

Project proposal template – Faculty studentships Summer 2014

<i>Project title</i>	Help or hinderance? Exploring the effects of cognitive enhancing substances in healthy individuals	<i>Director of Study</i>	Prof Andrea Petroczi
<i>Second Supervisor</i>	Dr Mark Preece	<i>School</i>	Life Sciences
<i>Other members of supervisory team</i>		<i>Any requirements from applicant (eg degree in specific subject area)</i>	First class honours degree in psychology; preferably with
Project summary (max 1,000 characters)			
<p>The use of cognitive enhancers (CE) or 'smart drugs' such as modafinil and methylphenidate among university students has generated much media interest, but their use has also been documented in many other situations (military, healthcare, business) where prolonged wakefulness and concentration are required. Benefiting from our ongoing research and the complimentary expertise of the supervisory team, this project will contribute to the current understanding of off-label use of CEs by exploring the specific cognitive effects of 'lesser-known' over-the-counter and well as prescription-only CEs; along with unwelcome effects in healthy individuals. Using appropriate cognitive testing procedures along with explicit and implicit psychological tests, the project will explore the stability of the functional knowledge acquired under CEs, the degree of discrepancy between perceived and actual cognitive ability whilst using CE; cognitive rigidity; and triggers for disruption of attentional control. To better characterise the potential effects of CEs on brain neurochemistry, analyses of suitable biomarkers (eg, urinary catecholamine neurotransmitter metabolite levels) will complement the experiments.</p>			