

## The experiences of women navigating doctoral education and motherhood

### Participant Information Sheet

We are seeking self-identified **women** who are **currently undertaking** or who have recently (since 2015) **completed a doctoral degree**, in **any field** and in **any country**, and who during at least part of their doctoral study period have or had the **responsibility of caring** for at least one child.

#### 1. Research Project Title

The experiences of women navigating doctoral education and motherhood

#### 2. Invitation

We would like to invite you to take part in this research project. Before you decide to do so, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before making a decision. Feel free to contact us using the contact details below if you would like more information.

#### 3. What is the project's purpose?

This research project aims to gather and better understand the lived experiences of doctoral candidates who are also mothers and carers of children, in order to

- ◆ highlight the possibilities and challenges for mothers in the doctoral education space,
- ◆ provide a source of guidance and comfort for current and future doctoral researchers,
- ◆ identify potential areas for improved support mechanisms that promote student well-being and satisfaction,
- ◆ identify potential areas for improved policy guidelines that promote increased retention and completion rates

#### 4. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to indicate your agreement in the online consent form. You can withdraw at any time up to the time that you submit your online form, after which your data will not be able to be destroyed as it will be non-identifiable.

### **5. What will be my involvement?**

You will be asked to complete a web-based questionnaire with four sections. Sections 1 & 2 include multiple choice questions that we estimate will take around 5 minutes to complete. Sections 3 & 4 each include some Likert scale questions and some open-ended questions. The time commitment for these questions will depend on how much detail you wish to provide, but our pilot participants spent between 20 and 45 minutes answering the questions. You are also able to save your responses and complete them at a time convenient to you. There are no other commitments associated with participating.

### **6. What are the possible advantages of taking part?**

Participating in the research gives you an opportunity to share your experiences and opinions freely in a safe space. Your contributions will be extremely helpful in providing guidance and support for current and future doctoral students, and may help to inform institutional-level policies and support structures.

### **7. What are the possible risks of taking part?**

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. We do not ask you to disclose identifying information such as your name or institution, and you will be in control of the level of detail and scope of information that you disclose to the researchers. If you experience any distress while responding to questions about your experiences, we request that you stop and take a break from the survey, and return at a later stage if you feel comfortable doing so. If you feel you need further support after talking about your experiences, we encourage you to get in contact with a support group in your country. In Australia, this might be Lifeline (free call 131114) or Beyond Blue (<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/contact-us>).

### **8. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. If you include any identifying information in your open-ended responses, it will be anonymised at the stage of data cleaning. All data will be stored by the researchers in password-protected files and/or locked filing cabinets.



## 9. What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results of the research may be disseminated through publications and presentations. You will be able to access the details of any research outputs arising from the study at our project page at <https://www.researchgate.net/project/The-experiences-of-women-navigating-doctoral-education-and-motherhood>

## 10. Who is organising the research?

The project is a partnership involving three researchers. Shannon completed her doctoral studies, while also caring for her two children, both of whom were born during her candidature. Melissa submitted her PhD by publication thesis in early 2020. She has a seven year old daughter, who was four years old when they moved to Germany, to enable Melissa to undertake her PhD. Susan completed her PhD with a little one whilst living and researching in West Papua.

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This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2020/028). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics & Integrity on Tel. 08 9360 6677 (+61 8 9360 6677 for overseas studies) or e-mail [ethics@murdoch.edu.au](mailto:ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Link to survey for **current doctoral researchers**

[https://murdochuni.sydney1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_agSUIJA1KmfKX9r](https://murdochuni.sydney1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_agSUIJA1KmfKX9r)

Link to survey for recent (2015-2020) **doctoral graduates**

[https://murdochuni.sydney1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_5d7dG9xWepAfBdj](https://murdochuni.sydney1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5d7dG9xWepAfBdj)