

Parent/Guardian Information Statement

Research study: Implications of the HSC serving dual purposes, secondary exit and tertiary entrance.

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1. What is this study about?

We are conducting a research study about how Year 12 students view the Higher School Certificate (HSC) and its dual purposes as both a qualification for finishing school and a pathway to university. We aim to find out if students have misconceptions about these purposes, whether these misconceptions contribute to stress, and what changes to the system students would prefer. This research is important because it highlights student perspectives and explores ways to reduce stress, improve the HSC experience, and ensure the system better supports students' needs and goals.

Your child/the person under your care has been invited to take part. Taking part in this study is voluntary.

Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

2. Who is running this study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

Jim Tognolini- Professor and Director of the Centre for Educational Measurement and Assessment (CEMA) at the University of Sydney

Bianca Aiello- Conducting this study as a basis for Honours in Education at the University of Sydney.

3. Who can take part in the study?

We are seeking both ATAR and non-ATAR Year 12 students and students who graduated Year 12 in 2024. This is because these students are uniquely positioned to provide firsthand insights into the challenges and stressors of completing the HSC. Moreover, graduate students' perspectives may alter upon completion of the HSC.

4. What will the study involve for my child/person under my care?

If you decide your child or the person under your care can take part in this study, they will be asked to participate in a 30-minute interview at school. Specific timing of these interviews will be negotiated with the school, but they will be within school hours.

Your child or person under your care will be asked these main questions, as well as potential follow up questions:

1. Were/are you eligible for an ATAR?
 - What influenced your decision to choose this?
2. What do you think the purposes of the HSC are?
 - (if relevant to participant) Prior to receiving your results from UAC and NESA, did your opinion differ to what you believe now? Why/why not?
3. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 being highly stressed and 1 being not at all, how stressed did/do you feel during the HSC year?
 - Why did/do you feel this stressed?
4. (if needed for further information) Were/are the factors contributing to your stress related to your awareness of the HSC's purpose/s? Why/why not?
5. How do you feel about the current HSC system?
6. (if needed for further information) Based on your experience, do you believe the purposes of the HSC you identified earlier are still relevant for you and other students? Why/why not?
 - If not, what do you believe the purpose/s of the HSC should be?

They don't have to all be answered and participants are allowed to go into as much or as little depth as they are comfortable with. Participants may also be asked follow up questions based on their responses given the interview structure will not be rigid and can flow naturally.

There will be audio recording on a phone involved if you and your child/person under your care consent to this. This will help the researcher transcribe your responses for analysis purposes later in the research project. There will also be an opportunity to review this transcript prior to analysis to verify the transcript accurately reflects the contributions of the participant.

5. Can we withdraw once started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and your child or the person under your care does not have to participate. They will also be asked if they agree to take part if you decide they can.

Any decision will not affect current or future relationships with the researchers or anyone else at The University of Sydney.

We do not anticipate your decision will affect your relationship or your child's or the person under your care's relationship with the school.

If you and your child or the person under your care decide to take part in the study and either of you change your mind, you can withdraw by telling the interviewer (who is the researcher) at any time during or before the interview.

If your child or the person under your care takes part in an interview they may refuse to answer any questions that they do not wish to answer.

If your child or the person under your care chooses to withdraw, we will stop collecting information. If you don't want the information already collected to be in the study results, please tell us at the time of withdrawal.

6. Are there any risks or costs?

Given we aim to ask about your experiences of stress, this may raise sensitive issues such as mental health. As a reminder, you do not have to answer questions if you feel uncomfortable. Options to withdraw will also be provided at the start of the interview and, if necessary, in the interview.

To further manage this risk, we recommend using the following mental health resources if necessary:

- Beyond Blue Support Service
 - <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support>
 - 1300 22 4636
- Headspace (12–25 years)
 - <https://headspace.org.au/>
 - <https://headspace.org.au/online-and-phone-support/>
 - 1800 650 890
- Kids Helpline (5–25 years)
 - <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
 - 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline

- <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>
 - <https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/>
 - <https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-text/>
 - 13 11 14
- School Counsellor services

Aside from this and giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any other risks or costs associated with taking part in this study for your child or the person under your care.

7. Are there any benefits?

You and your child or the person under your care will not receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

However, the study aims to benefit the wider community by providing insights into how the HSC system affects students' well-being and academic experiences. By identifying stressors and potential misconceptions, the research may inform improvements to the HSC, promoting a more supportive educational environment. These findings could potentially guide policymakers and educators in creating a system that better aligns with student needs, ultimately fostering healthier and more equitable outcomes for future Year 12 students.

8. What will happen to information that is collected?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting information from your child or person under your care for the purposes of this study. The information collected will include interview data based on their responses. Specifically, the interview data will be audio recorded on a phone if you consent to this so the researcher can transcribe and analyse their responses. There will also be an opportunity for participants to review this transcript prior to analysis so they can verify the transcript accurately reflects their contributions. We will use Microsoft Stream to transcribe interviews. This will involve sharing their information with Microsoft. We will not share this information with anyone else without your consent unless we are required to do so by law. Microsoft Stream is owned by Microsoft and located in Redmond, Washington, US.

Any other identifiable information you, your child or the child under your care provide us will be stored securely and will only be disclosed with permission from both of you unless we are required by law to release information. Therefore, no third parties will have access to your child or child under your care's information during or after the study unless it is enforced.

Whilst we plan to publish the findings, your child or child under your care will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

We will store all this information securely following the University's Recordkeeping Policy. Only Bianca Aiello (Honours student) and Jim Tognolini (Responsible researcher) will have access to the data during or after the study. The data collected will be retained for a minimum of five years after the completion of analysis and publication. After this period the data can be disposed of securely. For more details about how your child or child under your care's information will be handled please see the University's [privacy webpage](#).

9. Will I be told the results of the study?

You and your child or the person under your care have the right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can indicate you are interested in receiving feedback by providing contact details on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a brief plain language summary.

10. What if I would like more information?

When you have read this information, the following researchers will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have.

- Jim Tognolini (Responsible Researcher). Email: jim.tognolini@sydney.edu.au
- Bianca Aiello (Honours student). Email: baie7618@uni.sydney.edu.au

11. What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of The University of Sydney [2024/HE001494] according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the University:

Human Ethics Manager
human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
+61 2 8627 8176

Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

This information sheet is for you to keep