

UQ Summer Research Project Description – 2026

Project title:	Oral Health and Aged Care Research Project
Hours of engagement & delivery mode	6 weeks, 12 Jan – 20 Feb 2026 Hours of engagement: 30 hours Location: Herston, Oral Health Centre, School of Dentistry Delivery mode: Can be offered in hybrid mode of virtual and in-person/onsite
Description:	This project forms part of the MRFF Oral Health in Aged Care research initiative and provides students with the opportunity to actively contribute to research addressing the oral health challenges faced by older Australians. Participants will support the Population Oral Health team at UQ in the logistical preparation of research field trips, gaining first-hand experience of how large-scale population studies are planned and coordinated. In addition, students will review and synthesise existing evidence on the oral health status of aged care residents, drawing on both national and international data. The project provides hands-on experience in interpreting real-world data from sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the AIHW, and peer-reviewed literature. Students will also contribute to research outputs by preparing a preliminary report on the oral health status of older adults in residential aged care. This report will include a review of existing oral health programs and referral pathways, both nationally and globally, supporting a broader understanding of current approaches to improving oral health in aged care settings. Through this work, students will gain practical skills in applied research, data analysis, and academic writing, while contributing to outputs that form part of a larger research effort in oral health and aged care.
Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:	By participating in this project, students can expect to: • Gain practical skills in the logistical preparation of research field trips, including packing, planning, and coordination considerations. • Develop research literacy through interpreting and synthesising real-world data from sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the AIHW, and peer-reviewed literature. • Build academic writing experience by contributing to the preparation of a preliminary report on the oral health status of older adults in residential aged care. • Gain broader contextual understanding by reviewing existing oral health programs and referral pathways, both nationally and globally, and considering their relevance to the Australian aged care setting. At the end of the 6-week project, students will be expected to deliver: • A preliminary report summarising the oral health status of aged care residents in Australia, incorporating evidence from national datasets, peer-reviewed research, and a review of existing oral health programs and referral pathways in Australia and internationally. • A brief presentation to the research team outlining their findings, reflections, and learning outcomes from the project.

Suitable for:	This project is open to undergraduate students with an interest in dentistry, oral health, public health, or aged care. It would particularly suit students who are considering future research pathways or postgraduate study in population health, special needs dentistry, or related fields. Applicants should be detail-oriented, organised, and comfortable working with data and research literature. Strong written communication skills will be an advantage, as the project involves contributing to a preliminary report.
Primary Supervisor:	Professor Loc Do l.do@uq.edu.au https://dentistry.uq.edu.au/research/population-oral-health-uq-pohuq
Further info:	The supervisor CAN be contacted by students prior to submission of an application