Waipapa Taumata Rau
University of Auckland

Honours Research Supervision Areas in the School of Psychology

This document outlines the processes for selecting and allocating supervision for the BAdvSci and BSc(Hons) programmes. Please use it to familiarise yourself with the research allocation process and to complete your application and supervision preferences.

Both the BAdvSci (Hons) and BSc (Hons) degrees include a 30 point dissertation (PSYCH 780 A/B) and a complementary research communication course (PSYCH 779 A/B). Both courses must begin in Semester 1. Please see the website for entry requirements. Note, that these are minimum entry requirements and do not guarantee a

Application Process

- **BSc(Hons):** When you apply online, you will be asked to rank your top three research areas, to briefly describe your interests in these areas and any previous research experience.
- **BAdvSci:** All BASH students will be emailed a Research Area Interest form in which they can rank their top three research interests in these areas and any previous research experience.

In both cases, you are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible in the spaces provided.

How Supervision is Allocated

You do not need to find a supervisor yourself. The school will allocate supervision based on a combination of:

- **Your GPA:** Students will be ranked based on their top three psychology courses at Stage III, including PSYCH 306 (or equivalent) and excluding the Capstone course.
- **Your preferences:** We will do our best to place you in one of your chosen areas, however this depends on availability of space and staff.
- **Supervisor matching:** Once successful applicants accept their offer, you will be assigned a supervisor within your allocated area.

Please note that while the School will make every effort to place you in one of your preferred areas, this cannot be guaranteed and will depend on demand and supervision capacity. In most cases, you will complete a project within the expertise of your assigned supervisor, with limited scope for negotiation. The dissertation should be viewed as a **research apprenticeship**, rather than an independent project of your own design. To support this process, please outline your interests in the broad research areas and explain how they relate to the work of staff within them. You may mention individual staff members whose research aligns with your interests, but placements with specific supervisors cannot be guaranteed. For this reason, we encourage you to describe a **broad range of interests** across your selected areas rather than focusing too narrowly on a single project or individual staff member. Please note this is a limited entry programme based on supervision capacity.

Research Supervision Areas

The following pages outline the nine research areas available for BAdvSci and BSc(Hons) dissertations. Areas associated with professional programmes (e.g., Clinical, Organisational) do not offer supervision for Honours. Please review the area descriptions and list your top three choices in order of preference. BSc(Hons) students will provide this information through their online application to study, while BAdvSci students will use the form that will be emailed to them.

Graduates of universities overseas and/or those without New Zealand citizenship or permanent resident status should also correspond with the International Students Office.

Student Information

Please visit Student Hubs website for information on study options, course advice, and application support.

Disclaimer: Although every reasonable effort is made to ensure accuracy, the information in this document is provided as a general guide only to students and is subject to alteration. All students enrolling at The University of Auckland must consult its official document, the Calendar of The University of Auckland, to ensure that they are aware of and comply with all regulations, requirements and policies.

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Behavioural Psychology

Behavioural psychology (behaviour analysis) focuses on how behaviour is influenced by the environment, and in particular by the consequences of behaviour. Research in this area spans from fundamental, curiosity-driven experimental research with human and animal participants, to applied interventions based on principles discovered in experimental research to improve people's lives.

Sarah Cowie

Sarah's research focuses on how our decisions and actions are affected by our experience and by our ability to anticipate the future. Sarah uses animal models (usually pigeon subjects) and quantitative modeling to investigate the fundamentals of how our actions in the present depend on our recent past experience, and on our ability to use this experience to extrapolate about future events. Sarah is interested in the extent to which simple learning processes underlie 'complex' behaviors like planning and the solving of novel problems, and how approaches developed with animal models can shed light on learning and decision-making in humans, including children with intellectual/developmental disabilities, and people with psychological conditions associated with disrupted reward processing (e.g., depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder), and in decisions about sharing rewards with others. Sarah is also exploring how an understanding of the role of personal experience and individual differences can contribute to the welfare, production, and health of animals in farms, zoos, and laboratories – this research combines computer vision, machine learning, and behaviour-analytic approaches. For more information on any of Sarah's research, please visit the BehaviourLab website or email Sarah.

Douglas Elliffe

Doug's past research falls mostly within the tradition of the experimental analysis of behaviour, both animal and human. Most of his work has a strong quantitative emphasis, and nearly all of it involves experimental research. In recent years, he's become particularly interested in exploring a reconceptualization of reinforcement as a signal that directs future successful behaviour, rather than as simply strengthening past behaviour. See Doug's Google Scholar page for a complete list of his published research, and/or email him to discuss possible Honours projects.

Please note: Sarah Leadley, Angela Arnold-Saritepe, and Rebecca Sharp are not available for Honours supervision. If you're interested in working in their areas, consider applying to the Master of Behaviour Analysis. You do *not* need an Honours degree to be eligible for this program.

Sarah Leadley (Apply to MBehAnalysis)

Sarah Leadley's research focuses on support and interventions for tamariki with feeding difficulties. She leads the Ready to Eat study, which provides intensive home-based intervention to support tamariki to move from tube feeding to eating. This study involves a high level of whānau involvement, and is supported by each child's team of health professionals. Further current projects are focused on increasing access and equity to intervention, as well as developing parent-to-parent support groups. Further details can be found here

Angela Arnold-Saritepe (Apply to MbehAnalysis)

Angela is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and Psychologist. She conducts research that focuses on improving the quality of life for neurodiverse people (specifically intellectual disability, autism and brain injury) and their whānau. Angela is particularly interested in complex verbal behaviour, relationships and sexuality. Topics around rights and disability are also an area of interest. Outside of the University Angela provides behaviour-analytic services to people with TBI and developmental disabilities and their families, schools and other organisations. Find out about her research interests here.

Rebecca Sharp (Apply to MBehAnalysis)

Rebecca is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and Psychologist. Her research interests include behaviour-analytic approaches to working with people with dementia and traumatic brain injury, and people with comorbid dementia and developmental disabilities, disseminating behaviour analysis, applied animal behaviour, and translational research. As a clinician, she has worked with recidivist youth offenders, with children with brain injury, adults with dementia, and adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Further details can be found here

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Cognitive Science

Cognitive science draws on psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, linguistics, computer science and engineering to examine foundational mental functions such as sensory processing, perceptual operations, memory systems, attention, language processing, and motor control. It has widespread applications across fields like law (is eyewitness memory reliable?), business (is human decision-making rational?), engineering safety (what, precisely, is human error?), and education (what evidence is there for learning styles?

Jeff Hamm

Jeff runs the Mental Chronometry Lab. His areas of interest include visual attention, comparing exogenously captured attention with endogenously controlled attention. These studies may involve the use of a typical cuing paradigm or may investigate the influence of attention in the generation of illusory motion. He also investigates other forms of Illusory motion which can be generated by object processing systems, early visual cortical activity, or visual masking. Using an individual differences approach, Jeff and his students have been able to determine there are at least four separate visual illusions, which in the literature had been assumed to be all the same illusion. Jeff also investigates mental transformations, such as mental rotation, size transformation, mental paper folding, and so forth. Jeff also investigates memory and the role that forgetting plays in efficient memory formation. Students are expected to take control of the project and contribute to its intellectual content. Often projects will become part of a submission for publication, with students being named authors of the research, and so they will be expected to take part in the publication process. Please contact Jeff to discuss potential supervision and project ideas at j.hamm@auckland.ac.nz

Michael Hautus

Michael's interests lie in empirical quantitative research, which includes quantitative assessment of the functioning of the auditory system, modelling auditory, visual, and flavour judgment, and modelling cognitive processes involved in judgment. Michael's published research spans quantitative psychology, memory, sensory evaluation, pain, auditory neuroscience, mathematical modelling, and decision science. You can find current research topics, that may be available for PhD, Masters, or Honours students, at hautus.org, or on Michael's University of Auckland profile.

Barry Hughes

Barry's research focusses on the power and precision of touch as a sensory-motor system. The hands especially are merely body parts: they are part of complex system --an extension of the brain--that permits both exquisite perception and powerful motor control. We are currently investigating two facets of this complex arrangement. One asks how the power of touch permits the brain to interpret--as meaningful language--the small, raised- dot code that is braille. The other asks how this skill could ever arise in anyone: how do we use the fingerpads to make judgments about number, pattern, size, number, area? How does this compare to vision? How does this ability fit within the larger, more basic issue of numerical decision-making? For more information visit Barry's webpages or email him.

Tony Lambert

Tony supervises projects in three areas. (1) Auditory and visual imagery, especially interested in the psychological implications of experiencing an absence of auditory imagery (anauralia) and/or an absence of visual imagery (aphantasia). See here or here. (2) Visual attention and eye movements. (3) Pupillometry – measuring changes in the size of the eye pupil.

Samuel Mehr (also see Developmental & Educational)

Sam directs The Music Lab, an international research group that is part of both UoA Psychology and the Child Study Center at Yale University (USA). We study the perception and cognition of sounds, especially music. Our cognitive projects mainly involve citizen- science projects taking the form of gamified experiments on themusiclab.org, typically via computational and data-science methods with tens or hundreds of thousands of participants, and including topics such as music perception ability and musical intelligence, auditory memory, auditory imagery, musical emotion, and aesthetic preferences in music. There are also opportunities to collaborate with the new international Musicality Genomics Consortium, which collects massive-scale data to uncover the genetic architecture of human musicality. Honours students are given substantial independence and in most cases are expected to submit a first-authored paper reporting their findings to a scientific journal at the conclusion of their Honours year. *If you are interested in applying, please contact Sam (sam@auckland.ac.nz) to schedule a meeting to discuss your interests *before* applying. You can also apply to The Music Lab via the Developmental area.*

David Moreau

David directs the Brain Dynamics Lab. This research group studies the dynamics of brain and behaviour— how neural and cognitive systems change over time, as a result of development, interventions, or disorders. Questions in the lab include: What are the mechanisms underlying neural and behavioural change? How can we refine methods and measurements to evaluate brain dynamics? How can we design interventions to improve mental and physical health? The Brain Dynamics Lab has a strong focus on methodological and statistical developments, in conjunction with tools such as EEG, fMRI and DTI. Students are expected to work autonomously and contribute to the literature either via their individual projects or as part or collaborative studies in the lab. A background in neuroscience and/or statistics is preferable, and a willingness to learn computational methods is essential (e.g., R, Python, Matlab). Prospective postgraduate students are welcome to email David.

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Critical Psychology

We are interested in understanding human experience and action as embedded within wider sociocultural and political contexts. From a social justice orientation, we seek to understand how contexts shape, constrain and enable our decisions, priorities and possibilities. Our research spans Indigenous, health, cultural and social psychology, and we draw on various critical qualitative and Indigenous methodologies.

Jade Le Grice

My research takes a Kaupapa Māori approach to deconstructing colonial discourses and interlocking systems of oppression, while legitimating mātauranga in the academy. My research explores topics of Indigenous reproduction and sexuality – including areas of maternal subjectivities, assisted reproductive technologies, abortion, sexuality education, and sexual violence prevention. I draw from and contribute to the puna o mātauranga from within my hapū Ngāti Korokoro, Ngāti Wharara, Te Pouka of Ngāpuhi iwi, and Ngai Tupoto of Te Rarawa iwi. I am also a member of Nga Kaitiaki Mauri, of Te Ohaki a Hine: National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together & He Paiaka Totara, a network of Maori Psychologists. For more information on the kind of research I do, you can visit my staff profile or my website https://www.becomingsexualbeings.org/. You can also email me.

Nicola Gavey

My research examines dominant cultural norms, values and practices – as well as social, political and economic factors – that contribute to (and obscure or justify) sexual violence, coercion and harassment. Currently I'm focusing on trends that incorporate and normalise aggression within mainstream (hetero)sexual scripts. There is potential to work on projects related to this programme of research, including analysis of popular cultural representations of these trends, as well as aligned trends and influences. For example, the resurgence of masculine dominance. Projects will involve critical qualitative approaches, most likely with textual data, and will be finalised in relation to student interest and academic experience. For more information on the kind of research I do, see my staff profile. You can also email me.

Ginny Braun

I am an invisibly-disabled straight Pākehā woman (pronouns she/her they/them). As a feminist and critical (health) psychologist, my research utilises critical qualitative methodologies to explore the intersecting areas of gender, bodies, sex/sexuality, and health. I supervise students in projects using critical qualitative methodologies to explore topics related to gender/bodies/sexuality and health – often interrogating dominant meaning-making and exploring the implications of this. I haven't yet settled on specific projects for 2027, so there's scope to explore ideas. For more information about what I do, you can go to my staff profile or Google Scholar profile, or visit one of our two methodology sites: www.thematicanalysis.net or www.storycompletion.net. You can also email me.

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Developmental & Educational Psychology

Our group examines how the social, cognitive, neural, and evolutionary processes that influence human behaviour change (or stay the same) across development or in specific developmental windows. We use diverse methods and approaches to examine human behaviour and development across diverse contexts and populations. Students will be matched with one of the main supervisors listed below and will become part of a vibrant group that holds seminars throughout the year and consists of five active research labs.

Chris Erb

Chris directs the Cognitive, Manual, and Neural Dynamics (CMND) Lab. His lab explores what it is about the human mind that allows us to behave in flexible and adaptive ways. Their research approaches this question developmentally by investigating how children, adolescents, and adults focus their attention, filter out distractions, and engage self-control. They use a range of techniques, including eye-tracking, motion capture, Virtual Reality, and electroencephalography (EEG). Honours students are welcome to join existing research projects or design new projects to suit their interests. While some of the lab's projects feature child participants, many projects also focus on adulthood and/or aging. The CMND Lab team has exciting collaborations with researchers in Psychology studying Cognition and Neuroscience, as well as researchers in the School of Computer Science. To learn more, see their website (www.cmndlab.com) or contact Dr. Erb (christopher.erb@auckland.ac.nz).

Annette Henderson

Annette directs the Early Learning Lab (ELLA), which examines how children learn to communicate and work well with others. Research projects could examine early development of morality and prosocial behaviour, how technology impacts caregiver-infant interactions, what children think about intergenerational conflict, and how the pandemic or other stressful events, impact the wellbeing of young children and their families. Projects involve diverse methods including behavioural observation, questionnaires, and even interactions with human children or the world's first virtual child! To learn more, see our website (https://www.earlylearning.ac.nz/) or contact Annette (a.henderson@auckland.ac.nz).

Karen Waldie

is accepting students who are confident with quantitative statistics to explore longitudinal associations between child and adolescent mental health, problem behaviour and neurodiversity (using already-collected data from either the ABC study or Growing Up in NZ). She is mainly focused on developmental neuropsychology research and is the Director of the DEN Lab: *https://thedenlab.ac.nz*

Samuel Mehr (also see Cognitive Science)

Samuel directs The Music Lab, an international research group that is part of both UoA Psychology and the Child Study Center at Yale University (USA). We study the perception and cognition of sounds, especially music. Our developmental projects involve lab-based studies of how infants hear and understand sounds, using psychophysiology, looking time measures, and more; in-home studies of the effects of music on infant and parent health; and large-scale citizen-science projects taking the form of gamified experiments for children on themusiclab.org. Honours students are given substantial independence and in most cases are expected to submit a first-authored paper reporting their findings to a scientific journal at the conclusion of their Honours year. *If you are interested, please contact Sam (sam@auckland.ac.nz) to discuss your interests *before* applying. You can also apply to The Music Lab via the Cognitive Science area.*

Elizabeth Peterson

Liz directs the Enrichment Lab, which investigates the development of positive, adaptive learners. Most of the projects offered sit broadly within the field of educational psychology. Supervision projects focus on students' identities as learners, including their beliefs, expectations, and motivation, and how these are shaped by wider contexts such as parents, teachers, peers, schools, and culture. Some projects use large-scale *Growing Up in New Zealand* data to explore questions such as how students' and parents' academic expectations align over time and influence students' academic self-concept. Other projects examine how students respond to setbacks and the factors that promote adaptive responses to challenge and failure. Students are expected, where appropriate, to work towards submitting a scientific paper for publication based on their findings. While strong statistical skills are an advantage, a willingness to engage with data, experiment, and learn is equally important. For more information about our research, visit the Enrichment Lab.

Dr. Peterson is not available for supervision in 2027

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Evolution & Behaviour

Evolutionary approaches to understanding behaviour explore how selection and common descent have shaped the minds and behaviour of living organisms. By offering a deeper understanding of why we behave the way they do, these approaches can provide important insights and a guide to decision-making across areas as diverse as mental health, education, politics, arts, religion, happiness, artificial intelligence, animal ethics and conservation. Our group has interests in all these areas, with a particular focus on human language, culture and social behaviour, and how an understanding of these things can help us tackle major challenges of the 21st century, from climate change and pandemics, to inequality and extremism.

Nichola Raihani



Nichola runs the Social Evolution and Behaviour Lab, which explores how social behaviours evolve and why they vary. At the moment, she is especially interested in exploring attitudes to large-scale social issues, like climate change and conservation. Other work explores the role of punishment in deterring cheating and antisocial behaviour, asking who supports punishment institutions and why they so often fail to reform offenders. She is also interested in paranoia, conspiracy and misinformation – who is susceptible to these beliefs and why? Nichola is interested in supervising students who want to work in any of these areas, or are interested in the evolution of social behaviour more generally. For more information, visit Nichola's profile page or email Nichola.

Patrick Savage



Patrick runs the CompMusic Lab for comparative and computational musicology, which aims to enhance inclusive cross-cultural research and work collaboratively to understand how people make and value music in such different ways. He is also interested in broader relationships between music and other domains of culture such as language, religion, and cooperation. His work combines a range of methods, including anthropological field recordings, acoustic signal processing, experiments, and Indigenous knowledge. For 2027, he is able to supervise up to one honours student on topics related to his lab's research. For more information, visit Patrick's website or email Patrick.

Quentin Atkinson



Quentin runs the Language, Culture and Cognition (LCC) Lab, which investigates how our cognition and culture evolve and interact to shape the way we behave towards one another. His work has examined questions including the evolutionary origins of political ideology, why people believe in powerful deities, the values and institutions that underpin democracy, the origins of linguistic diversity, and what evolution can tell us about how to promote pro-environmental behaviours and tackle climate change. Work from the LCC Lab is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing on research across psychology, evolutionary biology, linguistics, anthropology and behavioural economics, and using a range of methods from lab and online experiments, to computer modelling, and cross-cultural fieldwork. Available projects for 2027 include: a) how perceptions of human nature shape our response to climate change; b) how social instincts differ across the political spectrum; c) how sacred values shape modern institutions; d) how language extinction threatens global cultural diversity; and e) the evolution of happiness. For more information, visit Quentin's website or email.

Behaviour Insights Exchange

Quentin and Nichola are co-Directors of the University of Auckland Behavioural Insights Exchange (UoABIX). UoABIX allows students to work alongside industry and government organisations, applying knowledge of cognitive biases to real world problems. While the exchange is primarily designed for Masters students, Honours students interested in this area should email Nichola to find out more about the availability of projects and their suitability for the programme.

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Neuroscience

Cognitive neuroscientists study neural structure and function processes and their relationships to cognitive processes. They use methods such as brain imaging (fMRI, DTI), electrophysiology (EEG, ERP), neuropsychology, and experimental psychology – often in combination.

Paul Corballis

Paul is a cognitive neuroscientist with interests in visual perception, attention, and cognitive control. He is particularly interested in our ability to build sophisticated understandings of the world on the basis of sensory information, and in how we balance focus and flexibility to maintain goal-oriented behaviours. Current projects include investigations of the neural basis of perceptual variability, the control of eye movements, the roles of value and goal relevance in decision making, and the interactions between spatial attention, distraction, and working memory in visual search tasks. Nearly all of Paul's research is based on laboratory experiments, many of which involve electroencephalography (EEG) or remote eye tracking. For more information or to discuss possible projects, email Paul or visit his School website.

Ian Kirk

Ian is a cognitive and systems neuroscientist with interests in the neural systems involved in memory, attention, and cognitive control. He principally employs EEG, fMRI and diffusion imaging, but is also interested in the genetic mechanisms that modulate development of, and activity in, cognitive systems. Ian is also interested in atypical processing in for example, Alzheimer's disease, depression, schizophrenia, Parkinson's and autism spectrum. Current possible honours projects include: EEG investigations of recognition or working memory, diffusion imaging in early Alzheimer's, or social neuroscience (EEG of cognitive control systems in relation to peoples' political ideology). For more information, or to discuss possible projects, email Ian, or visit his School website.

Reece Roberts

Reece is a cognitive neuroscientist interested in memory, imagination, creativity, neuroimaging methods, and Alzheimer's disease. Honours research projects may involve using MRI data from the Dementia Prevention Research to understand how Alzheimer's Disease develops or analysing open-access fMRI data related to memory or aging. For more information, visit Reece's website or email him.

Katherine Storrs

Kate's research uses human behavioural experiments and computational models to better understand visual perception. Research questions could involve things like: - How does our visual understanding of shape, lighting, and material develop over the first few seconds as we look at an unfamiliar object, and what might this tell us about recurrent processes in the brain? - How do people interact with unfamiliar objects in virtual reality (VR) when trying to visually understand their shape and material, and do we manipulate objects in ways that give us the most useful visual information? - Do artificial visual systems (e.g. deep neural networks) see the same sorts of visual illusions as humans do, and are they sensitive to the same visual features of objects that we are?Other cool ideas you have involving visual perception and/or AI...Visit her website or email her for further information.

Hanneke Hulst

I am a clinical neuroscientist and philosopher from the Netherlands, with a passion for understanding how brain health affects the way people think, feel and function in everyday life. Since 2025, I have been based at the University of Auckland, where I am Professor of Brain Research and Director of the Centre for Brain Research. My research focuses particularly on cognition and psychological wellbeing in people with multiple sclerosis (MS).

How do cognition, lifestyle, psychological wellbeing and brain health interact in people with MS? Students can explore their own research question using a rich dataset of approximately 500 people with MS, including extensive neuropsychological, lifestyle, questionnaire and MRI data. From early 2027, there will also be opportunities to contribute to a new study on computerised cognitive training in MS and gain hands-on experience with participant assessment and data collection.

Makarena Dudley

Makarena's research focuses on mate wareware (dementia) and Māori and intersects with Neuroscience. One aspect of the mate wareware journey that is lacking is knowledge that informs the needs of whānau who are kaitiaki for kaumātua. The burden of caregiving for whānau can be particularly difficult given. Other factors, such as cultural considerations and socio-economic status, may add extra burden to Māori whānau. A model of kaitiaki for whānau that meets the cultural needs of the kaumatua, the kaiawhina and the whānau is needed to assist in the navigation of this journey. This model will also inform caregiving assessment services of the issues facing whānau and what support is needed. Makarena is keen to work with students to explore this using Kaupapa Māori Methodology, including kanohi-ki-te kanohi hui with whānau. For more information, email Makarena, or visit her school website.

Catherine Morgan

Catherine's research uses Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) methods to study the brain in normal cognition, cognitive developing new quantitative MRI methods for studying vascular aspects of the brain including the blood-brain barrier, cerebral blood flow and perfusion. Catherine has projects with a range of topics and analysis methods available to suit the interests and skills of the student. Projects commonly involve: learning how MRI works, how to process image data, deriving image summary metrics and then investigating their relationship with cognition and other risk factors for dementia. For more information, visit Catherine's profile or email her.

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Māori, Pacific, & Indigenous Psychologies

The Māori, Pacific, & Indigenous Psychologies group includes researchers who draw upon Māori, Pacific, and Indigenous knowledges, theories, methodologies, and synthesized psychological frameworks within social, critical, and clinical domains of psychology, and harness a range of critical qualitative and quantitative research modalities.

Shiloh Groot

Shiloh is a community psychologist who is involved in a range of applied projects exploring issues such as homelessness, housing, and urban poverty; migrant-Indigenous and Pākehā-Indigenous solidarity; labour justice; LGBTQIA+ and takataapui wellbeing, relational health and health inequalities. Shiloh's research adopts a community-oriented approach to psychology and employs creative qualitative methodologies. As a supervisor, they are happy to co-design a project alongside students that reflects their passions and interests or to create space for them in any work Shiloh may be currently involved in (with or without an Indigenous focus). For more information, email Shiloh.

Sarah Kapeli

Sarah's research largely focuses on the mental health and wellbeing of Pacific, Indigenous, and underserved communities. In 2027, Sarah is interested in supervising Honours projects that contribute to the development of a Pasifika mental health literacy measurement tool. Potential projects may include systematic or scoping reviews of mental health literacy research; exploring how mental health literacy has been conceptualised and measured across diverse populations; qualitative studies involving Talanoa with Pasifika communities and stakeholders to identify culturally relevant understandings of mental health literacy; research examining the development and testing of survey items for a Pasifika mental health literacy measure; and quantitative projects using survey data to explore the factor structure, reliability, and validity of the emerging measurement tool. Students may also have opportunities to investigate how mental health literacy varies across Pasifika population groups, age cohorts, or cultural contexts. These projects provide experience with qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, and Pacific research methodologies while contributing to a culturally grounded and community-informed research project. For more information, email Sarah.

Sam Manuela

In 2027, Sam is particularly interested in supervising Honours projects connected to his ongoing Cook Islands mental health research programme. Potential projects include mental health literacy in the Cook Islands, examining how Cook Islands people understand, recognise, and respond to mental health concerns; Cook Islands young people's perspectives on mental health and wellbeing, exploring how young people understand and make sense of mental health within their cultural and social contexts; and cognitive interviewing to support the cultural adaptation and translation of the Kessler-10 (K10) into Cook Islands Māori, contributing to the development of a culturally and linguistically appropriate measure of psychological distress for Cook Islands communities. These projects provide opportunities to work with quantitative, qualitative, and Pacific research methodologies. For more information, email Sam.

Hineatua Parkinson

Hineatua is a Qualitative Kaupapa Māori researcher with a wide range of research interests including Rangatahi wellbeing and identity, Psychedelics in Aotearoa, Community support in the disabilities sector, and the intersection of Psychology and Rongoā Māori. Hineatua has largely supervised students who have used existing data sets or developed projects from the ground up. Hineatua has co-supervised mixed methods projects and projects with a transdisciplinary focus. For more information, email Hineatua.

Suzanne Purdy (also see Speech Science)

Suzanne has broad research interests in auditory neuroscience, communication, and health equity. Suzanne is collaborating with Patrick Savage, Hineatua and Larissa Renfrew on a project exploring relationships between speech and song in Te Reo Māori (and other languages worldwide). Other research with Māori, Pacific and Pākehā colleagues has a strong equity lens, focusing on experiences and outcomes for Māori and Pacific whānau engaging with ear and hearing health services. A current project related to this Kaupapa is exploring experiences of early childhood educators and whānau/magafoa with hearing services. For more information, email Suzanne.

Pesetā Veronica Tone-Graham

Pesetā Dr Veronica Tone-Graham is a Clinical Psychologist working in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. At present, Veronica's primary research interest lies in a HRC Postdoctoral Fellowship, which focuses on co-developing a vā-centered family therapy framework tailored for Pacific peoples. This research is grounded in Indigenous Pacific methodologies and explores how family-centred care sits with Pacific values and may support mental health service delivery to Pacific peoples experiencing poor mental health. Having worked across both the legal and mental health sectors, Veronica is also interested in how law and psychology intersect, in particular how that is seen in youth justice, and the criminal justice system. For more information, email Veronica.

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Social Psychology

Research in the social psychology group covers a range of topics focused on identifying how people can live healthy and happy lives, including identifying how to enhance social relationships, address inequality and create a fair and sustainable society, and combat barriers to health and wellbeing.

Niki Harré

Niki's research focuses on the intersection of human and ecological flourishing. She has worked with a number of organisations on creating a 'sustainability culture' within the organisation. Niki is also very interested in the role values-based practice and what religion teaches about how to care for each other and the planet as a whole.

As Niki is currently Head of the School of Psychology, she has limited capacity for Honours supervision. In 2027 she is only able to consider students with a strong interest in environmental issues who would like to work on a project focused on environmental activism. It is essential that any interested students contact Niki in advance. For more information, email Niki.

Danny Osborne

Danny's research examines how society produces and reproduces inequality, with a focus on (a) how belief systems justify inequalities between groups, and (b) how individual differences and the environment interact to shape socio-political attitudes. Across his research, Danny aims to identify ways to foster intergroup harmony.

Danny is keen to supervise students interested in the causes and consequences of inequality. Projects could examine the (a) relationship between personality traits and political views, (b) antecedents and consequences of system-justifying beliefs, (c) correlates of collective action and (d) other topics on prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination. Danny is also happy to supervise topics outside these areas if they connect with the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS). For more information, visit the NZAVS website or email Danny.

Nickola Overall

Nickola's research focuses on understanding and improving social relationships, particularly couple and family relationships. Nickola investigates how couples and families can effectively support each other and resolve conflict to enhance health and wellbeing. Nickola also examines how people's relationship insecurities, biased perceptions, sexist attitudes, and power influence the way they respond in close relationships, and identifies the factors that can overcome the destructive behaviors that arise from these risk factors.

Nickola supervises work on a range of topics, including (a) conflict and communication, (b) dyadic regulation of insecurity, (c) enhancing the provision and receipt of support, (d) bias and accuracy in interpersonal perceptions, (e) sexist attitudes, power and close relationships, (f) emotion regulation and family dynamics, and more. For more information, visit Nickola's website or email Nickola.

Chris Sibley

Chris is the Principal Investigator for the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study (NZAVS), a large longitudinal national probability annual panel study of social attitudes, personality, ideology and health outcomes. Chris is open to supervising research analysing NZAVS data to answer questions relating to broad areas of social psychology (e.g., prejudice, ideology, political attitudes, intergroup relations, personality, personal relationships), and topics relating to health, wellbeing and clinical psychology (mainly those concerned with modelling national trends in health and clinical outcomes). The majority of the honours research projects that Chris has supervised over the years end up published. Check out the NZAVS website or email Chris if you want to know more about thesis opportunities analyzing large-scale national data from the NZAVS.

Jessie Sun

Jessie's research centres on the ways in which other people matter in the pursuit of a good life. Specifically, she has three main lines of research examining (a) social interactions and well-being, (b) well-being and morality, and (c) moral improvement. To study these phenomena in ecologically valid ways, she uses a diverse methodological toolkit, including experience sampling, naturalistic audio recordings, informant reports, and personality change interventions.

In 2027, Jessie is especially keen to supervise projects on (a) the costs and benefits of initiating vs. awaiting social interactions, (b) barriers to and strategies for ending conversations, (c) mechanisms that link moral virtues with well-being, and (d) perceptions of moral traits within friend groups. She is also open to supervising other projects that connect with her lab's three main lines of research. For more information, visit Jessie's website or email her.

Waipapa Taumata Rau University of Auckland

Speech Science

Speech Science is a broad discipline that includes the study of human communication as it relates to culture, identity and wellbeing, speech difficulties, language difficulties, swallowing difficulties, acoustic analysis and processing of speech and/or language. Research in the Speech Science group focuses on communication and swallowing along the lifespan and across the world. Our research spans healthy communication and swallowing, the nature and impact of difficulties in these areas for our communities, and children and adults who benefit from speech-language therapy and audiology support.

Elaine Ballard

Elaine's research focuses on linguistic and social aspects of bilingualism in communities. The linguistic aspect has two strands; the first investigates how languages transplanted into a new environment (heritage languages) can change, and the second considers how English language assessments can be adapted into other languages. Currently, Elaine has projects investigating Mandarin and Cantonese adaptations of assessments. The social aspect considers the role of language, culture and identity on language choices in bilingual communities. In this area Elaine has projects on Latinx, Cambodian and third culture groups. For more information, email Elaine

Joan Leung

Joan's research interests are in neurodevelopmental psychology, hearing/auditory processing, and lifespan health trajectories. She spends half her time with the Graduate Diploma for Applied Psychology; and the other half on research projects in collaboration with Psychology, Audiology, the Centre for Brain Research, the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit, and the Universitas 21 Autism Research Network. Joan is involved in projects about equitable hearing outcomes for Māori and Pacific children, lifespan hearing trajectories using longitudinal data, auditory processing and functional language on the autism spectrum, and auditory training for mild cognitive impairment. For more information, email Joan.

Clare McCann

Clare's research has two main areas; the impact of language difficulties experienced by people after an acquired brain injury (particularly stroke); and the communication difficulties experienced by people within the criminal justice system. Clare is also working with other staff in the School of Psychology on research into communication access and capacity assessments in stroke wards as well as supported communication for adults with intellectual or learning difficulties. Her research is mostly qualitative with methods that involve interviews, observations and surveys. For more information, email Clare.

Anna Miles

Anna's research strives to improve the lives of people with swallowing and voice difficulties through improved assessment, treatment and medical education. Her work is often hospital or community-based involving interaction with communities. This year, Anna has a number of projects available that focus on swallow, voice and cough difficulties across a range of populations including head and neck cancer, progressive neurological diseases and healthy older adults. For more information, email Anna.

Suzanne Purdy (also see Māori, Pacific, Indigenous)

Suzanne has broad research interests in hearing/auditory processing, neuroscience, and communication difficulties. One of her projects is exploring the learning environment for primary-school-aged children in Flexible Learning Environments, including children with hearing loss. This project examines teacher perceptions, acoustics and listening/learning challenges. Other research has a strong equity lens, focusing on outcomes and experiences of Māori and Pacific whānau engaging with ear and hearing health services. Suzanne also collaborates with others to examine communication outcomes of children in the Growing Up in New Zealand longitudinal study. For more information, email Suzanne.

Nuzhat Sultana

Nuzhat's research focuses on early intervention to develop children's oral language skills. One of her current projects is a whānau/family support programme to teach naturalistic interaction strategies addressing the unique linguistic environments of young children with hearing loss. Research methods include individual and group-based parental training, interviews and observations based on Language Environment Analysis (LENA) technology. This is an advanced system for collecting acoustic data from the child's natural environment and analysing it without human biases. Nuzhat is working with others in Psychology to improve understanding of language behaviour in learning disabilities. For more information, email Nuzhat.

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