



UQ Games Engagement 2027 Summer Research Project

For further information on the 2027 Summer Research Program and how to apply, please visit the [Research Experiences website](#).

Section	Description
Project title	How Doping Cases/Issues Are Communicated - A Research Project to Inform ITA Athlete Education Messaging
Hours & delivery	- Between 24-30 hours per week - Standard working hours - with the potential for a meeting outside normal hours of operation - Between 3-4 days per week - Delivery mode - hybrid (on site - St Lucia and online). Specific days onsite and online can be discussed
About the project (150–250 words)	- Athletes receive information about anti-doping rules and cases from many sources, including official organisations, news media, social media and online forums. The accuracy, tone and framing of this information can influence how athletes understand anti-doping, how much they trust the system, and how they respond to high-profile cases. - This project will examine how selected doping cases are reported and discussed across public media and online channels. It will explore what information is communicated accurately, where misunderstandings or factual errors emerge, and whether coverage tends to inform, reassure, stigmatise or alarm athletes. Claims identified through the review will be considered against official anti-doping sources and relevant academic research. - The findings will be translated into practical recommendations for the International Testing Agency (ITA) Athlete Education Department, including guidance on effective athlete-facing communication and examples of messages or campaign concepts that could be used to address common misconceptions and improve understanding of anti-doping issues.
What you'll do (100-150 words)	- You will undertake a six-week desktop-based research project examining how a sample of real doping cases has been reported in the media and discussed online. Working under UQ academic supervision, you will identify relevant news coverage, social media commentary and online discussions, then assess the accuracy, framing and tone of selected claims. - You will compare key statements against authoritative anti-doping sources, including relevant ITA and WADA information, and draw on academic research to consider how different forms of messaging may influence athlete understanding, trust and behaviour. - You will then combine your findings into a concise report for the ITA, highlighting recurring misconceptions, communication risks and opportunities.



	You will also develop practical recommendations and example athlete-facing messages or campaign concepts that the ITA Athlete Education Department could adapt in future communications and education activities.
What you'll learn (100–150 words)	- Through this project, you will build practical skills in media analysis, research synthesis, factchecking and evidence-based communication. You will develop a stronger understanding of the anti-doping system, including how complex rules and cases are interpreted and communicated outside official channels. - You will also learn how media framing, tone and misinformation can shape athlete perceptions of fairness, risk, trust and compliance. This will require you to connect academic research with real-world communications practice and consider how evidence can be translated into clear, constructive messaging. - The project will also strengthen your ability to work with an external industry partner, refine a research question, manage a short, applied research project and present findings in a form that is useful to decision-makers. You will gain experience producing recommendations that are both academically grounded and practically relevant.
Project outcomes (75–125 words)	- The project will produce a concise, evidence-based overview for the ITA Athlete Education Department on how contemporary doping cases are being reported and discussed across media and online channels. - The project will identify factual errors, misunderstandings or misconceptions that may warrant clearer communication through athlete education. It will also highlight examples of messaging that may support understanding and compliance, as well as messaging that risks being punitive, confusing or unnecessarily fear-based. - The final output will include actionable recommendations for athlete-facing communications, supported by a number of example messages or campaign concepts that the ITA could adapt for education sessions, digital content or proactive communications around future anti-doping issues and activities.
Who should apply? (75–125 words)	- This project would suit a student with an interest in sport, communications, media, journalism, psychology, public health, education, integrity or policy. You do not need to be an anti-doping expert, but you should be comfortable engaging with detailed information and checking claims carefully against authoritative sources. - Strong applicants will be curious about how public communication influences understanding and behaviour, and able to analyse both factual accuracy and the tone or framing of media and online discussion. You should have solid research, writing and critical thinking skills, with the ability to work independently and synthesise information into clear practical recommendations. - The project is particularly well suited to someone who enjoys applied research and wants experience working on a real-world issue with an international sport integrity organisation. An interest in athlete education, misinformation, media analysis or evidence-based communication would be highly relevant.
Team & supervision (75–125 words)	- Dr Sharon Hinton, Executive Manager, UQ Games Engagement - Adam Sehnoun, Program Manager, UQ Games Engagement



		• Tracey Holmes, Industry Professor, Sport and Media, UQ Games Engagement • Marta Nawrocka, Head of Communication, International Testing Agency
Additional opportunities (optional)		• Opportunity to further develop your understanding of the anti-doping landscape by working closely with the International Testing Agency, the independent organisation responsible for delivering anti-doping programs and services for international sport organisations, including International Federations and major event organisers. • Opportunity to take part in anti-doping courses throughout the UQ-ITA Academic Centre
Additional requirements (if applicable)	NA	
Contact	Yes, students may contact the supervisor before applying.	
	Direct enquiries to: gamesengagement@uq.edu.au	