

Position description

Position title	Senior Research Fellow - Systems Science
Date established	July 2023
Reports to	Head, Prevention
Employment status	2 year maximum-term contract, full time (1.0 FTE)

Background

The Sax Institute is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that improves health and wellbeing by driving better use of evidence in policies, programs and services.

The Institute has an international reputation as an Evidence Specialist, and over 20 years' experience in translating research findings into policy drawing on our own expertise as well as that of our more than 50 member organisations. We work with governments, health organisations, research organisations and a network of experts nationwide to analyse policy problems and find the best evidence-based solutions.

Division Information – The Prevention Centre

The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (Prevention Centre) is Australia's leading national collaboration of researchers, policy makers and practitioners working together to prevent chronic disease. Established at the Sax Institute in 2013, the Prevention Centre has developed world leading expertise on systems approaches, delivered an extensive body of research evidence and led innovations in co-design, science communication, and capability building for emerging leaders in prevention. It also supports research translation, including through the Collaboration for Enhanced Research Impact (CERI) in partnership with 11 NHMRC Centres of Research Excellence (CREs). The central roles and functions of the Prevention Centre are now widely recognised as core-infrastructure of Australia's prevention system.

Purpose of position

This new position has been established to lead, guide and support the application of systems approaches and systems science to the diverse work portfolio of the Prevention Centre. This work will draw and build on the systems-based research conducted and methods and tools developed by the Prevention Centre, as well as other international literature and systems science best practice.

The Senior Research Fellow will lead the development and implementation of the Prevention Centre's Emerging Leaders Strategy and the activities of the Emerging Leaders Network, which brings together early and mid-career researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

The role will also contribute advice and systems science expertise to the Sax Institute's overall strategy of addressing complex health problems in partnership with policy makers, practitioners and researchers to improve Australians' health and wellbeing.

Key accountabilities

<p>Provide leadership and support for the application of systems science in prevention research, policy and practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide leadership and guidance on the use of systems science and systems approaches for the prevention of chronic disease. ▪ Support the use of systems thinking, methods and tools to analyse and solve complex problems in prevention research, policy and practice. ▪ Advance the field of systems approaches to prevention by working with partners on national thought leadership and applied methodological, conceptual and empirical work. ▪ Collaborate with colleagues and partners to apply for new funding to support systems science research and translation initiatives.
<p>Collaborate with prevention colleagues and partners to develop and implement the Emerging Leaders Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lead the Prevention Centre process to review, develop and implement the Emerging Leaders Strategy to build national prevention system leadership. ▪ Support and guide the Emerging Leaders Network, with focus on developing and nurturing successful research-policy-practice partnerships, research translation and research impact. ▪ Collaborate with the Head, Prevention and other Sax Institute colleagues to develop new funding applications to support the Emerging Leaders Strategy.
<p>Partner across teams, networks and agencies to build systems science capability and capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to build and strengthen systems thinking capabilities and capacity across Australia. ▪ Guide and support the application of systems approaches to inform the the strategy, workplan, research-policy partnerships, and the prevention system support and coordinating functions of the Prevention Centre. ▪ Advise on the application of systems approaches to tackling complex problems across the programs of the Sax Institute.

Selection criteria: Qualifications, Skills, Experience and Personal qualities

To be successful the Senior Research Fellow – Systems Science should demonstrate the following technical and behavioural competencies:

- PhD or equivalent in public health, chronic disease prevention or a relevant related field.
- Deep understanding of systems science, methods and tools, and demonstrated ability to apply systems thinking to support strategic systemic change in applied practice settings, and to use systems science to guide research questions and methods in prevention / public health.
- Strong track record of leading prevention / public health / health related research, preferably that involved applying systems science to the prevention of chronic diseases. A senior academic affiliation with an Australian university is highly desirable.
- Demonstrated experience of working in partnerships between research institutions, and government and non-government organisations (NGOs) to support policy and program delivery.
- Proven ability to convene and lead dialogues, workshops and webinars relevant to population health research, policy and practice, and to support and mentor early and mid-career colleagues.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to develop persuasive and compelling funding proposals and negotiate complex agreements.
- Ability to effectively prioritise and manage complex projects, meet deadlines, and work collaboratively towards shared goals across research disciplines, and policy and practice in health and non-health sectors.