

Psychology Department Research Policies

Instructors

Guidelines for Research Participation as Part of a Psychology Course

The research experience should not be designed simply to provide the researcher with an easy or guaranteed pool of participants. Rather, any research experience that is part of a course should be created with the student's benefit as the goal. Students who provide their time and willingness to participate should receive a positive experience in which they expand their understanding of psychology. In general, participation in research provides students with exposure to how psychology research is conducted.

It is up to the Psychology faculty member responsible for a course to decide whether that course will have a research component. For those courses that do have a research component:

- ◆ Requirements for the research need to be clearly communicated to students in writing. Ideally, the purpose and rationale for the research experience should be clearly stated in the course syllabus.
- ◆ A research experience can take several forms.
 - Research participation can be optional, where the student receives extra credit points that contribute to the course grade. This is typically offered to help students move up a portion of a grade, for example from a C+ to a B.
 - Research participation can be required in order for the student to receive his/her grade, but not be part of the grade calculation.
 - Research participation can be required in order for the student to receive his or her grade, and this participation or other equivalent research experience (such as writing a comparable research report) can be part of the grade calculation.
- ◆ When research participation is part of a psychology course, the instructor must provide equivalent alternative(s) for people who do not want to participate. The alternatives must be equivalent in terms of effort required, for example writing a summary of a research journal article.

Researchers

Guidelines for Researchers' Responsibilities

A fundamental characteristic of a subject pool is that students trust the system. This means that it is imperative that researchers show up for their scheduled appointments or provide a substitute researcher. In rare instances, the researcher can offer to switch a subject to another experiment at the same time. However, this option may not be available. Researchers should be at their research lab 15 minutes before the scheduled beginning of their experiment.

Administrative Actions:

1. If a researcher misses a scheduled appointment, then the researcher must explain this absence in writing to the Sona Systems administrator. If the absence is not justified, then the researcher will be required to read the *APA Principles for the Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects* and write a one-page report describing the central components of this document.
2. If a researcher has two unjustified absences (fails to show up for two scheduled appointments and these absences are not justified), this researcher would not be allowed to run any studies for the remainder of the semester. This decision will be made by a committee consisting of the Department Chair, Area Chairs, and the Research Pool Administrator(s).

Educational Program Policy

The research pool is designed to benefit both students and researchers. To ensure students have the opportunity to learn from their experience as participants, every study must include an educational component. Examples of the types of programs that would be acceptable include the following:

- ◆ The researcher can provide an educational rationale for the study being conducted.
- ◆ The researcher can select one aspect of the study to expound upon and share it with each participant.
- ◆ The researcher can describe how previous research on the topic has contributed to our knowledge base or to practical applications.
- ◆ The researcher can discuss the research method (quasi-experiment, correlational study, etc.) in an educational manner.

The educational component can take several forms, including verbal and written information communicated to participants. It can be given to participants at the beginning of a study, when participants are signing up for a study, or when a participant has finished. The educational component should be designed so the study results are not compromised.

Participants

No-Show Policy

The failure of a participant to show up for a scheduled research session often imposes a substantial cost on the researcher in terms of lost time and effort. For example, researchers may make a special trip to campus in order to conduct their study. Often, the researcher is trying to complete the study and meet a deadline, either because the research is funded, because the study is being used as part of an honors thesis, master's thesis, or dissertation requirement, or simply because science can advance quickly and a study that is timely in one year may be old news in the next. Also, when the study involves the formation of groups, the failure of one participant to show may mean that several others who did show cannot complete the study as planned.

Because of this, we treat signing up to participate in a study as a serious obligation, and track and impose sanctions on unexcused "no-shows." **A "no-show" is defined as a failure to show up within 15 minutes of the start time for a scheduled session, unless the appointment has been cancelled or rescheduled as described below.** The names of participants who sign up for a study and fail to show up will be reported to their relevant course instructors. **If a participant has two "no-shows," he or she will be blocked from participating in any more research projects for the remainder of the semester and will lose the privilege of accumulating any additional research credits from that point on in the semester.**

In sum, it is the responsibility of research participants to:

- Note the time and location of studies in which they have agreed to participate (a reminder containing this information will be emailed to participants prior to the study, and, the computerized scheduling system may be accessed to check on this information at any time).
- Show up at the correct location, 5 minutes *prior* to the starting time. In the rare event that the researcher has not shown up by five minutes after the start time, please notify the receptionist in the main office of the Psychology department (by elevators, room # 341).
- In the case of an emergency, cancel or reschedule the appointment for another time as soon as possible but *at least one hour prior to the research session start time*. This can be done either through the computerized scheduling system, or by contacting the department receptionist by phone, at 330-972-7280.

Access to the Sona Systems

Administrator Level

The person responsible for overseeing the research pool will have administrator level access to the system. Additional people with access at this same level will be limited and potentially include people in roles such as technology support, receptionists or administrative assistants, and other faculty sharing research pool oversight (co-administrators).

Researchers

Researchers can include faculty and graduate students from the Psychology Department and College of Education CPCP who are conducting IRB approved research. Outside researchers may also be included at the discretion of the Sona Systems administrator. Researchers must give the Sona Systems administrator a copy of the IRB approval letter. Faculty members who supervise graduate or undergraduate students conducting research are responsible for ensuring their advisees are conducting research and using the research pool appropriately. This includes conducting research in a professional manner, e.g., showing up when participants are scheduled as well as giving students credit for participating in a timely manner (within one week).

Instructors

Instructors who offer credit for research participation can access the Sona Systems at any time for a summary of points earned by each student. Instructors can also see if students were “no shows” for any studies.

Students

Undergraduates who are taking courses offering credit for research participation can access the Sona Systems to see what studies are being offered and their requirements, to see a schedule of studies for which the student has signed-up, and a tally of research credits earned.