

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Exploring factors associated with breastfeeding initiation and practice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Dr Marjorie Atchan</b>
<b>Address</b>	<b>University of Canberra, 11 Kirinari St Bruce 2617</b>
<b>Telephone</b>	<b>0408 696 877</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>Marjorie.Atchan@canberra.edu.au</b>

**Lead discipline (please select one)**

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Midwifery</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Health Economics</b>       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Allied Health</b>        | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Biostatistics</b>          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Medicine</b>             | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Value-based Healthcare</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Pre-clinical</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Epidemiology</b>           |

**Outline of the project**

Increasing breastfeeding is one way of improving the short- and long-term health of all childbearing women and children. Breastfeeding is one of the most important human behaviours for the survival, growth, development and health of infants and young children. The risks associated with the use of infant formula are well documented, for example sudden infant death syndrome, diarrhoea, respiratory infections, middle ear infections and the development of diabetes in later life. Data from national health indicators shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children experience greater health disparities than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. While there is a lack of population health studies specifically on breastfeeding prevalence and practice, these disparities may well result from lower rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration. This scoping narrative review intends to explore the barriers and enablers to breastfeeding for this specific group.

**Proposed research methods**

This is a scoping narrative review due to the expected paucity of available published literature on the topic. Scoping reviews are an ideal tool to determine the scope or coverage of a body of literature on a given topic and give clear indication of the volume of literature and studies available as well as an overview (broad or detailed) of its focus. Scoping reviews are useful for examining emerging evidence when it is still unclear what other, more specific questions can be posed and valuably addressed by a more precise systematic review.

A systematic process will be followed using an established framework (Joanna Briggs Institute). The protocol will be developed, a review question/objective determined, eligibility criteria established, multiple databases searched, and reference lists scanned, level 1 and 2 screening of identified sources and a summary table to present results. Found

papers will be analysed and using Popay's (2006) guidance for a narrative synthesis. Gaps in the literature will be found with implications for future studies and any implications for practice.

**Preferred study discipline being undertaken by the student**

Midwifery

**Potential benefits to the student and to the department**

Along with experience in preparation of a manuscript for publication, the student will gain in depth knowledge of the literature relating to the factors that influence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childbearing women's experiences of breastfeeding and early parenting. This project is the first stage of a larger study on this topic. The student will gain valuable skills in all aspects of conducting reviews using a systematic process.

This project will benefit maternity services by providing data on barriers and enablers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander childbearing women in accessing appropriate and timely support from health professionals, which may assist practitioners to better support women in the future.

**Department within ACT Health Directorate / Canberra Health Services where the student will be based**

SYNERGY: Nursing & Midwifery Research Centre  
University of Canberra and ACT Health

Please submit form to [preclinical.research@act.gov.au](mailto:preclinical.research@act.gov.au)