2027 Summer Research Project Template

Help us present your project in a way that connects with the right students. Thoughtful, engaging descriptions tend to attract stronger and more suitable applications. Thank you for putting a project forward - these programs rely on your contribution, and we couldn't do it without you.

Section	Description
Project title	Provide a **clear and engaging title** that captures the focus of your research. Aim for a title that is **concise while still sparking interest**. This is often the first impression students will have of your project. Sleep, Development, and Environmental Exposures in Early Childhood
Hours & delivery	Projects must align with **program dates** and involve **20–36 hours per week**. Please specify the weekly **hours**, delivery **mode** (On campus, Hybrid or Online), and **campus** or **location**. If known, include typical **working days or hours** to help students understand the expected commitment. Hybrid - onsite at the Centre for Children's Health Research (Southbank) and remotely through work from home.
About the project (150–250 words)	Describe your project in **accessible language** so students from relevant backgrounds can understand it. **Explain the research question** or problem, **why it matters**, and the broader **aims** and **context** of the work. Indicate how the **students' input** will contribute to this. The Sleep Transition and Regularity Study (STARs) is a four-year national study aimed at understanding children's sleep and napping patterns to inform policy and provide better information to families and carers. The study enrolled over 250 families across Australia to capture rich, real-world information about early childhood sleep and development. This project draws on the longitudinal STARs dataset to examine how sleep patterns, bedtime routines, and environmental exposures change across early childhood. Students will analyse multi-timepoint data, including open-ended descriptions of bedtime routines, monthly check-ins, childcare attendance patterns, sleep problems, bedtime environments, and child chronotype. The aim is to generate high-quality descriptive outputs that deepen understanding of developmental sleep trajectories and the environmental factors that shape them. This project forms part of a broader research program focused on early life sleep and environmental determinants of child development.
What you'll do (100-150 words)	Outline the **key activities students will undertake** throughout the project. Students will work with a large longitudinal dataset, conducting data checks, cleaning, and descriptive analyses using R software. Students will learn to navigate and integrate information collected across multiple time points, data sources, and measurement frequencies. Students may also wish to work with qualitative descriptions of bedtime routines and environments to generate meaningful summary outputs. Findings will be synthesised into tables, figures, and written summaries, culminating in a brief report and/or presentation that communicates key patterns and insights from the data.
What you'll learn (100–150 words)	Describe the **skills and experience students will gain** from participating in the project. This project provides hands-on experience working with real-world longitudinal research data and offers practical training in quantitative research methods. Students will develop skills in managing, exploring, checking, and cleaning datasets in R as well as interpreting and communicating findings through tables, figures, and written reports. The project will strengthen students' understanding of developmental research design, sleep and child development measurement, and the challenges of working with large observational datasets. Working alongside researchers, students will build confidence in

	data analysis, critical thinking, and research communication skills that are valuable for future honours, postgraduate study, and research-related careers.
Project outcomes (75–125 words)	Briefly describe the **expected outputs or achievements** by the end of the project. By the end of the project, students will produce a concise research report and/or presentation summarising the descriptive findings from their analyses. Outputs may include data summaries, tables, figures, developmental profiles, or visualisations that characterise sleep patterns, bedtime routines, environmental exposures, or related developmental indicators across early childhood. Students will gain experience translating complex data into meaningful research outputs.
Who should apply? (75–125 words)	Describe the **attributes** that would make a student a good fit for the project. This may include **relevant disciplines** or **year level**, as well as **useful skills** or **coursework**. You can also highlight **interests** and **personal qualities** that would support success. This project is well suited to students in psychology, developmental science, public health, epidemiology, biostatistics, health sciences, or related disciplines. Students in their second, third, or fourth year of study are encouraged to apply. Prior experience with data analysis software such as R, SPSS, Python, or Excel is advantageous but not required, as support and guidance will be provided throughout the project. We are looking for students who are curious, motivated, and detail-oriented, with an interest in child development, sleep, health, or data analysis.
Team & supervision (75–125 words)	Provide details about the **supervision and research environment**. Include the supervisor's name and position, as well as the research group or lab. You should also indicate **who students will work** with during the project. The project will be led by Associate Professor Sally Staton, Group Leader of the Brain Health and Early Development Research Group at the Child Health Research Centre. Students will work closely with Dr Emily Westwood and George Normore, who will provide day-to-day mentoring, and support throughout the project. The research team has expertise in child development, sleep health, longitudinal research, and quantitative data analysis. Students will be embedded within an active and supportive research environment and will have opportunities to engage with researchers, higher degree students, and members of the broader research group.
Additional opportunities (optional)	Describe **any additional opportunities associated** with the project, such as presentations, networking, or publications, pathways into ongoing research or further study. These experiences can **help students understand the broader value** of participation. Students will have opportunities to connect with researchers and research students within and around the Brain Health and Early Development Research Group. Depending on student interest and outcomes, there may be opportunities to contribute to conference presentations, publications, or ongoing research activities including Honours or Doctoral research programs.
Additional requirements (if applicable)	List **any other specific requirements** students should be aware of before applying. This may include safety training, field work, licences, checks, etc. Nil
Contact	Yes, students may contact the supervisor before applying. Direct enquiries to: Sally.staton@uq.edu.au