**UQ Summer Research Project Description - 2026**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project title:** | Co-Designing Tools to Support Epilepsy Inclusion in Sport and Exercise: Insights from Para Start Athletes and Trainers |
| **Hours of engagement & delivery mode** | This project will run during the Summer Research Program (12 January – 20 February 2026). The student will be engaged for 20–30 hours per week (negotiable within this range) across 6 weeks. Delivery mode: Hybrid (on-site at UQ St Lucia and offsite via zoom/teams). |
| **Description:** | Sport and physical activity are powerful ways to build health, confidence, and social connection. However, for people living with epilepsy, participation is often limited by stigma, safety concerns, and a lack of awareness about how to support them effectively in sporting environments. This can create unnecessary barriers that reduce opportunities for inclusion and wellbeing.  The Para Start program at The University of Queensland is a sport-based initiative designed to support athletes with disability to engage in sport and physical activity. Partnering with Para Start athletes and trainers, this project will explore how to make sporting environments more inclusive for people with epilepsy and co-occurring disability. Using a co-design approach, we will work alongside athletes and trainers to identify common barriers and existing supports, and to develop practical recommendations or a tool (such as a checklist, guide, or framework) that can be applied across different sporting contexts.  **Aim:** The aim of this project is to better understand the needs of athletes with epilepsy and co-occurring disability and the perspectives of trainers, and then translate these insights into actionable strategies to improve inclusion.  **Key research questions:**   1. What are the perceived barriers and supports that influence sport participation for athletes with epilepsy? 2. How do athletes and trainers envision practical strategies or tools that could enhance inclusion and safety in sporting environments? 3. What features should a practical inclusion tool (e.g., checklist or guide) include to be adaptable across different sporting contexts? |
| **Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:** | Through this project, the Summer Research Scholar will gain practical research skills and hands-on experience in applied health and sport research. They will:   * Develop skills in data management and cleaning/formatting transcripts for analysis. * Gain experience as a second coder, by independently coding selected transcripts, comparing results with the supervisor, and contributing to refinement of the coding framework to ensure rigour. * Build capacity in synthesising qualitative data by producing summary tables (e.g., barriers and supports matrix, illustrative quotes). |
| **Suitable for:** | This project is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students from a range of disciplines, including occupational therapy, exercise and sport sciences, physiotherapy, psychology, public health, education, or related health and social sciences.  Applicants should:   * Have strong written and verbal communication skills. * Be organised, proactive, and able to work both independently and in a team. * Be comfortable engaging with diverse groups, including people with disability and health conditions. * Have an interest in inclusive sport, disability research, or participatory/co-design approaches.   Students with lived experience of epilepsy or inclusive sport are strongly encouraged to apply. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Brittany Williams and Dr Jessica Hill  School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences |
| **Further info:** | Students are encouraged to contact the supervisor prior to submitting an application to discuss their suitability and ask any questions about the project.  For further information about this project, please contact: [Brittany.williams@uq.edu.au](mailto:Brittany.williams@uq.edu.au) |