

Participant Information Sheet

- Research title:** Preparedness for practice and professional engagement for early career teachers.
- Lead researcher:** Dr Stevie-Jae Hepburn – Lecturer and Director of Professional Experience, School of Education, University of Queensland
- Other researchers:** Joanna Cardinal – Research Assistant and Tutor, School of Education, University of Queensland
- Research team contact:** Email: s.hepburn@uq.edu.au
- Ethics approval number:** 2025/HE001788
- PIS version number** Version 2

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project. Please read the following information about the project so that you can decide whether you would like to take part in this research. Please feel free to ask any questions you might have about your involvement in the project. You can also talk to someone you trust, like a family member or friend, before deciding if you want to participate.

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you do not have to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to stop at any time, and you would not need to give any explanation for your decision to stop participating.

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a Consent Form and will be given a copy of that signed form and this Participant Information Sheet to keep. Your decision whether you take part, or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with The University of Queensland.

What is the purpose of this research?

This research project, supported by the School of Education, aims to highlight the experiences of early career teachers within the first five years of their teaching careers. We want to understand and gain insight into the experiences of early career teachers, especially concerning preparedness for practice. We are interested in understanding what supports early career teachers to think, feel and act like qualified teachers.

What does participation involve?

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to participate in a focus group interview, including questions relating to your experience as an early career teacher. The focus groups will be conducted via teleconference (e.g., Zoom or Microsoft Teams). Focus groups will be recorded (i.e. video and audio recording) and transcribed. The video recording will not be included in the data

analysis but it will be used to support the transcription process and to facilitate the discussion during the focus group. It is anticipated that the focus group may take approximately 45 – 60 minutes. You will be compensated for your time in the form of an electronic gift card (value \$40).

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will have the opportunity to share your perspective and experience with reference to your time as an early career teacher. Your contribution to this study will provide valuable insight into what supports early career teachers to feel prepared to practice, that is, to think, feel and act like a qualified teacher. Personal benefits include sharing your lived experience and potentially informing future initial teacher education program development and initiatives. You will be compensated for your time with a gift card valued at \$40 (e.g. Prezzy electronic gift card).

How do I access my eGift?

Only one gift card per participant will be allocated. All gift cards are valid until the expiry date as specified on the gift card or by the provider (i.e. <https://www.prezzy.com.au/>). Gift cards are subject to the conditions stipulated by the provider of the voucher. eGift cards must be taken as offered and cannot be varied, nor can it be redeemed for cash. The research team accepts no responsibility for any variation in the eGift card value. Where an eGift card is unavailable for any reason, the research team may substitute for that eGift card or another item of equal or higher value as determined by the research team. The research team accepts no responsibility or liability for any delay or failure by Prezzy to deliver the eGift card, or otherwise concerning the eGift card itself. The research team will distribute the eGift card to participants who participate in this project within fourteen days of the focus group, using the email address provided by the participant when registering for the project. Once emailed, the research team will deem the eGift card as delivered to the recipient, and no compensation will be forthcoming if the eGift card is not received.

What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?

It is not anticipated that you will experience any risks for engaging in this project. The focus group questions will refer to your lived experience and your perspective. You will not be asked to share any sensitive experiences or examples or specific information about your employer. You will have the option to not respond should you choose to and we acknowledge you may not wish to share your experience or perspective in a group setting. The only likely burden for your participation is the inconvenience of the time it will take to attend the focus group. The focus groups will be scheduled outside of school (i.e. work) hours to minimise any inconvenience or interruptions to work tasks. If you do not want to contribute an answer to a question, you are able to skip the question.

What will happen to the information about me?

By signing the Consent Form, you consent to UQ collecting, using, and (where applicable) disclosing your information as set out in this Participant Information Statement and the Consent Form. Information obtained in connection with this project will be retained on the UQ Research Data Management program for 5 years and then destroyed. For further information regarding the management of research data and information, you may refer to UQ's [Research Data Management Policy](#).

Any information obtained in connection with this research project that can identify you will remain confidential. You will be asked to have your camera on for the focus group and the video recording will only be used to clarify the transcription. The video recordings will not be stored and will be destroyed after the transcription has been checked. Only the transcription and audio files will be used for analysis. After transcription, the participant codes will be used to provide anonymity (i.e. no

participant names or the names of schools will be used). Confidentiality will be maintained by only de-identifiable data being included in analysis or reports – pseudonyms will be used and no identifiable information will be included in representative quotes. You will not be required to provide any identifiable information.

It is anticipated that the results of this research project will be published and/or presented in a variety of forums. In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified, except with your express permission.

Any information obtained during the research project is subject to inspection (for the purpose of verifying the procedures and the data) by the relevant authorities and authorised representatives of The University of Queensland, or as required by law. Designated University individuals (data stewards or custodians) may also have access to the information for the purposes of ensuring long-term retention and disposal. By signing the Consent Form, you authorise the release of, or access to, this confidential information to the relevant research personnel and authorities as noted above.

What will happen if I decide to withdraw?

Your participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw without needing to explain. If you withdraw from this study before the focus group is completed, you will not receive compensation (i.e., electronic gift card). You will receive the compensation if you complete the focus group. If you decide to withdraw, you will need to provide written confirmation (e.g. email) of your withdrawal. We will not collect additional data or information from you. Any data, samples and information already collected may be retained as described in this Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form to ensure that the results of the research project can be measured properly and to comply with relevant regulations. If you decide to withdraw, every effort will be made to remove and exclude all information collected from/about you without distorting the responses from the other participants. You will need to withdraw before data analysis, which is scheduled for December 2025 – February 2026. Your decision whether you take part, not take part, or take part and then withdraw will not affect your relationship with the University of Queensland.

Can I hear about the results of this research?

A written summary of the study's findings will be made available for the participants should they request a copy. The study results will be submitted for publication in journals and presented at conferences.

Who can I contact if I have any concerns about the project?

Questions about the nature of this project and participation in it should be directed to the research team (see top of information sheet for details). This study adheres to the principles of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. The study has received ethics approval in accordance with the review processes of The University of Queensland. You are free to discuss concerns regarding this study or your participation in it with the research team, but if you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Human Research Ethics Team via email humanethics@research.uq.edu.au or phone (see contact details at: <https://research-support.uq.edu.au/research-support/ethics-integrity-compliance/contacts>).