



Sylvia Rodger Academy Research Program

Applicant Information Pack

2020



AutismCRC



Australian Government
Department of Industry, Science,
Energy and Resources

Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Program

The Sylvia Rodger Academy is an initiative of the Autism CRC, which receives funding from the Australian Government

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Sylvia Rodger Academy Research Program. The Sylvia Rodger Academy (an initiative of Autism CRC) is excited to be able to offer autistic adults and autism researchers from across Australia the opportunity to apply for our 2020 Program.

This Applicant Information Pack is intended to:

- explain the different training and development initiatives for autistic participants and autism researchers which form the Research Program
- help you to determine if this Program may be right for you, and
- explain the application process.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for the Research Program you must:

- be an autistic adult and/or autism researcher
- be aged 18 or older as of the 31st of June 2020
- live in Australia (as an Australian citizen or permanent resident)
- be willing and available to participate in all of the program activities, and
- have an interest in both
 - learning the skills to undertake co-production, and
 - engaging in co-production.



Program activities

Online modules

Autistic Participants

The first part of the Research Program to be completed is a series of 7 online modules. The first module will start on **Monday 7 September 2020**. Each module will run for 2 weeks before the next module opens. These modules act as an introduction to research, and will teach participants about research methods and methodology. Topics will include participatory research, qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods and an introduction to ethics.

You will be asked to:

- **explore information** (articles, videos etc.) about research
- **reflect on that information** through the activities, and
- **submit your responses** to those activities via our online learning platform.

It is estimated that you will need to allow approximately **4 hours a fortnight** to work on the modules. There will also be **extension material** if you'd like more information about a topic, but completing extension material is not essential.

There will be **an online discussion** for each module, which you may attend via video conferencing software. It's recommended that you attend these sessions or watch the recording if you are unable to attend as it will provide further discussion on the module as well as an opportunity to get to know other Program participants and members of the Project Team.

After the 7th module, there will be an opportunity for you to **catch up on and complete any unfinished tasks and activities**.

Autism Researchers

The first part of the Research Program to be completed is a series of readings and activities. These readings and activities act as an introduction to autism, neurodiversity, as well as co-production. These readings and activities become accessible from **Monday 7 September 2020**.

The readings and activities are split into 2 parts:

- **Part A** focuses on autism and neurodiversity. You will be asked to watch videos and undertake readings selected by Research Program alumni. You will then be asked to write a reflection on what you learned and what it means for you as a researcher.
- **Part B** focuses on co-production and participatory research. You will be asked to undertake selected readings and then complete a written task. The task involves examining your past, present or current research projects and how you could have enhanced co-production in each stage of the research process.

The written task will be submitted and marked 'pass or fail'. It is estimated that you will need to allow approximately **10 hours in total** to complete the readings and activities.

Residential workshop

The residential workshop will be held in **January 2021** in Brisbane, taking place over a weekend. The workshop will be attended by all Research Program participants and Project Team members. Autistic participants will attend the residential workshop for 3.5 days and 3 nights, while autism researchers will attend 1.5 days and 1 night of the residential workshop. The residential workshop will provide an opportunity to learn about and practice the skills for co-production.

Meals, transport and accommodation will be provided for autistic participants; meals and accommodation will be provided for autistic researchers. Autism researchers will need to cover the cost of their own travel.

Attendance and participation in the workshop is an essential part of the Research Program. If you **won't be available** to attend, you should not apply for this Program.

Activities at the workshop may include:

- Presentations and discussions
- Practical activities
- Question and answer sessions, and
- Optional social activities (such as a trivia night).

The workshop will be a flexible space. Attendees are free to position themselves in a way that makes them feel comfortable and able to participate (move about the room, stim, colour, etc.). The workshop will also take place at the same site as the accommodation to allow participants to use their rooms as a retreat space. If you already live in the same city as the workshop, you still have the option to stay at the hotel with the rest of the group.



All participants will be given an information booklet prior to the workshop. This will help you prepare and will include information about the workshop venue including menus, photos of the venue and the people who will be there.

Volunteer placement

Autistic Participants

The volunteer placement is a practical opportunity to be involved in the research process. The placements will be for approximately 50 hours.

Everyone's volunteer placement will be different. Placements will involve pairing autistic participants and autism researchers undertaking co-production. Placement decisions will be based on a number of different factors including:

- where you live;
- the skills and experiences you shared in your application, and;
- what we know about your interests from what you shared in your application.

Please note that the Research Program is **not** an employment program and it is not anticipated that volunteer placements will lead to employment.

Autism Researchers

Autism researchers will not be required to complete a volunteer placement.

Graduation and evaluation

After completing the Program, participants will receive a certificate of graduation and membership into the Sylvia Rodger Academy.

Participants will be invited to take part in evaluation activities related to the Program. This will assist the Sylvia Rodger Academy to improve future Programs and may include online surveys, focus groups and/or interviews. Each participant will be provided with information sheets and asked for their consent before participating in any evaluation activities. These activities may take place at various intervals throughout the Program and after participants have graduated.

Application process

Applications for the 2020 Program will **close at midnight AEST on Sunday 19 July 2020**. There are 3 sections to the application.

- **Part A** is an online form that will ask you questions about yourself and your experience. You do not need to have experience relevant to every question in this section to be considered for the Program.
- **Part B** is a series of selection questions that can be answered through your choice of an online form, PowerPoint presentation or video.
- **Part C** is a series of marketing questions and a declaration. You will be asked to confirm that you are eligible to apply for the Program and that to the best of your knowledge everything you have recorded as part of your application is true and correct.

Applicants are required to submit **all parts** of the application **by midnight AEST on Sunday 19 July 2020**.

Key dates for applications

Applications open	Monday 6 July
Applications close	Sunday 19 July at midnight (AEST)
Notification of application outcome	Week of 24 August
Program starts	Monday 7 September

Selection Questions

Autistic Participants

Part B is a series of 4 selection questions that can be answered via the online form, in a video or in a PowerPoint presentation. Whichever format you choose, you will still complete Part A (About You/Skills and Experience) and Part C (Marketing Questions and Declaration) via the online form.

If you complete Part B via the online form, you will have **50 to 150 words** to answer each question. For information on **how to submit a video or PowerPoint response** to Part B, check the Appendices of this Pack.



Selection Questions

1. Why would you like to be part of the Research Program?

Hint: *Think about why you feel motivated and ready for this opportunity.*

2. Why do you think it's important for autistic people to be involved in researching autism?

Hint: *Think about why you want to be involved in autism research and if relevant, your past experiences of being involved in research.*

3. What are the 1 or 2 main areas (or issues) in autism research that you are most passionate about? Why are they important to you?

4. How would you like to be involved in autism research after the Research Program finishes, and what amount of time do you think you could contribute?

Example: *Giving feedback to researchers about things like survey questions (e.g. being on an advisory group or steering committee); being involved in each stage of the research; as a co-lead on research projects, etc. Available 2 hours per week; twice a month; not during University semester or school holidays, etc.*

Optional: Is there any other relevant information you would like us to know? (maximum 200 words)

Autism Researchers

Part B is 2 selection questions that can be answered via the online form, in a video or in a PowerPoint presentation. Whichever format you choose, you will still complete Part A (About You/Skills and Experience) and Part C (Marketing Questions and Declaration) via the online form.

If you complete Part B via the online form, you will answer the questions below within the identified word count. For information on **how to submit a video or PowerPoint response** to Part B, check the Appendices of this Pack.

Selection Questions

1. Why would you like to be part of the Research Program? (50 to 300 words)

2. Why do you think it's important for autistic people to be involved in researching autism? (50 to 200 words)



Optional: Is there any other relevant information you would like us to know? (maximum 200 words)

Being offered a place

Applicants will be offered a place via email or be notified that they were unsuccessful between **Monday 24 August and Friday 28 August.**

The first online module for successful applicants for the autistic participant stream will start on **Monday 7 September**, with the autism researcher stream beginning at a later date.



Privacy

Autism CRC recognises the importance of protecting your privacy when it comes to your personal information. Any information that is collected from you, including your application, is protected under Australian law and kept private. This means that your application is stored securely and that the Research Program Project Team legally cannot share details of your application (or that you've applied to this Program) with unauthorised staff, visitors, or the general public. This includes family members and support persons.

For more information on Autism CRC's Privacy Policy, which has been guided by the *Privacy Act 1988*, [please click here](#).

Find out more information

Please see [our website](#) for more information about the Program, including answers to some of the questions you may have.

If the question you'd like to ask is not answered on the website (including the FAQs) or in this Applicant Information Pack, please email the Executive Officer, Olivia (Liv) at ogatfield@autismcrc.com.au. Please note that Liv works part-time and will take 2 to 3 business days to respond to your email.



Appendices

Completing Part B (PowerPoint)

You are welcome to answer selection questions using a PowerPoint presentation instead of the online form. This method allows you to incorporate both writing and images into your responses.

You will have up to **3 slides** of content to address **each** question.

In addition to this, you can also have:

- a **title slide** at the start of your presentation; and,
- a slide showing each **question** (as long as those slides do not contain any other text).

Please use a minimum 20pt easy-to-read font (such as Arial) with no embedded video addressing the questions or additional notes beyond the slides. Any embedded video or additional notes included will not be considered by the selection panel.

There will be a question in the online form after the Part A questions asking how you want to complete Part B. Select “Via PowerPoint”. Then continue to answer the Part C questions before submitting the form. After you have completed and submitted the online form you will need to email your completed presentation to ogatfield@autismcrc.com.au by **midnight AEST on Sunday 19 July 2020** with “Research Program 2020 Part B” and your full name in the subject line.

To..	ogatfield@autismcrc.com.au
Cc..	
Subject	Research Program 2020 Part B - John Smith

Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title slide of your presentation to enable collation of parts A, B and C of your application.

It will take a few days for our Executive Officer to respond to your email containing your PowerPoint to confirm we have received it (especially if you submit it over the weekend or on the closing date).

Completing Part B (Video)

You are also welcome to answer selection questions using a video instead of the online form.

This might involve you speaking to the camera directly or having a friend, family member or colleague interview you using the selection questions. You will have up to **90 seconds** of edited video to address **each** question. After filming your video you will need to edit it and upload it to either DropBox or as an **unlisted** YouTube video (we won't be able to access it if it is listed as private).

Instructions for uploading and sharing videos on both of these websites can be found online, including the examples listed below:

- <https://blogs.dropbox.com/dropbox/2015/05/share-large-files/>
- <https://blogs.constantcontact.com/how-to-upload-video-to-youtube/>

There will be a question in the online form after the Part A questions asking how you want to complete Part B. Select "Via video" and you will then continue to answer the Part C questions before submitting the form. After you have completed and submitted the online form you will need to email your completed presentation to ogatfield@autismcrc.com.au by **midnight AEST on Sunday 19 July 2020** with "Research Program 2020 Part B" and your full name in the subject line.

To...	ogatfield@autismcrc.com.au
Cc...	
Subject	Research Program 2020 Part B - John Smith

Please ensure you include your full name in both the email subject line and the title/file name of your video to enable collation of parts A, B and C of your application.

It will take a few days for our Executive Officer to respond to your email containing your video link to confirm we have received it (especially if you submit it over the weekend or on the closing date).



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