Australian Postgraduate Research Outcomes and Career Pathways (APROC)

Online Survey Information Sheet

Who is conducting the research

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Invitation to HDR graduates

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Why is the research being conducted?

Undertaking Higher Degree by Research (HDR) training is a substantial commitment. To get the most out of an HDR program, and to make an informed choice about whether and where to undertake a HDR program, prospective candidates need access to a range of information including potential career outcomes.

However, data on the performance of the research training system in Australia is lacking. One of the key findings and recommendations of a 2016 review into Australia’s research training system was that longitudinal data on Australian HDR graduate outcomes and career pathways needs to be collected.

In response to the Review’s recommendations, Griffith University undertook the ‘HDR Reconnect Campaign’ project in 2017-2018. Griffith reconnected with 35% of the total Griffith HDR graduate cohort at the time of the survey. This Australian-first project provided Griffith, and other stakeholders, with valuable graduate outcomes and career destinations data which have been used to inform and improve the research training offered at Griffith.

Since 2016, recognition of the importance of employability to current HDR candidates in an environment of ‘rising employment precarity’ has increased, with HDR candidate concerns heightened due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant employment impacts on the Higher Education sector.

The APROC survey has been developed by the Griffith Graduate Research School, in collaboration with the IRU network, aiming to build on the ‘HDR Reconnect Campaign’ by:

- gathering up-to-date career destination and career pathways information from HDR graduates.
- collecting information to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment outcomes of HDR graduates.

1 Flinders University, Griffith University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Murdoch University, University of Canberra, Western Sydney University.

This research is being conducted in accordance with Griffith University Human Ethics policy (GU 2023/734)
What you will be asked to do

The survey consists of seven sections in which you will be asked questions as follows:

1. About you, relevant permissions, and prize draw entry
2. What you were doing one year following completion of your HDR (employment or otherwise; this is your ‘initial position’)
3. What you are doing currently (employment or otherwise; this is your ‘current position’)
4. The value of your HDR (including how skills/knowledge gained during your HDR has been of benefit or otherwise for your career)
5. What you were doing immediately pre-COVID (i.e., at the end of 2019), if different to your initial or current position
6. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
7. Staying connected with your graduating institution.

If you agree to participate, the survey will take approximately 15-30 minutes, depending on your answers.

You can save the survey and resume participation later, if needed. To do this, click on ‘Resume later’ in the top right-hand corner of the survey window. You will be prompted to enter a name and password and click save. Your survey can then be completed later by logging in with the same name and password. If you provide an email address, an email containing the details will be sent to you, however an email address is not required. You can remain anonymous when saving the survey by using a pseudonym as your username.

A small number of survey participants may be contacted individually at a later date with a request for a personal follow-up on their journey (see below under ‘Feedback to you’ section for more information).

The expected benefits of the research

This research will:

- provide prospective and current candidates with up-to-date employment outcomes and career pathways of HDR graduates.
- enable the enhancement of quality in research training, including employability and career readiness support, offered at IRU institutions.
- improve current candidate and graduate satisfaction with the HDR experience.
- allow the assessment of impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment and career outcomes of HDR graduates.
- provide beneficial information for potential employers of HDR graduates, through raising awareness of the types of roles for which HDR graduates are suited.

Risks to you

The anticipated risks to you by participating in this research are minimal. Your participation in this research is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. Neither the responses you provide, nor withdrawal of participation will affect your relationship with your graduating university in any way.

If you are affected by any of the topics covered in the survey, help and support is available via Beyond Blue, Lifeline and Mind.

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Your confidentiality and privacy

Your privacy and the confidentiality of your data will be protected. The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements.

Participants will not be identifiable in any publication or reporting. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded.

All respondents will be assigned a unique Participant ID. Collected data will be separated into ‘identifiable information’ and ‘survey data’ with the data stored for up to five years in different folders on a secure server at Griffith University, in a re-identifiable form using the assigned unique Participant ID’s. Data containing the unique Participant ID’s will be accessible only to the APROC project team.

The APROC project team will provide each participating IRU University with de-identified/aggregate data from that institution’s graduates. In addition, for those respondents who ‘opt in’, the following information will be shared, separate to the de-identified survey data, for each participating graduate of that institution:

- Name and title
- Email address
- Date of birth
- Postcode
- Current employer and position title

This information will enable participating Universities to update existing student/alumni records and reach out to alumni for events and/or engagement activities related to the current HDR cohort, e.g., identifying potential partners for industry-PhD engagement. Employer and position title are already publicly available via platforms such as LinkedIn for many graduates.

All participating IRU universities will store identifiable participant Data from their own graduates in a restricted in-house repository in each respective Graduate School or Alumni Office.

You can indicate if you do not wish for this information to be shared by selecting ‘no’ to the relevant items in the survey.

For further information consult Griffith University’s Privacy Plan.

Mechanism for distribution and return / Web backend

A link to the survey instrument will be emailed to you from your graduating University providing your contact details are up to date. The survey link will also be made available via social media. As it is an online survey, you will simply need to submit the online form to complete your participation. The online survey instrument has been approved by Griffith University and conforms to our requirements for data security.

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). If participants have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project they should contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

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3 Re-identifiable, also sometimes known as coded. This refers to data where, if a code key or other separate tool is used, it is possible to associate data with individual respondents.

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Feedback to you

A project website will be created as a way to share de-identified/aggregate results with participants and other interested stakeholders, as well as a way to inform, educate, and attract prospective HDR candidates (no identifiable results will be shared unless participant consent to be identified is obtained).

A small number of survey participants may be contacted individually at a later date with a request for a personal follow up on their career journey. This would allow creation of case studies that can be used to promote HDR study and clearly show potential graduate pathways. Only survey participants who agree to be contacted for future research and communication initiatives related to this survey will be contacted for this purpose.

Prize draw information

Each participating institution will be conducting a prize draw for their own participating graduates, consisting of 1 x $500 e-gift card, 1 x $200 e-gift card and 3 x $100 e-gift cards. More details of the prize draws, including the types of gift-card that will be provided, are available for each institution via the links below.

Respondents who indicate they wish to be entered into the prize draw will need to provide their name and email address. Once the survey has closed, the APROC project team will provide a list of respondents who wish to enter the prize draw to each participating institution.

APROC prize draw terms and conditions are accessible here:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Prize Draw T&amp;Cs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Griffith University</td>
<td>GU Link</td>
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<td>James Cook University</td>
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<td>La Trobe University</td>
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<td>Western Sydney University</td>
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Further information?

If you have any questions about your participation in the survey, please reach out to the APROC project team via the contact details listed above.

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