UQ Summer Research Project Description - 2026

Project title:	Mapping Queensland's greatest healthcare challenge – the statewide distribution of frailty, its contributing factors and the availability of related health services
Hours of engagement & delivery mode	This project will run from Monday 12 Jan – Friday 20 Feb 2026 with planned activities expected to be commensurate to full-time work (36 hours/week). The project will be based at the Dutton Park campus. While in-person attendance for occasional meetings is strongly preferred, the majority (~90%) of engagement hours can be completed on-site, remotely or in a hybrid arrangement – as preferred by the candidate.
Description:	Frailty is a large and ever-growing challenge to the Australian health system. On an individual level, it leaves people vulnerable to poor health outcomes and/or death. On a system level, it is incredibly expensive – placing significant demands on limited healthcare resources. Our group has calculated a frailty score for all adult patients who attended a Queensland Health hospital between Jan 2023 and Jun 2024. This project will use linked postcode data to map out where in Queensland frail inpatients originate. This geographic distribution of frailty will then be compared to demographic factors, distribution of socioeconomic disadvantage and distance to/availability of medical services and social supports using publicly available datasets. This project will help answer three important clinical questions: 1) Where in the community do frail inpatients come from? 2) How is this distribution related to potential determinants of frailty in the community? 3) Where are there potential gaps in the services/supports needed to mitigate the effects of frailty?
Expected learning outcomes and deliverables:	This project is intended to develop a candidate's skills across a number of domains including applied biostatistics, data interpretation and scientific writing. Additionally, participation in this project is meant to familiarise a candidate with work within a research group. Project findings are to be submitted by the end of the study period in the form of a scientific report. We expect that successful completion of this project would warrant the inclusion of the candidate as an author in a submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Publication cannot be guaranteed.

Suitable for:	While this project is open to all candidates, it would likely be most suitable for candidates enrolled in health sciences, public health or related fields. Candidates familiar with basic biostats (particularly linear/logistic regression) and R statistical software are preferred, but those with a strong interest to learn will be considered. By far, the most important selection criteria are a candidate's professional qualities.
Primary Supervisor:	Dr David Ward (Dr Douglas Drak will act as a co-supervisor)
Further info:	We are happy to be contacted by potential candidates if they would like further information about the project. david.ward@uq.edu.au