

So you're thinking about doing a PhD...

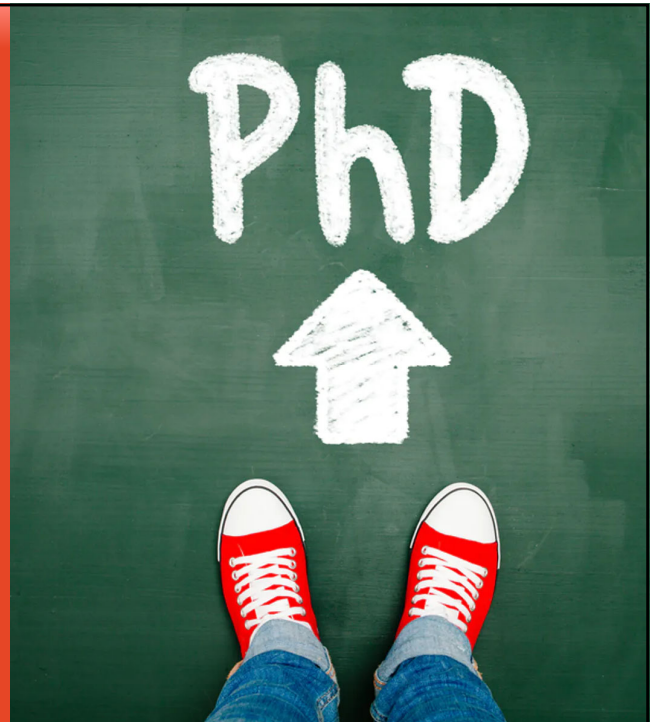
Prof Katherine Mills

Samantha Lynch

The Matilda Centre for Research
in Mental Health and Substance Use



4 June 2021



We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of
Country throughout Australia and recognise their
continuing connection to land, water and culture.

We pay our respects to those who have cared
and continue to care for Country.



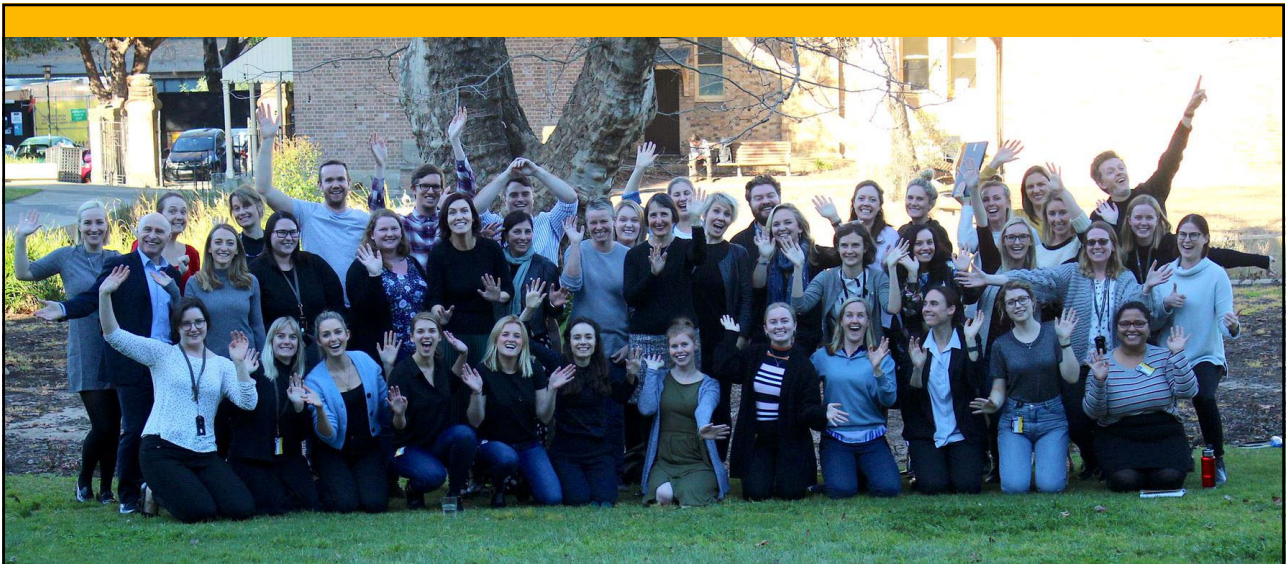
What is a PhD?

Things to think about before starting:

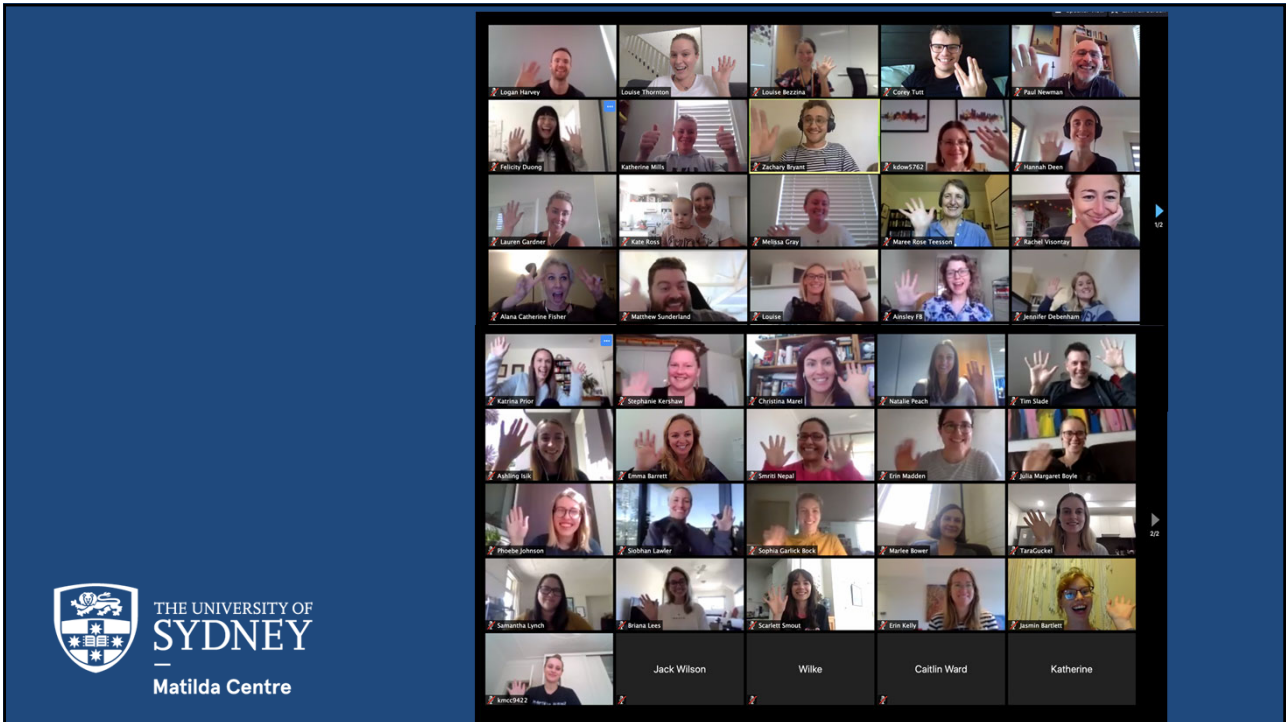
- How, when, where to apply
- How you'll be funded / scholarships
- Other Higher Degree Research options
- Identifying and approaching supervisors
- Developing a proposal

During and after the PhD:

- Facilities available to PhD students
- Balancing work with your PhD
- Expectations/milestones
- Possible career routes both in and out of academia



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The role of trauma in the nature and treatment of substance use disorders		
Understanding and addressing interpersonal risk and protective factors in the development of substance use among young people		Alcohol aggression and violence among young people: A volatile mix
Risks and harms of binge drinking in young people: Bridging neurobiological cognitive and psychological perspectives		
Aetiology of excessive alcohol consumption and alcohol use disorder in young adults: Identifying change mechanisms to inform prevention and intervention strategies		The relationship between traumatic stress problematic substance use and disordered eating behaviours among Australian adolescents
Healthy body healthy mind: Examining the relationships between six modifiable health behaviours and mental		Investigating the relationship between adolescent nutrition and other lifestyle behaviours on onset of chronic inflammation
The relationship between post traumatic stress disorder and opioid use among adults with chronic non cancer pain		
Empowering through change: The treatment of substance use disorders among mentally ill offenders	Therapeutic alliance on the NSW Drug Court	The seductive allure of neuroscience-based education: Alcohol and other drug harm reduction for young people
Understanding the general factor of psychopathology and aetiology of mental and substance use disorders in young people: Optimising targets and timing of prevention		

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What is a PhD?

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What is a PhD?

**Research
Project**



Thesis

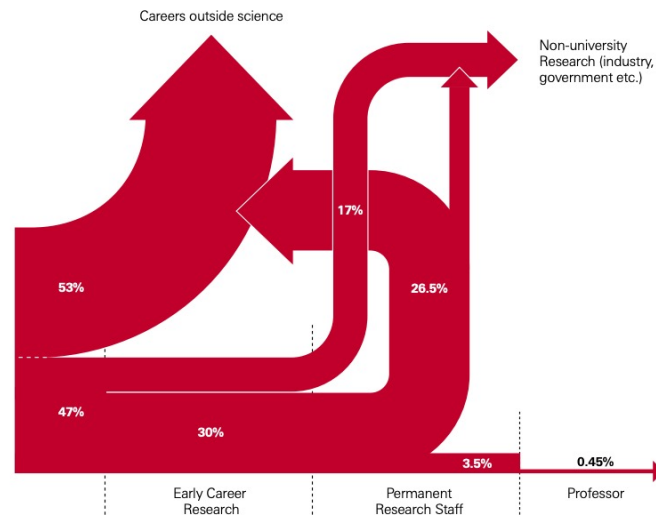


**Professional
Development**

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Career paths

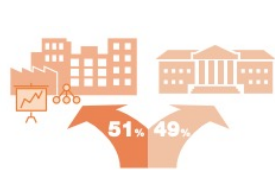


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[Career destinations for research scientists in the UK. Source: "The Scientific Century", Royal academy of science, 2010](#)

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Career paths



About 51% of PhD students hope to enter business or the public sector

Just over half of current Australian PhD students (51 percent) responding to our national survey hope to leave academia and work in business or the public sector once they graduate.



PhD graduates are increasingly finding jobs outside academia

A growing percentage of PhD graduates are finding employment in businesses, government and the non-profit sector. 19 out of the 20 largest ASX listed companies now have PhD graduates among their senior executive teams.



Public and private health & medical sectors employ the most PhDs

In the public sector, the main area of PhD employment is hospitals and health care, while in the business sector the medical and pharmaceutical industry ranks third. Together these sectors employ the most PhD degree holders outside of academia.

["Advancing Australia's knowledge economy: who are the top PhD employers"](#)

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Things to think about before doing a PhD...

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What to expect when you're expecting a PhD

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So you want to do a PhD...



So you are thinking of doing a PhD in...?

- No right or wrong reasons for wanting to do a PhD
- It is a very big commitment – make sure that it is the right step for you
- Ask yourself:
 - Does this degree qualify you, or put you in a better position to do what you want to do?
 - Are you willing and able to put in the work required for that outcome?



Where to apply

- Which university?
- Requirements (e.g., compulsory coursework at Usyd from 2021):
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/study/study-options/postgraduate-research.html>
- Resources available (e.g., Matilda Centre student handbook):
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/matilda-centre/study-and-training/phd-handbook-2020.pdf>
- Talk to current /recently completed candidates



Student Research Opportunities

Training the future leaders of mental health and substance use research



When to apply

FMH HDR internet:

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/courses/courses/pr/doctor-of-philosophy-medicine-and-health0.html>

FMH HDR intranet:

<https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/medicine-and-health/hdr.html>

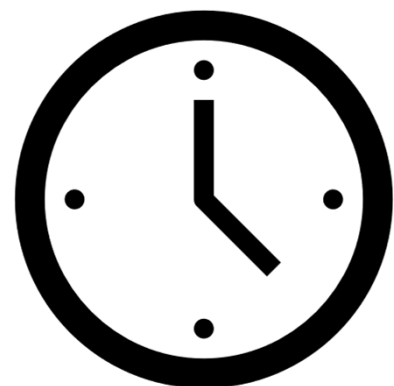
Applications are open year round.

Start dates have to align with the start of research periods.

Research Period 2: Start date 1 Mar

Research Period 3: Start date 1 Jul

Research Period 4: Start date 1 Oct



When to apply

- **When is the right time for you?**
- **F/T or P/T (3.5 vs 7yrs to complete)**
- **Can vary candidature during degree**



How to apply

- **How?** <https://www.sydney.edu.au/study/how-to-apply/postgraduate-research.html>
 - [Determine eligibility and suitable course](#)
 - [Develop your research proposal and find a research supervisor](#)
 - [Funding your HDR study](#)
 - [Gather required documentation and submit online](#)
- * Also check the [requirements with your faculty](#).



Eligibility

Need to demonstrate sufficient prior research experience and capability. In most cases, you will have either:

- a **bachelor's degree** with **first or upper second class honours** or
- a **master's degree** performed at a **high academic standard**, and which includes a **substantial component of research** (equivalent to 25% of one year's full-time enrolment)
- an **equivalent qualification that demonstrates research experience**, excellence and capability.

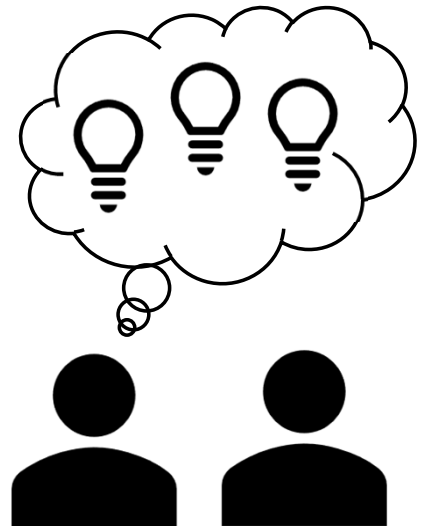
These are the minimum requirements for eligibility but they do not guarantee admission. That remains at the discretion of the Associate Dean (Higher Degree by Research) for the faculty.



Refer to the [University of Sydney \(Higher Degree by Research\) Rule 2011](#) for full policy details.

Develop your research proposal

- Cohesive program of work to answer a set of research questions:
 - Feasible
 - Substantive contribution to new knowledge
- Approx 2,000 words
- Guidance on how to develop research proposal: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/study/how-to-apply/postgraduate-research/how-to-write-a-research-proposal-for-a-strong-phd-application.html>
- Not set in stone



Finding a research supervisor

- Supervisory team
- In approaching potential supervisors, be guided by:
 - Area of study
 - Content / methodological skills required
 - Consider mix of senior and early career researchers
- Discuss expectations
- Talk to current / recent students



<https://www.sydney.edu.au/matilda-centre/>

Funding / scholarships

- Domestic students do not pay tuition fees (covered by the Australian Government)
- Scholarships are highly competitive and tend to be for a set amount (e.g., RTP 2021: \$35,629 per annum)
- Stipends may go towards living expenses, research costs, or both.
- Some scholarships are specific to a research project or discipline [Search for a scholarship](#).
- Scholarships: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/scholarships/domestic/postgraduate-research.html>
- Egs: RTP; NHMRC Postgraduate Scholarships; Rotary Health; other (depending on funding Matilda Centre or specific project scholarships)



Upcoming
Matilda
Centre
Scholarships

Things to think about before doing a PhD...

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What to expect when you're expecting a PhD

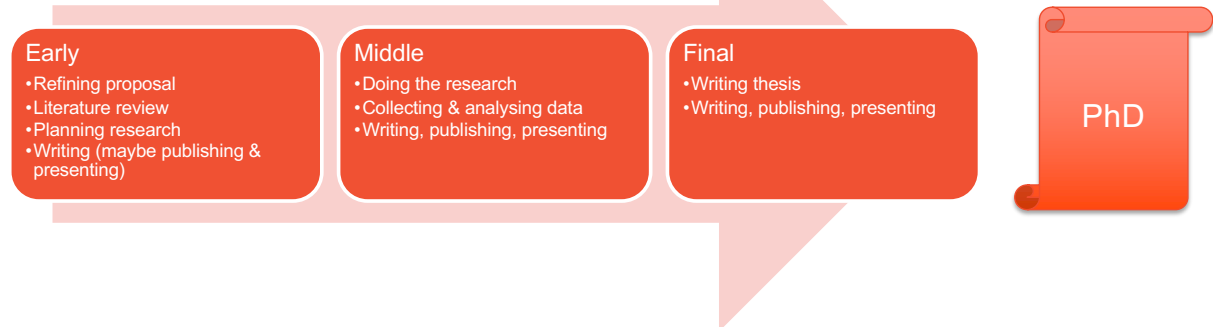
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What to expect when you're expecting a PhD

Milestone requirements

Annual Progress Reviews



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Milestones

Milestones are set by

- University: e.g. compulsory online modules, writing integrity check
- Faculty: e.g. lit review, research training, presentations
- You!

University milestones and faculty milestones can be found in the [Progress Planning and Review for HDR candidates policy](#) in the Policy Register.

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Annual Progress Reviews (APRs)

Purpose: to help keep you on track & give you an opportunity to discuss issues or get feedback/assistance with your candidature

Comprised of:

1. Online Progress Review Report + supporting documentation
2. Progress Review Interview (approx. 30 minutes)

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Coursework

- HDR degrees from 2021 include a **compulsory coursework component**
- **No fees** (though additional courses may involve costs)
- Must complete **12 credits** (most units are 6 credits) **by the end of Year 2**
- **Over 270 units to select from**
- Units available in
 - Quantitative & qualitative analysis
 - Ethics
 - Research methods
 - Project management
 - Discipline specific
 - Check out links below for more info...

[Full list of subjects available online in Table R of the HDR Handbook](#)

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Coursework: Insights from current Matilda Students

- Some units only available in Semester 1 or 2
- Important to **consider timing and workload of subjects** in your planning
- **Talk to your supervisor** when selecting subjects and planning
- **Select and enroll in subjects early** so you don't miss out and have to wait 6-12 months
- Grades appear on your transcript
- Embrace the opportunity to upskill early in your PhD!

Full list of subjects available is available online in Table R of the HDR Handbook

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Facilities & support

University/Faculty

- HDRAC (HDR Administration Centre)
- Research Education Team
- Learning Centre
- Library research support & services
- FMH HDR Workshops
- Informatics Hub
- General support & services

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- PhD Group
- Stats Drop In
- Highly collaborative & supportive environment

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Balancing Work & PhD

- Treat your PhD like a job – establish set hours/days
- Plan your time – be realistic about what's achievable and try to minimize overlap of busy times in PhD and work
- Schedule down time
- Give yourself time to figure out what works best for you

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Questions & Discussion

Questions about applying, eligibility, requirements

Katherine Mills: katherine.mills@sydney.edu.au

Questions for current students

Samantha Lynch: samantha.lynch@sydney.edu.au

Logan Harvey: logan.harvey@sydney.edu.au

PhD Group Queries

Christina Marel: christina.marel@sydney.edu.au

Katrina Champion: katrina.champion@sydney.edu.au



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