

PhD Opportunity:



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA

HEALTH RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

The UC30 trial

Location: Health Research Institute, University of Canberra (UC), Bruce, ACT, Australia

Start: February 2024

The project: University students are highly sedentary, increasing their risk of poor health outcomes. This funded PhD project aims to investigate a co-designed nudge-based intervention (UC30) to encourage university students to break up long periods of sitting every 30-minutes. Co-designed posters, slides and videos will be embedded in lectures and tutorials using choice architecture (or nudge theory) to encourage short physical activity breaks every 30-minutes. A stepped wedge cluster randomised trial design will be used to determine the effectiveness of the UC30 intervention, with UCs five faculties randomly allocated to receive the intervention over 3 semesters (N=12,000 university students). The main outcome measure will be self-reported sedentary behaviour (min/day) measured using a sedentary behaviour questionnaire validated in a university population (PAST-U questionnaire). If successful, this study will guide future research, policy and practice and ultimately improve the health and education outcomes of our university students.

A broad range of research opportunities are available within this project, including implementation of a stepped wedge cluster randomised trial in a university-wide setting, analysis of self-reported sedentary behaviour, and process and implementation measures for intervention delivery.

Under the direct supervision of Associate Professor Nicole Freene, and with support from other key experts from the Research Team, the successful candidate will develop a broad range of research skills related to the evaluation of a sedentary behaviour intervention for university students. Specific skills developed will be dependent on the project, allowing for a motivated candidate to pursue their own goals within the framework provided by the evaluation.

The successful candidate will have:

- completed a Masters or a high-level Honours Degree (or be regarded by the University as having an equivalent level of attainment) with a focus on health, health promotion, public health, psychology, education, or other related discipline that aligns with the project.
- demonstrated ability to work under broad direction, exercise initiative in undertaking responsibilities and work effectively as a team member
- high levels of written and oral communication skills in English
- peer reviewed publications would be an asset
- be an Australian or New Zealand citizen; or an Australian permanent resident; or an international student eligible to study in Australia on an international student visa.

To apply, interested candidates are invited to send their Curriculum Vitae, and a summary of their goals for a PhD, along with the names and contact information of two referees to Associate Professor Nicole Freene Nicole.Freene@canberra.edu.au.

Closing date: 10 September 2023

Scholarship opportunity: This is a funded **full-time** PhD position (\$32,000 per year for 3.5 years, tax free).