

PhD Opportunity

The Ageing in Prison Longitudinal Study (A-PLUS): health and frailty trajectories of older people in prison

Summary

Project	The Ageing in Prison Longitudinal Study (A-PLUS): health and frailty trajectories of older people in prison.
School/Department	Justice Health Research Program (JHRP), School of Population Health, UNSW Sydney.
Value and scholarship	Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) with stipend AUD \$39,207 (2026 rate, indexed 2% annually).
Location	UNSW Sydney
Duration	3.5 Years
Type of applicant	International/Domestic
Expected Start Date	September 2026 or earlier
Application Deadline	31 December 2025 11:59PM AEST

Project Overview

The Justice Health Research Program (JHRP) in the School of Population Health, University of New South Wales is undertaking the Ageing in Prison Longitudinal Study (A-PLUS). This study is funded by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and has three aims: i) determine the prevalence of frailty and key indicators of age-related health status of older adults in prison compared to older adults in the general population, ii) examine the extent of age-related health decline (or improvement) that occurs for older adults in prison over time compared to older people in the general population, and iii) identify whether there are distinct subgroups of older people in prison in terms of frailty trajectories, based on a range of individual health factors and social determinants as well as broader systemic factors. The study will run until 2029 and plans to recruit a PhD student to work on the project. Refer to the [JHRP, School of Population Health](#) webpage to learn more about the research group and the project.

Research topics

The successful candidate will be involved in undertaking research among the ageing prison and community (comparison group) cohorts to be recruited for the purpose of the study. Research topics will include, but not limited to, determining prevalence of age-related health condition and frailty; describing frailty and health measures; observing frailty change over time; and analysing subgroups of frailty trajectories and its predictors.

Supervisory Team

- Primary Supervisor: Professor Tony Butler
- Joint/Secondary Supervisors: Dr Jane Hwang and Dr Amanuel Kidane Hagos

Candidate requirements

The PhD opportunity is open to international and domestic applicants. Prospective candidates are required to demonstrate exceptional potential for undertaking higher degree research and meet UNSW requirements for Higher Degree Research. Please refer to [HDR application process | UNSW Sydney](#) for further details.

PhD admission requires at least an appropriate 3-year Bachelor degree plus an Honours year, or a 4-year Bachelor degree from UNSW with Honours 1 or upper 2nd class (H1/H2.1), or equivalence. Equivalence means strong evidence of research capability, which can include:

- Australian or New Zealand medical degree after successful completion of 1 year as intern ("PGY1").
- OR, a 3+ year full-time equivalent (FTE) Bachelor degree plus H1, H2.1 or a Masters degree with 1 year FTE research including a high quality dissertation/thesis.
- OR, a combination of academic and professional qualifications that demonstrate achievement at Bachelor and/or Master level including research that allows assessment of research potential equivalent to H1 or H2.1 in the discipline and where weighted average grades for research and coursework are at least equivalent to 75/100.
- OR, a UNSW School of Population Health Master degree that meets the following criteria:
 - Completed a 12 or 18 Units of Credit (UOC) research project
 - Completed 1 of the following: PHCM9120 Qualitative Research Methods, PHCM9132 Applied Research Methods, PHCM9517 Advanced Biostatistics, or PHCM9518 Epidemiological Methods
 - At least Distinction average for the overall Master program
 - Letter of support for admission to a PhD from the Head of School or delegate
- *If qualifications are >5 years old or <1 year FTE research dissertation within degree*, applicants need at least 1 year FTE recent research experience and at least 1 solid, recent, *sole first author* peer-reviewed publication indexed in a database, like PUBMED or Scopus.

For applicants who do not have a degree from an Australian or New Zealand university, PhD admission eligibility requires strong evidence of relevant research capability, which can include:

- At least a 3 year full-time equivalent (FTE) Bachelor degree plus 1st or upper 2nd class honours, or a Masters degree. The most recent degree needs to have an average grade for coursework and research of at least 75/100 and include a high quality thesis or dissertation based on around 1 year of full-time equivalent research experience.
- OR, a combination of academic and professional qualifications that demonstrate achievement at Bachelor or Master level including research that allows assessment of research potential equivalent to 1st or upper 2nd class honours in the discipline and where weighted average grades for research and coursework are at least equivalent to 75/100.
- *If qualifications are >5 years old or there is <1 year FTE research dissertation within degree*, applicants need at least 1 year FTE recent research experience and at least 1 quality, recent, *sole first author* peer-reviewed publication indexed in a database, like PUBMED or Scopus.

Funding and support

This PhD opportunity covers UNSW Tuition Fee Scholarship (TFS) and annual stipend of AUD \$39,207 (2026 rate, indexed 2% annually). The successful candidate will also receive necessary support from a multidisciplinary and collaborative research team in the JHRP.

Timeline and application deadline

The scholarship will be offered for 3.5 years with expected commencement date of September 2026 (or earlier). Application deadline is **31 December 2025 11:59PM AEST**.

How to apply

Interested applicants can send expression of interest to the research project's shared mailbox (APLUS@unsw.edu.au) with a subject line 'Expression of Interest for a PhD Opportunity'. The expression of interest should include:

1. Complete [Research Plan Form](#)
2. CV (max 3 pages)
3. Academic transcripts

A panel of experts from the research project will review the expression of interest and identify the most suitable candidate through series of review processes. The successful applicant is expected to apply for admission and Tuition Fee Scholarship through the [HDR application process | UNSW Sydney](#).

Contact

For further inquiries about the scholarship opportunity please contact APLUS@unsw.edu.au