation of the knowledge, skills and understandings for participation and the possibilities for physical education
- Managing informal sport participation: tensions and opportunities

The research team, led by Associate Professor Ruth Jeanes at Monash, has a project website.



If you would like further information on the research in Western Australia or if you are a school interested in exploring informal sport, please contact Professor Dawn Penney: Email d.penney@ecu.edu.au or Twitter is [@profdpenney](https://twitter.com/profdpenney)

KindyTxt project goes live

Improving parental engagement in children's learning and schooling through a literacy-based text messaging program.

This School of Education research project will develop, deliver and evaluate a literacy text-messaging program for parents with a child at kindergarten in WA (approximately 300 kindergartens in 16 local government areas).

Texts will be delivered weekly over four terms, in collaboration with Better Beginnings (BB), a State Library of WA (SLWA) literacy program delivered by local librarians to families attending kindergarten.

Kindergarten teachers and BB librarians will attend workshops to establish kindergarten-family-library partnerships, produce and evaluate a partnership framework and implementation materials. Evaluation will involve all participants, with in-depth data collected from participants in six vulnerable communities.

Researchers: Professor Caroline Barratt-Pugh, Associate Professor Nicola F. Johnson, Associate Professor Lennie Barblett, Dr Susan Hill and Professor Stephen Winn.

Find out more about Kindytxt on our website.



GRADUATE CERTIFICATES FOR QUALIFIED TEACHERS

ECU's School of Education has added new specialisations to its Graduate Certificate in Education, ideal for qualified teachers interested in furthering their knowledge and skills in a particular area, or expanding their career opportunities. Other courses have recently been updated too.

These specialisations require completion of 4 units of study at the Mount Lawley Campus or online:

- Behaviour and Wellbeing (with a unit related to working with children who have experienced trauma)
- Educational Leadership (on-campus and accelerated online available)
- Learning Difficulties (with a new unit on the Science of Reading)
- Special Education: Complex Communication Needs (new to Master of Education pathway)
- Literacy Education
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
- Secondary: Mathematics (online only)
- Secondary: Design and Technology (on-campus only)

Possible fee savings

You can apply for a 15% fee discount if you completed your undergraduate degree at ECU.

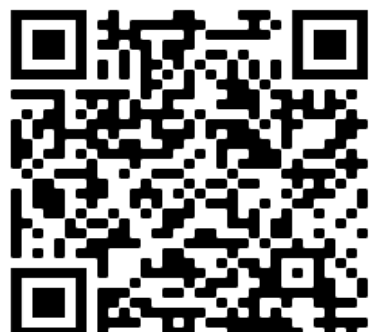
Applications are also open NOW for scholarships valued at \$5,000 for studies in Learning Difficulties or Special Education.

Applications close 1 April - Apply now

Progress to a Masters

You can use the 4 completed Graduate Certificate units towards a Master of Education – Coursework, leaving only 4 further units to graduate.

Explore course details by scanning this QR code.



Dr Pauline Roberts
Academic Coordinator, Graduate Studies



ADVANCE YOUR TEACHING CAREER

Develop a deeper understanding within a specialist teaching area and progress your career with ECU's new Graduate Certificate of Education.

As a teacher, you can put your interests at the forefront of your professional development and focus on a specialist area of teaching. Or you can choose a specialisation to enhance your opportunities for leadership roles.

There are eight specialisations available that you can study part-time, online or on-campus:

- Behaviour and Wellbeing
- Educational Leadership (on-campus and accelerated online available)
- Learning Difficulties
- Literacy Education
- Secondary: Design and Technology (on-campus only)
- Secondary: Mathematics (online only)
- Special Education: Complex Communication Needs
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

APPLY NOW FOR MID YEAR ENTRY

ECUWORLDREADY.COM.AU/EDUCATION

ECU primary interns make the most of disrupted year

In a year impacted by COVID-19, a group of ECU primary Pre-Service Teachers were able to accumulate 18 weeks of experience in school, thanks to ECU's sector-leading internship program.

While professional placements in 2020 were reduced to just six weeks due to the pandemic, the 13 ECU primary interns were able to accrue an extra 12 weeks of experience via their internship.

ECU's Associate Dean (Primary Education) Associate Professor Matt Byrne said the School's Primary Internship Program offers a unique three phase approach, enabling this year's cohort to maximise their professional experience despite the disrupted year.

"Phase one of the program places students in a primary school for the first two weeks of term one," he said.

"Most professional experience programs take place in later terms, so graduates in their first year on the job are often new to the experience of what the beginning of a school year looks like.

"This internship gives real value, as our Pre-Service Teachers get to learn how relationships are built and developed. This is vital in orientating yourself to a full school perspective and learning how to set up a school year."

The program then concludes in term three, after students have completed their professional placement at the same school. The interns are embedded for a full school term of ten weeks.

The primary internship was piloted for the first time in 2017 with three students, and grew to 13 interns in the 2020 cohort.

Associate Professor Byrne said both students and schools were seeing the real-world value of the internships and demand was growing rapidly, with 30 applications already received for next year.

As part of a 2021 pilot, students will be able to complete the internships in Western Australia's Department of Education regional support hubs.

This innovative opportunity has been the result of a strong partnership with DoE Workforce, Policy and Coordination Nicole Hanna (Director) Nigel Wakefield (Principal Consultant, Professional Practice) and the team.

"This is not only setting up valuable placements for our Pre-Service Teachers in rural and regional locations, but providing country schools with meaningful pipelines for teacher recruitment," Associate Professor Byrne said.

"Many students who complete the internship go on to be employed, often at the school where they did the internship.

"In fact, our interns have an almost 100% success rate at landing employment after completing one of these internships."

For more information about the internship program, visit the ECU course guide.



Kelly Trusso, Mentor

ECU alumni can develop their coaching and leadership skills by becoming a mentor



We are currently seeking ECU teaching alumni to become mentors as part of the Alumni Mentoring program. You can participate from wherever you are – virtual meetings are okay! This volunteer program will see you paired with an ECU student, who you will meet at your mutual convenience over a four month period. We hope you can support a student mentee as they make plans to start their career.

Testimonial

"I decided to take part as I really enjoy helping prac students, and I was also keen to progress my own teaching career. It's also great to have the association with ECU.

We did two classroom visits, and then had a number of emails back and forth as well. The school was very positive towards me having a mentee join me in the classroom. This is how we all learnt, so hosting a mentee is well-regarded. It was good to be able to give Lisa the experience without the pressure of a structured prac.

I'm pleased that Lisa found it useful, I was just really glad to help. I would definitely recommend other alumni to take part in the program as I got a lot out of it, including my own professional development."

Kelly Trusso

Applications close 9 April – Apply now



Recruiting now for Scholar in Residence program

Dr Christa Norris, Lecturer,
School of Education

We're looking for schools to host teaching students in 2021 – but not in the usual way.

The Scholar-in-Residence program provides an additional workplace integrated learning opportunity for students in our undergraduate and Master of Teaching secondary education courses. It's a chance for Pre-Service Teachers to be immersed in school culture and delve into the complexity of schools, without having a major focus on teaching.

This placement is different to a traditional internship, as at ECU, the scholars bring ideas and innovative research-based practices, as well as provide support for teachers and schools in various projects.



Undergraduate scholars

Our undergraduate scholars provide additional support in the class or department through the development of research-based resources to cater for specific classes and/or students, and additional support in a project or area of need for the school. These scholars are placed in schools for 3 days a week during Term 3.

Master of Teaching scholars

Our Master of Teaching scholars develop their skills and understanding through being involved in contextual action research projects with staff. If the school has a research focus that they would like assistance with, then our Master of Teaching scholars are available. These scholars are placed in schools for 2 days a week during Term 4.

Testimonials

"I have just landed myself a permanent full-time position ... In my interview, I used samples that I had created for the Scholar in Residence program, and felt at ease discussing the AITSL Standards."

Previous Scholar-in-Residence

"Interns provide a great sense of enthusiasm and fresh ideas that can be implemented in the school."

Head of Learning Area – Partner School staff



Register now

If you are interested in finding out more or are able to host a scholar for 2021, then head to: <https://www.ecu.edu.au/schools/education/scholar-in-residence-program>.



INDUSTRY PHD SCHOLARSHIP

OPTIMISING SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT OF THE FOODBANK WA SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM THROUGH INTEGRATED, WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACHES

ECU is seeking a PhD candidate to undertake research in the School of Education in conjunction with our industry partner, Foodbank WA.

The Foodbank WA School Breakfast Program (SBP) is highly valued by all key stakeholders, as documented by the ECU-led longitudinal evaluation of the SBP. Foodbank WA now wants to investigate why the impact of the SBP is greater in some school communities than others and determine ways to further improve the support provided by WA schools for students affected by poverty or social disadvantage.

The successful PhD candidate will undertake applied research aimed at developing and trialing a self-reflection framework for schools to use and an evaluative model for conducting Social Return on Investment (SROI) assessments of the SBP. The framework and SROI model will enable tracking of performance at the school level and more meaningful school- and system-level assessments of the implementation and impact of whole-school approaches to the SBP. The candidate will be expected to enrol and commence in 2nd Semester 2021.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants should have experience in working with schools, particularly within vulnerable communities, and hold a first class/upper second class honours or Master by Research qualification in education, public health or related field.

The scholarship is open to Australian citizens and permanent residents.

MORE INFORMATION

To express interest in this scholarship opportunity please contact Dr Susan Hill (susan.hill@ecu.edu.au) indicating your previous experience and interest in the project, and providing contact details by **30 April 2021**.

Further information can be found at: www.ecu.edu.au/scholarships/details/industry-phd-scholarship-foodbank-wa

[ECUWORLDREADY.COM.AU](https://www.ecu.edu.au)



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