

Epsom Campus

Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave
Auckland, New Zealand

T +64 9 623 8899

W education.auckland.ac.nz

The University of Auckland

Private Bag 92019

Victoria Street West

Auckland 1142, New Zealand

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Principal Investigator Dr. Jo Smith, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education and Social Work at the University of Auckland, with Research Assistant Ms. Sarah-Kay Coulter.

Research Title:

Academic Conference Experiences of Female Ph.D. Students in STEM Programmes: A Needs Assessment

What is the research about?

Tertiary Education Commission data reveal that less than a third of all students working towards a STEM-related tertiary qualification in New Zealand are women. A smaller number enrol in postgraduate programmes, and even fewer end up in academic positions. Without role models, the underrepresentation of women in STEM is likely to continue. One critical avenue to break this cycle is the recruitment of Ph.D. students into the career pipeline from their programme of study into post-doctoral research opportunities and academic positions. This often begins through informal networks formed by participation at academic research conferences, both national and international. The proposed project is a needs assessment that draws on prior research in the United States to assess the academic conference experiences of University of Auckland female Ph.D. students in STEM-related fields. Study findings will be used to apply for funding to partner with a virtual reality developer to create a virtual reality training module to prepare female Ph.D. STEM students to participate at academic conferences that are often the gateway to postdoctoral work and academic positions, with the ultimate aim of breaking the cycle of low female participation in STEM fields.

What am I being asked to do?

To give your consent to take part in this research through an individual interview or focus group of approximately 4-6 people, depending on your personal preference.

Who does it involve?

I am hoping to include at least 24 female Ph.D. students from STEM programmes at the University of Auckland. There is no limit on participants, but only the first 24 participants will receive a \$25 gift card to the University book store for participating, as this is all that my project budget includes.

How long will the research take and where will it occur?

Interviews would take about 40 minutes; focus groups would be about 60-90 minutes. Depending on participants' preference, the meeting could take place in a conference room on the university campus or over the phone/Skype/Zoom. Data will not be collected in public places or in participants' homes.

Can I participate in te reo Maori?

Yes, if you'd like to participate in te reo Maori, please let us know! One of the research team members is happy to conduct the interview/focus group in te reo Maori, and we will then translate the transcript into English.

Assurances

The PI is a staff member in the University of Auckland's Faculty of Education and Social Work. Participation or non-participation will not have any impact on participants' grades, employment or academic/school relationships and you may contact your academic head should you feel that this assurance has not been met.

Can the participants choose to withdraw at any stage?

Participation is entirely voluntary. Participants have the right to not answer any questions they do not want to answer, can leave the room at any stage of the focus groups and return if they don't want to answer certain questions, and can withdraw from participating in the focus groups by leaving (and without providing a reason), but that because of the conversational and contextual nature of the group discussion, any data obtained as part of a focus group typically cannot be withdrawn if it affects the contextual meaning of the remaining data. Participants who opt to be interviewed can opt to withdraw their interview responses without giving reasons up to two weeks after the interview or up to two weeks after they have received the interview transcript via email provided in the consent form if they opt to review the transcript. Non- return of the transcripts after 2 weeks will be considered approval of content from the participant. Withdrawal will not result in forfeiture of the gift card.

Will the interviews be recorded?

Yes. Audio recording is essential to get an accurate transcript of the interview/focus group. Study participants can ask to turn off the recording at any time and may choose not to answer a question. The audio recordings will be transcribed by the researcher with the aid of voice recognition software.

Will it be confidential?

The preservation of confidentiality of all participants, including the department/school, is paramount. Access to data will be limited to the principal investigator and her research assistants. In any reports or presentations of findings, the researcher will ensure confidentiality of the departments/schools and all participants by replacing all names with pseudonyms and by deleting or masking any identifying information. If you opt to take part in a focus group, participants will be asked not to discuss what is said in the focus group with others, but confidentiality in this setting cannot be guaranteed and so you can opt for an individual interview if you would prefer complete confidentiality. Data collected via audio recording will be de-identified in the written transcripts.

How will the findings be used?

The findings of this research will be used for conference presentations and as pilot findings for a grant application to conduct an intervention study. All participants will be given the option to receive a summary of the findings via the email address provided in their Consent Form.

What will happen to the data?

The data will be stored securely on a University of Auckland managed storage server. Identifying material (e.g., consent forms) will be stored separately from coded data. All consent forms and de-identified data will be stored for six years after completion, and destroyed thereafter.

What are the benefits and risks of participation?

The benefits include an opportunity to reflect on your experiences at academic conferences and to provide data that will inform a grant application for an intervention study aimed at enhancing participation and experiences of female PhD students at STEM conferences. Risks of participation include surfacing unpleasant experiences and the potential breach of confidentiality from focus group participants. As noted above, you can opt for an individual interview if you prefer.

What should I do next?

If you consent to take part, please complete the attached consent form and contact the researcher via this email address smith.joanna@auckland.ac.nz

Thank you very much for your time and willingness to consider participating in this research. I would be happy to provide more information about the project on request. If you have any questions or concerns you wish to discuss please do not hesitate to contact me or my Head of School:

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jo Smith

Email smith.joanna@auckland.ac.nz

Research Assistant: Ms. Sarah-Kay Coulter

Email: sarahkcoulter@gmail.com

Head of School (Learning, Development and Professional Practice):

Associate Professor Richard Hamilton
Faculty of Education and Social Work,
University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142
Email rj.hamilton@auckland.ac.nz

For any questions regarding ethical concerns, you may contact
Chairperson of the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee
University of Auckland Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142
Tel: 03 373 7599. Ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the UNIVERSITY of AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 7 January 2021
for three years. Reference Number UAHPEC21547.