

**Advancing
Relational
Thinking
Lab**



**2021 RESEARCH
PROSPECTUS**



**ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR
SCOTT EACOTT**

CHASING IDEAS

Under the leadership of [A/Prof Scott Eacott](#) the [Advancing Relational Thinking Lab](#) is about pushing the edge of what we know about the social world. Our work is located within a network of internationally renowned and emerging scholars whose ongoing work is seriously and consequentially engaged in theoretical and methodological developments in relational research. Scholarship from the team is therefore aimed at the forefront of contemporary thought and analysis and in doing so, stimulates dialogue and debates in the interest of advancing scholarship.

COME WORK WITH US

We are constantly seeking outstanding researchers whether they are Honours, Masters, Doctoral, Post-Doc, or Visiting Scholars to undertake projects that advance our goal of changing the way people think and act through the *relational* approach.



Crucially, the **Advancing Relational Thinking Lab's** primary purpose is creating a research environment dedicated to fostering and delivering internationally recognised research and research training.

This is achieved through weekly Lab meetings, monthly international network meetings, an annual symposium, and establishing collaborations with key national and international scholars and research centres to develop new and ground-breaking theories and methodologies relevant to the contemporary world.

THE RELATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

The *relational* research program offers a methodological [framework](#) for the study of the social world. It provides a means to frame scholarly inquiry and [structure](#) an argument in a thesis, paper, book, or conference paper. The relational approach comprises five relational extensions:

- The centrality of 'organising' in the social world makes it difficult to epistemologically break from the ordinary language of the everyday;
- Rigorous social scientific inquiry calls into question the very foundation of popular labels used to organise the social world;
- Contemporary conditions cannot be separated from the ongoing, and inexhaustible recasting of organising;
- Foregrounding social relations enables the overcoming of the contemporary, and arguably enduring, analytical dualism; and
- In doing so there is a generative space to theorise organising.

NEW TO THE RELATIONAL APPROACH?

A useful overview can be found in:

Eacott, S. (2019). [Starting points for a relational approach to organization theory](#). *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership*, 4(1), 16-45.

<https://doi.org/10.30828/real/2019.1.2>

The most comprehensive articulation of the relational program can be found in:

Eacott, S. (2018). [Beyond Leadership: A Relational Approach to Organizational Theory in Education](#). Springer.

A 2019 Special Issue of [Research in Educational Administration and Leadership](#) was dedicated to discussing the problems and possibilities of the *relational* approach.

See scotteacott.com for further details on the relational approach.

CURRENT PROJECTS

recruiting researchers

School closures: Despite population growth, schools throughout Australia are being closed due to under-performance, changing demographic and resource pressures. These schools serve some of the most diverse and marginalised communities. This interdisciplinary PhD project will integrate multiple data sources to build a comprehensive database of small closures throughout Australia overtime. This first of its kind database will provide in-depth understanding of the relations between social and education measures as a catalyst for improving policy decisions and interventions.

RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

We are always open to hearing different ideas for projects. The most important factor is your willingness to mobilise the *relational* approach in your project. If that is the case, feel free to reach out and start a discussion about potential supervision / collaboration.



Small schools: Schools are often described as the heart of communities and more so in small communities. This PhD project will explicitly put this idea to the test. Undertaking fieldwork in small schools to investigate the role they play in the establishment and sustainment of communities.

Drawing on the emerging field of *relational* theorising, this project will transform the way we understand small schools and communities in ways not previously possible. In doing so, it will address significant knowledge gaps while generating explanatory insights on the vital history and culture of small schools.

POSSIBILITIES AND FURTHER DETAILS

for joining the team

Prospective staff and students are encouraged to apply for fellowships / studentship schemes in their country of origin, or from Australia, that would allow them to travel to Sydney.

In this case, the project and topic of research will be negotiated between A/Prof Eacott and the applicant, based on the applicant's area of expertise and the relational research program. A/Prof Eacott will assess the applicant and potential project before committing to support the application.

COMPETITIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

UNSW Sydney offers a number of highly competitive scholarships for researchers. These range from annual stipends, living allowances and coverage of tuition fee costs, as well as funding for travel. Further details can be found [here](#).

Advice for applicants

If you are looking to apply to join the **Advancing Relational Thinking Lab**, apart from meeting eligibility criteria, it is important to demonstrate that your proposed work contributes to and extends the work of the Lab.

We also welcome unfunded applicants wanting to work with the relational approach.

Most importantly, we are looking for highly motivated and talented researchers who believe they have the potential to make a significant contribution to the team

For Further Information about the relational research program, or to join the team contact A/Prof Scott Eacott:



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