

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher:

These interviews are adding to the study forming the basis of a PhD for the principal investigator, Sarah Walker, looking at the impact of orientation and transition programs. Sarah is also a professional staff member working within the portfolio of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). She is currently the Senior Manager of Student Life, 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.

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, and Ravinith Prasad, a consultant with over 15 years of experience working in higher education where he has worked closely with students, Colleges, and central teams. Sarah will be the only research team member to have access to the identified transcripts.

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

General Outline of the Project:

- **Description and Methodology:** This is a semi-structured individual interview that aims to explore, understand and examine the experiences of students at ANU. It is done through interviews to ensure the experience is directed by you, the interviewee, to allow you the space to tell your personal experience. We're doing this to learn more about the transition experience of students, what was helpful, what can be improved, and what impact the transition experience had, good or bad. The interviews will be conducted and recorded via Zoom, with the recordings saved directly to an ANU password protected computer. The audio recordings are then transcribed using a speech recognition transcription service, this allows us to focus on our conversation during the interview. The interview can go forward without being recorded, it is being utilised as the default interview method to allow me to fully concentrate on our conversation but if you do not want the interview to be recorded I can take notes instead.
- **Participants:** We are inviting current ANU students who began studying from February 2021 to participate. Information coming out of the interviews will be shared in a way to reduce the potential that individuals will be identifiable, this is to allow you to openly share your experience without others being aware that the experience is yours. It should be noted there is always the potential that individuals can be identified from the way they speak and the stories they tell. Steps will be taken to reduce the potential for you to be individually identified but it is always a risk with interviews. We are aiming to interview 48 students for this portion of the study.
- **Use of Data and Feedback:** A professional third-party transcription service utilising advanced speech recognition software will be employed to translate the audio/video recording into a transcripts at which time I will remove identifying items and then utilise the transcripts with the research team for analysis.
- 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 final written report with the results of the study upon completion here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/1m3kbptopc2ezq5c4evy/h?dl=0&rlkey=l37o0x2y3cyg5ruqvgunlzy94>

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 project is **voluntary**, as is answering specific questions in the interview, and you may, without negative consequences, decline to take part or withdraw from the research without providing an explanation at any time up until the findings are prepared for publication. If you choose to withdraw completely the recording and transcription will be deleted.
- **What does participation in the research entail?** I, Sarah, am conducting the interviews and will ask about your experience at ANU including your transition to ANU, what was helpful and what can be improved, as well as challenges you have faced, support you have received and your connection with the University community. You will also be asked some demographic questions such as what year of study you are in and whether you moved to Canberra for study. As this is a semi-structured interview other topics can be discussed if you choose to raise them. I may reach out to clarify something you have said with further questions once we begin reviewing the transcripts. As with the rest of this project, your participation in additional questions or conversations is voluntary and you can, without negative consequences, decline to answer additional questions or engage in a further conversation without providing an explanation.
- **Location and Duration:** The interviews will be conducted online via Zoom and is estimated to take **1 hour** to complete. I may request additional conversations in order to clarify something you have said or if something arises during the analysis.
- **Remuneration:** Eligible students who participate in an interview will receive a \$20 digital gift voucher. The voucher will be sent to your nominated email address within 7 days of your interview being conducted.
- **Risks:** Due to the sensitive nature of some of the questions in this study (i.e. reflecting on potentially difficult situations you have been in in relation to your time at ANU which could include experiences of homelessness, financial hardship, poor mental or physical health and family pressure, or experiences of social harm caused by the structure of society and its impact on you), there is a risk that you may feel psychological distress when reflecting on certain experiences. The interview has been designed so you can determine what information and experience you share to allow you to only raise issues and experiences you are comfortable discussing but distress is still possible. If the questions do raise feelings of discomfort or distress, we can pause or stop the interview at any time and you are also able to withdraw your participation.

There are also support services available through ANU and elsewhere (see below), and I can discuss these with you during or after the interview if you wish as I have experience through my professional role in support students understand and access these services.

Interviews carry a risk of individual identification due to the way individuals speak and the stories they tell. We will take a number of precautions in an attempt to prevent this from occurring including utilising a pseudonym that will only be known to me, and amending key specifics within the experience

such as changing the name of your degree, the hall you live in, town you come from, etc. but it should be noted that there is still the potential you can be recognised by someone who reads a resulting publication and we must advise you to avoid defaming anyone or revealing information that you may later regret or that could put you at risk.

- **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:** Interviews are non-anonymous by nature, particularly when conducted via video conference. As such, your data in this study will be **confidential**, but not anonymous. What this means is that your responses will not be linked to your name, and you will be offered the opportunity to choose a pseudonym at the start of the interview which will be utilised in all reports and papers to “identify” you. All data will remain confidential to the researchers involved in this research project, as far as the law allows. Data, including audio/video recordings, transcriptions and analysis, will be stored securely within ANU Cloudstor, with raw data, audio/video recordings and transcriptions with identifying items such as names, restricted to myself, Sarah, in a folder that only I have access to. Transcriptions would be provided to the rest of the research team once identifying items have been removed/modified, i.e. the name of residential halls changed to a different name. You will have the opportunity to review your de-identified transcript before it is provided to the research team if you wish.

Privacy Notice:

Australian privacy law (or rules) require me to tell you how my University 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/ppl/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

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

Data Storage:

- **Where:** The data will be held within ANU Cloudstor accessible only by the researchers. Data will continue to be stored according to ANU privacy requirements and will not be linked to participants’ identifying data.
- **How long:** The data will be stored for a period of at least 5 years from the date of any publication arising from the research on ANU Cloudstor in line with the requirements of ANU and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
- **Handling of Data following the required storage period:** At the end of the storage period, the data will be archived 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 similar study involving a longitudinal comparison of the constructs examined.

Queries and Concerns:

- **Contact Details for More Information:** For further information or queries regarding the study, please contact:

Sarah Walker, Primary Investigator
Engagement and Success
Sarah.swenson@anu.edu.au

Or Dr Lillian Smyth, Co-investigator,
ANU College of Health and Medicine
Lillian.Smyth@anu.edu.au

- **Contact Details if in Distress:**
ANU counselling services
 - ANU Counselling Centre (02) 6125 2442
 - ANU Psychology Clinic: (02) 6125 8498

For immediate mental health support (available 24 hours, 7 days a week)

- Lifeline: 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

If you are in an emergency situation or need immediate assistance, call emergency services on:
- 000

Ethics Committee Clearance:

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee (Protocol 2022/397). 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