Challenges of access and equity: the higher education curriculum answers back

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ONLINE SURVEY (STUDENT)

(1) What is the study about?

You are invited to participate in a study that investigates the challenges of access and equity in higher education in two curriculum domains – doctoral education, and the professional learning of academics – across four research-based universities. The study interrogates the understandings and discourses of access and equity that circulate within these domains, and it explores how higher education curriculum is being positioned to respond.

(2) Who is carrying out the study?

This is an international study being conducted at four universities with different research sites. At the University of Sydney, the Chief Investigators are Dr Tai Peseta and Associate Professor Simon Barrie. Additional researchers elsewhere include: Associate Professors Mark Barrow & Barbara Grant, and Dr Frances Kelly (The University of Auckland); Drs Lisa Lucas & Sheila Trahar (The University of Bristol), and Associate Professors Lucia Thesen & Jeff Jawitz (University of Cape Town).

(3) What does the study involve?

The research site for this part of the study is The University of Sydney. It involves different kinds of data collection and analysis:

- **individual interviews** with staff involved in the curriculum and co-curriculum of the Education PhD in the Faculty of Education & Social Work
- **an online survey** of PhD Education students
- **an online survey** of staff who have completed a program of academic professional learning – Foundations of Research Supervision (FRS) Program
- **document/textual analysis of curriculum and artefacts** related to doctoral education, and academics’ professional learning.

**The particular aspect of the study we are inviting you to take part in is an online survey, related to your learning experiences as a doctoral student.** Specifically, we are interested in the opportunities you have had to engage with issues of access and equity both in your research, and as a student.

The survey will be hosted on an online platform and invitations will be issued via email – with the possibility of at least two follow-up emails.
It is not anticipated that you will be exposed to any risks, discomfort or harm as a result of participating in the study.

Your participation in the online survey is entirely voluntary. Should you choose not to participate, it will not affect your relationship with The University of Sydney or any institution named as being involved in this study.

4. **How much time will the study take?**

If you decide to complete the online survey, it should take you no longer than take no longer than 15-20 minutes.

5. **Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to consent and if you do consent, you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney. Only those who consent will be included in this study.

Please note that the submission of your responses to the survey will imply participant consent. Your responses can be withdrawn prior to submission, however, not after submission, as the survey is anonymous.

6. **Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the University of Sydney researchers will have access to information on participants.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

7. **Will the study benefit me?**

Across the globe, universities are looking for opportunities to improve the doctoral education experience. This has resulted in learning opportunities for PhD students that are richer and fuller than ever before. PhD students now have access to an array of learning opportunities outside the formal supervision setting. By participating in this study, you have a chance to reflect on your doctoral experience, and to consider how access and equity issues feature in your research – and in what kinds of ways. These reflections may help you to clarify an aspect of the design of your study, or it may provide an impetus for being more focused and strategic in the way you go about your learning.

8. **Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, feel free to tell others about the study.

9. **What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?**

When you have read this information, Dr Tai Peseta will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Tai on (02) 9351 5812 or email tai.peseta@sydney.edu.au.

10. **What if I have a complaint or any concerns?**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

*This information sheet is for you to keep*