

# PhD Pathways

MPH Careers Seminar – 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015

**Melanie Lowe**

PhD Supervisors: Prof Carolyn Whitzman & Prof Billie Giles-Corti

Place, Health and Liveability Program

McCaughey VicHealth Community Wellbeing Unit

Centre for Health Equity



# Outline

- My PhD pathway
- The PhD experience
- MDHS Faculty eligibility standards
- Choosing a research topic
- Scholarships
- Post-PhD career options

# My PhD Pathway

- Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Honours)
- Worked as a physiotherapist
- Master of Public Health, including minor thesis
- Worked as a research assistant for Prof. Billie Giles-Corti, McCaughey Unit, MSPGH
- Started PhD in 2012
  - Topic: How Victorian state government policy can better support the creation of healthy urban environments

# What does a PhD involve?

- Thesis of approximately 80,000–100,000 words
- Independent, sustained project investigating a specialised topic
- Make an original contribution to knowledge
- Work with supervisor(s) and advisory panel

# What does a PhD involve?

- Duration is 3 years full-time
- Full time students can do other paid work for up to 8 hours per week
- Can study part-time, but this impacts scholarship eligibility
- Confirmation at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year (EFT)
- PhD can include some coursework to develop skills as required

# MSPGH PhD experience

- MSPGH has supervisors for a diverse range of research topics
- Desks provided in the School
- PhD students are seen as junior faculty members
- Opportunities to develop other skills (e.g. publishing, conferences, teaching, leadership)
- RHD student groups, and social events
- Some School funding for research-related expenses (in addition to PhD scholarships)

# MDHS Faculty eligibility standards

- Look at Faculty and School websites
- Need to meet the H1 Standard (e.g. Bachelor degree with first-class Honours; Masters degree of high standard, with research component).
- If you don't clearly meet the H1 Standard, the School may make a case for consideration of your qualifications and experience, as equivalent to the H1 Standard
- Admission is conditional on approval of an academic research supervisor within the MSPGH

# Thinking about a PhD?

## What you can do NOW

- Aim for H1 grades
- Aim to do a Research Project as part of MPH
- Aim to publish
- Talk to people who have done a PhD
- Discuss it with your Lecturers



# Choosing a research topic

- Choose a topic that really interests you!
- Two main options:
  1. Develop your own research topic, then approach potential supervisors to gain support before applying
  2. Apply for existing, pre-defined PhD opportunities (advertised through PHAA, scholarships databases etc.)

# Scholarships

- Most scholarships are for full-time enrolment
- Scholarships pay for living expenses (approx. \$25,849)
- Domestic students:
  - Australian Postgraduate Award (APA)
  - Faculty Research Scholarship
- International students:
  - Melbourne International Research Scholarships (MIRS)
  - Scholarships to cover course fees

# Post-PhD career pathways

- Regardless of your career pathway, a PhD will allow you to develop new and useful skills and expertise.
- Many career options!
  - Academic career: research or teaching
  - Research in other environments: NGOs, think-tanks, consultancy
  - Non-research careers: Public service, NGOs, private sector, health sector

# Thank you



## More information

### School website:

<http://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/study/degrees/doctor-of-philosophy/overview>

### Faculty website:

<http://research.mdhs.unimelb.edu.au/future-grs>