**UQ Summer Research Project Description - 2026**

*Please use this template to create a description of each research project, eligibility requirements and expected deliverables. Project details can then be uploaded to each faculty, school, institute, and centre webpage prior to the launch of the program.*

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| **Project title:** | **Enhancing outcomes for young people in out-of-home care who self-place away from approved placements** |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | For the Summer program, students will be engaged **for 6 weeks**.  Hours of engagement must be between 20 – 36 hrs per week and must fall within the official program dates (Summer = 12 Jan – 20 Feb 2026).  Scholars will work 20hrs per week, with hours/day negotiated with the student. Students will have access to a desk in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work. Working from home arrangements will also be possible by negotiation. |
| **Description:** | This project looks at **improving outcomes for young people in out-of-home care who self-place**. Self-placing refers to young people who, without approval, leave statutory out-of-home care (OOHC) placements (foster care and residential care) to determine their own, often temporary and insecure living arrangements such as couch surfing or sleeping rough. Self-placing is associated with increased vulnerability and poor individual outcomes for young people and socio-economic burdens on justice and health systems. Whilst there is growing awareness of the need to address self-placing in OOHC, there is a dearth of evidence regarding the phenomenon and how to address it, particularly within Australian jurisdictions.  Building on our 2022 pilot research and informed by people with direct experiences of self-placing or supporting those who do, this project will generate the robust knowledge needed to optimise policy and practice responses for this cohort. It adopts a mixed-method, multi-stakeholder approach to building knowledge about the needs of young people and the factors that facilitate and inhibit our partners’ intra and inter-agency practices for supporting this cohort. Specifically, this project aims to:  Our project addresses the **significant** individual and societal issue of ensuring young people in, and transitioning from, OOHC are appropriately supported to experience positive outcomes now and into adulthood. Young people who self-place are not currently represented in Australian OOHC policy and government reporting. Knowledge gained as part of this project will be used to inform policy design and ensure implementation is responsive to the distinct needs and circumstances of this group. |
| **Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:** | Students will have the opportunity to:   * Contribute to the development of manuscripts, particularly in relation to updating a scoping literature review to inform the background section. * Learn how to systematically conduct literature searches, screen papers using Covidence software, and extract data as part of a scoping literature review |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to students in social work, social science, psychology and other related disciplines – preferably in their 3rd or 4th year of study.  Interest in child protection, youth, transitions and policy is desirable. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Jemma Venables |
| **Further info:** | [Jemma.venables@uq.edu.au](mailto:Jemma.venables@uq.edu.au)  Students are welcome to contact me prior to application, but it is not required. |