

*Attitudes Towards and Preferences for Working with People with Complex Communication Needs:
Impact of a Course in Augmentative and Alternative Communication*

You are invited to participate in this project, which is being conducted by Hilary Johnson and Karen Bloomberg, lecturers in HCS32AAC – Augmentative and Alternative Communication at La Trobe University, School of Human Communication Sciences.

Recently there has been an increase in job opportunities for speech pathologists in the disability field. It is anticipated that such opportunities will continue to increase. As part of this project, we are seeking information from speech pathologists who graduated from La Trobe University since 2000. In particular, we are interested in aspects of your undergraduate training that could have influenced your decision to work with people with complex communication needs. The term *complex communication needs* refers to people who previously were referred to as those with *severe communication impairment*.

To participate in this project, simply go back to the HCS Research web page, [<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/hcs/hcs/research.html>] click on the link to the questionnaire, complete the survey and submit it on the web. It should take no more than 10 minutes. The submitted questionnaire will be sent to us, but will not contain any information that could identify you – the form has been programmed so that the email sent to the researchers will be stripped of senders' details. Even if you are not working with people with complex communication needs, we ask that you participate by completing the first question in the questionnaire, and submitting the form. This information will assist us in obtaining an accurate estimate of the number of recent graduates working with this group.

Please note that the invitation to participate in this survey has also been sent by mail to new graduates by a staff member from La Trobe University, School of Human Communication Sciences, who is not involved in the study. We have not been provided with your contact details. Your participation in the study is purely voluntary; your decision to participate or not will have no consequences in terms of your relationship with La Trobe University.

The data from the completed questionnaires will be entered into a computer data-file, which will be accessed only by us or other research personnel. These data and the original emails with the completed questionnaires will be destroyed 5 years after completion of the study.

Only group results will be presented in any written reports or conference presentations; no information that could identify individuals will be reported.

If you have any questions about the study, or would like to obtain a report about the findings, you can contact one of us by phone on 9479-1802 or 9843-2000, or by email: h.johnson@latrobe.edu.au, k.bloomberg@latrobe.edu.au.

If you have any complaints or queries that the investigator has not been able to answer to your satisfaction, you may contact the Ethics Liaison Officer, Human Ethics Committee, La Trobe University, Victoria, 3086, (ph: 03 9479 1443, e-mail: humanethics@latrobe.edu.au).