

**Participant Information Sheet**

**Evaluation of learning resources and teaching approaches in *Critical Thinking: Media and Academia***

**Ethics application no:** 204315

**Researchers:** Dr Heidi Hetz and Dr Sarah Hattam

You are invited to take part in a research project that seeks to evaluate the learning resources and teaching approaches in *Critical Thinking: Media and Academia*. You have been invited because you were enrolled as an external student in *Critical Thinking: Media and Academia* in SP2 or SP5 in 2022.

You are invited to participate in an online survey and a focus group, to be held via Zoom. You can participate in either or both activities.

This Participant Information Sheet tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

Please read this information carefully. Ask questions about anything that you don’t understand or want to know more about.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

This research seeks to evaluate the learning resources and teaching approaches used in the external offering of *Critical Thinking: Media and Academia*. We would like to hear about your views on the effectiveness of learning resources such as the interactive H5P activities, discussion forums, and Padlet; the provision of summary and individual feedback; the communication through weekly emails and videos; tutor support for your learning; and your experiences of belonging and connectedness to a community of learners at UniSA College.

The online survey and focus group seek to evaluate the usefulness of these learning resources and teaching approaches for external students. We want to use the results to determine whether we will continue to use these learning activities and teaching approaches in future study periods and whether / how we can further improve them. We also want to share our findings with other educators who teach critical thinking and text analysis skills to external students.

This research has not received any funding. No member of the research team will receive a personal financial benefit from your involvement in this research project (other than their ordinary wages).

**Voluntary participation and consent**

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you don’t wish to take part, you don’t have to.

You are free to decline to complete the online survey or to participate in the focus group.

You can withdraw from the study at any point while completing the online survey, without affecting your relationship with the researchers or the University of South Australia, either now or in the future. Once you submit your survey, however, we are unable to remove your response as it will be impossible to identify your completed survey. By completing and submitting the survey, you are indicating that you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and give your consent to be involved in the research.

You can withdraw from the study at any point while participating in the focus group, without affecting your relationship with the researchers or the University of South Australia, either now or in the future. Once you commence your participation in the focus group and you choose to leave the focus group, however, we are unable to remove your responses from the transcript as they will be deidentified.

**What does participation in this research involve?**

Online survey:

If you choose to participate in the online survey, you will be able to access the survey link in the email sent to you about this research. The time required to complete the online survey is about 20 minutes. The survey asks you about your experiences with the learning resources and teaching approaches outlined above, and seeks your suggestions on further improving them.

The survey is only open to external students enrolled in *Critical Thinking:* *Media and Academia* in SP2 and SP 5 in 2022. The survey will remain open for one month after the initial email to you about this research.

Focus group:

If you choose to participate in the focus group, you can express your interest by emailing our research assistant *[name]*: *[email address]*.

*[name of research assistant]* will email you a consent form. If you still wish to participate, you can sign and return the consent for to *[name of research assistant]* via email. *[name of research assistant]* will send you a link to an online poll where you can show your availability for the focus group which will take place via Zoom. Once the date is confirmed, *[name of research assistant]* will send you an invitation with a Zoom link.

You will attend the focus group via Zoom with a small group of students who studied in the external offering of *Critical Thinking: Media and Academia* with you. *[name of research assistant]* will conduct the focus group, asking you about your experiences with the learning resources and teaching approaches outlined above, and seeks your suggestions on further improving them. You can contribute as much or as little as you feel comfortable.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

If you participate in the online survey, you will go into the draw to win one of five gift vouchers to the value of $20 (five gift vouchers for students enrolled in SP2 and five gift vouchers for students enrolled in SP5). If you participate in the focus group, you will receive a gift voucher to the value of $50.

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this research beyond the gift vouchers; however, possible benefits may include reflection on your learning over this study period. By completing the survey, you are also making a positive contribution towards the continued improvement of the external offering of *Critical Thinking: Media and Academia* for future students.

**What are the possible risks and disadvantages of taking part?**

It is not anticipated that there are any risks to participation in this study beyond those encountered during everyday life.

However, because of the sensitive nature of some of the topics that were covered in the weekly activities, some students may have experienced distress while completing these activities and / or may experience distress while reflecting on these activities as part of this research.

Should you feel distressed at any time while completing the online survey, please be aware that you can exit the survey and withdraw at any point. Should you feel distressed at any time while participating in the focus group, please be aware that you can exit the focus group and withdraw at any point.

The researcher can assist you in accessing support services as required. Alternatively, other support services available include:

* [Student counsellors](https://i.unisa.edu.au/students/student-support-services/counselling/) at the UniSA Student Engagement Unit – book [HERE](https://i.unisa.edu.au/students/student-support-services/online-bookings/).
* UniSA Out-of-Hours Crisis Line: 1300 107 441 or text 0488 884 163 (5:00pm to 9:00am weekdays and 24hrs weekends and public holidays)
* Lifeline - <https://www.lifeline.org.au> / phone: 13 11 14
* Beyond Blue - <https://www.beyondblue.org.au> / 1300 22 4636

**What will happen to information about me?**

By submitting your responses to the online survey and / or by participating in the focus group, you consent to the research team collecting and using information from you for the research project. Any information obtained in connection with this research project will remain confidential. Information collected or used will be stored as non-identifiable data. It will only be disclosed with your written consent, except as required by law.

This research uses an internet-based survey. Every effort will be made to ensure that responses are confidential, however the researcher cannot guarantee the confidentiality or anonymity of material transferred by email or the internet.

All data from this project will be stored electronically for a minimum of five years in accordance with UniSA policy and the Australian code for responsible conduct in research. Only the researchers will have access to the survey data. The data may be used for related research in the future.

Data collected through this survey will be used to inform improvements at UniSA and could also be used in external publications and presentations. Individual responses will remain confidential and no individuals will be identified in the reporting of results.

**Will I learn about the findings from this research?**

A summary of the research findings will be available to all participants upon request. Should you wish to receive a summary of the research findings, please contact Dr Heidi Hetz via the contact details provided (see below).

**Further information and who to contact**

The person you may need to contact will depend on the nature of your query.  If you want any further information concerning this project or if you have any problems which may be related to your involvement in the project, you can contact the researcher Dr Heidi Hetz:

Dr Heidi Hetz

Lecturer

UniSA College

Phone: +61 8 8302 9301

Email: Heidi.Hetz@unisa.edu.au

**Who has reviewed the research project?**

The ethical aspects of this research project have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the University of South Australia as required by the Australian government research requirements, specified in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 - updated 2018). This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about being a research participant in general, please contact:

Reviewing HREC approving this research and HREC Executive Officer details:

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| Reviewing HREC name | University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee |
| HREC Executive Officer | Human Ethics Officer |
| Telephone | +618 8302 6330 |
| Email | [humanethics@unisa.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@unisa.edu.au) |