



FACULTY OF ARTS

Adelaide Summer Research Scholarship 2019-2020

Assessing the Experiences of First-Year PhD Students in Arts

Supervisor: Associate Professor Natalie Edwards, Director of Graduate Studies

School of Humanities

This project aims to understand the experiences of first-year students in Arts PhD programs. In particular, it aims to pinpoint issues that may lead to their withdrawal. While withdrawal rates in Arts at our University have decreased in the last two years, the national rate across all disciplines is still alarmingly high. Several studies have been published that examine, for example, the development of students' identities as researchers, their experiences of socialisation, the impact of their supervision and their access to sources of emotional support and well-being. While these studies help us to gain a general understanding of postgraduate student experience, this project will produce a more focused analysis by concentrating specifically on first-year students and in Arts disciplines.

The Summer Research Scholarship student will carry out two tasks. First, s/he will administer and collate the results of an online survey. This aims to garner preliminary data on what Faculties of Arts are doing well in the field of postgraduate experience and what they could improve. Second, s/he will carry out interviews with first-year doctoral students. These interviews will follow up on the results of the survey in order to provide a more detailed picture of the first-year student experience. The aim of the overall project is to interview 30 students from the three universities in Adelaide. The Summer Research Scholarship student will be asked to complete approximately ten of these interviews.

The student will gain the following research skills and experience;

- Publication in a high-quality journal
- Develop high-level research skills, both discipline-specific and generic;
 - Gather and interpret survey data
 - Carry out research interviews
 - Plan the stages of a research project