



Curtin University



# Faculty of Business and Law

2020 Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarships

## Strategic Project Profile

**PROJECT TITLE:** The use of monetary incentives in organizations: Getting what you pay for?

**FIELD OF RESEARCH CODE:** 1503 & 1701

**PROJECT SYNOPSIS:** Background: The use of pay-for-performance schemes is ubiquitous in the workplace, with bonus and incentive programs increasingly being used across industries and types of jobs, even for white-collar work and public organisations. However, debates regarding the effects of monetary rewards on work motivation continue to rage with little progress on the empirical front. This is all the more relevant given how work is changing. Simple menial work is increasingly being automatized, while more complex tasks remain done by humans. Given the fact that rewards have only been shown to work for algorithmic tasks (simple and straightforward), the design of incentive systems has to be reviewed. Self-determination theory will be used to test the effects of commonly used incentive systems across different types of jobs and organisations, and to find optimal ways of designing incentive and compensation systems.

**Project Summary:** The Candidate will be involved in developing and testing hypotheses derived from self-determination theory as well as other theories that have been used to study the effects of incentives on work

motivation, performance, and well-being. The use of experimental and quasi-experimental designs in the lab and field will be used.

#### **FEASIBILITY AND RESOURCING – DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPPORT THIS PROJECT WILL RECEIVE:**

The empirical research for this project will be primarily conducted via experimental laboratory studies and quasi-experimental field studies. The laboratory studies can be completed at relatively low cost via online participant recruitment sites such as Mechanical Turk or Prolific or with student groups. Field studies will be conducted in partnership with FOWI's vast network of industry collaborators, or with Masters-level student samples such as MBA and DBA students. The supervisory team is proficient in methodological and statistical skills required to provide support to the candidate. The faculty will provide a laptop, shared work space and research training.

#### **WHAT MINIMAL ATTRIBUTES AND SKILLS EXPECTED BY THE CANDIDATE BE COMPETITIVE:**

Honours I or higher. Some research experience with a first author output is desirable, but not essential.

#### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT/ PROGRAM FOR THE ENROLLING SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION:**

The Future of Work Institute is the leading research institute in the Faculty of Business and Law. Aligning to FOWI'S research themes, compensation and remuneration are highly relevant topics, especially with the recent revelations emerging from the Royal Commission into financial service providers in Australia that compensation structures were incentivising highly unethical behaviour. The Future of Work Institute will be hosting its inaugural conference on the topic of Compensation, and this conference will aim to connect academics from multiple disciplines with practitioners. It is expected that industry-led research opportunities will emerge from this conference, and this PhD project will likely play a key role.

**Students are advised to contact the Project Lead listed below prior to submission of their scholarship application to discuss their suitability to be involved in this strategic project.**

#### **PROJECT LEAD CONTACT**

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#### **PRIMARY SUPERVISOR**

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