

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher:

This study is forming the basis of a PhD for the researcher, Sarah Walker, looking at the impact of orientation and transition programs. Sarah is supported in this research by her research supervisor Dr Lillian Smyth, a lecturer and an educational and social psychologist at ANU, working mainly in the areas of social influence, learning and wellbeing.

Sarah is also a professional staff member working within the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and University Experience)'s portfolio. She is currently working as the Manager of Engagement and Success, the team primarily responsible for transition programs such as Orientation Week, and community building activities to increase the connection students feel with the University, each other and the local community.

Project Title: Sense of self and belonging in university students participating in first year support program

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** We are looking for incoming undergraduate domestic students to participate in a longitudinal study to share your experiences and feelings on your connection, support and engagement with the University. We are running these surveys over 4 years to connect your final grades with what you've done along the way to see if the engagement you have with other students, University services, academics and the local community makes a difference in terms of your grades and how you feel. We will send you two brief surveys each year so we can follow along with your study at ANU, please note that you do not have to complete each survey and can choose to complete only one or two if you want. Each survey is estimated to take 15 minutes to complete.
For this study to give us the best information we will link together your responses over all of the surveys, but in a way that minimise the likelihood of you being individually identified. To do this you'll be asked to create your own unique id in the first survey and use that id for the future surveys. Qualtrics, the survey software ANU uses, helps us with this process and in the first survey after you create your id and hit the 'Next' button, you will be brought to a new survey which only Sarah has access to. Qualtrics will automatically pull in just the unique id you created and then ask you to provide an email address which we can use to send out the future surveys and confirm you consent to us sending you the future surveys. By doing this, Sarah will end up with just your unique id and email address, this way she can remind you of the id when the future surveys are sent out. Sarah's PhD supervisor, Dr Smyth, will have access only to survey responses and unique ids. Dr Smyth will remove your unique id before sharing data with the Sarah so that Sarah cannot link your responses back to you specifically, and Dr Smyth will not have access to the email addresses of people who participate.
- **Participants:** We are inviting all domestic undergraduate students who begin study at The Australian National University from February 2021 to participate. We hope to have as many people as possible answer this survey, but our minimum goal is about 500 people.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** Your responses will be used, de-identified, as part of a PhD thesis submission, as part of a report to evaluate the University's transition programs, and may be published as part of journal articles, chapters and presented at professional conferences.
All results will be presented to minimise the likelihood of individual participant identification. Participants will be able to view the results of the study here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wo0cd1thi0dpvhs/AAC3C9ZgHAjDBbi7fMTu5kG8a?dl=0>.

Participant Involvement:

- **Who can participate?** For ethical reasons, only people who are 18 years old or over are eligible to participate in this study. If you started studying at ANU in February 2021, and you are a domestic undergraduate student, we'd like you to participate.
- **Voluntary Participation & Withdrawal:** Your participation in the study is **voluntary, you are in no way required to participate**, and you may, without penalty, decline to take part or withdraw from the study without providing an explanation at any time up until results are prepared for publication. You may also decline to answer a question or select the option 'Prefer not to say'. Your participation or non-participation, along with your actual responses, will in no way affect your academic performance and/or progress at the ANU. You are not obliged in any way to participate in this study. You may also choose to participate in only part of the study, i.e. complete one survey but decline to participate in the others or decline the request to provide access to your academic results. To withdraw please email Sarah Walker at sarah.swenson@anu.edu.au to let her know you are withdrawing at which point your data will be destroyed and not used.
- **What does participation in the research entail?** You will be asked to complete two surveys a year from 2021-2025 and to allow access to academic records held by ANU in order to obtain your final GPA when you complete your studies. Remember, you do not need to approve all of this and can choose to participate in only part of the study.
In the surveys you will be asked about your participation in University events/activities, how you feel about being associated with ANU, your social support networks and connections, measures of wellbeing, self-esteem and mood and then some questions about yourself.
- **Location and Duration:** The surveys are all online so you can complete them where ever and whenever you choose. We anticipate each survey will take 15 minutes to complete totalling approximately 30 minutes per year. If you participate in all of the surveys in this project this will take approximately 2 hour over 4 years.
- **Remuneration:** For students who complete the survey a \$5 Prezzy voucher will be sent to your nominated email address within 14 days of the survey closing. You will receive \$5 for each survey round you complete.
- **Risks:** As with any survey requiring self-reflection, there is always a possibility that some questions may make some people uncomfortable. The study includes questions about potential pressures experienced during your time at ANU (such as experiences with homelessness, financial hardship, poor mental or physical health and family pressure), connection that you may have to the University and other students, as well as the sense of support you feel you have, this means there is the potential that this will raise feelings of discomfort or distress. If this is the case, you are free to withdraw without penalty at any time up until results are prepared for publication and be aware that there are a number of support resources available through ANU (see information at the bottom of the information sheet).
- **Benefits:** It is unlikely that you will benefit personally from participating in this research but you will have the opportunity to provide insight we do not yet have in regards to student transition, sense of belonging and connection to ANU and how these impact on long-term academic and personal achievement. This insight will help us make changes and improve the experience and connection

students have with ANU. An improved connection to ANU and sense of belonging increases the likelihood of the overall success at university of other students like yourself.

Confidentiality:

- **Confidentiality:** All data will remain confidential, so far as the law allows. Raw data will be downloaded from Qualtrics by Dr Smyth and stored securely within ANU systems in password protected locations where only she can access it. Dr Smyth will remove your unique id and provide Sarah all survey responses together with a new unique code assigned to each respondent so that Sarah can connect your data together but not connect your response to you, please note this is a different unique code from the id you create yourself during the first survey. This means responses will be able to be linked across surveys responses but your individual response will not be stored with identifying data. Steps will be taken to minimise the risk that individual participants can be identified in any reporting. All data analysis will also be held within the ANU system in password protected locations.

Privacy Notice:

Australian privacy law (or rules) require me to tell you how ANU handles your private information, and you can ask me to give you more details of that or how you can find out what information we have about you and to fix it if it is wrong.

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/pp1/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information; and
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Data Storage:

- **Where:** The data is held within Qualtrics, ANU's preferred survey tool, while the survey is open, a period of two weeks and then downloaded from Qualtrics, deleted from Qualtrics and held within ANU systems on password protected computers so that it is only accessible to the researchers according to ANU privacy requirements and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. The raw data will only be accessible to Dr Smyth, Sarah will have access only to the survey responses once your unique id has been removed. All analytical work will also be store within ANU systems within a password protected location.
- **How long:** The data will be stored for at least five years after the final publication from this project.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** At the end of the storage period, the data will be archived within ANU systems in a password protected location to allow later use without exposing you to new or additional risks. Your responses will not be linked to your identity in any way. Access will be restricted to the Manager of Engagement and Success with whom requests can be submitted to ensure any future research is in line with the original intent of the ethics application. Later research could include a study that tracks the long term impact of changes to student support and engagement provided by ANU.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** For further information about this project, please contact:

Sarah Walker
Engagement and Success
Sarah.Swenson@anu.edu.au

Or Dr Lillian Smyth, PhD supervisor,
ANU College of Health and Medicine
Lillian.Smyth@anu.edu.au

Contact Details if in Distress: Support services

ANU Counselling Centre, available 9am – 4.45pm: (02) 6125 2442

ANU Crisis Line available 24/7: 1300 050 327

Lifeline available 24/7: 13 11 14

Kids Helpline (5-25yr olds 24/7): 1800 55 1800

QLife Phone and Online Chat available 3pm – midnight: 1800 184 527 <https://www.qlife.org.au/>

eheadspace (12-25yr olds): 1800 650 890 or online chat <https://www.eheadspace.org.au/>

Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2019/746). If you have any concerns or complaints about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager
The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au