



# FACULTY OF ARTS

## Adelaide Summer Research Scholarship 2021-2022

### **Mum first – performing (digital) motherhood**

**Supervisor: Dr Kim Barbour**

**Department of Media**

**School of Humanities**

This project looks at motherhood as a construct and a practice. Of all the ways that ‘women’ as a concept is socially and culturally constructed, it is being (or not being) a mother that often impacts, both positively and negatively, on all other elements of the lives of women. Importantly, these impacts exist whether or not a woman raises children. This centrality of being a mum is increasingly, and rightfully, being questioned, as people choose not to have children, have fewer children, and define their identities in ways that transcend their relationship to progeny. Old categories of womanhood, and the binary understanding of gender that underpins it, are problematized. However, there are those who see their role of mother as the core of their adult identities, around which everything else shifts; this project focuses on them, and particularly on the way this identity is performed online.

Mummy-blogging is one part of this – it is certainly a highly visible form of performing mothering online – but there are other elements to online motherhood that this project will investigate. A part of the role for the student researcher is to identify those threads in published research, follow up with checks in online spaces, and identify where additional research is required.

Working with Dr Barbour, the student researcher will gain experience in the following areas:

- Writing and submitting low risk ethics applications for both case-study/interview and online observational research
- Conducting highly targeted literature searches, collating annotated bibliographies, and synthesising published research to identify themes
- Tracing themes identified in published research into online spaces
- Transcribing, cleaning, and coding primary research data (interview and focus group recordings)

The skills learned across this project will put you in a strong position to conduct independent primary research at Honours level, particularly for those interested in studying mediatization of identity, social networks, or gender.