

to complete the study survey please go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G5JQLZ5>

Dear Colleague

We invite you to participate in a research study investigating work-life merge, work-life balance and wellbeing in UK and Australian academics. The study is being conducted by Associate Professor Cathy Fetherston, Ms Sharryn Batt, Dr Max Sully and Dr Ruth Wei from the School of Health Professions, Murdoch University in Western Australia. We all have special interests in health promotion and wellbeing and would greatly appreciate your assistance with conducting this research.

Nature and Purpose of the Study

The term 'work-life merge', was coined by facebook executive Emily White (Rosin, 2010) and challenges the notion of work-life balance, where 'work' and 'personal life' are seen as separate and disconnected experiences that should not interfere with each other. This research is the first phase of a study that was initially motivated by the researchers' desire to positively influence wellbeing from an employer perspective, by identifying strategies to assist staff in our School to best manage workload and work-life merge. However this first requires us to explore how academics experience work-life merge and how these experiences impact their wellbeing. Anecdotal observations indicate an academic's work and personal life are rarely dichotomous, but that there is potentially a wide range of how individual academics experience, and wish to experience, the overlap between work and personal life activities. This study seeks to describe those variations and findings are expected to contribute to a wider understanding of higher education workplace experiences and wellbeing requirements. This understanding will then inform workplace guidelines to be implemented and evaluated in a follow-up study that will aim to optimise wellbeing and job satisfaction amongst academics.

If you consent to take part in this research study, it is important that you understand the purpose of the study and what your participation involves. Please make sure that you ask any questions you may have, and that all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction before you agree to participate.

What the Study will involve:

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to undertake the following tasks:

- Follow the survey link provided above and also at the end of this sheet. This link will take you to an on-line survey site external managed and accessed only by the researchers.
- Complete the questions contained in the survey and then click submit. The survey consists of closed and open ended questions and is expected to take between 15 and 30 minutes, depending on how detailed you wish to make your replies to the open ended questions.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from participating at any time up until the submission of the survey. However once you have finalised the survey and clicked the submit button you will not be able to withdraw your data due the anonymous nature of the survey. Should you have any questions regarding the study please contact the lead researcher who will be happy to answer your questions at any time.

Privacy

Your privacy is very important to us. No-one other than the researchers, has access to any data submitted via the survey. The survey is anonymous, and no IP address is attached when the data is downloaded from the on-line survey by the researchers. All information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released to a third party unless required to do so by law. All data is kept securely for five years after which time it will be destroyed. The findings from the study will be published in the form of aggregated data only and no exemplars of qualitative findings will be published that might indirectly lead to the identification of an individual, their university or their department.

Benefits of the Study

While there is no guarantee that you will personally benefit, participation will inform and potentially benefit academics employed in university settings in the future.

Possible Risks

There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. However, if you find that you are becoming distressed or uncomfortable about events you are recalling during completion of the survey we would encourage you to contact either your workplace counseling service or speak with your family doctor for referral to an appropriate service.

If you have any questions about this project please feel free to contact Associate Professor Cathy Fetherston on + 61 8 9582 5516 or +61 8 9360 6834.

Once we have analysed the information from this study we will provide a summary of our findings on the Murdoch School of Health Professions research website <http://www.murdoch.edu.au/School-of-Health-Professions/Our-Research/>

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Thank you for your assistance with this research project.
Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Cathy Fetherston RN RM IBCLC BAppSc, GradDip(Mid) MSc PhD

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2017/007). 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 Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 (for overseas studies, +61 8 9360 6677) or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.