

Can sharing the “mental load” close the leadership gender gap?

PhD Project Opportunity

University of Western Australia Business School & School of Psychological Science

Prof. Gillian Yeo, Dr. Serena Wee

Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Grant Project

Overview

The University of Western Australia (UWA) Business School and School of Psychological Sciences invites exceptional domestic or international candidates to apply for a PhD position in **Organisational Behaviour** or **Organisational Psychology** with a focus on **mental labour (or “the mental load”), gender, and leadership**. This project is part of an **Australian Research Council (ARC)** discovery grant aimed at understanding and addressing mental labour and leadership gender gaps. It also aims to develop scientifically informed interventions and policy changes aimed at increasing gender equity in mental labour and closing the leadership gender gap.

Funding is available to support research activities (e.g., data collection), but no stipend or tuition scholarship is provided. Applicants must independently secure a scholarship with the support of the supervisory team. Details on the scholarship process are outlined below.

Project Scope

This PhD project will take an organisational psychology perspective to examine mental labour, gender and leadership. Some illustrative ideas are provided below. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather as a starting point to help ground proposal ideas. Applicants are encouraged to consider how their particular areas of research and expertise may be applicable to mental labour and the leadership gender gap.

Examples include:

- Investigating the experience and distribution of mental labour in female-dominated industries such as education and healthcare
- The impact of flexible work arrangements on mental labour and leadership emergence
- Organisational interventions to distribute mental labour equitably
- Mental labour and its impact on mental health, burnout, and leadership
- Understanding mental labour as a leadership capability

Supervisory and Research Team

The candidate will be supervised by internationally recognised scholars in organisational behaviour and applied psychology:

- [Professor Gillian Yeo](#)
- [Associate Professor Serena Wee](#)

The candidate will be embedded within a supportive and high-performing research team at UWA's Business School and/or School of Psychological Science, collaborating closely with leading researchers from international universities and industry partners:

- [Emma Stephenson](#)
- [Assistant Professor Laura Fruhen](#)
- [Professor Julie Wayne](#)

Candidate Requirements

To be eligible, applicants must:

1. Hold a bachelor's degree with honours or a master's degree in Organisational Behaviour, Industrial/Organisational Psychology, Applied Psychology, or a related discipline.
2. Have completed a research thesis equivalent to at least 25% of their degree with a final grade on said thesis of at least 80%.
3. Achieve a Weighted Average Mark (WAM) of **80+** (or equivalent). Details on how to calculate your WAM are available through the UWA graduate research school website.
4. **[International only]** Meet English language proficiency requirements (IELTS 7.0+ in all components). English tests must have been completed within six months.

How to Apply

Interested candidates are encouraged to:

1. Review the eligibility criteria above. Please ensure you meet the minimum requirements.
2. Prepare a short research proposal (1–2 pages double spaced) outlining how your interests align with the project theme. Please be specific and demonstrate your own area of interest and how it aligns with the project theme and the supervisory team. The research proposal must make a clear link between the supervisory team and the theme.
3. Email *Emma Stephenson* (emma.stephenson@uwa.edu.au) and *CC Gillian Yeo* (gillian.yeo@uwa.edu.au) and *Serena Wee* (serena.wee@uwa.edu.au). Your email should include the following:
 - A cover email introducing yourself, your motivation to apply for this project and a statement regarding your eligibility (referring to the 3 [or 4 for international applicants] points above).
 - A 1 – 2 page (double spaced) short research proposal as per above.
 - A copy of your CV.
 - A copy of your full academic transcript(s). If the results are not in English, a valid translation is required.
 - **[International only]** A copy of your English proficiency scores. If the results are not in English, a valid translation is required.

Next step: Once the research team has reviewed your materials and agreed to supervise your project, you will be invited to formally apply to the PhD program and submit your application for scholarships via the online [HDR application portal](#).

- **International:** The UWA 2026 International RTP Scholarship Round opens on the 1 July 2025 and closes on the **31 August 2025**.
- **Domestic:** The UWA 2026 Domestic RTP Scholarship Round opens on 1 September 2025 and closes on **31 October 2025**.

Further Information

For more details about UWA's PhD program and application process, visit:

<https://www.uwa.edu.au/study/postgraduate-research>

For more details about the application process for scholarship rounds, read the 'Advice for Applicants' document here:

<https://www.uwa.edu.au/study/fees-and-scholarships/hdr-scholarships>