

Position description

Position title	Research Fellow – 18 and Up
Reports to	Scientific Director – Prof Justine Gatt
Date established	May 2026
Direct reports	PhD students as appointed
Employment status <i>(Full-time, part-time, contract length, FTE)</i>	Contract until 30/6/2030 - Full time 1.0

Background

The Sax Institute is a leading Australian expert body in helping decision makers find and make best use of research to solve real-world health and social problems. The Sax Institute facilitates the uptake of robust evidence into policies and services through a range of programs that support all stages of the research-to-policy continuum. We help generate reliable new evidence; provide authoritative summaries of existing evidence on specific topics; help researchers analyse data securely; help policy makers evaluate programs and policies; and run training courses for researchers and policy makers. We connect individuals and organisations with research, we build research platforms that generate new knowledge for use in decision making, and we lead thinking and knowledge around how to ensure more research has a real-world impact. We are a transformative organisation established to develop innovative ways of better connecting knowledge from research with those who can use it.

Division – 18 and Up Study

The 18 and Up Study is a new nationally significant, multigenerational cohort study that will include over 300,000 Australians aged 18 and over. It extends the Sax Institute’s long-standing 45 and Up Study and enables groundbreaking research into mental health, service use, and the social and intergenerational determinants of wellbeing. Funded by the NHMRC, the study is being delivered by the Sax Institute in collaboration with Australia’s leading mental health researchers and policy partners. The study includes dedicated governance and advisory structures to support engagement, co-design, and impact.

Purpose of position

The Research Fellow will deliver analysis-focused research to the 18 and Up Study, contributing to the design, delivery and impact of a nationally significant cohort study through rigorous, reproducible methods. Working closely with the Scientific Director and the broader study team, the role undertakes statistical analysis, supports data preparation, quality assurance and documentation, and contributes to analytic planning and delivery of study outputs. The position translates findings into high-quality products such as peer-reviewed publications, technical reports and briefing materials to inform mental health policy and service improvement.

Who the role will suit

This role will suit an early to mid-career researcher in epidemiology/biostatistics/public health with extensive biostatistics skills) who enjoys applied research with real-world impact. You will be confident working with complex, large-scale cohort and administrative datasets, including linked health data, and motivated to deliver high-quality analyses and research outputs in a collaborative environment. Required to support academic collaboration and publication pathways.

Key accountabilities

Key accountabilities	Performance expectations
Statistical analysis and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver high-quality statistical analyses aligned with agreed analytic plans, timelines and governance requirements. • Produce clear, decision-ready outputs (tables, figures, technical notes and summaries) suitable for internal reporting and external dissemination. • Interpret and communicate results in plain language for diverse audiences (research, policy and service partners). • Identify analytic risks (e.g., bias, missing data, confounding) and propose appropriate mitigation strategies.
Data preparation, quality and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake data extraction, cleaning, linkage-ready preparation and derivation of analysis variables using reproducible methods. • Implement and document data quality checks (completeness, consistency, outliers, duplicate records) and maintain an audit trail. • Maintain well-structured code, metadata and data dictionaries to support shared use, re-use and handover. • Comply with data governance, privacy and secure analysis environment requirements at all times.
Publications and research outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and develop peer-reviewed manuscripts arising from the study (and may lead or co-lead manuscripts subject to CI approval), including methods, results and interpretation, and coordinate co-author inputs through to submission. • Conduct literature reviews (including rapid and systematic reviews where required) to inform research questions, analytic approaches and study outputs. • Coordinate analytic contributions to agreed study outputs and support timely internal review and quality assurance. • Maintain accurate records of analyses and outputs to support transparency, reproducibility and future updates. • Support translation of findings into stakeholder-facing products, presentations and communications as required.
Collaboration and study support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work effectively with internal teams and external academic/policy partners to refine questions, deliver analyses and interpret results. • Provide analytic input to study planning, including feasibility assessments, variable definitions and outcome measurement. • Provide research and analytic support to study operations and recruitment led by the operations team, as needed (e.g., analysing recruitment patterns, preparing recruitment/operational reporting, contributing evidence to issue triage, and providing insights to inform operational decisions). • Contribute to governance and advisory processes by preparing analysis summaries and responding to data/analysis queries, including participation in relevant groups/committees (e.g., Research Committee,

	<p>Operations Committee, Lived Experience Committee, Analysis Planning Group).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support development of grant and funding proposals, including evidence synthesis, methods input, analysis plans and preparation of supporting documentation. • Contribute to knowledge mobilisation activities, including preparing stakeholder-facing materials and supporting workshops, webinars and events that share study insights. • Support supervision and capability building (e.g., PhD students, junior analysts) where appointed and appropriate.
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Selection criteria: Qualifications, Skills, Experience and Personal qualities

Essential

To be successful the Research Fellow should demonstrate the following technical and behavioural competencies:

- PhD in a relevant discipline (e.g., epidemiology, public health, biostatistics or a related field) with a strong track record as an early to mid-career researcher (e.g., peer-reviewed publications and/or successful contributions to grant/funding applications).
- Demonstrated experience analysing large datasets (e.g., cohort, survey, routinely collected administrative data), including strong applied statistical skills.
- Experience working with linked health data (or a strong understanding of linkage principles, data quality and bias).
- Demonstrated ability to produce high-quality written research outputs (e.g., technical reports, policy/briefing papers and analytic summaries) and to draft peer-reviewed manuscripts, coordinating co-author inputs to support timely submission (may lead/co-lead papers subject to CI approval).
- Experience conducting literature reviews (including rapid or systematic reviews) to inform research questions, methods and interpretation.
- Demonstrated experience supporting grant or funding proposals (e.g., evidence synthesis, methods sections, analysis plans and supporting documentation).

Desirable

- Proven ability to contribute to governance and working groups, including preparing analysis summaries and participating in committees (e.g., Research Committee, Operations Committee, Lived Experience Committee, Analysis Planning Group).
- Experience translating research findings into stakeholder-facing products and supporting knowledge mobilisation activities (e.g., workshops, webinars and events).
- Experience providing research and analytic support to study operations and recruitment activities (e.g., recruitment reporting, analysing recruitment patterns, and providing insights to inform operational decisions) in partnership with an operations team.
- A current university affiliation (or the ability to establish one) to support academic collaboration and publication pathways

Key stakeholders and relationships

Internal

- Scientific Director – 18 and Up Study (line manager) and Chief Investigators (CIs)

- 18 and Up Study project/operations team (study operations, recruitment, participant communications)
- Data, analytics and secure data services teams (data access, linkage arrangements, governance, platforms and reporting)
- Knowledge mobilisation and communications teams (translation products, events and stakeholder engagement)
- Corporate services as required (e.g., HR, finance, procurement) to support project delivery

External

- University and research collaborators (including the Research Fellow's affiliated university/department)
- Policy and service partners (including government, health services and relevant agencies)
- Data custodians and linkage units (data access processes, approvals and delivery schedules)
- Advisory and governance members, including lived experience representatives and committee participants
- Funding bodies and partners (e.g., NHMRC) as required for reporting and impact activities