**UQ Summer Research Project Description - 2026**

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| **Project title:** | **Examining the Social Networks of Adults with Hearing Loss** |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | The successful candidate will be engaged in the project for 20 – 36 hrs per week during the official program dates 12 Jan 2026 – 20 Feb 2026. |
| **Description:** | Acquired hearing loss can impact social connection, resulting in social isolation, loneliness, and poor wellbeing. Evidence suggests that adults may be more likely to seek help for their hearing if they perceive they have social support, suggesting that social connection is an important factor in hearing rehabilitation. Our project aims to generate a better understanding of social drivers and impacts of acquired hearing loss. We have recruited 191 adults aged over 50 years old, who are diagnosed with hearing loss in their initial assessment appointment, and have never used hearing aids. Participants complete an online survey at baseline, 3-months, 6-months, and 12-months. The survey includes an online Social Identity Map (capturing the quantity and quality of social connections), and a battery of questionnaires on hearing handicap, self-assessment of communication, an adapted version of the important people instrument for hearing rehabilitation, psychological distress, loneliness, and personal wellbeing.To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study to examine in depth the social groups of adults with hearing loss. In this project, we aim to unpack the nature of participants’ social groups and investigate how these relate to quantitative measurements of social support. This project expects to generate a better understanding of the types of groups and social connections of adults with acquired hearing loss. We will use these findings to understand how social connections may link with hearing interventions.  |
| **Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:** | This project will identify key insights into the nature of the social networks of adults with hearing loss. The student will examine participants’ social maps to investigate common group types and understand these networks. The student will gain experience with qualitative analysis of social identity maps, and will we asked to summarise their findings at the completion of the 6-week period.  |
| **Suitable for:** | This project would suit students with strong writing skills, who are comfortable learning new skills, and who have multidisciplinary interests across areas such as hearing and wellbeing. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Dianna Vidas  |
| **Further info:** | If you are interested in this project, please feel free to contact the supervisor via email (d.vidas@uq.edu.au)  |